

SEMANA SANTA PROCESSIONS AS VIEWED BY GALDÓS AND ALAS¹

Peter Bly

In Memoriam: Brian Dendle (1936-2013)

In both their journalism and fiction, Benito Pérez Galdós and Leopoldo Alas have devoted significant attention to the public ceremonies of Semana Santa. The aims of this study are twofold: first, to show the serious manner in which these events are discussed in the non-fictional writings of both authors; and secondly, to examine in detail the similarities of treatment when they are incorporated into the fictional worlds of *Gloria* (1877) and *La Regenta* (1885). In both novels the topic assumes an important role, not only in the unfolding of the plot, but also in relation to the theme of the differences between physical sight and spiritual insight, whose cardinal importance in the work of Galdós I have already treated elsewhere (*Vision*).

Galdós's newspaper articles

Galdós wrote three newspaper articles on the topic of Holy Week. The first appeared in Madrid's *La Nación* on April 1, 1866. At first, his attitude is mock serious as he divides the worshippers into two groups: the "multitud disciplinada" who in church light sad-looking candles and say their rosary, dressed in appropriately shoddy clothes, the majority fulfilling their religious obligations, the *Tartuffes* and the *Martas las piadosas* in the congregation (*Los artículos* 313), and the truly devout minority that "se prepara a contemplar en éxtasis místico los tormentos del Hijo de Dios, los dolores de María" (*Los artículos* 313). However, once both groups leave church to be greeted by the warm Spring sunshine, all thoughts of religion disappear. The Holy Week liturgies still sounding within ("el capellán bosteza un sermón; resuena el fagot con fúnebre lamento; óyense las siete palabras, el stabat y el requiem" [Los artículos 314]) are really no match for the allurements of Nature and of the streets of "Madrid demonio." On the one hand, there may be "golpes de pecho, caras de Dios, setenarios, monumentos, estaciones," but on the other, there are more potent forces at work: "chismografía de historia, ambición que fascina y hornos del diablo que se achicharran" (Los artículos 317). Since these interests are available all year, Galdós pleads for religious thoughts during this one week in the calendar: "seamos católicos esta semana, ya que hemos sido indiferentes un año entero" (*Los artículos* 314; my emphasis). Here the previously playful tone becomes more serious. Indeed, the word "indiferente" will be used by Galdós with utter seriousness in his correspondence with José María Pereda about the meaning of *Gloria*, as we shall see shortly.

In a second article on Holy Week for the same newspaper two years later (April 12, 1868), Galdós inverts the tone of his comments: initially, they sound strictly serious as he talks of the week being "símbolo de lo pasado, resumen de la tradición, afianzamiento de las

creencias, representación de la más triste historia que vieron los pasados, ni piensan ver los venideros siglos” (*Los artículos* 487). The Good Friday procession in Madrid, for example, is a topic “para altísimas y transcendentales consideraciones.” If, in his first article, he was able to give a breezy summary of some of the religious observances through single-word references, he is now slightly more expansive when mentioning what happens on Maundy Thursday. All public entertainment places are closed and there is an increasing silence in the streets, as vehicular traffic is banned. Still, there is a positive side to this situation: one can admire with greater ease the pretty bourgeois and aristocratic women as they walk along the streets to enter the churches:

¿Qué puedo decir de las faldas de raso, de los terciopelos, de las joyas, de los diamantes, lazos, tocados, cintas y perendengues? Por ahí van en la tarde del Jueves las hijas de Madrid tan vistosas y gallardas, que no las igualarán arcángeles celestiales, si ángeles bajaran a estas tierras; y como aumenta su compostura y donaire el ir andando por sus propios pasos y no encajonados en esos pesados coches que las llevan con rapidez y las ocultan hasta medio cuerpo, nos felicitamos de esta costumbre de eliminar ruedas, que da a la población, silenciosa magnificencia y aspecto variado, solemne y bello. (*Los artículos* 487)

As in 1866, Galdós sees, then, the true spiritual meaning of Easter Week vying with natural carnal attractions for people’s attention.

His most substantial discussion of the topic, far more serious than the previous two, though still laced with the odd touch of humour, is to be found in an article he wrote for *La Prensa* of Buenos Aires on April 14, 1884. Although appearing after *Gloria* and before *La Regenta*, it can be studied here with relevance for both novels, whether in retrospect or anticipation. The first point he makes is that Semana Santa celebrations have declined considerably everywhere in Spain in the last few years, both in the sumptuousness of the processions and the religious fervour of the faithful who participate in them. He supports this statement with his own personal experiences. He claims that, since he left his native city, he has not seen “aquellos oficios hermosos y teatrales, aquellas procesiones magníficas y llenas de pompa, acompañadas de un pueblo devoto que se interesaba en los pasos de la pasión, *como si fueran reales*” (*Las cartas* 87; my emphasis). This statement is important for a number of reasons: first, it shows that Galdós could and did appreciate very much the religious processions even from his early years in Las Palmas and that he did so because the various “pasos” or sections of the processions were beautiful theatrical shows to watch and appealed to the faithful because they seemed so real, life-like. But more particularly, they commemorated “el fundamento del cristianismo y el hecho más importante de la historia humana” (*Las cartas* 87). Unfortunately, what he has seen in the years since he moved to Madrid has seemed to him “pobre, frío y mezquino,” although he is prepared to admit that this transformation may not be “en el espectáculo sino en *nuestros ojos*” (*Las Cartas* 87; my emphasis), two words that will assume a great importance in this study.

The 1884 review really expands in greater detail upon the brief allusions of the two previous articles. The writer has very harsh words for the capital’s Good Friday procession, which seems to him more like a street revolt: “es de lo más chocarrero, estrafalario e irreverente

que se pudiera imaginar” (*Las cartas* 87). The statues have no artistic merit. On the other hand the Maundy Thursday visits of aristocratic ladies to see the “Monumentos” in churches carried by bewigged servants on old-fashion litters, offer “muy hermoso [...] *espectáculo* [...] por su buen gusto, elegancia y riqueza” (*Las cartas* 88; my emphasis).² However, the juxtaposition of sex and religion on this occasion has become even more blatant with the recent establishment of a new custom: the placing of “mesas de petitorio” at church entrances, staffed by all classes of women canvassing worshippers for donations to various organizations. This charity event is a great marriage bazar, where a lot of flirtation passes between the female canvassers and their male admirers:

Creo inútil señalar el interés que esta costumbre tiene para todas las personas de uno y otro sexo de la clase de novios y para los pretendientes y celosos, y en primer lugar para las muchachas bonitas que se hallan en condiciones de colocación ventajosa. Para todas ellas son estos días casi tan felices como los mejores de la mundana temporada de bailes y saraos [...]. Se cruzan sonrisas y gestos de inteligencia entre las postulantes y sus amigos, y no falta en ninguna iglesia el fenómeno social que los ingleses llaman *flirtation* (?). (*Las cartas* 89)

Galdós is also highly critical of other aspects of Madrid’s Holy Week: for example, the accounts of events appearing in newspaper social columns or the grotesque plays put on in Passion Week in third-rate theatres by third-rate actors, such as the one playing “la inmensa, sobrenatural figura de Jesús” (*Las cartas* 90). Some female spectators are moved more by these absurd theatre shows than by any eloquent sermon in church. If Jesus were to come back to Earth, He would have to drive these actors out of the theatres, as well as the flirting “novios” of Maundy Thursday out of the churches (*Las cartas* 90-91).

Authorial aside in *Gloria*

In the chronological sequence of Galdosian observations on Semana Santa that we have been following, one item has been omitted hitherto, because, strictly speaking, it is not a newspaper article and yet, in what is clearly an authorial aside to the reader, the thoughts expressed correspond in great measure to those the novelist had already published in the 1860s and was to enlarge upon in 1884. Consequently, the two long paragraphs that close Chapter VI of Part II of *Gloria* represent a link in a chain of reflections, the most important of which is that, for Galdós, Easter is always about the “extraordinario enigma de la Redención” (615). Secondly, the simple grandeur of the ceremonies and processions makes them aesthetically appealing, even to the imagination of the most incredulous; at least, they used to do so in the past. However, he has to recognize that, for many modern-day Spaniards—almost four fifths in this Catholic country par excellence (“los católicos más católicos a su modo, con falaz creencia de los labios, de rutinario entendimiento y corazón vacío” [615]) —, the processions are a kind of carnival street theatre, only suitable for old women and young children, the one exception, of course, being Maundy Thursday, whose events in and around churches are really an excuse for open flirtation between the sexes, as we have just noted in the 1884 *La Prensa* study: “Sólo en Jueves Santo, cuando la afluencia de mujeres guapas convierte a las iglesias en placenteros jardines de

humanas flores, son frecuentadas aquéllas por la varonil muchedumbre de nuestro orgulloso estado social, el más perfecto de todos, según declaración de él mismo” (615).

Clearly, then, there has been a decline in the popularity of Holy Week, which is the fault, according to the present generation, of the preceding one. For Galdós the narrator, this means that the ceremonies have lost “su conmovedora sublimidad” because they have become more numerous, complex and theatrical “por el abuso de imágenes vestidas, de procesiones, pasos y traspies irreverentes, absurdos, sacrílegos, irrisorios; por la falta de seriedad y edificación que trae consigo la ingerencia de seculares beatos en las cosas del culto” (615). But apart from corresponding in thought and expression to previous and future journalistic analyses of the subject, this digression within a novel is highly important for another reason: it lays bare Galdós’s underlying ideas at a point in the narrative, when having described the preparation for Ficóbriga’s first Easter Week procession, he is now going to recount its happening. Inevitably, then, the digression must influence to some extent any interpretation, not only of these immediately contiguous portions of the text, but of the whole of Part II, and indeed of Part I, of the novel.

Pereda and *Gloria*

Furthermore, this digression is relevant at another level: that of the novel’s gestation. It has to be related to another authorial “intrusion,” albeit briefer, in the next chapter, when the narrator, on identifying various Montaña types watching Ficóbriga’s Palm Sunday procession, associates them with other literary texts: they have been “trasladados por Pereda con arte maravillosa, al museo de sus célebres libros montañeses” (621). Galdós’s passing reference to his great friend and colleague is not at all accidental, for, in many respects, Pereda can be considered the co-author of Part II of *Gloria*. Galdós’s early intuition, communicated in a letter to Pereda of December 1876, even before Part I had been published (Bravo Villasante 13), that his friend might not like this new novel, was more than corroborated by the ensuing epistolary polemic between the two men that overlapped with Galdós’s commencement of the composition of Part II, that is, in March 1878. As if to soften this anticipated outcome, Galdós had already reminded Pereda, in a letter dated November 28, 1876 that he had asked him for “datos locales” (Bravo Villasante 11), a request to which the former acceded in principle a week later: “Estoy dispuesto a llevar la piedrecita que V. me pida para edificar esa *Gloria*” (Ortega 44). “En plena polémica”, so to speak, and with timid hopes that Pereda might not be as critical of Part II (Bravo Villasante 13, 15), on March 21, 1877, Galdós finally makes his requests specific. Yet, surprisingly, they are few in number (three) and can all be resumed in the first one: to know “cómo celebran los pueblos la Semana Santa en las Villas” (Bravo Villasante 22). His query about the continuing observance of a Palm Sunday procession is more credibly acceptable than the wayward enquiry about the burning of a “muñeco” on Holy Saturday, which Pereda scornfully dismisses in his reply. Equally surprising are Galdós’s repeated expressions about the urgency of receiving this wish-list, especially when he had tarried so long—almost three months—between original general request and subsequent specific list: “Lo relativo a procesiones es para mí de sumo interés. [...] Bastante referencia a estas cosas me convendría [...]. Todos estos datos y cosas y mapas quisiera tenerlas lo más

pronto posible” (Bravo Villasante 22). In contrast, Pereda’s forwarding of the information is immediate and accompanied by a plethora of details.

Pereda is, however, more than an honorary research assistant. He becomes, in fact, an associate co-author, in a way that Galdós had probably not totally envisaged when he had wryly remarked upon submitting his wish-list: “*Lo peor para V. es que le voy a hacer cooperar en esta obra nefanda, pero pienso que por mucho que sea su coraje en contra de mis ideas, no me negará los datos que le pido*” (Bravo Villasante 21; my emphasis), for Pereda goes so far as to suggest which processions would suit the fictional Ficóbriga, giving all the details. For example, the Maundy Thursday procession should be led by a statue of St. John behind a pair of Civil Guards, with that of La Dolorosa bringing up the rear and escorted by Carabineros. There should be at least two “pasos” in the main body of the procession. He really involves himself in the mechanics of the plot in Part II when discussing which characters should carry the rods of the “palio” behind the statue of the Virgin Mary. If Juan Lantigua had not died at the end of Part I, then he would have had to be one bearer. If his brother, the Bishop, is to take part, then he would walk behind the pallium with the other clergy.

Once or twice as he is writing out the details, Pereda realizes that, in so doing, he might be supplying Galdós with ammunition that he could well use against the Catholic Church in Part II: “Conste, pues, que si esta noticia que le doy es para echarla a mala parte, la *retiro*. Pinte, pero no hiera” (Ortega 61). And yet at the beginning of this missive, he had accepted Galdós’s earlier promise (Bravo Villasante 22) that “[los pormenores] no serán para burlarse del *asunto*” (Ortega 58). In turn, Galdós is at pains to point out, when reporting back to Pereda on June 6, 1877—just days before the appearance of Part II—that he has used a considerable amount of the religious material “sin burlarme” (Bravo Villasante 23). And this is despite the fact that Galdós had been clearly stung by Pereda’s earlier jibe that he could find out some of the information for himself: “cuyos pormenores puede ver V. mismo ahí en cualquier parroquia haciendo el sacrificio de entrar en ella la próxima Semana Santa” (Ortega 60). Galdós flatly rejects

su opinión desfavorable respecto a mi irreligiosidad, que no debo dejar de protestar un poquillo.

No tanto don José, no tanto que ignore esas cosas tan cruciales.

En mi país se celebra la Semana Santa con bastante esplendor. En mi tiempo yo no perdía ripio y dondequiera que sonaba un *gori-gori* allí estaba yo. Aquí también suelo ir a las lamentaciones cuando hay buena música, y (puede que V. no lo crea) llevo mi libro y me pongo a leer los Salmos a riesgo de que me tengan por una lumbrera de la juventud católica. (Bravo Villasante 23)

This is a very important paragraph, for it reveals a Galdós who, both earlier in Las Palmas, and now in Madrid, was genuinely and sincerely interested in the liturgy of Holy Week, as he was to repeat in his 1884 *La Prensa* article and, as we have already seen, in his authorial aside in Part II of *Gloria*.

In his letter of June 18, 1877, Pereda makes no reference whatsoever to this self-defence by Galdós or to the manner in which he has incorporated (or not) into Part II the information that Pereda had generously and painstakingly supplied. The Santander writer limits himself to just a grateful acknowledgement of the passing allusion to his own novels on Montaña types. If one were to be so bold as to speculate that Galdós’s solicitation of Cantabrian material

(including agricultural details, which are crammed late in Part II [679] into a postprandial chat of Ficóbriga's priest, Don Silvestre, and Cardenal-Archbishop Lantigua on Holy Saturday) were a surreptitious stratagem to mollify the ruffled feelings of his mentor, then the attempt would seem to have been a total failure, for Pereda's rejection of Part II of *Gloria* is as totally uncompromising (in length and tone) as that of Part I. The documentation exercise, as we have seen, gave rise to some testy exchanges between the two men. Pereda may have noticed with pleasure the mention of his own name, but it could hardly be said that the Montaña types highlighted by Galdós form an inspiring group of citizens: "toda la grey díscola y ladina de aquellas verdes montañas, todos los ejemplares de vanidad infanzona, de gárrula presunción, de socarrona travesura, de solapada codicia, de graciosa sencillez, de castellana hidalguía y de ruda generosidad" (621). In short, even when Galdós dutifully employs the supplied material or pays due homage to his mentor, the resultant version in the text of *Gloria* might not be totally free of that burlesque intent that he had forsworn to Pereda before using this local data.

Gloria

Galdós may have later regretted writing a sequel to Part I of *Gloria*, but after its publication in 1877, he was very eager to do so. In a letter, dated January 5, 1877, he reported to Pereda that Part I was his most successful novel ever, and that he was already at work on Part II, thinking about its challenges: "pero en la 2ª parte va a ser ella. Plantear con pulso firme la cosa tal ¿pero cómo se resuelve a gusto de todos?" (Bravo Villasante 14). One such challenge that immediately presented itself was how to correlate the fiction with the Passion of Christ, since the whole of Part II was to take place during Holy Week.³ But at least the treatment of one component of that context—the religious processions—had already been anticipated in Part I. This preparatory work, as it were, is deftly initiated in Chapter XIV of Part I. The storm that shipwrecks Daniel Morton on Ficóbriga's shore also causes some damage in the town's church, the Abadía: in particular, to some statues. Though minor, the effects are rather comical: the wind rips the sword from the hand of St. Michael and hurls it into a confessional, whilst, more ominously for later events, a lamp comes crashing down from the ceiling and breaks the glass of the urn which contains the statue of the crucified Christ (537). More grotesque religious statuary, including a discarded remnant of a Holy Week "Monumento," is to be found in the nearby hut which serves as home for *Caifás* and his family and in which Gloria seeks shelter from the driving rain. It is in this setting and in the context of the preceding account of damage to Christ's urn that the sexton tells the family's benefactress that she will fall in love with a man whose beautiful face can only be compared to that of Christ. This comparison is, indeed, made by Gloria herself a little later, when, on returning home, she sees the rescued Morton lying in a bed in a guest room. It is significant that this is the only part of Morton's body that she instantaneously focuses on: "en aquel breve instante de observación, hizo un paralelo rápido entre la cabeza que tenía delante y la del Señor que estaba en la Abadía dentro de la urna de cristal y cubierto con blanquísimas sábanas de fina holandá" (542). Consequently, when Part II opens with the curt declaration of its time frame, the reader already has an impression, albeit not completely favourable, of some of the religious figures and decorations in the Abadía that have been associated with Holy Weeks in the past. The one

exception to this negative impression is the body of Christ in the urn, which has been firmly and seriously connected with Morton, and upon whose beautiful face particular attention has been focused.

The narrator's characterization of the Holy Week celebrations as "las festividades religiosas más interesantes *al alma y a los ojos* del cristiano" (601; my emphasis) is important for two reasons: first, it shows the same serious reverence for the profound meaning of the Passion of Christ that Galdós had shown and would continue to show in his journalistic articles. Secondly, he carefully distinguishes between the respective appeals of the ceremonies to the soul and to the eyes of the faithful, a distinction to be re-affirmed in subsequent chapters, for it lies at the heart of the current decadence of the Easter Week observances in Spain. Will those processions of Ficóbriga be only occasions for empty exhibitionism, mere spectacles for the eyes of excited spectators, or will they represent something deeper, more spiritual? And though the whole of Holy Week may provide the convenient chronological frame for the events of Part II, it is clearly the religious processions on certain days that are intended by Galdós to command most attention, if for no other reason than that of the town having been deprived of them for the last fourteen years. But this situation is now about to change, thanks to the generosity of the Lantigua family: "Sí, sabedlo; aquel año habría procesiones, regocijo de que estuvieron privados los anteriores a causa de la pobreza del clero y lastimosa decadencia del culto" (601). However, it will prove to be a one-time event, for, by the novel's end, with Gloria dead and the Lantigua family torn apart, Don Buenaventura prefers to spend his money on paving the town's dirt streets through which he painfully walks in the Maundy Thursday procession.

The Lantigua family is further involved with these processions, agreed to by Mayor Juan Amarillo and Don Buenaventura, because Gloria will finally emerge from her year-long reclusion within the family house and view the Palm Sunday procession from the balcony, although this initial plan will be scotched when she is persuaded to attend the blessing of the palms in church. Furthermore, the statue of Christ on the donkey that is to be paraded on the first day of Holy Week is a Lantigua family possession. As it is being cleaned up in the musty-smelling sacristy of the family chapel in the Abadía by three "beatas" led by the mayor's wife (the ironically nick-named Teresita *la Monja*), Galdós devotes an important section to its description: the work of some carver of the Golden Age, it looks so real and life-like, as if it wants to speak: "faltaba poco para oír su voz, a ninguna voz humana parecida" (609; my emphasis). Its majestic forehead appearing as a triangle between two strands of hair on either side surpasses anything fashioned even by Greek sculpture. The rest of the the body is of little merit, clearly the work of another—inferior—artist. Yet, even within this beautifully fashioned face, there is one feature that is even more sublimely attractive, something that the statue of the supine crucified Christ to be paraded on Maundy Thursday can not provide: wide-open eyes that express all the power and majesty of God: "Pero sobre todas las perfecciones de tan ideal rostro, *descollaba aquel mirar que era la irradiación de la inteligencia suprema y que infundía pasmo y veneración. La pupila inmensa que todo lo ve y que penetra hasta lo más íntimo de los corazones*, no podía tener representación más adecuada" (609; my emphasis).

Undoubtedly, this passage constitutes another example of Galdós's immense respect for the Easter story. But, more importantly here, Galdós is emphasizing, as he had done in

the opening lines of Part II, the role that the physical eye will play in this spectator sport that is a Holy week procession, but now through the wooden eyes of a carved statue, which, in turn, is the focus of the spectators' own eyes. Christ's eyes are, for sure, very human-like, but they transmit the very substance of the Divine Being. Physical sight is shown to be only the vehicle for a more important spiritual insight. This intense stare of the God-incarnate image that reaches down into the souls of all mortals establishes a reference point by which an inner vision, or more pertinently, its lack, in the fictional characters can be evaluated in the rest of the novel. The continuing attention given to the optical organ through the rest of the text will gain added significance. Teresita *la Monja*, in fact, typifies the attitude of the other townsfolk to this sublime work of ocular art: they can all admire the stunning life-likeness, but no spiritual introspection ensues. Teresita, with her ever-moving cat-like eyes, is extremely envious of the statue's "don supremo de ver lo invisible y de leer en los corazones" (610), simply because she would like to possess the same power in order to pry into the innermost secrets of other people.

The Palm Sunday procession

On the other hand, the statue's eyes are eyes that Gloria can not bear or dare to look at, for the obvious reasons, during the blessing of the palms, when it is positioned by the side of the main altar or later, when it leaves the church in procession. Indeed, Gloria closes her eyes during the whole service, but follows the recital of the psalms and other canticles, as Galdós did (so he had confessed to Pereda), with great devotion: "Sentía los lentos pasos, el canto grave, la humareda de incienso, el murmullo del conmovido pueblo, y *sometiendo su imaginación y su pensamiento a la idea de tan bello símbolo, contemplábalo en toda su grandeza sublime*" (615; my emphasis).

The processing of the statue through the streets occurs later in the afternoon, and is at first related "off-stage," as it were, as it leaves and then eventually returns to the church. Nevertheless, a reminder of its progress in action is provided by the decayed posy of flowers that Gloria had gathered from her garden for Christ's little donkey and which Teresita and her co-cleaners had rejected in moral indignation at the heiress's behaviour with Morton. But the Jew's memory can not be eradicated by this action or by Serafina's vain attempt to convince her niece to enter a convent, for their conversation in the family chapel is interrupted by the return of the statue, to the accompanying discordant shouts of "el judío" (Morton).

The retrospective account of the procession had importantly opened with a picture of the crowd of spectators in the street all looking at the beautiful head and eyes of the statue: "La hermosa cabeza de éste [...] *era centro de las miradas y de la atención del devoto pueblo*" (619; my emphasis). The irony of this last phrase is put into relief by the sentimental nature of their subsequent reflections, which can hardly be characterized as any inner self-examination of conscience: "El que entró en Jerusalén saludado por el *hosanna* y las aclamaciones de triunfo, no podía ser de otra manera que aquél, tan bello y afable, con su rizada barba, sus ojos, que miraban como sólo puede mirar el que, después de haber fabricado los mundos, vio que eran Buenos" (619).

This tone of levity is continued when the crowd is amused by the little donkey at Christ's side with its saddle-bags stuffed with corn and artificial flowers, not Gloria's posy. Moreover,

the Spring sun shining on the gold-bordered velvet that covers Christ's body makes him look like an Oriental monarch. When the narrator then sternly asserts that "aquella cara sin igual, aquella mano *que se alza amonestando, aquellos desnudos pies que pronto serán clavados a un leño, no son de nadie más que de ÉL*" (620; my emphasis), he is only indicating the gap that lies between his personal interpretation and the crowd's of this procession. The serious tone is maintained for only a moment, however, as the choir, especially in the fervent singing of *Caifás*, recites the appropriate verses of the liturgy.⁴ The comic note returns in greater volume with the appearance of the parish priest, Don Silvestre, all elegant and full of decorum "cual hombre que sabe su oficio," accompanied by his deacon, the appropriately named "el padre Poquito," whose dwarfish body is dragged along by his outsize robes and whose down-turned eyes and contrite appearance make him appear an angel who believes himself to be a sinner.⁵

However, the local figure who is the real target of the narrator's joking is Mayor Amarillo, who, as procession marshall, proudly thumps his stick of civil authority on the ground. Pertinently, Galdós pays special attention to the eyes of the Mayor (as he had done to his wife's), as if to contrast them with those of the Christ sitting on the donkey, for

ni un instante daba reposo a los ojos para observar todo lo que en el curso de la procesión pudiera ocurrir. Su cara no cesaba de moverse, ora para mirar a la gente, ora para ver si entorpecían los chicos el paso del religioso cortejo. [...] de sus ojos podría creerse, no que se apresuraban a observar los incidentes procesionales, sino que los preveían y los anunciaban. En la expresión de su mirada, a un tiempo mismo amenazante y protectora, se conocía que los ficobrigenses no debían contemplar la procesión sin permiso del Municipio [...]. Es preciso tener cien ojos, y aún no basta. (620-21)

In truth, this Palm Sunday procession has more to do with the Mayor parading his own self-importance than with any veneration of the religious statue of Christ. The narrator punctures this bubble of pride when, as the procession passes in front of the Casino's balcony, the town band's six members switch from their rendition of *Barba Azul* to play the *Marcha Real*, whose notes emerge from the instruments "chorreando sangre para ir a rasguñar las orejas de los fieles" (620). But to Amarillo's ears, they are like "un *Ave Caesar imperator*" addressed to him and not to Christ. The Roman analogy assumes even higher hierarchical levels when the Mayor's meticulously controlled parade turns into total chaos with the return of Daniel Morton and his servants, riding, not on donkeys, but on horseback, into the Jerusalem of Ficóbriga. The bolts of lightning hurled by the eyes of the incensed mayor, now likened to an ancient god, are powerless to restore the order of his procession as it collides with the oncoming one of the Jew. The figures on the float come crashing to the ground, except for the statue of Christ, whose face and body return to the Abadía without any mark whatsoever. Comedy in abundance, then, in this Palm Sunday procession, but the original seriousness of its purpose is maintained by the iconic figure of Christ, just as its human look-alike, Morton, has to emerge from the laughable mayhem of the street collision to face temporary imprisonment as his own Passion Week continues.

The Maundy Thursday procession

The Maundy Thursday sequel, in which Galdós incorporates a lot of the information Pereda had sent him (for example, the berobed Penitents of the “cofradías” and especially the processional order), is announced by an unpleasantly strident and unidentified noise: “No era tañido de campana, ni rumor de ruedas, ni rechinar de goznes sino un horrible choque de tablas con piedras retumbando en hueco. Parecía que andaba por el cielo una legión de seres extraños calzados con almadreñas y bailando sobre guijarros” (663). It is—appropriately—a noise made by young children rattling their “carracas.” The conversion of Morton before a crucifix that is his mirror facial image has to be interrupted so that the whole Lantigua family can go onto the balcony to watch the procession. In so doing, they become themselves objects for viewing. The use of this vantage point allows Galdós to adopt a narrow downward focus so that each “paso” and its attendants can be recorded. More importantly, though, the shock and surprise of those processing at seeing the Jew kneeling on the balcony as they look up can thus become the highlight of his account, despite the mass of descriptive detail imported from Pereda. That this is the author’s intention is conveyed by the employment of the same verbal formula as the successive “pasos” of the procession file before the frame of the narrator’s camera: “se quedaban mirando el balcón” (664). Not that there is any need to clarify that the sole object of their staring is Morton, for his kneeling is the visual confirmation of his rumoured conversion. Ironically, “los feroces judíos azotadores” and the berobed Penitents are identified amongst the gawpers. The latter, sweating under the crosses (literal and figurative) that they are bearing, “miraron por sus espantables claraboyas el balcón de Lantigua”(664). As in the Palm Sunday procession, Galdós concentrates on the expressions in the characters’ eyes in order to identify the principal preoccupation directing that gaze. What should have been the focal point of everyone’s attention—the processing of the supine statue of the crucified Christ from the Abadía—has been totally forgotten for something they are more interested in: the kneeling Morton. As the narrator sadly concludes: “ni uno solo *dejó de apartar su vista y su mente* de los lastimosos cuadros de la Pasión para fijarlas en la casa de Lantigua” (664; my emphasis). Again—significantly—Galdós mentions eyes and mind in tandem to emphasize how mental vision is only synonymous here with physical vision. By the same token, what are the Lantiguas looking at from their balcony? The procession itself or the crowd looking at them? In this ocular interplay, are the procession’s sponsors more insightful than their own spectators? In particular, can they see that their lives are following the tragic trajectory that is enacted in tableaux before them? On this important point, the narrator is notably silent, although his arresting and humorous reference to a flock of birds resting on a nearby telegraph wire “con tanto comedimiento y gravedad atentos a la comitiva, que parecían tocados de la más pura devoción” (664), suggests that external appearances count for more than spiritual insight in this procession. That that is probable seems corroborated by the reservation for the chapter’s concluding sentence of the last component of the procession: the all-seeing Juan Amarillo, who reacts negatively to all this balcony-gazing by frowning “como enojado de que un gran suceso excitara la curiosidad sin su permiso” (664).

The mayor’s subsequent thunderous barking of orders strengthens this reminder of the first procession, on Palm Sunday, for again, a sudden commotion at the head of the parade

causes an unforeseeable disruption of the whole event. Another mode of equine transport—a coach, not single horses on this occasion—causes disorder and confusion. However, there is no repeat of violence and mayhem; on the contrary, the citizenry is filled with joy to see the town’s favourite son, Bishop (now Cardenal-Archbishop) Lantigua, alighting first from the coach.⁶ Once more, the seriousness of these Holy Week processions that one would expect after a 14-year hiatus has to take second place to more mundane matters: here, the welcome arrival of the Lantigua ecclesiastic: “Poco faltó para que los pasos fueran abandonados en medio de la vía” (665). In fact, the hierarch is lucky to be alive, for his coach had toppled over at a dangerous corner en route and nearly fallen over a precipice into a river below. He had been rescued by Morton’s mother and transported to town in her coach. Ironically, the Jewess has saved the Christian Cardenal’s life. But the purpose of her trip to Ficóbriga is to save her son from converting to Christianity. With her well-preserved beauty of fifty years, she has the typical long-lasting appearance of female Biblical figures. She could be compared to La Salvadora, or the Virgin Mary, whose procession she has just brought to an end, in the same way that her son had done with the Palm Sunday procession of his look-alike, El Salvador. The town’s holy statues, with their universal timelessness, are forced to confront modern-day look-alikes of the same original Jewish faith. In many ways, Ficóbrigans are being presented by Galdós with a series of eye-tests. First, can they see the straightforward physical resemblance between the respective statues and their modern human counterparts? Secondly, can they draw mental parallels from the respective stories of all four figures involved in this mirroring? Thirdly, do they have the spiritual insight to recognize their own responsibility in the treatment given to Morton?

Finally, towering over the human representativeness of both Morton and his mother is the figure of Gloria, who seems to combine, in a complicated pattern, two gender and generational roles: on the one hand, she is like Christ in that she undergoes a Passion Week that ends with her ascent to Heaven at the dawn Mass on Easter Sunday. On the other hand, she is also a Virgin Mother figure in that, through her “accidental” sexual union with Morton, a Christ-like figure, she has given birth to another Messiah, the infant son, Jesus.⁷ Such associations are, however, beyond the ken of the 19th-century inhabitants of Ficóbriga (if not of the more privileged contemporary and future readers of the novel). Indeed, the only eye-test they would seem to pass is the elemental one of comparing the face of Morton with that of the Lantigua family’s Christ figure.

Alas’s journal writings on Semana Santa

The following two claims may seem extravagant: First, that *La Regenta* as a whole, and the episode of Ana Ozores’s bare-footed processing in particular, have their first brief origins in one specific Holy Week. Secondly, that the narratorial approaches in the description of the Good Friday procession may have been influenced by the others of Easter Week described in *Gloria*. While this second claim will be addressed in the remainder of the study, part of the first has already been accepted by most critics, according to Ángeles Ezama (Alas, *Cuentos* LX-LXI), viz. that the short story, “El diablo en Semana Santa,” published in Easter Week of 1880 in the journal, *La Unión*, was the embryo or mini-precursor of Alas’s 1885 novel. The

story is set in a cathedral at an evening celebration of Mattins probably on Maundy Thursday. Inflamed by the Devil hovering around the building, a young and handsome Magistral in the sanctuary around the High Altar is sexually aroused by the sight of the beautiful “jueza” holding a young child in her arms behind the metal screen. The spell is broken when the judge’s wife is approached by another handsome gentleman who pats the young child causing him to shake his “carraca,” thereby signifying the end of the *Tenebrae* office (Alas, *Treinta relatos* 261-73).

Curiously, Alas’s next publication, which appeared three days later, in the same Holy Week of 1880 and in another journal, *La Publicidad*, also had Holy Week as its major topic (for practically two thirds of the article) (*Obras completas*: 6: 461-64).⁸ “Cartas al lector” starts by reproducing the hyperbolic style that the newspaper *La Correspondencia* would use in its social columns when reporting the charity collections on Maundy Thursday, a feature that Galdós was to likewise criticize in his 1884 *La Prensa* study. Alas mimics this style:

El pueblo de Madrid ha demostrado una vez más su acendrado catolicismo recorriendo las estaciones con religioso recogimiento. Las más distinguidas damas aristocráticas, confundidas con todas las capas sociales, visitaron a pie los monumentos, dejando en cada iglesia el óbolo de la caridad. Los sentimientos cristianos del pueblo de Madrid se fortifican más cada día, a pesar de las predicaciones, etcétera, etcétera, etcétera. (*Obras completas* 6: 463)

Alas’s conclusion is the same as that which his Canary Islander mentor later reaches in his 1884 study, but it is more forcefully expressed: “Y diga lo que quiera *La Correspondencia*, no hay cosa más profana que la religiosidad del pueblo de Madrid en Semana Santa” (*Obras completas* 6: 463). In practice, this Maundy Thursday devotion merely amounts to putting a collection plate for donations at the foot of the Cross on the “Monumento.” Like Galdós, but with less humour, Alas yearns for Jesus’s return to Earth to drive the merchants and the ungodly from the Temple. But what galls Alas most is the conjunction of sexual and religious exhibitionism by the aristocratic ladies walking up and down the Carrera de San Jerónimo later that afternoon—all vehicular traffic being banned—pretending to meditate on “motivos de la Pasión y muerte de Nuestro Señor Jesucristo, y de paso enseñan el pie, *si a mano viene*, aquel pie que admira *La Correspondencia*, porque osa pisar el pavimento de la calle. [...] Ahora podremos ver de qué pie cojean” (*Obras completas* 6: 463). Word-play aside, the scene surely suggests a development that will become the most scandalous feature of the Good Friday procession in *La Regenta*: Ana Ozores will certainly show her feet for the whole city to see. Alas closes his 1880 article with a bitter denunciation of this erotic peripatetic religiosity, which would only scandalize the early martyrs of the Church, who gave their bodies in defence of the Christian faith, if they were to suddenly return to Earth. In thundering against the hypocritical farce of “las que se dicen gente devota del corazón de Jesús o del corazón de María” (*Obras completas* 6: 464), Alas shows his deep concern for the truths of Christianity, as Galdós had done in articles and in *Gloria*. The latter’s reference to Spain as the Catholic country par excellence is echoed in Alas’s sarcastic closing comments to “Cartas al lector”: “Y a esto llama la Estadística ¡dieciséis millones de católicos! ¡Ay! ¡Ay! y ¡cómo rien los arúspices!” (*Obras completas* 6: 464).

La Regenta

There is only one Holy Week procession in Alas's novel of 1885, and it takes place on Good Friday, not on Palm Sunday or Maundy Thursday as in *Gloria*. Joan Oleza acclaims it as "una de las escenas más brillantemente desarrolladas de la novela" (2: 434, note 22), an opinion shared by reviewers when the novel was first published (Tintoré 168; 211). It appears in Part II, which, unlike that of *Gloria*, is not devoted entirely to Holy Week observances. In fact, it is covered in only the second half of one chapter: XXVI. However, the chapter contains references to other processions which can be said to converge on Ana's Good Friday procession or radiate from it, both literally and metaphorically. Chapter XXVI, in fact, opens with a reference to a previous procession: a funeral one, that of Don Santos Barinaga, narrated in Chapter XXII. This procession, described as an "entierro"—a word of frequent use and cardinal importance in Chapter XXVI—is presided over by his old friend, Don Pompeyo Guimarán. The funeral had taken place in December of the preceding year. The torrential rain, reminiscent of the storm that had shipwrecked Morton on the shoreline of Ficóbriga, can be said to shipwreck this funeral procession, for the crowd scatters in all directions because of the rain after the corpse has been unceremoniously shoved through the fence in the civil plot of Vetusta's cemetery. This chaotic dispersal of the mourners does suggest a Holy Week procession of sorts, but one orchestrated by Nature, not by Man: "a latigazos lo despedía [al duelo] el viento con disciplinas de agua helada" (2: 337). (In *Gloria* the Palm Sunday crowd had been violently dispersed by the combative reactions of Morton and servants running into them). For the people of Vetusta, it is not the deceased who occupy their thoughts ("Se miraba el espectáculo generalmente con curiosidad burlona, con algo de desprecio" [2: 335]), but rather El Magistral, who has to watch the funeral procession of his nemesis from behind window curtains, and is blamed for his death, causing him to lose many friends during the procession.

The consequences of Barinaga's funeral are significant and interrelated for both De Pas and Guimarán in Chapter XXVI. The first sentence immediately indicates those for the latter: the drenching Pompeyo received that December evening has left him very sick, and now close to death, the city's only openly declared atheist astounds everybody with a deathbed conversion to Christianity, which he wants the Magistral to officiate. This news reaches the cleric just before another surprise letter: a message from Ana, who asks him to make a visit to her house, where she expresses her wish to show the public that she is his faithful servant. Thus, Don Fermín has scored the "impossible double," two victories in quick succession over his opponents and detractors in the town. He has bounced back very well indeed from the nadir of the Barinaga funeral. These two successes are now inextricably linked and will both lead to Holy Week processions, which, in turn, are now expressly related by De Pas to that of Barinaga's corpse mentioned in the chapter's opening line: "un entierro les [a los vetustenses] había hecho desprestigiar a su tirano, otro entierro les haría arrodillarse a sus pies," just as Ana had done in their ninety-minute interview, and as he now sees Pompeyo doing, after reconciling with the Church: "Y aquel diablo [Pompeyo], aquel malhechor se arrojaba a los pies del señor espiritual de Vetusta" (2: 416).

De Pas has to rouse himself from these spasms of delight when confronted by the facial expression and subsequent confession of the former atheist. As with the Lantigua Christ statue in *Gloria*, attention is focussed on the dying man's face: "un rostro pálido, avellanado, todo huesos y pellejo que parecía pergamino claro" (2: 415-16), and in particular on his most expressive eyes: "Los ojos de Guimarán tenían una humedad reluciente, estaban muy abiertos, miraban a los abismos de ideas en que se perdía aquel cerebro enfermo, y parecían dos ventanas a que se asomaba el asombro mudo" (2: 416; my emphasis). If the eyes of the humanized divinity of the Christ statue in *Gloria* had reflected the depths of eternal existence and knowledge, here the eyes of the almost mummified human being reflect something similar: the ecstasy of the mystical vision he has experienced and which he struggles heroically to express between coughing and spitting: "Puede usted creer... señor Magistral... que ha sido un milagro esto... sí, un milagro... He visto coros de ángeles, he pensado en el Niño Dios... metidito en su cuna... en el portal de Belén... y he sentido una ternura... así... como paternal... ¡qué sé yo...! ¡Eso es sublime, don Fermín... sublime... Dios en una cuna... y yo ciego... que negaba...!" (2: 416-17). Eyes, here of a human mummy, are associated once more with a deeply felt religious experience. Pompeyo has discovered the true meaning of Christianity in all its sublimity, (in Alas's mind, and in Galdós's too, as we shall see later) whereas De Pas, who on arriving at the house had seemed to be "un santo bajado del cielo" with "una alegría de arcángel satisfecho [...] en su rostro hermoso" (2: 415), can only talk long and pompously of public rituals to the born-again Christian, who like the born-again confessor's pupil that is Ana, now declares to his former foe that "yo soy esclavo de su voluntad" (2: 417).

As in *Gloria*, there is a procession the next afternoon, Palm Sunday, attended by the whole population of Vetusta ("No se respiraba por las calles del pueblo más que religión" [2: 417]), although no description is given. It has nothing to do with the traditional celebrations of Holy Week; the procession consists only of the Viaticum being carried by El Magistral through the streets from the Cathedral to the ex-atheist's house. Pompeyo's eventual death on Holy Wednesday is the cause for another massive procession, again unrelated to those of Holy Week, but bearing all the hallmarks of one, as the principal dignitaries, duly listed, lead the city's mourning: "una solemnidad como pocas" (2: 421). For the third time in the series of processions alluded to in Chapter XXVI, Fermín is the subject of every conversation, and his apotheosis is reminiscent of Christ's ride into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, as re-enacted in *Gloria*, with the crowd pointing to him and acclaiming him: "En efecto, el pueblo se lo enseñaba con el dedo: 'Aqué! es, aqué! es' [...] señalando al Apóstol, al Magistral" (2: 421-22; my emphasis). It almost seems as if Vetusta is celebrating the *Semana Santa* of Fermín de Pas, not of Jesus Christ.

The religious events of Maundy Thursday consist of visits on foot to see the "Monumentos" and the canvassing of donations at the "mesas de petitorio" located close to church entrances. These activities, as we have seen, were denounced by Galdós and Alas in their journalism as hypocritical farces where sexual flirtation replaced any serious religious thoughts. In Vetusta, the aristocratic circle of ladies, led by the Marquesa de Vegallana, are presented on their return from these Maundy Thursday "observances" with the bombshell announcement by Doña Petronila of Ana's forthcoming bare-footed participation in the Good Friday parade.⁹

This procession (the fourth in our series) will be described almost constantly in Chapter XXVI by the narrator as “el entierro de Cristo,” and occasionally as a “fúnebre cortejo” (2: 427). El Magistral also uses the phrase to relate it to Pompeyo’s funeral, although, significantly, not to that of Barinaga: “¡Dos días de triunfo! ¡El miércoles el entierro del ateo convertido, el viernes el entierro de Cristo, y en ambos él, don Fermín triunfante, lleno de gloria” (2: 426). Ironically, however, a major factor behind Ana’s decision to walk in this procession, taken at the end of the preceding chapter (XXV) during a performance of Rossini’s *Stabat Mater* at a Passion Week Novena de los Dolores, had been pity for her calumniated confessor, whom she had compared to the crucified Christ:

sí... ella... ella, Ana a los pies del Magistral, como María a los pies de la Cruz. El Magistral estaba crucificado también por la calumnia, por la necedad, por la envidia y el desprecio... y el pueblo asesino le volvía las espaldas y le dejaba allí solo... y ella... ella... ¡estaba haciendo lo mismo! ¡Oh, no, al Calvario, al Calvario!, al pie de la cruz del que no era su hijo, sino su padre, su hermano, el hermano y el padre del espíritu. [...] Donde quiera que hay una cruz con un muerto, se puede llorar al pie, sin pensar en lo que era el que está allí colgado; mejor se podrá llorar al pie de la cruz de un mártir. (2: 406)

But, of course, by the time the procession is to start on Good Friday, Ana has lost much of this devotional pity for her Master, now recollected with great regret in a much abbreviated form. De Pas, who, for a week in Ana’s mind, was a mirror image of Christ, is now walking behind an artistic copy of the original Christ that is being buried. At a metaphorical level, Fermín is indeed walking at his own funeral, for, though he thinks that the procession represents the pinnacle of his influence over Ana (“El era el amo de todo aquello” [2: 433]), in reality, it marks the beginning of the end. Their relationship will never be the same again. So the Good Friday procession is a pivotal event in the plot, as Oleza observes (2: 434-35, note 22). More recently, Elizabeth Amman has maintained that it is “the dramatic center of the work” (13). Significantly, it is the only procession of the three recorded in *Semana Santa* that El Magistral does not preside over.

The allusions to the spectators’ act of physical viewing, a major aspect of any account of Holy Week processions, multiply significantly in this Good Friday version because of an unusual feature: the exposing of Ana’s bare feet as she walks through the streets. In fact, the feet “apenas se podían entrever de vez en cuando” (2: 428) beneath her tunic, which she frantically uses to cover them. Even so, the procession becomes a peep show, a voyeur’s feast of sexual perversion (Rutherford 24; Sinclair 212). The jostling of the huge crowds in the streets and on the balconies has one purpose only: to view Ana’s feet: “se la devoraban con los ojos” (2: 428). In Obdulia’s lapidary phrase, “toda Vetusta [...] tiene ahora entre ceja y ceja esos pies descalzos” (2:438). Ana recognizes that she is “*dándose en espectáculo*” in a “*cuadro vivo*” (2: 427) for all to see, so it is not surprising that, in her overpowering fear of the crowd’s eyes, she keeps her own firmly fixed on the ground.

Alas selects two central viewing positions (not one, as Galdós had done in *Gloria*) for his procession: the Casino for the men, and the Real Audiencia, on the opposite side of the street, for the women. When the procession passes underneath their balconies, Alas fashions,

stylistically and typographically, one of the most significantly staccato-paced passages in the whole novel:

Cesaron los comentarios en los balcones.
 Todas las almas, más o menos ruines, se asomaron a los ojos.
 Ni un solo vetustense allí presente pensaba en Dios en tal instante.
 El pobre don Pompeyo, el ateo, ya había muerto. (2: 430)

The sudden and prominent mention of Pompeyo not only further relates this Good Friday procession to the two previous ones in which the former atheist had participated as president and then corpse, but, more importantly, emphasizes the total absence of true Christianity in Vetusta on the most solemn day in the Church's calendar. The reference in the second line to the spectators' eyes being the windows to their base souls inevitably establishes a contrast with the eyes of Don Pompeyo on his death bed, when they were wide-opened and filled with amazement at his discovery of the truly divine identity of Christ.

Pompeyo's shrivelled, parchment-like face and prostrate appearance on his deathbed can be likened to those of the religious effigies being paraded on Good Friday: "Cristo tendido en su lecho, bajo cristales, su Madre de negro, atravesada por siete espadas, que venía detrás" (2: 428). But the crowd of the faithful have no eyes for them, only for Ana. It is only Alas the narrator, like Galdós the narrator in *Gloria's* Palm Sunday procession, who can truly appreciate the sublimity of the expressions in the statues. They certainly merit from Alas more attention than the town dignitaries walking beside them, who are mainly listed only by their office. Christ and His Mother appear more life-like than the crowd of voyeurs: "El Cristo tendido en un lecho de batista, sudaba gotas de barniz. Parecía haber muerto de consunción" (2: 432). As with the Lantigua Christ statue, the art work of this supine Christ is not first-rate, but the statue is awe-inspiring to Alas, whose profound religious feeling pierces through his description of the procession: "A pesar de la miseria del arte, la estatua supina, por la grandeza del símbolo infundía respeto religioso... Representaba a través de tantos siglos un duelo sublime" (2: 432). The statue of La Madre is of similarly poor artistic quality: it is "alta, escuálida, de negro, pálida como el hijo, con cara de muerta como él." None the less, in its "mirada de idiota" firmly fixed on the cobble stones, the inexperienced artist who had created it has unwittingly given its face "la expresión muda del dolor espantado, del dolor que rebosa del sufrimiento" (2: 432). Despite the seven swords piercing Her breast, Her only feelings of pain are for "la muerte que llevaba delante." She can spare no glance for anyone in the crowd: "Desde su altura dominaba la muchedumbre, pero no la veía. La Madre de Jesús no miraba a los vetustenses" (2: 433). The eyes of the supine body of the crucified Christ can see nothing, of course, because they are closed.

It could be argued that looking at statues and people in the early dusk of the narrow streets of the town is not the best optical experience, but Alas only renders it more challenging with his choice of metaphors to capture the atmosphere of this street scene. The candles with their yellow light that are carried in the procession are like a broken rosary; their reflections in the windows of shops and balconies seem the backdrop of a witches' coven. The silence of the crowd watching and the steps of those processing increase the "apariencia de ensueño"

(2: 432). The seminarists walking ahead of the statues are like automatons, “máquinas de hacer religión.” Indeed, they are compared to inanimate objects, with particular attention paid to their eyes: “No parecían seres vivos [...] pálidos unos, con cercos morados en los ojos. [...] *casi todos cejijuntos, preocupados con la idea fija del aburrimiento*” (2: 432; my emphasis). (The crowds on the sidewalks are more fortunate, being able to ogle at the sight of Ana’s bare feet “entre ceja y ceja”). The future priests, apostles of Christ, “[i]ban a enterrar a Cristo, como a cualquier cristiano, sin pensar en Él a cumplir con el oficio.” Alas’s criticism of the total absence of true religion even amongst the clergy of the future could not be more damning. Their eyes say it all: they reveal the inner emptiness of their souls.¹⁰

The procession is, of course, a re-enactment of the burial of Christ, as Alas has just elaborated in his description of the seminarists, but, as this is also the name of the statue being paraded, associations with the Saviour’s other titles are invited, particularly in the case of Don Álvaro, often called, fittingly in this chapter, by his surname “Mesía.”¹¹ His sole companion in the secretarial room of the Casino is Ana’s husband, who hides behind his friend. Don Víctor is a voyeur too: “quería ver, sin ser visto” (2: 430). For him, the procession in which his wife has scandalously agreed to act represents “lo que él llamaba la *subida al Calvario de su dignidad*” or “el entierro de su mujer” (2: 437).¹² By the novel’s conclusion, however, his—not his wife’s—real funeral procession will have taken place (but not described) after the fateful duel with Mesía. The collateral damage resulting from the latter event leads to the end or metaphorical “entierro” of Alvaro’s affair with Ana, just as the Good Friday procession that all are here watching marks the end or metaphorical “entierro” of El Magistral’s relationship with la Regenta.¹³

This Casino balcony is also the scene for two important eye encounters when the procession passes below.¹⁴ The first is that which occurs when Álvaro looks at La Madre, almost level with his feet. Instead of kneeling, he steps back frighetend by the sight “de aquella imagen del dolor infinito,” because it clashes with his current libidinous thoughts about Ana, who, walking beside the statue, seems an unseeing statue too: “También Ana parecía de madera pintada; su palidez era como un barniz. Sus ojos no veían” (2:433). She is the only other person to look at the Virgin’s eyes when seeking—unsuccessfully—consolation. Divine chastisement—in the form of indifference—is meted out by the statue’s eyes before the sin is committed by the two soon-to-be adulterers, as it were. When Don Víctor plucks up courage in the closing section of the chapter to lean forward and look at his statue-like wife walking by (2: 437), he steps back as Mesía had earlier done, and feels shivers, as Ana had done when her stare had been unreciprocated by La Madre (2: 433)

The second important eye encounter of the chapter occurs moments later when both De Pas and Mesía are fantasizing about the possibility of a future sexual relationship with la Regenta. The significance of Álvaro’s recoiling—for the second time—before the piercing glance of the cleric is fully revealed by the narrator:

Al pasar delante del Casino, frente al balcón de Mesía, Ana miraba al suelo, no vio a nadie. Pero don Fermín levantó los ojos y sintió el topetazo de su mirada con la de don Álvaro; el cual reculó otra vez, como al pasar la Virgen, y de pálido pasó a lívido. La mirada del Magistral fue altanera, provocativa, sarcástica en su humildad y dulzura aparentes: quería decir *Vae Victis!* La de Mesía no reconocía la victoria; reconocía una ventaja pasajera... fue discreta, suavemente irónica, no quería decir: “Venciste,

Galileo” sino “hasta el fin nadie es dichoso.” De Pas comprendió, con ira, que el del balcón no se daba por vencido. (2: 434)

This eye conversation has been a successful exercise in communication: each rival knows exactly what the other thinks is the current state of play between them regarding the conquest of Ana’s body.

Reminiscent of what he had done at the start of Barinaga’s funeral procession in Chapter XXII, when groups of working-class women had voiced opposing views over the absence of clergy in the procession (2: 335), Alas, at the end of Ana’s “funeral” procession, suddenly takes a random poll of public opinion of her performance, as it were, through which to channel, perhaps, his own verdict: “El populacho religioso admiraba sin peros ni distingos la humildad de aquella señora. ‘Aquello era imitar a Cristo de verdad. ¡Emparejarse, como un cualquiera, con el señor Vinagre el nazareno; y recorrer descalza todo el pueblo..! ¡Bah! ¡era una santa!’” (2: 436).

Conclusion

The incorporation of Semana Santa processions in both *Gloria* and *La Regenta* permits the construction of pivotal moments in the development of the plots and of the relationships between the main characters. More importantly, the processions in both novels expose the fundamental lack of a truly religious spirit in most of the fictional characters, who are unaffected even by the solemn nature of the Holy Week festivities in which they participate. On the contrary, the latter only serve to critically highlight this spiritual failing. Essentially, Galdós and Alas reach the same conclusion on this point, which is consonant with what they had written publicly in previous journalistic articles on the subject of Easter Week. To underscore this religious hypocrisy and the abandonment of the true meaning of the Christian religion for selfish materialism or the gratification of sexual urges, both writers choose to emphasize the role of physical vision during these processions, which, per force, are pre-eminently great occasions for the sport of spectating. In both novels, the characters, principal as well as secondary, show themselves to be great observers of external physical reality, a faculty that is not supported by an equal development of an inner or spiritual vision, for the most part, except in the notable case of Don Pompeyo, who, in a singular moment in *La Regenta*—on his deathbed—comes to possess such a vision. To this extent, Brian Dendle was undoubtedly right to criticize “the empty theatricality of Holy Week processions” in *Gloria* (“Perspectives” 26).

Yet, both novelists go beyond this negative base point. Both use the principal objects paraded in these processions—the respective statues of Christ and his Mother, the Virgin Mary—to reveal by contrast the lack of true religious feeling amongst the participants and onlookers of the processions in contemporary Spain. It is almost as if the artistically mediocre inanimate objects possess more humanity than real, live people. Even more importantly, in order to bring out this failure of Spanish Catholics, both novelists focus attention on the eyes of the statues, which transmit a deep inner vision of meaning to those who should have taken time to look at them during this most solemn of weeks for spiritual meditation by Christians.

If the fictional characters are incapable of such a penetrating vision, the narrators/authors

are certainly not: they are transfixed by the sublime faces and eyes of the statues, and they say so, unambiguously, in language laden with sincerity and conviction. Consequently, Dendle was again correct, but only in part, when he observed that “Alas is not hostile to religious aspirations in *La Regenta*; he is concerned only with exposing the simulacrum of religion which he found in nineteenth-century Spain” (*The Spanish Novel* 42-43). For, behind the negative criticism of empty external religious observances in both novels, there vibrates, both implicitly and explicitly, a much more solidly positive sense of the true Christian religion.

In Galdós’s case, this assertion may seem to fly in the face of the apparently categorical statement that he made in one of his letters to Pereda during that Spring of 1877: “En mí está tan arraigada la duda de ciertas cosas que nade me la puede arrancar. Carezco de fe, carezco de ella en absoluto. He procurado poseerme de ella y no lo he podido conseguir” (Bravo Villasante 23).¹⁶ This statement, made two decades before the development of Gloria’s “ecumenical Christian evangelism” in *Misericordia*, for example, leads Valis (121) to conclude—questionably—that “Galdós plainly is not a Catholic novelist in any accepted sense of the word.” And whilst she may be partially correct in saying that “It is not at all certain what Galdós believed in” (124), I would respectfully suggest that in other 1877 letters to Pereda he does advance a very positive message of the value of a truly Christian spiritual faith, as he perceived it then, albeit without going into specific details. For example, in his letter of February 11, 1877, he asserts emphatically: “Precisamente lo que quería combatir es la *indiferencia religiosa* (*peste principal de España, donde nadie cree en nada*)” (Bravo Villasante 15; my emphasis). A month later, he claims, with equal vehemence, that *Gloria* is not an anti-Catholic or anti-Semitic novel: “Precisamenteme me quejo allí [...] *de lo irreligiosos que son los españoles*” (Bravo Villasante 18; my emphasis). Then, more explicitly, he expounds his belief that with religious freedom “ganaría muchísimo la moral pública, y las costumbres privadas, seríamos más religiosos, más creyentes, *veríamos a Dios con más claridad*” (Bravo Villasante 19; my emphasis). Here, as it were, is the crystallization of what Galdós considered to be the highest sort of vision of which the human spirit could be capable and which always reverberated, more or less, behind his many references to eyes and vision in *Gloria*. In the last analysis, it is the reader, and especially the eye of the reader, which has to aim for this superior vision, accompanied by an inner emotion too, when (s)he reads the literary text: “pero ninguna religión positiva, ni aun el catolicismo, satisface el pensamiento ni *el corazón* del hombre en nuestros días. [...] Esto es a mi juicio *lo que puede hallar en mi desdichado libro el ojo del observador* [my emphasis]” (Bravo Villasante 25). “Seeing and feeling properly is believing properly,” Galdós seems to be saying.

These epistolary comments of Galdós’s are also echoed in other texts by Alas. In *Solos de Clarín* of 1881, he admitted “lo poco y mal que practicamos todos la religión” in Spain (*La Regenta* 2: 430, note 17). The “indiferencia religiosa” which Galdós had seen as the cardinal sin of contemporary Spaniards is also committed within the text of *La Regenta* (along, of course, with other serious religious omissions or sins), not only in the Holy Week of Chapter XXVI, but also during another Semana Santa celebrated years earlier. Bishop Fortunato’s dramatically vivid sermon describing the Crucifixion one Maundy Thursday or Good Friday is received with boredom by the congregation: the general comment is “Aquello era sacar el Cristo” (1: 536), a phrase of familiar speech that, ironically, would sum up exactly what the

Bishop had just achieved and what the Good Friday procession of Chapter XXVI will realize in practice: “El entierro de Cristo” will be carried from the same church of San Isidro in which the Bishop gave this sermon. His eloquence had not always gone so unappreciated. Quite the contrary: at the beginning of his term of office, “[h]ablaba de repente, llamas de amor místico subían de su corazón a su cerebro, y el púlpito se convertía en un pebetero de poesía religiosa cuyos perfumes inundaban el templo, *penetraban en las almas*” (1: 528; my emphasis). But now, in what is arguably one of the most genuinely moving religious passages in all of Spanish 19th century literature, Bishop Fortunato’s deeply felt religious passion provokes no response, merely indifference, except from the narrator/author:

[...] fue en vano que en cierto sermón de Semana Santa Fortunato estuviera sublime al describir la crucifixión de Cristo [...] “¡Y era un Dios! ¡el Dios único, el Dios de ellos, el nuestro, el de todos! ¡Era Dios...!” gritaba Fortunato horrorizado, con las manos crispadas, [...] temblando ante una vision, como si [...] la cruz y Cristo estuvieran allí suspendidas en la sombra sobre el auditorio, en medio de la nave. *La inmensa tristeza, el horror infinito de la ingratitud del hombre matando a Dios, absurdo de maldad, los sintió Fortunato en aquel momento, con desconsuelo inefable, como si un universo de dolor pesara sobre su corazón. Y su ademán, su voz, su palabra supieron decir lo indecible, aquella pena.* El mismo, aunque de lejos, y como si se tratara de otro, comprendió que estaba siendo sublime; pero esta idea pasó como un relámpago, se olvidó de sí, y no quedó en la Iglesia nadie que comprendiera y sintiera la elocuencia del apóstol, *a no ser algún niño de imaginación fuerte y fresca que por vez primera oía la descripción de la escena del Calvario.* (1: 535; my emphasis)

To a great extent, Bishop Fortunato Camoirán has captured in words, tone and gestures the same sublime message that the unknown artists of past centuries had carved in wood and paint in the face and eyes of the Lantigua Christ and of the Christ and Mother of Vetusta on parade in Easter Week. There can be no doubt that it is Alas the individual human being and not Alas *qua* narrator or novelist who is speaking behind these words, for he was to reproduce them and others *in toto* in his obituary of a former Bishop of Oviedo, Benito Sanz y Forés, in *El Imparcial* of November 7, 1895 (Tintoré 347-55). This hierarch had been the real life source for Bishop Camoirán, but Bishop Sanz y Forés had greater significance for Alas: he had been “sin saberlo él probablemente, uno de los maestros de mi alma” (Tintoré 347). Alas is effusive in his gratitude for the effect that the Bishop had had on his life and mind: “Siempre agradecí al noble cristiano la *casualidad* de que él fuera obispo en mi tierra al llegar yo a la edad en que empiezan las dudas, la reflexión propia” (Tintoré 347). The bishop “tantas veces despertó en mi alma la emoción religiosa, sobre todo la de caridad, de delicia inefable” (Tintoré 348), the very same religious emotion “de corazón” that Galdós had sadly concluded neither Catholicism, as practiced then in Spain, nor any “religión positiva” could provide. Alas’s concluding accolade for the deceased bishop is most apt: “Yo no he oído hablar a nadie en el templo como a aquel prelado” (Tintoré 352).

Yvan Lissorgues has highlighted very well the Bishop’s importance for Alas’s spiritual development:

Dans le cas de Sanz y Forés, il y a, pour Clarín, quelque chose de plus profond: une sorte de reconnaissance envers un homme qui ayant su trouver une unité entre sa vie et sa foi, a été un exemple, sinon à imiter, du moins réconfortant. En outre, la personnalité religieuse de cet évêque montre que le catholicisme n'est pas nécessairement un obstacle à une véritable religiosité. C'est là une idée importante que d'autres exemples viendront étayer. (309-10)

Alas's obituary piece of 1895 occurs, then, at a point in his life, when, according to Lissorgues, his religious thinking "débouche sur sa parfaite cohérence à partir des années 1889-90" (182). By the 1890s Alas, as is well known, had fully embraced the universal movement in favour of a spiritual reform of Christianity. However, by the same token, because the 1895 obituary is an almost verbatim reproduction of the 1885 passages from *La Regenta*, one could claim that this spiritual progression of Alas's was under way even earlier than 1889 or 1887, a date Lissorgues posits later in his study: "il faut retrouver le chemin de la religion du coeur. Cette idée apparaît de manière explicite au moins à partir de 1887" (363). As Valis has wisely remarked, it is so easy and simplistic to see in the author of 1885 "the iconoclastic image of a ferociously anticlerical Clarín" (155). In her felicitous phrases, Clarín's religion was always "the desire for religion. He could not live without it, but did not know how to live with it" (194). His "was a soul-in-progress" (161).

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In short, then, there are many fruitful parallels to be drawn between the respective treatments of Holy Week processions in *Gloria* and *La Regenta* and between the remarks of both Galdós and Alas on the true solemnity and transcendence of Holy Week in these two texts and in preceding journalistic pieces. Can we talk of any direct influence of the novel of 1877 on that of 1885? There is no doubt that Alas was profoundly impressed by the character of *Gloria* herself. In his review of Part II of the novel, he writes, in words that are poignant, but also almost emotionally embarrassing, of an inner affinity between himself and the fictional heroine:

No se extrañen los lectores si hablo de *Gloria* como si la hubiera visto ... sí, merced al genio de Pérez Galdós, la he visto llorar, es más, la he sentido llorar esas lágrimas que corren por dentro [...]. [L]a miro como a una hermana querida [...], hermana a lo menos de mis ilusiones, salgo a su defensa con todo el ardor de que soy capaz, para sincerarla de ciertos cargos. (*Galdós, novelista* 51)

Jesús Rubio comments further on this relationship: "La fidelidad de Clarín hacia *Gloria* continuó años después al punto de considerarla dechado de lo femenino. [...] De *Gloria* a Clarín le interesó resaltar que era una muestra del realismo buscado aplicado al análisis de cuestiones importantes de la vida católica: el problema de la vida religiosa y sus relaciones con la conciencia moral" (96).

Rubio also confidently claimed that "el personaje galdosiano central pudo estar en la base de Ana Ozores de *La Regenta*, las dos víctimas de su buena voluntad e inocencia" (96).

However, in their respective reviews of the other's novel (Alas on Part II of *Gloria* in *El Solfeo* of June 1877, Galdós's prologue to the 1901 edition of *La Regenta*), there are no specific references to the Holy Week ceremonies. The nearest that either of them comes to any such reference is when Galdós, in a letter to Alas of September 20, 1885, writes: "De lo que he leído en el segundo tomo, la muerte del ateo me parece la más feliz, inspirada y profunda idea que un novelista podría dar y desempeñar" (Tintoré 317-18). But this or any similar comment is not to be found in the 1901 prologue.

That document had opened with a rather cryptic confession from Galdós, to the effect that for him "visitar talleres ajenos [...] es recrearse en las obras ajenas sabiendo cómo se hacen o cómo se intenta su ejecución" (*Ensayos* 245). Could this statement be a verbal "guiño" (an appropriate designation, given the importance of eyes and physical/inner vision in the two novels) to his old friend and colleague, as well as to the readers of the second edition of *La Regenta*, to wit, that some of Alas's achievements, like the Good Friday procession, could be traceable to his own successes in similar scenes in *Gloria*? Perhaps. Perhaps not. All would depend on whether the reader's mind had "caught sight" of the verbal "guiño." But, in view of their fundamental dialogue in the creation of *La Regenta* and *Fortunata y Jacinta*,¹⁸ it would be surprising if this were not the case. Indeed, in a letter written to Clarín on October 26, 1885 conveying his observations on Part II of *La Regenta*, Galdós declared openly: "En esto es V. un iniciador. Le soy a V. franco; pienso robarle a V., en la parte pequeña que pueda, este método suyo; es decir, pienso imitarle, o intentar hacerlo, en tan preciosa facultad. Claro que no lo conseguiré sino en parte; pero no importa. Yo me asimilo todo lo que puedo, y así vamos viviendo" (Smith and Rubio 150). Galdós's frankness may be taken at face value, or not, or only in part. The tone of friendly and professional banter aside, there could well be more than a grain of truth in what he proposes to and will do (in *Fortunata y Jacinta*), and what Alas had already done in *La Regenta* vis-à-vis *Gloria*.

Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario

NOTES

¹ This article is based on a much-abridged version of a preliminary draft delivered on April 12, 2014 at the session organized by the Asociación Internacional de Galdosistas in memory of Brian Dendle during the Kentucky Foreign Language Conference at the University of Kentucky, Lexington.

² The “Monumento” is a “túmulo, altar o aparato que el Jueves Santo se forma en las iglesias, colocando en él, en una arquita a manera de sepulcro, la segunda hostia que se consagra en la misa de aquel día, para reservarla hasta los oficios del Viernes Santo, en que se consume” (Real Academia Española 894).

³ See William H. Shoemaker (109), Benito Varela Jácome (254-55), and Charles A. Zamora (465), for some of these parallels.

⁴ The verses are the well-known “*Turba multa clamabat Domino, Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini. Hosanna in excelsis.*” Interestingly, Galdós uses the Latin version and not the Castilian provided by Pereda (Ortega 62): “Bendito sea el que viene/En el nombre del Señor.” Furthermore, the last line of the Latin anticipates, to some extent, the wording of the Mass on Easter Sunday (“*Gloria in excelsis Deo*” [697]) at the moment when Gloria dies.

⁵ Eamonn Rodgers correctly believes that in the Palm Sunday re-enactment of Christ’s entry into Jerusalem “Galdós seems to be suggesting that these latterday Pharisees [...] are capable of betraying in practice those Christian ideals in which they claim to believe” (“Religious Conflict” 48), but he fails to take fully into account the comic tones in which this procession is related from its very beginning, not to mention its absurd ending.

⁶ Again, Galdós pointedly chooses not to follow Pereda’s suggestion in his addendum of notes: instead of having the (arch)bishop bringing up the rear of the Maundy Thursday procession behind the “palio,” the cleric brings it surprisingly to an abrupt end from the opposite direction.

⁷ When she had sought shelter in the hut of Caifás during the storm in Part I, she had been compared to the Mother of Christ with her adoring servant—the sexton—at her feet (539).

⁸ I am indebted to Professors Jean-François Botrel and Yvan Lissorgues for bringing this article to my attention.

⁹ Alas uses two humorous nicknames for the go-between of Fermín and Ana in this scene: “el Gran Constantino” and “el obispo-madre” (2: 422). The latter is particularly interesting in that in *Gloria* the Maundy Thursday ceremony was also upstaged by the surprise arrival in town of “Obispo/Arzobispo” Lantigua and his “Saviour,” “La Madre” of Morton. Furthermore, later in Chapter XXVI Don Víctor Quintanar says that his wife advised him of her intentions when “me viene con la embajada de la procesión” (2: 425). In *Gloria* the stratagem employed by Esther to prevent her son’s conversion had been the procurement from “la Embajada inglesa” (682) in Madrid of a warrant for his arrest for alleged family fraud in England.

¹⁰ Amman, preferring to see in these religious icons that are paraded a reflection of the “cursilería” of the whole episode (22), criticizes Ana for her tragic inability to “camp up” her performance during the procession (23, 27). Noël Valis totally disagrees with this interpretation, maintaining, as I do, that the Good Friday procession is “powerful precisely because it is religious in nature” (156).

¹¹ “Mesía” is by far the preferred form (11 times), with “Don Álvaro” appearing twice and “Álvaro Mesía” four times.

¹² As in *Gloria*, a band—military, not municipal—supplies a comic accompaniment to the religious procession through the streets, the only noise to break the overpowering silence of the gawping crowd. At first, though, the drums thump out a funeral dirge in what the narrator characterizes as a boring attempt to “resucitar un dolor muerto hace diecinueve siglos” (2: 432). For Víctor, the dirge is for his wife being marched off to the gallows. By the end of the chapter, however, when the band is moving on to other streets, the funeral march is now fragmented into onomatopoeic letters in the text framing the (ultimately self-damaging) “palabras

grandilocuentes de Quintanar” (2: 437) about his wish that Ana had fallen into the arms of a lover rather than into those of religious fanaticism. Yet the sound of the band’s “¡Chin, chin, chin! ¡bom, bom, bom!” becomes such an unbearable reminder of his dishonour that he asks Mesía to close the balcony window, thereby ending the chapter on this Good Friday procession in which his wife, not Christ or His Mother, has been the star show.

¹³ *Gloria*, it could be said, starts and ends with very real, not metaphorical, “entierros.” In Chapter V of Part I, it is reported that the mother of the heroine had died when Gloria was twelve, leaving her to look after her younger brothers, until they both suddenly died. Gloria “les había cerrado los ojos, les había vestido y les había puesto flores en las sienes y en las manos, y, al fin, había cerrado la caja, cuando *Caifás* se los llevó al camposanto de Ficóbriga” (525), a place she never passes thereafter without shedding tears. In the final chapter of the novel, it is Gloria’s own “entierro” that is described. Most of the crowd that attends it do so “*por verla*” (697), although tears are shed by many. The saddest figure of all is *Caifás*, now the town’s gravedigger: “parecía un muerto que salía del hoyo para enterrar un vivo” (697).

¹⁴ Carolyn Richmond notes this “juego de niveles,” but emphasizes its general application to the whole procession: “las miradas ascienden y descienden diagonalmente entre la calle y los balcones,” thus creating “una fuerte sensación teatral—hasta operática—en que los dos protagonistas de la novela se convierten en actores vistos por los ojos de un numeroso público” (4).

¹⁵ Alas’s recourse to phrases prominently associated with famous episodes of Roman history, both before and after Christ (see *La Regenta* 2: 434, notes 20, 21), in order to encapsulate the respective reluctance of either man to accept defeat by the other in this ocular ping-pong, reinforces the earlier charge made by Don Víctor against El Magistral as the confessor walks beside his prize parishioner: “La lleva ahí como un triunfador romano a una esclava... detrás del carro de su gloria” (2: 431). The narrator clarifies that the scene the ex-Regente really has in mind when making this analogy is one from Donizetti’s opera, *Poliuto*, whose story, again fittingly, takes place during the Roman Empire. Nor can Quintanar’s allusion to a Roman hero’s procession fail to recall that which Mayor Amarillo had imagined he was conducting on Palm Sunday in *Gloria*. Neither novel discussed in this study includes in their Semana Santa processions the figures of Roman soldiers.

¹⁶ Rodgers explains that what Galdós meant here by the word “fe” was “el asentimiento a las formulaciones dogmáticas” (“Liberalismo” 128), which was the normal acceptance of the word in the religious oratory of the times.

¹⁷ This is the kind of sermon that Galdós, in his 1884 *La Prensa* survey, had suggested that the audiences of the third-rate Passion Week plays should listen to, as an alternative Easter observance. However, his own example of such a sermon in *Gloria*—the “Sermón de la Soledad”—delivered by Don Silvestre on Good Friday afternoon—is the exact opposite: it is as much a tear-jerker as the lambasted Passion plays. It is a theatrical show that relies on dramatic gestures and diction to provoke a highly emotional response from the congregation. This is another example of how Galdós “misuses”, as it were,—deliberately, perhaps—the local Cantabrian information that Pereda had supplied, for there is no doubt that Don Silvestre’s sermon is far from being an expression of true Christian fervour in the style of Alas’s Bishop Fortunato’s. It merely produces a comic effect on the reader. In the notes he sent to Galdós, Pereda was proud to recommend “una especialidad” for a Good Friday sermon in Ficóbriga. It was something that he himself had heard a number of times in the local village of Suances: a so-called “sermón del descendimiento,” where two priests re-enact the removal of Christ from the Cross by Joseph and Nicodemus, and this dramatic action is accompanied by an equally dramatic narration of the event by the celebrant standing above them in the pulpit (Ortega 61).

¹⁸ See Gilman, especially chapter VI, “A Colloquium of Novelists.”

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