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GABRIEL PAQUETTE

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ROMANTIC LIBERALISM IN SPAIN AND PORTUGAL, c. 1825–1850*

GABRIEL PAQUETTE

The Johns Hopkins University

ABSTRACT. *This article examines Spanish and Portuguese liberal political thought in the period after the independence of Latin America (c. 1825–50). It argues that while Iberian liberalism undoubtedly reflected broader European and transatlantic debates and intellectual trends, it was distinguished by its robust engagement with literary romanticism. The article proceeds to describe and make a case for ‘romantic liberalism’ through the examination of texts by six politically engaged writers: Spanish statesman, poet and dramatist Francisco Martínez de la Rosa (1787–1862); Portuguese statesman, poet, novelist, and dramatist João Baptista da Silva Leitão de Almeida Garrett (1799–1854); Spanish poet and statesman Ángel de Saavedra (1791–1865), Duque de Rivas; Spanish parliamentarian and literary critic Antonio Alcalá Galiano; Spanish poet, journalist, and parliamentarian José de Espronceda (1808–42); and Portuguese historian, novelist, and journalist Alexandre Herculano (1810–77).*

Intellectual historians who study liberalism rarely turn to texts from countries such as Spain and Portugal. The ambiguous, indeed fraught, relationship with liberal institutions, political and economic, from the late eighteenth through the late twentieth centuries, makes those countries improbable incubators of political thought in the liberal tradition. The geopolitical trajectories of nation-states, together with the hierarchies they imply, generate, and perpetuate, have shaped the canon, however malleable (and, increasingly, inclusive), of authors and texts considered constitutive of it, especially since the sixteenth century. There persist pervasive, if erroneous, assumptions about ‘leader and follower nations’, comparative ‘backwardness’ and ‘immaturity’, and ‘late-comer’

Department of History, The Johns Hopkins University, Gilman Hall 301, 3400 North Charles Street, Baltimore, MD 21218, USA gabriel.paquette@jhu.edu

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status. With regard to Spain and Portugal, a lingering disdain for those nations' intellectual achievements often formed part of 'the black legend' (*leyenda negra*, in Spanish). Especially prevalent in Britain and the Netherlands, the 'black legend' was the offspring of the union of virulent anti-Catholic prejudice and the fears concerning the alleged aspirations for universal monarchy harboured by Charles V, Philip II, and their successors in early modern Europe.¹ It was refreshed by the dissolution of the Iberian empires in the Americas in the first quarter of the nineteenth century. This latter cataclysm seemed to confirm the diagnosis of irreversible decadence, and enervation, wrought by uncompromising 'absolutism'. This perception undoubtedly was reinforced by the fickle fortunes of Iberian liberal institutions over the subsequent century and a half, with the dictatorships of Franco and Salazar, respectively, in the mid-twentieth century emblemizing the purported repudiation, or at least weak hold, of liberalism there.²

The history of political thought slowly is being recast, however, whether 'Europeanized', 'globalized', or 'internationalized'. The impact on the field has been enormously salutary.³ Scholars working outside of academic institutions where the English, French, and German languages predominate have benefited from the insights and methods pioneered within those three linguistic contexts. As a result of this fruitful interchange, scores of new studies have been published, which display the richness, variety, and complexity of the political discourses animating the societies whose contributions to the history of ideas were formerly deprecated.⁴ The appearance of this new scholarship,

¹ These subjects are addressed, both directly and indirectly, in several noteworthy works, including J. H. Elliott, *Empires of the Atlantic world: Britain and Spain in America, 1492–1830* (New Haven, CT, and London, 2006); and Anthony Pagden, *Lords of all the world: ideologies of empire in Spain, Britain and France, c. 1500–1800* (New Haven, CT, and London, 1998).

² On the genesis of such master-narratives about Spanish History in the nineteenth century that accentuated either 'difference', 'exceptionalism', 'failed modernity', or 'irreversible decline', including 'the Two Spains', see, for example (in English and inter alia), Richard Kagan, 'Prescott's paradigm: American historical scholarship and the decline of Spain', *American Historical Review*, 101 (1996), 423–46; Isabel Burdiel, 'Myths of failure, myths of success: new perspectives on nineteenth-century Spanish liberalism', *Journal of Modern History*, 70 (1998), pp. 892–912; and Christopher Schmidt-Nowara, *The conquest of history: Spanish colonialism and national histories in the nineteenth century* (Pittsburgh, PA, 2006). Note that most of these tropes emerged from within Spain itself, or at least drew heavily on Spanish sources, discourses, and debates.

³ See, for example, the essays in Samuel Moyn and Andrew Sartori, eds., *Global intellectual history* (New York, NY, 2013).

⁴ A key example is the 'IberConceptos' project, straddling the Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking worlds, directed by Javier Fernández Sebastián. See Fernández Sebastián, ed., *Diccionario político y social del mundo Iberoamericano: La era de las revoluciones, 1750–1850* (Madrid, 2009). See especially the editor's stimulating methodological approach as outlined in 'Introducción: Hacia una historia atlántica de los conceptos políticos'. For an assessment of this work and related publications, see Gabriel Paquette, 'The study of political thought in the Ibero-Atlantic World in the age of revolutions', *Modern Intellectual History*, 10 (2013), pp. 437–48.

though, raises fresh questions, including how, precisely, once underappreciated political writers, their texts, and the historical contexts in which they operated should be integrated (if at all) into broader frameworks and narratives? The failure to incorporate texts and political writers of such provenance would merely perpetuate the mistaken notion, often tacit, sometimes articulated, that they are of second-tier importance, peripheral, somehow derivative, or defective imitations (or, perhaps, crude, imperfect translations) of political ideas more elegantly, originally, or comprehensively expressed elsewhere. But it is equally incumbent on those who seek to integrate ‘peripheries’, like the Iberian Peninsula in particular and southern Europe more generally, into an enlarged, more comprehensive framework to demonstrate convincingly why such an exercise matters. These scholars must identify precisely to which larger project their research contributes and explain how such an undertaking enriches the sub-discipline rather than clutters it, merely expanding its linguistic range, geographical scope, and stock of texts for no higher purpose beyond inclusivity and thoroughness.

In studying both liberalism and romanticism in the early nineteenth century, the case is surprisingly straightforward. It would be anachronistic to relegate Spain and Portugal to the periphery or ignore their contributions altogether.⁵ First during their resistance to Napoleonic occupation between 1808 and 1813, and then again in the early 1820s, Spain and Portugal were at the forefront of European liberalism, inspiring, for example, British writers from Byron to Bentham. While drawing eclectically on the French revolutionary constitutions of the 1790s, the 1812 Spanish Constitution, known also as the ‘Constitution of Cádiz’, together with its attendant decrees, outstripped contemporary charters in many respects, heralding the abolition of the Inquisition, Indian tribute (in America), forced labour, and seigniorial jurisdiction. In lieu of overlapping jurisdictions, it declared a universal state, with equality before the law. It was allegiance to this Constitution that united the self-declared liberals in the Mediterranean – particularly in Naples, Portugal, and Spain – during the tumultuous, if largely forgotten, period 1820–3, known in Spanish as the *Trienio Liberal*. It echoed powerfully as far as British India, Russia, and Latin America.⁶ For their allegiance to that Constitution, and the political society it portended, its champions were forced into exile in the 1820s, converging on

⁵ Yet this fate befell Iberian liberalism in the standard, general works of the twentieth century: Harold Laski, *The rise of European liberalism: an essay in interpretation* (London, 1936); Guido de Ruggiero, *The history of European liberalism*, trans. R. G. Collingwood (Boston, MA, 1959; original 1927); and Pierre Manent, *An intellectual history of liberalism*, trans. R. Balinski (Princeton, NJ, 1996).

⁶ John Davis, *Naples and Napoleon: southern Italy and the European revolutions (1780–1860)* (Oxford, 2006); Christopher A. Bayly, *Recovering liberties: Indian thought in the age of liberalism and empire* (Cambridge, 2012); Richard Sutes, ‘Decembrists with a Spanish accent’, *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, 12 (2011), pp. 5–23; and Roberto Breña, *El primer liberalismo español y los procesos de emancipación de América, 1808–1824: una revisión historiográfica del liberalismo hispánico* (Mexico City, 2006).

London and then Paris, where they formed a 'Liberal International'. There, they plotted a return to liberate their respective *patrias* from despotism, an ambition that invariably ended in disaster.⁷ It was these common documents, shared experiences, and collaborative, transnational projects which make plausible the treatment of southern European liberalism as a coherent entity, of which the Iberian Peninsula formed a key node, if not the core.⁸

With regard to romanticism, while the word itself did not enter into the Spanish and Portuguese languages until the second decade of the nineteenth century or gain traction until the late 1820s, Spain and its literature, both primitive, medieval romances and Golden Age theatre, inspired, and was frequently invoked by, Herder, Schlegel, Hugo, Scott, and other leading figures associated with romanticism. There was a veritable 'Spanish craze'⁹ in European culture, an interest which incorporated Portugal as well. Already in the late eighteenth century, the Spanish medieval ballad was heralded by Herder and others as a prime example of popular poetry. The poet Heine, in *Almansor* (1821), demonstrated deep interest in culture, especially the history, of southern Europe. Victor Hugo's sensational *Hernani, ou l'Honneur castillan*, set in sixteenth-century Spain (1830), and his *Ruy Blas* (1838), set in late seventeenth-century Spain, to say nothing of his self-acknowledged debt to Calderon and Tirso de Molina, is evidence of this broader engagement with Iberian culture.¹⁰ Nor was this interest merely a passing fashion, but rather was a family trade: Abel Hugo, Victor's brother, was a noted Hispanist, who brought out a French prose translation of Spanish historical romances in 1822,¹¹ while Victor himself had lived in Madrid for some of 1811–12 while accompanying his father during the Napoleonic campaigns.¹² The interest did not wane. In 1838, King Louis-Philippe put 400 Spanish paintings in the Louvre, forming the *Galerie Espagnole*,¹³ while Prosper Mérimée's 1843 *Carmen* depicted Spain as a land of primitive culture and sensualist enjoyment.¹⁴ To these examples, many more could be listed, including Giuseppe Verdi's adaptation of various Spanish and Spanish-themed plays, including Duque de

⁷ Maurizio Isabella, *Risorgimento in exile: Italian émigrés and the liberal international in the post-Napoleonic era* (Oxford, 2009); Gregorio Alonso García and Daniel Muñoz Sempere, eds., *Londres y el liberalismo hispánico* (Madrid, 2011); and Juan Luis Simal, *Emigrados: España y el exilio internacional, 1814–1834* (Madrid, 2012).

⁸ Gabriel Paquette, 'Introduction: liberalism in the early nineteenth-century Iberian world', *History of European Ideas*, 41 (2015), pp. 153–65.

⁹ The apt phrase is borrowed from Richard Kagan, 'The *Spanish Craze* in the United States: cultural entitlement and the appropriation of Spain's cultural patrimony, c. 1890–c. 1930', *Revista Complutense de Historia de América* [Madrid], 36 (2010), pp. 37–58.

¹⁰ Ricardo Navas Ruiz, *El romanticismo español* (3rd edn, Madrid, 1982), p. 26.

¹¹ E. Allison Peers, *A history of the romantic movement in Spain*, 1 (Cambridge, 1940), p. 98.

¹² Navas Ruiz, *Romanticismo*, p. 26.

¹³ Henry Kamen, *The disinherited: exile and the making of Spanish culture, 1492–1975* (New York, NY, 2007), p. 198.

¹⁴ Diego Saglia, 'Orientalism', in Michael Ferber, ed., *A companion to European romanticism* (Oxford, 2005), p. 483.

Rivas's *D. Álvaro, o la fuerza del sino* (1835). The centrality of Spain and Portugal, therefore, to the development of European romanticism and liberalism in general suggests that viewing these countries as a peripheral sideshow in the history of those two important concepts would be an unforgeable anachronism.

I

Liberalism may undoubtedly exist without romanticism, and vice versa.¹⁵ Romanticism is the exclusive property of no party. Yet, in the Iberian World in the decades before 1850, liberalism and romanticism often intersected in ways that enriched and added new dimensions to each other, and accentuated certain pre-existing elements latent in each of them. It was a highly unstable, potentially combustible compound, which cohered briefly from the mid-1820s until the early 1840s and thereafter disaggregated into its constituent elements. The intersection of liberal political thought with literary romanticism produced a distinctive type of liberalism: romantic liberalism.¹⁶ It held in 'tense equilibrium'¹⁷ radically diverse elements which could not be combined permanently, but could be briefly, if powerfully, integrated.¹⁸ The remainder of the article is confined to what romanticism added to liberalism's intellectual endowment, what inflections it provided, and attributes it furnished. The focus is

¹⁵ As Roy Porter and Mikuláš Teich observed, romanticism 'was neither uniformly progressive nor reactionary, neither wholly liberal nor authoritarian, neither republican nor monarchist', in their 'Introduction' to Porter and Teich, eds., *Romanticism in national context* (Cambridge, 1988), p. 3; In Spain, José Joaquín de Mora famously equated liberalism with classicism ('El liberalismo es en la escala de las opiniones políticas lo que el gusto clásico es en la de las literarias'), quoted in Derek Flitter, *Spanish romanticism and the uses of history: ideology and the historical imagination* (London, 2006), p. 157; and much ink has been spilled on 'romantic conservatism'; see, for example, the application of that appellation to Robert Southey in David Eastwood, 'Robert Southey and the intellectual origins of romantic conservatism', *English Historical Review*, 104 (1989), pp. 308–31.

¹⁶ The term 'romantic liberalism' has been used by other scholars, most recently by K. Steven Vincent in reference to Benjamin Constant (and Germaine de Staël). Vincent argued that 'elements we associate with "liberalism" were creatively intertwined with those we associate with *sensibilité* and "romanticism"' and that 'sentiment – the enthusiasm of conviction and commitment – was essential for individual fulfillment'; see Vincent, 'Benjamin Constant, the French Revolution and the origins of French romantic liberalism', *French Historical Studies*, 23 (2000), pp. 607–37; the argument presented here is rather different, but the effort to connect literary commitments, preoccupations, and endeavours with political action and thought is undoubtedly a related enterprise.

¹⁷ The apt phrase belongs to, and is borrowed from, Jacques Barzun, *Berlioz and the romantic century*, 1 (Boston, MA, 1950), p. 383.

¹⁸ This article focuses on the agents who drew on ideas they conceived to be 'liberal' and 'romantic', and attempts to reconstruct their intentions (and their mental world) for using these ideas together in certain political junctures at particular moments. This approach is indebted to the one developed by Quentin Skinner, not least in the essays 'Meaning and understanding in the history of ideas' and 'Motives, Intentions and the interpretation of texts', both republished in Skinner, *Meaning and context: Quentin Skinner and his critics*, ed. James Tully (Cambridge, 1988).

'romantic liberalism', instead of liberalism's contribution to romanticism (that is, 'liberal romanticism') and the political ideologies of certain 'romantic' writers. Not only is the latter subject of less interest to historians, but it has received thorough, and superb, treatment by literary scholars.¹⁹ Furthermore, the plentitude of evidence supports the view that liberal politics (broadly conceived) furnished romantic writers and poets with many themes whereas the contribution of romanticism to liberal political thought requires further explanation.

The three basic elements of romantic liberalism, the emphases of which differ by exponent and according to the context of each specific utterance, were the following. First, romantic liberals adopted a historicist approach to constitutions and public institutions. Their historicism was at once unrepentantly anti-absolutist yet also anti-democratic. Romantic liberals repudiated monarchical centralization and the purportedly devastating effects of overseas expansion. Both of these developments, they held, had undermined representative institutions, particularly the Cortes, and other habits, practices, sensibilities, and proclivities which reflected and undergirded political liberty.²⁰ To be sure, romantic liberals enjoyed no monopoly over historical constitutionalism.²¹ But, unlike their adversaries, and even their rivals within the broad community of self-styled liberals, they embraced so-called 'medieval' constitutionalism and celebrated early modern representative institutions in a manner that was neither nostalgic nor 'fetishistic'. Rather, romantic liberals conjured, embellished, and sometimes invented a long-dormant past for a pressing political purpose.²² By valorizing those who had struggled valiantly (and had suffered the ultimate punishment), romantic liberals sublimated the geopolitical disaster, social strife, and factionalism facing Spain and Portugal in the late 1820s and 1830s. They transformed it into the prelude to the heroic recovery of lost liberties and national regeneration.²³ They sought to demonstrate the

¹⁹ Recently, a historian of political thought has enriched this scholarly literature. See John Morrow, 'Romanticism and political thought in the early nineteenth century', in Gareth Stedman Jones and Gregory Claeys, eds., *The Cambridge history of nineteenth-century political thought* (Cambridge, 2011), pp. 39–76.

²⁰ In the Portuguese case, Pedro Cardim, *Cortes e cultura política no Portugal do Antigo Regime* (Lisbon, 1998), and A. M. Hespanha, *As vésperas do leviathan: Instituições e poder político em Portugal. Século XVII* (Coimbra, 1993), have shown the chasm between early modern practices, especially relating to the Cortes, and nineteenth-century Portuguese liberals' interpretation of those practices.

²¹ See the excellent essay by D. R. Kelley, 'Historians and lawyers', in Stedman Jones and Claeys, eds., *Cambridge history*, pp. 147–70.

²² De Ruggiero dismissed romantic historicism as 'anti-historical fetishism'. See de Ruggiero, *European liberalism*. Several recent Spanish literary scholars have purveyed views consonant with those of de Ruggiero; the position advanced in this article departs from this interpretation and instead coincides with, and is indebted to, that of Brian Hamnett, *The historical novel in nineteenth-century Europe: representation of reality in history and fiction* (Oxford, 2011), pp. 103, 146.

²³ On the impact of Latin American independence in Spain and Portugal, see Michael Costeloe, *Response to revolution: imperial Spain and the Spanish American revolutions, 1810–1840*

existence of an 'indigenous' liberal tradition, disassociated from foreign taste and fashion. Romantic liberals would deploy the literary arts to forge an affective bond with that distant (or sometimes imaginatively distorted) past. They hoped to establish liberal institutions insulated from mass politics. Yet, they sought to ensure that those institutions enjoyed popular approbation and that they were accepted by the populace as legitimate, even if they did not derive their legitimacy from popular sovereignty, but rather from their alleged basis in national tradition.

Second, romantic liberals were committed to (within certain bounds) unencumbered expression, often reflected in an ardent defence against encroachments upon civil liberties (especially the protection of press and speech). This position was linked to the conviction that, in the aesthetic sphere, beyond non-interference, genuine liberty consisted in the absence of dependence: on formal rules, on foreign fashions, imitation in general, and the tyranny of artistic 'schools'. Independence from these inhibitory forces, and the cultivation of 'naturalness' and 'spontaneity', which romantics claimed had been prevalent in early 'national' poetry, folksongs, and ballads, would regenerate the culture (broadly conceived) and, in turn, its politics. Romantic liberals thus conceived of a two-way traffic between cultural and political liberty, in which meter, theme, genre, and other aesthetic choices, including the extirpation of loan words from other languages, were presented as the analogue of, even the counterpart to, political acts. These included the revival of representative institutions, resistance to military occupation, and defiance of asymmetrical relations of dependence on foreign powers (e.g. disadvantageous economic treaties, coercively imposed slave trade abolition agreements, and the omnipresent threat of armed intervention by the Holy Alliance). Just as foreign cultural 'occupation' had preceded military and political occupation, so emancipation from cultural dependence would buttress a more robust, less easily undermined national political sovereignty.²⁴

Third, though romantic liberals embraced political economy, sought (generally) to eliminate interference of various kinds in the economy,²⁵ and disdained privileges, exemptions, and heterogeneous fiscal regimes, they also evinced profound distrust of market mechanisms and economic individualism. Like other romantics, they associated the market with narrow materialism,

(Cambridge, 1986); Leandro Prados de la Escosura, *De imperio a nación: crecimiento y atraso económico en España (1780-1930)* (Madrid, 1988); Brian Hamnett, 'Spain and Portugal and the loss of their continental American territories in the 1820s: an examination of the issues', *European History Quarterly*, 41 (2011), pp. 397-212; and Gabriel Paquette, *Imperial Portugal in the age of Atlantic revolutions: the Luso-Brazilian world, c. 1770-1850* (Cambridge, 2013).

²⁴ This tendency toward cultural autarky jostled uneasily with the cosmopolitan sensibilities evinced by many of the figures classified in this article as 'romantic liberals'.

²⁵ Whether by the government or powerful private individuals or groups (e.g. guilds, the church, other corporations).

ferocious speed, relentlessness, and an impersonal and dehumanizing calculus.²⁶ In short, everything romantics loathed about the ‘age of cash’. This romantic liberal wariness was manifested in efforts to monitor, if not reduce, the number and size of spaces in which markets operated unimpeded and to prevent political and social life from becoming too closely enmeshed with, and dominated by, economic processes.²⁷

II

A key feature of the period in which romantic liberalism emerged was the collision of literature and political thought, which became entwined and left each other with indelible (certainly detectable) traces, if not fundamentally transfigured by the encounter. To study the intersections of romanticism and liberalism, it is necessary to trespass into different disciplines and to interrogate genres and modes of expression that normally fall outside of the historian of political thought’s scholarly jurisdiction. These include drama, poetry, opera libretti, the novel, historical writing, serial publications, newspapers, and the transcriptions of orations to learned bodies, such as royal academies, which were often published as pamphlets or annals or serialized in newspapers. Also important are what may be lumped together as ‘paratext’, the prologues, prefaces, forewords, epigraphs, and explanatory notes and other apparatus which surround, adorn, and structure the reading of the principal text, and which ‘generally impart an authorial or editorial intention or interpretation’.²⁸

When the source base is enlarged to encompass the aforementioned genres and range of texts, which remain the seldom-poached game reserve of the literary scholar, unconventional dimensions of liberalism are more easily perceived. These were the genres and modes of expression favoured by those

²⁶ Iberian romantic liberalism resembles in some respects German romantic political thought of the 1790s. While there were notable intersections between romanticism and liberalism, German romanticism was marked by a strong communitarian element as well as a critique of excessive individualism. See Frederick C. Beiser, *Enlightenment, revolution and romanticism: the genesis of modern German political thought, 1790–1800* (Cambridge, MA, 1992), pp. 18–19, 223.

²⁷ An obvious fourth aspect, perhaps the best-known aspect, of romantic liberalism was its internationalism, marked by staunch solidarity with oppressed people everywhere. While extremely important, it is far from self-evident that such internationalism (or cosmopolitanism) was exclusive to romantic liberalism. It was ubiquitous and shared by partisans of many divergent visions of politics. On this subject, see Isabella, *Risorgimento in exile*; William St Clair, *That Greece might still be free: the Philhellenes and the War of Independence* (London, 1972); F. Rosen, *Bentham, Byron, and Greece: constitutionalism, nationalism and early liberal political thought* (Oxford, 1992); and Paul Stock, *The Shelley–Byron circle and the idea of Europe* (New York, NY, 2010).

²⁸ Gérard Genette, ‘Introduction to the paratext’, *New Literary History*, 22 (1991), pp. 261–72; as Genette clarified, ‘the paratext, in all its forms, is a fundamentally heteronomous, auxiliary discourse devoted to the service of something else which constitutes its right of existence namely the text’, p. 269.

expositors of the unstable compound of ‘romantic liberalism’.²⁹ Literary forms were not mere disguises for the (semi-) covert expression of political ideas. Rather, recourse to, and employment of, literary forms, styles, and modes of representation was construed by many as a political intervention in itself.³⁰ The ascendancy of the ‘linguistic turn’ notwithstanding, the demarcation of the study of literary texts from political philosophy has distorted the canon of political thought by reducing the range and variety of texts considered worthy of study by historians.

Though teasing political ideas from literary sources is notoriously tricky, methodological anxiety is partially alleviated in the case of ‘romantic liberalism’. Many of the leading poets and dramatists associated with romanticism in Spain and Portugal were also high-placed politicians and political writers, who framed constitutions and revamped legal codes while simultaneously writing historical dramas. For a fleeting moment, chiefly from the end of the 1820s until the middle of the 1840s, they were engaged simultaneously in two kinds of writing, which they conceived as commingled, interdependent, intimately connected pursuits, preferring one genre to another depending on their purpose in a given circumstance. These poets, dramatists, and historians were not, to invoke Shelley’s famous if hackneyed phrase, ‘unacknowledged legislators’,³¹ but rather elected or sometimes appointed ones.

While wary of succumbing to the ‘mythology of coherence’³² and searching for the unifying features of a single individual’s literary and political writings, it is possible to maintain that there was significant and fertile overlap between the two pursuits for at least six figures: Spanish statesman, poet, and dramatist Francisco Martínez de la Rosa (1787–1862); Portuguese statesman, poet, novelist, and dramatist João Baptista da Silva Leitão de Almeida Garrett (1799–1854); Spanish poet and statesman Ángel de Saavedra (1791–1865), Duque de Rivas; Spanish parliamentarian and literary critic Antonio Alcalá Galiano; Spanish poet, journalist, and parliamentarian José de Espronceda (1808–42); and Portuguese historian, novelist, and journalist Alexandre Herculano (1810–77). These politically engaged writers will be used to elucidate the three core aspects of romantic liberalism. First, Martínez de la Rosa will be used to illustrate the argument about historical constitutionalism. Second, Alcalá Galiano, Almeida Garrett, and Rivas will be used as evidence

²⁹ On the importance of using different registers of texts for the study of political thought, see Fernández Sebastián, ‘Introducción’.

³⁰ This last sentence draws heavily from Andrew Hadfield, ‘Republicanism in sixteenth and seventeenth-century Britain’, in David Armitage, ed., *British political thought in history, literature and theory, 1500–1800* (Cambridge, 2006), p. 118. Hadfield further argued, with regard to republicanism in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Britain, that republicanism ‘existed as a series of stories. These were easy to narrate, repeat, retell and configure, signaling a republican subject matter ... without necessarily entailing a commitment to any program’, p. 118.

³¹ Percy Bysshe Shelley, ‘A defence of poetry’ (1821), reproduced in W. Breckman, ed., *European romanticism* (Boston, MA, 2008), p. 152.

³² Skinner, ‘Meaning and understanding’.

for the argument concerning freedom from cultural dependence. Third, Espronceda and Herculano will be used to advance the argument about romantic liberals' sceptical stance toward the unbridled market and economic individualism.

Literary pursuits and political writing were inseparable in Portugal and Spain between 1825 and 1850. Almeida Garrett claimed that 'due to the times in which we live, everything is jumbled together, to the extent that the history of literature and poetry is mixed together with political events and matters'.³³ Madrid's *Boletín de Comercio* observed that 'for the last twenty years the influence of those revolutions which have shaken empires has been communicating itself to literature'.³⁴ While affirming the accuracy of the lines just quoted, it must be conceded that not all observers believed that the entanglement of literature and politics had produced beneficent effects. In his 1828 inaugural lecture at the University of London, the first professor of Spanish, exile Alcalá Galiano, lamented that 'most of [Spain's] literary men turned their attention to politics, and were all, or nearly all, wrecked upon that rock. The effects were fatal to the mental cultivation of the country ... many stately trees have been felled to the ground and many young opening flowers nipped in their buds.'³⁵ Whether or not political pursuits tainted and undermined literature, it is certain that the combination of rigorous censorship, exile, and political exclusion, as well as the heterogeneous public for which they wrote, encouraged political writers to opt for modes of expression and genres which often serve to preclude the inclusion of their texts from canons (however permeable) of political thought.

Ignoring less conventional modes of expressing political ideas not only deprives scholars of important sources for the study of liberalism, but effectively excludes the countries (and languages) where such modes were preferred from the study of political thought. At the very least, it marginalizes such countries and languages further, appearing to confirm their peripheral status. By examining literary texts (and paratexts), a 'hidden', or perhaps 'parallel', history of liberalism may be uncovered. Drawing on the concept of 'multiple modernities',³⁶ it is possible to affirm that there exist distinct, and even divergent, ontologies of political liberalism. The recognition that there exist multiple routes to, and pathways within, liberalism implies that the range of texts required to study the subject will vary according to national, regional, and linguistic context. The concept of romantic liberalism might potentially address,

³³ Almeida Garrett, 'Prefácio' to the 2nd edition of *Romanceiro I*' (dated 12 Aug. 1843), in *Obras completas: Romanceiro*, 1 (Lisbon, 1983), pp. 65–6.

³⁴ Anonymously published article in the *Boletín de Comercio*, 1 (8 Feb. 1833), quoted in Peers, *Romantic movement in Spain*, 1, p. 205.

³⁵ Antonio Alcalá Galiano, *An introductory lecture delivered in the University of London on Saturday, November 15, 1828* (London, 1828), p. 27.

³⁶ Among others, Shmuel Eisenstadt, 'Multiple modernities', in Eisenstadt, ed., *Multiple modernities* (New Brunswick, NJ, and London, 2005).

and perhaps redress, this problem and demonstrate the value of treating Iberian literary texts as sources for the study of political thought.

III

The decision to study the convergences and divergences of literary romanticism and political liberalism is either a glaringly obvious or a frightfully counter-intuitive choice. It would be obvious if one subscribed to Victor Hugo's famous dictum that 'romanticism, taken as a whole, is only liberalism in literature',³⁷ or, indeed, with an older school of Spanish and Portuguese literary history that conflated the categories, viewing liberalism and romanticism as inseparable.³⁸ Yet, it would appear counterintuitive if one accepted the findings of the recent scholarship, which perceives robust linkages and multiple convergences between anti-liberal politics and romanticism.³⁹ Some scholars have disputed whether there can be such a compound as 'romantic liberalism' or 'liberal romanticism' at all, given the allegedly irreconcilable contradictions in their form and content.⁴⁰ And, following Arthur Lovejoy's lead, it may be argued that it is misguided to refer to romanticism, singular, and that, instead, it is better to study romanticisms, plural.⁴¹ Such a move recognizes

³⁷ Victor Hugo's 'Preface' to *Hernani*, quoted in Tim Blanning, *The romantic revolution: a history* (New York, NY, 2011), p. 159.

³⁸ For the most influential theses concerning the inseparability of liberalism and romanticism in Spain, see Navas Ruiz, *Romanticismo*; and Vicente Lloréns, *Liberales y románticos: una emigración Española en Inglaterra (1823-34)* (3rd edn, Madrid, 1979); for a comprehensive overview of this intellectual lineage, see Michael Iarocci, *Properties of modernity: romantic Spain, modern Europe and the legacies of empire* (Nashville, TN, 2006), pp. 34-47; for a recent study that has decried the 'profound and serious terminological confusion' of these debates, see Andrew Ginger, *Liberalismo y romanticismo: la reconstrucción del sujeto histórico* (Madrid, 2012), pp. 25-30.

³⁹ There is an abundant scholarly literature on this theme, beyond the scope of this article, which has argued that Spanish romanticism was essentially conservative, using 'medievalism as a strategy of legitimation' and asserting that 'its most salient features were its religious emphasis and its dynamically intense patriotism'; see Flitter, *Spanish romanticism*, pp. 20, 196; Silver stated the point more strongly: 'the majority of romanticism was essentially conservative ... the only literary romanticism with any chance of success became a backward-looking historical romanticism'. See Philip Silver, *Ruin and restitution: reinterpreting romanticism in Spain* (Liverpool, 1997), p. 10; this view originates with Jaime Vicens Vivens's short yet influential essay, 'El romanticismo en la historia' (1950), republished in David T. Gies, ed., *El romanticismo* (Madrid, 1989); the view of the present author coincides with that of Iarocci, who pointed out that 'liberal romantics in Spain and across Europe often espoused historicist ideas, even as they fought against absolutism. Opposing the Ancien Régime and embracing nationalist mythology were by no means contradictory.' See Iarocci, *Properties of modernity*, p. 46.

⁴⁰ For an analysis, albeit in a different context, and an attempt at reconciliation, see Nancy Rosenblum, *Another liberalism: romanticism and the reconstruction of liberal thought* (Cambridge, MA, 1987).

⁴¹ Lovejoy objected to the fact that 'such manifold and discrepant phenomena have all come to receive one name' and believed that 'each of these so-called Romanticisms was a highly complex and usually an exceedingly unstable intellectual compound'; see Arthur Lovejoy, 'On the discrimination of romanticism' (1924), in Lovejoy, *Essays in the history of ideas* (New York, NY, 1955), pp. 234-6 *passim*.

that romanticism in one country during a single period may have little in common with the romanticism found in other countries during different periods.⁴²

The frustration fuelling such approaches is palpable and justified. A dizzying, and often inconsistent, array of commitments and qualities have been described and counted as quintessentially ‘romantic’: sincerity, purity, a dedication to ideals and willingness to die for them, a hatred of tyranny, an indomitable will, aggressive self-assertion tied to a cult of the self, a rejection of (and perhaps revolt against) rules and grand universals and established traditions, an embrace of myth and the occult and Nature, naturalness and spontaneity in expression, the gothic and the medieval in taste.⁴³ Other scholars, presumably despairing of this untidy multiplicity, have asserted that romanticism’s essence is the ‘reconciliation of opposite or discordant properties’, a ‘balance’ between ‘emotion and order, judgment and emotion, [and] self possession and feeling’⁴⁴ or capacity to hold contradictions in a ‘tense equilibrium’, in Jacques Barzun’s meritorious verdict.⁴⁵

Two aspects of romanticism were most relevant for Iberian liberals. The first was the rejection of externally imposed rules, articulated vividly in Spaniard Agustín Durán’s 1828 manifesto on theatre. He called on his fellow dramatists to

open our souls to the emotions which inspire, even when we cannot analyse them; we feel them, even though they contradict the rules of drama; yet in the final analysis, sensations are things while rules are mere abstractions, theories which can be but poorly or inexactly applied.⁴⁶

‘Naturalness’, in the sense of spontaneous feeling, was the goal of art. The romantic writer did not imitate; moreover, he repudiated the very idea of imitation.⁴⁷ Hugo, of course, earlier had derogated such constraining conventions and rigid rules as ‘the cheap tricks that mediocrity, envy and conventionalism

⁴² Even within a single country and language, as another scholar sceptical of romanticism’s unity noted, ‘differences between [works] are so patently vast as to make comparison appear well nigh ludicrous’; see Lilian Furst, *Romanticism in perspective: a comparative study of aspects of the romantic movements in England, France, and Germany* (New York, NY, 1969), p. 16. Some have taken this argument further, arguing that even in individual strains of romanticism, that is, in the work of a single writer, are ‘ephemeral and eclectic’, an ‘incongruent’, ‘mixed together’, ‘fluctuating’, and ‘unstable’ ‘*intermezzo*’ in European culture; see Gabriel Augusto Coelho Magalhães, *Garrett e Rivas: O romantismo em Espanha e Portugal*, II (Lisbon, 2009), p. 329.

⁴³ A list drawn from the core essences of romanticism enumerated or cited by Maurice Bowra, *The romantic imagination* (Oxford, 1988); Isaiah Berlin, *The roots of romanticism* (London, 1999); Jerome J. McGann, *The romantic ideology: a critical investigation* (Chicago, IL, 1983); and Porter and Teich, eds., *Romanticism*.

⁴⁴ Harold Bloom, *The visionary company: a reading of English romantic poetry* (Ithaca, NY, 1971), pp. 270–1.

⁴⁵ Barzun, *Berlioz*.

⁴⁶ Agustín Durán, *Discurso sobre el influjo que ha tenido la crítica moderna en la decadencia del teatro antiguo español, y sobre el modo con que debe ser considerado para juzgar convenientemente de su mérito peculiar*, ed. D. L. Shaw (Exeter, 1973), p. 14.

⁴⁷ Lloréns, *Liberales*, p. 381.

have been playing on genius for the past two centuries'.⁴⁸ It was a short leap from inward-gazing cultural nationalism and infatuation with 'spontaneity' to an interest in romances, whether in prose though usually in verse, fabulous narratives from the middle ages, fictional tales based on marvels and miracles, which were thought to embody the longed-for quality of spontaneity.⁴⁹ The second, closely connected, aspect of Iberian romanticism most relevant for the study of liberal political thought was the infatuation with History, romanticism's ideal thematic quarry, a topic discussed fully in a subsequent section.

If romanticism was maddeningly multifarious, to the extent that it prods some scholars to prefer to study the phenomenon in the plural, political liberalism has been subject to a similar criticism. The meanings of 'liberal' and 'liberalism' were multiple, and in constant flux. For contemporaries, the significance of the term 'liberal' was varied, constantly evolving, and frequently ambiguous.⁵⁰ It has been a frustratingly fissiparous concept for historians of the period under consideration today. In France, for example, liberalism was 'used to describe a disparate section of the Restoration political elite, which was loosely united in criticism of most Bourbon governments ... [it was] a flag of negotiation, compromise, and convenience'.⁵¹ In Italian exile circles, it was similarly vague, coming to embody constitutionalism, a revised international order, a defence of civil-political freedoms, gradual progress, and social reform.⁵²

There were, however, several common traits uniting European liberals, including the avoidance and suspicion of arbitrary power.⁵³ In the early

⁴⁸ Victor Hugo, 'Preface to *Cromwell*', in Hugo, *The essential Victor Hugo*, ed. E. H. and A. M. Blackmore (Oxford, 2004), p. 38. The Iberian gravitation toward Hugo and Stendhal's celebration of Shakespeare's 'barbaric genius' is understandable: his shrugging off of the classical unities, combining verse and prose, mixing, in Hugo's words, the 'grotesque and sublime, the terrible and the absurd, tragedy and comedy'; see Heike Grundman, 'Shakespeare and European romanticism', in Ferber, ed., *Companion*, p. 41, with Hugo's quotation on the same page; The characteristics of French Romantic drama are well known and may be summarized as the liberalization of language and style; the introduction of prose (or a freer form of Alexandrine verse); the lifting spatial/temporal limits on action; the promotion of modern historical themes, 'local colour'; and awe-inspiring spectacle. See Barbara Cooper, 'French romantic drama', in Ferber, ed., *Companion*, pp. 235–6.

⁴⁹ On the nineteenth-century interest in the romance more generally, see David Duff, *Romance and revolution: Shelley and the politics of a genre* (Cambridge, 1994), p. 11.

⁵⁰ As Eduardo Posada-Carbó and Iván Jaksic judiciously pointed out, 'it would be a mistake to speak of a liberal tradition in the singular, or to refer to "liberals" in a generic way, as if they were adherents of a uniform and well-defined school of thought'; see their 'Introducción: naufragios y sobrevivencias del liberalismo Latinoamericano', in *Liberalismo y poder: latinoamérica en el siglo XIX* (Santiago, 2011), p. 41.

⁵¹ Pamela Pilbeam, *The 1830 revolution in France* (Basingstoke, 1991), pp. 80, 98; Some scholars have put a more positive gloss on the apparent variety of early nineteenth-century French (and British) liberalism, describing how it was produced slowly through the 'grappling with predicaments', from an 'active dialogue', which resulted in a liberalism that was 'not sealed, but open; not uniform, but confidently heterogeneous'; see Andreas Kalyvas and Ira Katznelson, *Liberal beginnings: making a republic for the moderns* (Cambridge, 2008), pp. 11–12, 17.

⁵² Isabella, *Risorgimento in exile*, p. 25.

⁵³ Alan Ryan, *The making of modern liberalism* (Princeton, NJ, 2012), p. 29.

nineteenth century, liberalism could be generally conceived (chiefly with reference to the French experience) as occupying a middle ground between ‘royalism’ and ‘Jacobinism’. It was characterized by support for written constitutions to enshrine, and protect against violations of, individual rights (sometimes described as ‘liberties’), to prevent the concentration of political authority in a single entity, and to define many spheres of human action as personal or private, thus removing them from politics. In general, some modicum of popular, or national, sovereignty also was defended by liberals, though this varied enormously by country and individual political writer. In short, early nineteenth-century European liberalism gave an account of freedom characterized by the absence of interference,⁵⁴ normally from an arbitrary power, and advocacy of the rule of law, embodied in a written constitution, to guard against such interference.

The edifice of Iberian liberalism was constructed upon the concept of a written constitution, manifested in and embodied by the 1812 Cádiz Constitution. It became a symbol of Mediterranean liberty when it was not translated literally and adopted whole.⁵⁵ But two competing conceptions of constitutionalism, in turn, jostled for primacy, often merging with debates over the ‘fundamental law’. The first was a historical constitutionalist account of the development of institutions, focused on retrieving, through historical research, the rights and privileges acquired or exercised by different bodies – social, ecclesiastical, territorial – which composed the monarchy. Its proponents maintained that the dispersed legislation, developed over centuries, merely should be compiled, modernized, and systematized. The second conception, by contrast, coalesced around the idea that the institutionalization of liberty required a new force, the nation, no longer understood as an amalgam of territories (kingdoms), estates, cities, and the crown, but as something both preceding and simultaneously superior to all other entities.⁵⁶ Hence, it entailed a new notion of sovereignty, locating it in the ‘nation’, with its representatives in possession of legislative authority. The liberalism embodied in the 1812

⁵⁴ As Quentin Skinner has elucidated, ‘what neo-roman writers repudiate avant la lettre is the key assumption of classical liberalism to the effect that force or the coercive threat of it constitute the only forms of constraint that interfere with individual liberty’; see Skinner, *Liberty before liberalism* (Cambridge, 2012), p. 84.

⁵⁵ For discussions of the diffusion of the Spanish Constitution, see Manuel Moreno Alonso, *La generación española de 1808* (Madrid, 1989), p. 219; ‘Liberal’ emerged as much as a term of opposition in Spain during the Cortes of Cádiz, the counterpart of ‘*servil*’ (and ‘*iliberal*’). A strong case has been made that the Spanish usage of the word ‘*liberal*’, pregnant with the meanings just mentioned, passed from Blanco White, and others, into the English language thanks to its dissemination by influential Hispanophiles Robert Southey and Lord John Russell. See Moreno Alonso, *Generación*, p. 221, building on the scholarship of V. Lloréns.

⁵⁶ This summary is indebted to the scholarship of J.M. Portillo Valdés, including his ‘Constitución’, in J. Fernández Sebastián and J. F. Fuentes, eds., *Diccionario político y social del siglo XIX español* (Madrid, 2002), and, above all, his *Revolución de la nación: orígenes de la cultura constitucional en España, 1780–1812* (Madrid, 2000).

Constitution thus sought to meld two doctrines (and traditions) that fit imperfectly together: natural law and nationalist historical constitutionalism.⁵⁷

Unsurprisingly, the coalition of liberals that had collaborated at Cádiz soon fractured. Though a rump of die-hard *doceañistas* remained, other self-proclaimed liberals either denounced the 1812 Constitution's radicalism or, alternatively, derided its conservatism.⁵⁸ Until at least 1830, there were great internal divisions among those who called themselves 'liberal', which produced significant divergences of meaning and generated internal contradictions.⁵⁹ The lexical-semantic shifts and rapid evolution of the meaning of liberalism and romanticism were, in many respects, a reflection of its moment. Contemporaries understood their age to be one of extreme flux and rapid recomposition.⁶⁰ As Almeida Garrett exclaimed, 'never has the political observer looked upon the past with such fright; never has the present seemed more unstable; never has the future promised such uncertainty'.⁶¹ Espronceda held that he was living in a 'century of transition', in a society 'composed of the remains of the old and the first fragments of the new'.⁶² Or, as he subsequently phrased it, where the old and new had 'become intermingled' to the point of dissolving into each other.⁶³

⁵⁷ Joaquín Varela Suanzes-Carpegna, *Política y constitución en España* (1808–1978) (Madrid, 2007), p. 48; see also Joaquín Varela Suanzes-Carpegna, *La teoría del estado en los orígenes del constitucionalismo hispanico* (*Las Cortes de Cádiz*) (Madrid, 1983), p. 25.

⁵⁸ For a discussion of the fissures within Spanish liberalism between 1814 and 1820, see Claude Morange, *Una conspiración fallida y una constitución nonnata* (Madrid, 2006), pp. 158–95 passim.

⁵⁹ From the viewpoint of social and regional history, Burdiel has argued that the "open" ideology of liberalism, combined with its intense local character, implied a deep social and political heterogeneity'. See Burdiel, 'Myths', p. 895; These shifting and mutually contradictory aspects of 'liberalism' (as well as other terms equally fraught with ambiguity, like 'absolutism' or 'conservatism') has encouraged some historians to adopt alternative frameworks, polarities, dyads, and antonyms, such as 'reform versus 'traditionalism. See Breña, *Primer liberalismo*, pp. 46–56.

⁶⁰ Fernández Sebastián, 'Introducción', p. 28; though 'liberal' eventually came to refer to a recognizable 'conjuncture of ideas, institutions, subjects, and political practices' in the 1830s. See Fernández Sebastián, 'Liberalismos nacientes en el Atlántico Iberoamericano: "Liberal" como concepto y como identidad política, 1750–1850', in *Diccionario ... Iberoamericano*, p. 719. As a result of the many compromises made with traditional institutions (and local and provincial powers) in order to retain power during the *Trienio*, Spanish liberalism's internal contradictions multiplied, its horizons became foreshortened, and its boldness faded. See Manuel Chust, 'El Liberalismo Doceañista, 1810–1837', in Manuel Suárez Cortina, ed., *Las máscaras de la libertad: el liberalismo español, 1808–1950* (Madrid, 2003), p. 95; as Raquel Sánchez García noted, Spanish liberalism 'mortgaged the greater part of its ideological principles [in order to cling to power], which generated a rupture in the movement', See Sánchez García, *Alcalá Galiano y el liberalismo Español* (Madrid, 2005), p. 24.

⁶¹ Almeida Garrett, in *O Cronista* (1827), quoted in António Reis, ed., *Portugal contemporâneo* (Lisbon, 1990), p. 19.

⁶² José de Espronceda, 'Política y filosofía. Libertad. Igualdad. Fraternidad', *El Español*, 76 (15 Jan. 1836), in Espronceda, *Obras completas*, ed. D. Martínez Torrón (Madrid, 2006), p. 1292.

⁶³ Espronceda, 'España y Portugal', *El Pensamiento*, 1 (19 May 1841), in Espronceda, *Obras*, p. 1298.

IV

The year 1834 was a remarkable, disruptive, one for Spanish politics. The transformation began late in 1833, when an amnesty of exiled liberals was declared in the wake of Ferdinand VII's death. It also proved to be a momentous year for the Spanish theatre. The government followed a royal commission's recommendation that theatres should be overhauled. Ecclesiastical censorship and resident censors were abolished. Permission to perform formerly prohibited plays was given. Oversight over the theatre was transferred to private from municipal hands.⁶⁴ Many of these changes were adopted and they ushered in a massive expansion of the repertory to include new 'romantic' plays, some of which had been written by the returning exiles.

Francisco Martínez de la Rosa dominated both the political and theatrical stages in 1834. The Granada-born statesman and dramatist had been banished upon Ferdinand VII's first restoration in 1814, incarcerated in a North African fortress-prison for six years.⁶⁵ Upon returning to Spain, he became head of government during the *Trienio Liberal* (1820–3). With the collapse of the *Trienio*, he sought exile in Paris, a move that coincided with a prolific burst of creativity, including many historical dramas, including several written and performed first in French. He shed his earlier political views, a transition that accelerated as he came under the sway of the French Doctrinaires. The subsequent evolution of his political thought was subject to scathing, and largely partisan, criticism.⁶⁶ He returned to Spain in 1834 and again ascended to the post of prime minister.⁶⁷ He immediately fashioned a new fundamental law, the *Estatuto Real*, or Royal Statute, which remained in force until it was

⁶⁴ David T. Gies, *Theatre and politics in nineteenth-century Spain: Juan de Grimaldi as impresario and government agent* (Cambridge, 1988), p. 115; see also David T. Gies, 'Spain', in Robert Justin Goldstein, ed., *The frightful stage: political censorship of the theatre in nineteenth-century Europe* (New York, NY, 2009), p. 163. Censorship eventually would return to Spain in 1836. A royal order re-imposing regulation maligned the tendency of theatre to 'exaltar las pasiones políticas de los espectadores' ('to inflame the political passions of the audience'); quotation reproduced in David T. Gies, *The theatre in nineteenth-century Spain* (Cambridge, 1994), p. 13.

⁶⁵ Peñón de Vélez de la Gomera, a rock-fortress off the coast of modern Morocco, over which Spain remains sovereign.

⁶⁶ The scathing attacks on Martínez de la Rosa are amply documented in the historiography: already during the *Trienio*, he had been nicknamed 'Rosita la Pastelera', a derogatory nickname, revived in an 1836 book, which combined the insult of an alleged predilection for compromising his beliefs with the vague, but malicious, insinuation of 'effeminate' behaviour. On this subject, see Pedro Ojeda Escudero, *El Justo Medio: neoclasicismo y romanticismo en la obra dramática de Martínez de la Rosa* (Burgos, 1997), p. 39 n. 94; and Robert Mayberry and Nancy Mayberry, *Francisco Martínez de la Rosa* (Boston, MA, 1988), p. 6. Azorín's early twentieth-century depiction of Martínez de la Rosa is memorably savage: 'at his core, this man believed in nothing ... [when he again became minister] even his superficial and sickly-sweet liberalism had fallen away and this man, now without recourse to artifice, showed himself to be arbitrary, hard, [and] despotic. Is this Spanish liberalism? Yes, it is.' Azorín, *Rivas y Larra: razón social del romanticismo en España*, in his *Obras completas*, XVIII (Madrid, 1921), pp. 56–7.

⁶⁷ The official title was *Presidente del Consejo de Ministros*.

replaced in 1836, thus surviving Martínez de la Rosa's own ministry, which fell in July 1835.⁶⁸

The Royal Statute was promulgated in the same week that Martínez de la Rosa's historical drama, *La conjuración de Venecia*, or 'The conspiracy in Venice', opened in Madrid.⁶⁹ This coincidence was not lost on the Spanish public. Mariano José de Larra, the critic and satirist, reviewing *La conjuración*, remarked that

this is the first time that Spain has had a minister adept at letters, blessed with the inspiration of the muses. And amidst what circumstances?! A Royal Statute, the foundation upon which Spain's regeneration will be built, and a meritorious drama; and all of this within the space of a single week; we are not aware that a similar instance has been recorded elsewhere.⁷⁰

The connection between the Royal Statute and Martínez de la Rosa's historical drama deserves some comment, for examining them together suggests how romanticism and liberalism (at least of a 'moderate'/conservative cast) enriched and reinforced each other.

La conjuración turns on a well-worn tale of love thwarted by political tyranny. The hero Rugiero's dual aspiration – to live openly with Laura (to whom he is secretly wed) and to overthrow the oppressive rule of Venice's *Tribunal de los Diez* around the year 1310⁷¹ – are fused as it is discovered that not only is Laura the niece of president of the *Tribunal*, Pedro Morosini, but that Rugiero is, in fact, his long-lost son.⁷² The political dimensions are as important as the love story and are, indeed, entwined. The action of *La conjuración* revolves around a plot to overthrow a corrupt government, by those who refuse to accept that the 'old laws' have fallen into abeyance. All of the conspirators are members of the elite. There is scarcely any popular participation at all. In fact, political change without public disorder is the abiding preoccupation of the conspirators. As one of the leaders, Marcos Querini, indicates:

⁶⁸ The best treatment of the Royal Statute remains Joaquín Tomás Villarroya, *El sistema político del Estatuto Real (1834–1836)* (Madrid, 1968).

⁶⁹ It must be noted that it was written and published in Paris as part of his *Obras literarias* in 1830, and would have been well known by Spanish readers by the time the play went into production.

⁷⁰ Fígaro [Larra], 'Representación de *La conjuración de Venecia*, año 1310, Drama Histórico en Cinco Actos y en Prosa, de Don Francisco Martínez de la Rosa', *Revista Española*, 198 (25 Apr. 1834), reproduced in Mariano José de Larra, *Fígaro: colección de artículos dramáticos, literarios, políticos y de costumbres*, ed. Alejandro Pérez Vidal (Barcelona, 2001), p. 203.

⁷¹ Of course, Martínez de la Rosa is bending the historical sequence here: the *Tribunal* was founded in 1310, *after* the revolt against the Doge.

⁷² As Gies and others have suggested, many elements emblematic of Spanish romantic drama abound in *La conjuración*: the historical time frame; the mysterious setting; the use of masks; surprise discoveries related to the origins of the principal characters which radically change the plot; the belief that love transcends life itself; rebellion against perceived injustice and oppression; the bloody joining of love and death. See Gies, *Theatre in nineteenth-century Spain*, p. 98.

Should we not seek to ensure that our triumph costs few tears and sheds no blood [?] ... [that] the people do not tarnish our victory with disorder and excess [?] They are born to obey, not to rule ... they should admire the ancient edifice of our laws. Yes, we shall rescue the inheritance of our ancestors ... but we shall not expose the ship of state to popular unrest.⁷³

Rugiero concurs with these sentiments when he assures his beloved Laura that 'everything has been calculated to avoid the spilling of blood'.⁷⁴ Ultimately, the conspiracy is discovered and the conspirators are tried and condemned. Rugiero is given the opportunity to repent and save himself, but he refuses the reprieve: 'I neither know how to lie, nor to violate my oaths', he declares.⁷⁵ The conspiracy is just, but ultimately the law must be obeyed and the conspirators punished. Reviewers picked up on the political ideas, sentiments, and prejudices communicated in the play. In a review published in the newspaper *El Tiempo*, *La conjuración* was praised for its 'balance', demonstrating 'the horror of tyranny and despotism; the fatal results of an immoderate and indiscrete liberty; and the illegitimate and dangerous nature of popular insurrection'.⁷⁶

Martínez de la Rosa's other creation of the fertile month of April 1834 was the *Estatuto Real*, which produced a more lasting effect on Spanish public life than his soon-forgotten drama. Compared with the sprawling 1812 Spanish Constitution, containing 384 articles, the Royal Statute was a notably concise document, with a mere fifty articles, written in a drier laconic style, entirely at variance with the author's usual exuberance, including that expressed in the *La conjuración*.⁷⁷ But the Royal Statute was preceded by a lengthy, perambulatory 'Exposición', another genre of paratext, in which the new charter was justified (note that the word 'constitution' was avoided, and language of a charter, implying royal imprimatur and provenance, was preferred).⁷⁸ Martínez de la Rosa defended the convocation of the Cortes, not according to principles drawn from either natural law or abstract principle, but on the

⁷³ Martínez de la Rosa, *La conjuración de Venecia, Año de 1310* (1834), ed. M. J. Alonso Seoane (Madrid, 2000), Act I, Scene III, p. 192.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, Act II, Scene III, p. 217.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, Act V, Scene X, p. 292.

⁷⁶ *El Tiempo*, 144 (24 Apr. 1834), quoted in Ojeda Escudero, *El Justo Medio*, p. 227 n. 67.

⁷⁷ The texts of both the 1812 Spanish Constitution and the 1834 *Estatuto Real* are published in Enrique Tierno Galván, ed., *Leyes políticas españolas fundamentales (1808–1978)* (2nd edn, Madrid, 1979).

⁷⁸ [Francisco Martínez de la Rosa et al.], 'Exposición del Consejo de Ministros á S. M. la Reina Gobernadora' (signed 4 Apr. 1834), preceding *Estatuto Real para la convocación de las Cortes Generales del Reino* (Madrid, 1834). The 'Exposición' was originally published in the *Gaceta de Madrid*; it should be noted that this document closely resembled the preamble to the French *Charte*, which, like the 'Exposición', presented precedents in French history as justification for its promulgation. For a valuable analysis of the preamble to the *Charte*, see Shirley Gruner, 'Political historiography in Restoration France', *History and Theory*, 8 (1969), pp. 347–360.

basis of historical precedent and custom, as well as practical efficacy.⁷⁹ 'The reunion of the Cortes is the only legal measure, recognized and sanctioned by immemorial custom (*costumbre*)', the 'Exposición' reads, 'which will silence unjust pretensions, pacify the warring parties', and serve as the foundation for 'future peace of the state'.⁸⁰

Martínez de la Rosa further signalled that his historical constitutionalism departed from that envisaged by his predecessors (and peers) at Cádiz in 1812, which he subsequently would deride as 'impractical' and 'fatal' for Spain.⁸¹ He insisted that the government need not 'disinter ancient institutions, however much they might have served our forebears in *siglos remotos*, amidst different circumstances'. Rather, he urged the 'application, with discernment and sanity, of the fundamental principles [embedded in] that legislation to the present society'. Otherwise, he warned, legislators would 'lose themselves in a labyrinth of conjecture and probability', in the thicket of esoteric legislation dredged up from antiquarian sources. What those who seek to frame constitutions must do, Martínez de la Rosa maintained, was to probe for, and grasp, 'the soul (*alma*)' of the ancient constitution. This 'soul' animating old legislation could be reduced to the fact that 'the classes and individuals who have a great stake in the *patrimonio comun* of society should have some influence in important matters (*asuntos graves*)'. Formerly, this role had been reserved to the nobility and clergy, but now the '*clases medias*', middle classes, this 'new political element', merited involvement.⁸²

The degree to which Martínez de la Rosa's constitutional ideas were related to, and consonant with, his literary theories, expounded upon in the paratextual elements of prologues and prefatory notes, as well as his historical drama *La conjuración*, deserves attention.⁸³ In his 'Notes on historical drama', published as a preface to his collected literary works in 1830, Martínez de la Rosa declared that chronicling and reconstructing historical events fell short of the playwright's principal task (as he firmly noted, 'the poet is not a chronicler; the end he sets himself is different, as are the instruments which are useful to him'). Rather, in the 'entrails of history', there existed a 'treasure trove of poetry' which the dramatist could 'discover and relate' to the audience. If the poetry uncovered in History's 'entrails' were presented well, it would 'move the heart', which was the 'best, if not the only, way to engage and

⁷⁹ Martínez de la Rosa made this point explicitly at the end of the 'Exposición': 'politics cannot be derived from abstract principles and various theories, but rather must be conceived as a practical measure to secure the tranquil possession of civil rights (*derechos civiles*)', pp. 30–1.

⁸⁰ Martínez de la Rosa, 'Exposición', p. 10.

⁸¹ Martínez de la Rosa, Nov. 1834, quoted in Pedro Pérez de la Blanca, *Martínez de la Rosa y sus tiempos* (Madrid, 2005), p. 282.

⁸² Martínez de la Rosa, 'Exposición', pp. 11–13.

⁸³ Villarroya claimed that Martínez de la Rosa's political and literary interests were unrelated, that the 'equilibrium and objectivity' displayed in the Royal Statute had 'little to do with the romantic extremism' of his dramas. See Villarroya, *El sistema político*, pp. 126, 448. This article disputes the claim made by Villarroya.

excite the interest [of the audience]'.⁸⁴ Martínez de la Rosa's approach to constitutions and historical drama thus overlapped significantly in this 1834 moment. With regard to constitutionalism, he urged not the assiduous reconstruction of old institutions, but rather the recovery of the principles inherent in them. Furthermore, those principles must resonate with and inspire contemporary society, whose members must be made aware of the political traditions to which they are the heirs. In historical drama, while historical knowledge is indispensable, he maintained that fidelity to the sources from which that knowledge is drawn was an objective subservient to the encapsulation and presentation of the 'soul' of the epoch, with which the dramatist elicits the audience's affective response.

Embedded in the 'Exposición' is a historical allegory, which linked the decline of representative government to Spain's present plight.⁸⁵ It conjectured that the regeneration of the Cortes, in a suitably updated and amended form, would galvanize the nation's renewal. Martínez de la Rosa credited the Cortes for Spain's 'age of prosperity and glory', and argued that once its 'force' was 'reduced and mutilated, it could not produce the old benefits or counteract malicious forces'. He lamented that the Cortes had been diminished to the point that 'it is a mere shadow of what it formerly was' and declared that the present age would not permit its continued obsolescence, a 'mere simulated Cortes'. Such a state of affairs, he warned, would neither provide the crown with sufficient 'cooperation and resources' nor satisfy the demands of the people (*pueblo*) for inclusion in government. As such, he suggested that royal authority be conceived, in a clear echo of Constant's *pouvoir neutre*, as the 'supreme moderator, [working] to prevent conflicts between two branches of the legislative power and to maintain them in balance'.⁸⁶

The remainder of the 'Exposición' to the Royal Statute is devoted to justifying bicameralism, the division of the Cortes into two estates (*estamentos*), *procuradores* and *proceres*.⁸⁷ The *proceres* 'form a barrier to the violent drives of the popular

⁸⁴ Martínez de la Rosa, 'Apuntes sobre el drama histórico' (1830), in Martínez de la Rosa, *Obras dramáticas*, ed. Jean Sarrailh (Madrid, 1933), pp. 408–9. Originally published in vol. v of the Didot (Paris) edition of *Obras Literarias*, published in 1830; in the prologue to another historical drama, *Aben Humeya*, he stressed a similar point, distinguishing between historical drama and history. Although the playwright sought to remain faithful to historical facts and to use details drawn from history ('local colour', in the phrase Hugo popularized, and Martínez de la Rosa invoked frequently), he should not 'attempt to maintain scrupulous fidelity to the sources demanded of a chronicle', but 'rather the character, the stamp of the epoch and nation that produced it'. See Martínez de la Rosa, 'Prólogo' to *Aben Humeya* (1830), in Martínez de la Rosa, *Obras dramáticas*, p. 175.

⁸⁵ He had broached the same subject more than two decades earlier. See Martínez de la Rosa, *La revolución actual de España, bosquejada* (Granada, 1813), pp. 11–12.

⁸⁶ Martínez de la Rosa, 'Exposición', pp. 14–15, 27. This authority, it must be said, was quite ample, extending to the convocation and dissolution of the *Estamentos*, on the *pouvoir neutre* in Constant's thought, see Biancamaria Fontana, *Benjamin Constant and the post-revolutionary mind* (New Haven, CT, and London, 1991), pp. 64–5.

⁸⁷ For a good analysis of the *Estatuto Real*, see Varela Suanzes-Carpegna, *Política y constitución*, p. 79.

elements, to guard liberty against both despotism and anarchy'. Martínez de la Rosa argued for the inclusion of the high nobility and ecclesiastical officials on the grounds that they would be 'essentially conservative', predisposed to preserve the status quo. As for the *procuradores*, since their primary function would be to 'represent the material interests of society', he proposed rather strict property/income qualifications.⁸⁸ It was this re-imposition of the estates in two chambers (recall that the 1812 Constitution was unicameral), the anxiety expressed about democratic (or popular) participation in politics, the deafening silence concerning the origins of sovereignty in the *Estatuto Real* (upon which the 1812 Constitution had been explicit), which led to the accusation that Martínez de la Rosa had betrayed liberalism. In the *Estatuto Real*, all reference to natural law was eliminated. There was no declaration of rights or statement concerning the division of powers. It purveyed a doctrine of shared sovereignty between the monarch and representative bodies, presenting it as the most essential aspect of Spain's historical constitution. The Royal Statute served to reinforce royal authority, undercut popular representation through bicameralism, and, by an accompanying electoral law, exchanged indirect and extensive suffrage for direct suffrage with a small number of electors. In the Royal Statute, Martínez de la Rosa claimed that he sought to make 'liberty' compatible with 'security and tranquility'. It was a vision of liberty, as he phrased in a contemporaneous parliamentary oration, as a '*grave matrona*' who 'neither humbles herself in the face of political power nor stains herself with disorder'.⁸⁹

In addition to countless parliamentary interventions, Martínez de la Rosa defended and refined his apology for a revamped mixed monarchy in a multi-volume history of the revolutionary period, entitled *El espíritu del siglo* (Spirit of the century), the first volume of which was published in 1835 (eventually it ran to eight volumes, published steadily over twenty years). The first volume, in particular, suggests the utility of studying works of history in conjunction with historical drama in order to recover the political thought of the period. Martínez de la Rosa described his undertaking as 'a course of politics applied to contemporary affairs', asserting that the nineteenth century was marked by its distrust of theory ('theories born from the imagination have given way to the examination of facts') and that, since extremes had been 'discredited', the present generation's task was to provide a durable solution to the conundrum 'what are the measures [needed] to best harmonize (*hermanar*) order with liberty?'⁹⁰ The answers, he believed, were to be sought in the

⁸⁸ Martínez de la Rosa, 'Exposición', pp. 18, 19, 26.

⁸⁹ Martínez de la Rosa, Oct. 1834, quoted in Pérez de la Blanca, *Martínez de la Rosa*, p. 132; compare this image to other romantic anthropomorphized depictions of liberty. See Duff, *Romance and revolution*, p. 35.

⁹⁰ Martínez de la Rosa, *Espíritu del siglo*, 1 (Madrid, 1835), pp. v, xiii.

past, not in medieval kitsch, but in the recovery and revivification of a previous epoch's 'soul' or spirit.

Martínez de la Rosa thus sought guidance from the past, a period he conjured, embellished, and distorted for his various audiences, prior to the decline of representative institutions, and, significantly, prior to overseas imperial expansion. Martínez de la Rosa, then, gazing at a Spain shorn of its ultramarine territories, a decade after the military defeat at Ayacucho, which sealed Spain's withdrawal from its mainland Spanish American empire, beheld Spain's future in its past. If not a past that was historically verifiable, then at least a poetic, imagined past that could, he hoped, elicit an affective response, and, like Rugiero in *La conjuración*, renew the old laws, purge corruption, and accomplish these things without recourse to popular participation.

V

In addition to literary works themselves, extra-textual elements surrounding the primary text and often signalling how it should be construed, were a ubiquitous mode of expressing political ideas in the Iberian Peninsula during the first half of the nineteenth century. An astounding array of authorial digressions were commonplace: prologues, prefaces, manifesto-style introductions, afterwords, appendices, and copious endnotes and footnotes. These heterogeneous devices, which may be lumped together and referred to as 'paratext', were mechanisms for linking literary and political ideas. One key idea conveyed in romantic liberal paratexts was that unencumbered expression was the precondition of other forms of liberty. Unfettered expression was conceived not only narrowly, as the absence of interference from state and ecclesiastical censorship, or the informal pressures exerted by a society's restrictive mores. Instead, it was understood more expansively, as expression characterized by 'naturalness' and 'spontaneity', achievable only when various types of dependence had been removed.

What were the forms of dependence from which romantic liberals strove to extricate themselves? Undoubtedly, dependence arose from making the intellect subservient to rules and conventions, like the classical unities, a common romantic gripe. For Spanish and Portuguese romantic liberals, there was another type of dependence, which they maintained was even more pernicious: slavish over-reliance on foreign models and excessive veneration of literature produced in other languages. The struggle against this type of dependence was, in a sense, a proxy struggle, against other types of occupation, an extension of the War of Independence (1808–13) against Napoleon's armies 'by other means'.⁹¹ By extirpating purportedly malicious, 'foreign' influences (the

⁹¹ On notion of literature as revolution 'by other means', see Paul Hamilton, "'Realpoetik': revolution by other means in European romantic Restoration thought", *History of European Ideas*, 38 (2013), pp. 370–86.

insinuation of which, in the Spanish case, was thought to have accelerated with the replacement of the Habsburg by the Bourbon dynasty in the early eighteenth century), purging the language of gallicisms, and reviving long-defunct national literary traditions, Iberian romantic liberals understood themselves as engaged in literary acts of national self-determination. All of which, they argued, would lay the groundwork for national regeneration. The independent literary imagination, now beholden to no extra-national or linguistic forces, would underpin and expedite the nation's political renewal. In the 1830s, these were not abstract musings: not only were the memories of the Napoleonic occupation and then the French reinstallation of absolutism (and the exile it instigated) in 1823 still vivid, but the debate over the 1834 Quadruple Alliance, which sanctioned further foreign intervention, made clear that national sovereignty remained under duress.⁹²

A prime example of this type of romantic paratext is Alcalá Galiano's 'Prólogo' (prologue) to Duque de Rivas's *El moro expósito* (1834), which was first published anonymously.⁹³ He broadsided sixteenth-century Spanish poetry as 'imitative' and maligned its lack of 'originality' or capacity to 'excite' its readers. But he reserved more lethal venom for the 'classicists' associated with Louis XIV's France, who arrogated to themselves the title 'classical', which was nothing more than 'the taste of their country and their age', instead of Antiquity. From Antiquity, Alcalá Galiano argued, the French borrowed merely the external forms for their own compositions. Vigorous adherence to these forms eviscerated the creativity of France's writers, producing merely 'severe', 'cold', and 'sterile' art, which the Bourbon dynasty carried across the Pyrenees following its victory in the War of Spanish Succession (1701–14). It is the eighteenth-century Spanish imitators of French 'classicism' ('who merely made copies of copies') who are lambasted most savagely by Alcalá Galiano. These writers were not 'inspired, original, or natural'.⁹⁴

Alcalá Galiano already had taken up this theme on an earlier occasion. In his aforementioned inaugural lecture at the University of London, he specified the damage such imitation had wrought: 'the Spanish language of our present times is visibly adulterated by Gallic words, and, which is worse still, by Gallic syntax'.⁹⁵ The pernicious effect, in Alcalá Galiano's view (as expressed in the 1834 prologue to Rivas's play), underpinned his admiration of German romanticism, which he believed acknowledged that 'there were many different paths to literary perfection, and each [nation] must follow that best suited to its own

⁹² On the Quadruple Alliance, see Roger Bullen, 'France and the problem of intervention in Spain, 1834–1836', *Historical Journal*, 20 (1977), pp. 363–93.

⁹³ [Alcalá Galiano], 'Prólogo', to Don Ángel de Saavedra [Duque de Rivas], *El moro expósito, ó Córdoba y Búrgos en el siglo décimo, leyenda en doce romances*, 1 (Pamplona, 1834), p. ix; further along in the 'Prólogo', he argued that romanticism and classicism were 'arbitrary divisions in whose existence I do not believe', p. xxvii.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. xiv, xviii–xx.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 'Inaugural', p. 10.

situation and customs'. After praising the English Romantics and Victor Hugo, Alcalá Galiano argued that it was necessary to 'remove the obstacles' which impeded the progress of Spanish literature. He called for literature to start from an 'examination of our passions, and internal turbulence' and express 'vehement and sincere' feelings. He urged them to take up historical subjects, identifying the 'middle ages' as a 'fertile field, long ignored by our poets', and praised Rivas for taking up this theme. Above all, though, Alcalá Galiano admired Rivas's drama for he 'wrote verse (*versificar*) as best he could, following his feelings and obeying spontaneous inspiration, not imitating that which the most celebrated foreigners have done'.⁹⁶

These were lofty sentiments, but economic reality often prevented playwrights from heeding them. Writers of original plays were paid a pittance. In Spain, many resorted to translating French plays for the Spanish stage, which often proved a better remunerated undertaking. Nor was this situation new. As early as 1819, during his travels in Spain, John Bowring had lamented that 'the national taste, or the national indifference, has chosen to sanction or permit the puerile trifles imported from the other side of the Pyrenees to occupy the seats which might be so much more honorably filled by native genius'.⁹⁷ In the words of one disgusted observer, 'the mania for translations has reached its height. Our nation, in other epochs so original, is not anything more today than a *nación traducida*.'⁹⁸ It was precisely this situation Alcalá Galiano sought to transform through his invective-laden and imploring paratexts.

The epigraph to Rivas's play was taken from the preface to *Adosinda*, a romance attributed to a 'JB Garrettes'. In that 1828 preface, Almeida Garrett, a Portuguese politician, playwright, and poet,⁹⁹ described his ambition to revive 'our primitive and eminently national poetry'. In that poetry, Almeida Garrett contended, one encountered 'a different style, a different mode of seeing, perceiving, and representing, [one which is] freer, more eccentric, more fantastical, more irregular and, for this reason, more natural in many respects'. For this reason, he claimed, 'romanticism is not in any sense new for us'.¹⁰⁰ Rivas may have earned Alcalá Galiano's approbation for the historical

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 'Prólogo', pp. xxii, xxvii, xxix.

⁹⁷ [John Bowring], *Observations on the state of religion and literature in Spain, made during a journey through the peninsula in 1819* (London, 1819), p. 15.

⁹⁸ Mesonero, quoted in Gies, *Theatre in nineteenth-century Spain*, p. 91.

⁹⁹ Almeida Garrett was elected to the lower chamber (*Camara dos Deputados*) of parliament and subsequently to the upper chamber (*Pares*) for Braga, Lisbon, Angra (Azores), and Beira in 1837, 1839, 1840, 1841, 1846–52.

¹⁰⁰ Preface ['Ao Sr. Duarte Lessa'] (1828) to *Adosinda*, in *Obras de Almeida Garrett*, 1 (Oporto, 1966), pp. 1748–9, 1751. Many scholars have noted Almeida Garrett's contradictions, including his ambiguous relationship with romanticism. Nevertheless, he is generally considered to have introduced many of its tenets into Portuguese literature, even in his ostensibly, and self-declared, 'classical' phase. Helder Macedo, for example, offered the following compilation of his contradictions: 'conservative revolutionary, classicist romantic, narcissistic altruist,

setting of his drama and the ‘spontaneity’ of his verse. But he did not initially heed the call to return to the origins of Spanish national literature for inspiration, to its poetry folklore, songs, and ballads. Almeida Garrett did precisely that.

Like Alcalá Galiano, Almeida Garrett heaped opprobrium on the imitation of foreign fashions.¹⁰¹ He lamented the glut of French translations into Portuguese, which had the effect of ‘making [French] the model and exemplar of everything; depreciating that of the Portuguese, whose own style, spirit, and genius (everything that is national) has disappeared’. He argued that it was necessary to study other languages, but ‘without following any school, learning from all of them, without deluding or confusing them with our own, national language’.¹⁰²

After the conclusion of the Portuguese Civil War in 1834 and amidst an active political career, Almeida Garrett pursued this theme further in the ‘Introduction’ to his second volume of the *Romanceiro* (published in 1845–6), a collection (and re-working in many cases) of popular songs, narratives in verse (*xácaras*), romances, and ballads (*solaís*), primarily drawn from the late medieval and early modern period. He began his ‘Introduction’ with the stark declaration ‘I want to do something useful, [to write] a popular book ... to popularize the study of our early literature, drawn from [Portugal’s] oldest and most original documents, and thus launch a literary revolution in the country.’¹⁰³ In what would this ‘revolution’ consist? The literary revolt would free Portugal, Almeida Garrett ventured, from the ‘oppressive, anti-national dominion’ and encourage Portugal’s ‘talented youth’ to desist from ‘imitating foreigners’ and, instead, to ‘study our primitive poetical sources, both *romances* in verse and *legendas* in prose, fables, and old beliefs, customs and old superstitions’. It was here, he argued, that one encountered ‘the true Portuguese spirit’, which he defined unambiguously as ‘the people and its traditions, its virtues and vices, its beliefs and its erroneous judgments’.¹⁰⁴ Extirpating foreign loan words from the language, casting aside stultifying rules and constraining metrical

puritan sensualist, moralist without morals’. See Macedo, ‘Garrett no romantismo Europeu’, in Ofélia Paiva Monteiro and Maria Helena Santana, orgs., *Almeida Garrett. Um romântico, um moderno*, 1 (Lisbon, 2003), p. 35.

¹⁰¹ Almeida Garrett, Preface to *Lírica de João Mínimo* (1828), in *Obras*, 1, pp. 1497–8; Madame de Staël distinguished between romanticism as poetry of northern Europe, of Ossian, and southern Europe synonymous with Homer and classicism more generally, in her 1813 *De L’Allemagne*, a distinction which entered thereafter into the mainstream.

¹⁰² Almeida Garrett, *O Cronista*, 1 (4 Mar. 1827), pp. 15–17, quoted in Álvaro Manuel Machado, ‘Almeida Garrett e o paradigma romântico europeu: modelos e modas’, in Monteiro and Santana, orgs., *Almeida Garrett*, 1, pp. 44–5. In the introduction to the *Lírica de João Mínimo*, Almeida Garrett bluntly stated that ‘to imitate foreign works and reject those of one’s own nation is ignorant and stupid’, in *Obras*, 1, p. 1497.

¹⁰³ Almeida Garrett, ‘Introdução’, *Romanceiro*, II, p. 49 (n.b. originally published, as serial of five articles, in the *Revista Universal Lisbonense* (1845–6)).

¹⁰⁴ Almeida Garrett, ‘Introdução’, *Romanceiro*, II, pp. 50, 54–5.

conventions, and renewing and reinvigorating the language with the poetry recovered from the purportedly primeval past was a precursor, Almeida Garrett contended, to a new phase of national regeneration. Only after various forms of cultural-linguistic dependence had been exposed, identified, and eliminated would the liberal protection of speech, expression, and press become truly valuable.

Though secondary and posterior to cultural independence, legal protection against interference was necessary for reborn national culture and political liberalism to flourish. For Almeida Garrett, freedom of the press was the guarantee without which political regeneration, embodied in the constitution, would founder.¹⁰⁵ He was not alone in this belief. The Spanish poet Espronceda, for example, further contended that officialdom's meddling in literature, its good intentions notwithstanding, always produced pernicious results. He did not deny that politics might influence poetry, but he maintained that this influence occurred 'by means of a mystical union [the results of which] cannot be foreseen'. He concluded that contemporary government could assist the arts, not through protection, but rather by abstaining from interference: 'independence is a better muse than patronage'.¹⁰⁶ Rivas, too, took up the theme in his inaugural address to the recently founded *Ateneo de Madrid* in December 1835. 'To think, it is necessary to be free', he began. Rivas contrasted the state-sponsored and supported academies (and other institutions) of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century France with the analogous ones founded in Britain during the same period. He claimed that the French academies and societies produced fewer lasting results than those which were formed 'spontaneously', as in England, 'in the beneficent shadow of liberty'. Dismissing the intellectual products of the French academies as 'flowers grown in the royal hothouse for the [exclusive] pleasure of its courtesans', he compared them unfavourably with those produced by the British academies and learned societies, the 'fresh and sturdy flowers which sprouted in the open air of the forests'.¹⁰⁷ For romantic liberals, then, freedom of expression took two, mutually reinforcing, forms: first, the absence of dependence on other national cultures and languages; and, second, expression unencumbered by, and protected against, the regulatory and censorial apparatus of the state.

¹⁰⁵ 'All the goods are null and void, all of the principles and effects of the constitution are uncertain, without a certain measure, the most efficacious and most important guarantee of all of the constitution's magnificent promises ... everything will be a chimera without this [freedom]'; see Almeida Garrett, 'Carta de guia para eleitores em que se trata da opinião pública, das qualidades para deputados e do modo de as conhecer' (9 Sept. 1826), in Almeida Garrett, *Obras*, 1, p. 1084.

¹⁰⁶ Espronceda, 'Influencia del gobierno sobre la poesía', *El Siglo*, 12 (28 Feb. 1834), in Espronceda, *Obras*, pp. 1250–1.

¹⁰⁷ Speech of the Duque de Rivas (6 Dec. 1835), published in *Ateneo Científico y Literario: sesión inaugural del 6 de Diciembre de 1835* (Madrid, 1835), quoted in Angel Garrorena Morales, *El Ateneo de Madrid y la teoría de la monarquía liberal* (1836–47) (Madrid, 1974), pp. 41–2.

VI

The advent of the July Monarchy in France made geopolitically feasible important political changes in the Iberian Peninsula. It facilitated the victory of the constitutionalists in the Portuguese Civil War by 1834. In Spain, following the death of Ferdinand VII in 1833, many Spanish liberals returned from exile, emboldened by an international conjuncture more favourable to their ambitions. The regent, the widowed Queen María Cristina, was drawn into a rapprochement of sorts with these returnees, as she cobbled together allies to fend off the armed threat posed by the pretender Don Carlos, her late husband's brother. At different times and for different reasons, the new liberal regimes launched massive programmes of disentailment and disamortization in the mid-1830s, which predictably fuelled a major, often bellicose, reaction.¹⁰⁸ In Portugal, the reform programme was closely associated with José Xavier Mouzinho da Silveira (ably assisted by Almeida Garrett). In Spain, disentailment was most closely associated with the ministry of Juan Álvarez Mendizábal, under whom monastic property was put up for sale in early 1836.¹⁰⁹ Besides fanning the flames of the Spanish Carlists' and Portuguese Miguelists' indignation, these massive reforms also sparked a critique of liberalism from within its own ranks, articulated best by several leading romantics. The policy fed their own disenchantment with the pervasive enthrallment to the market and economic individualism they discerned in their political brethren. Romantic liberals, in short, sought to expose liberalism's severe limitations, especially the shallowness of its historical and social imagination.¹¹⁰

One such critique came from Espronceda, a poet and parliamentarian, best known to his contemporaries for his long narrative poem *El estudiante de Salamanca* (1836–40) and the overtly political poetry he authored during his exile. Long preoccupied with the theme of social exclusion in his poetry, in which socially marginal types figure prominently, he turned to overtly political genres in 1836.¹¹¹ In two publications, a long newspaper article and a

¹⁰⁸ This subject, and cognate subjects, has attracted some excellent historical work: for Portugal, in general, see Nuno Monteiro, *O crepúsculo dos grandes: a casa e o património de aristocracia em Portugal (1750–1850)* (Lisbon, 1998); and *Elites e poder: entre o Antigo Regime e o Liberalismo* (2nd edn, Lisbon, 2007); for Spain, see Peter Janke, *Mendizábal y la instauración de la monarquía constitucional en España (1790–1853)* (Madrid, 1974); the most recent historiography for Spain has been summarized in Mary Vincent, *Spain, 1833–2002* (Oxford, 2007), pp. 16–19.

¹⁰⁹ He would be toppled by a coup d'état led by more conservative-leaning liberals, who were, in turn, turned out of office. It was then that the 1812 Constitution was reinstated, replacing Martínez de la Rosa's Royal Statute, before it was, in turn, superseded by the 1837 Constitution.

¹¹⁰ As Iarocci has argued, '[Romanticism] was not simply part of the machinery of liberalism. It was also the ghost in that machine, a sort of pained bad conscience that accompanied the upheavals of liberal modernity'; see *Properties of modernity*, p. 47, though Iarocci does not study these episodes recounted here, his arguments are applicable.

¹¹¹ Ginger, *Liberalismo*, pp. 94–5.

pamphlet, respectively, he berated the Mendizábal ministry, which had staked its claim to legitimacy on its capacity to repair state finances and prosecute the Carlist War to a successful conclusion, for its obsessive attention to the fluctuation in the markets, and the equation of rise and fall of the stock market with the nation's fortunes.¹¹² The ministers had mesmerized themselves with their calculations, estimates, and projections, with the policies they had concocted, Espronceda asserted. Yet, scant attention had been paid to the effects on the greater part of the population, while speculators benefited immensely.¹¹³ Espronceda claimed that the failure to 'interest the *masas populares* in the [project of] political regeneration and encouraged them to identify' with liberalism had been one of the 'most prejudicial errors' committed during the 1820–3 period, the last instantiation of the 1812 Spanish Constitution. He concluded that 'the word "liberty" is beautiful and sonorous, but devoid of sense for the rude *pueblo* which understands only its own material interest'.¹¹⁴

Espronceda's chief criticism of Mendizábal's ministry, however, was its failure to comprehend the popular gravitation toward, and tenacious loyalty to, what he derided as 'despotism'; that is, Carlism and cognate neo-absolutist ideologies more generally. Economic calculus would not aid Mendizábal in this respect, the poet averred. Instead, he turned to the Spanish proverb, 'mas vale malo conocido que bueno por conocer' (corresponding approximately to the English expression 'better the devil you know than the devil you do not know'), concluding that 'if the government had examined the ideas contained in this proverb, and had sought to make the *bueno* [i.e. liberalism] known, it would not remain unknown now'. The 'philosophical history of the Spanish *pueblo*', he concluded, was found in its popular refrains, proverbs, and sayings: 'to govern this people one must study the philosophy contained therein carefully, because it resembles no other'.¹¹⁵ The problem with Mendizábal's policy, he argued in the newspaper article, was that it 'converted' politics into a 'purely mercantile affair', reducing the complexities of government to the *Bolsa*, 'the stock market', even though, as Espronceda noted, with awkward prescience for the present historical moment, that no nation ever 'based its hopes for the future on the rise and fall of stocks'.¹¹⁶ Thus, for Espronceda, the market could not be substituted for politics. Politics always must reckon with folk

¹¹² The decree authorizing the sale of monastic properties was published on 8 Mar. 1836.

¹¹³ In fairness to Mendizábal, the political 'package' he promised seemed reasonable, if ambitious, to solve the fiscal conundrum, meet the challenge of Carlism, and avert revolution 'from below': the expansion of the franchise, the elimination of the *estamentos*, the exclusion of D. Carlos from Spain, disentanglement, and the abolition of seigneurial jurisdiction. For a summary in English, see Burdiel, 'Myths', p. 907.

¹¹⁴ José de Espronceda, *El Ministerio Mendizábal* (Madrid, 1836), pp. 19–20.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

¹¹⁶ José de Espronceda, 'El Gobierno y la Bolsa', *El Español*, 128 (7 Mar. 1836), in Espronceda, *Obras*, p. 1289–90; the best treatment of Espronceda's thought remains Robert Marrast, *José de Espronceda y su tiempo: literatura, sociedad y política en tiempos de romanticismo*, trans. L. Roca (Barcelona, 1989).

traditions, history, local contexts, popular prejudices, and related phenomena, things unaccounted for on the balance sheet. This was a case, then, in which romanticism might furnish insights to rescue liberalism from its own excesses and blindness.

Espronceda's views found numerous echoes in Spanish and Portuguese political society. Rivas, in an 1838 speech to the Spanish Senate, lambasted the economic policy of Mendizábal's administration.¹¹⁷ He was outraged that the only beneficiaries of the reforms, he claimed, were 'a dozen of immoral speculators, who benefit from public's misery'. But his fury was not limited to the public's failure to benefit materially. He lamented that 'there have disappeared many monuments, the pride of the arts; and, in this demolition of monuments, the loss of considerable capital, that of the labourers who made them, which the narrow-minded economists do not know how to calculate'.¹¹⁸

A similar critique percolated in Portugal at the same time. Alexandre Herculano, the liberal journalist and historian, harboured misgivings about the unintended repercussions of newly introduced political and economic liberty. These sentiments already had been expressed in his youthful (and perhaps best-known) 1836–7 work, *A voz do profeta*, a curious poetical blend of Old Testament prophesy and political polemic, which not incidentally contained myriad romantic images and invocations (e.g. impending catastrophe, macabre, horror, and exaggerated phrasing): 'The dream of liberty, the dream of my youth, this fount of poetry and heroic action, became for me a tiresome nightmare'. There were many reasons for the dejection articulated in *A voz do profeta*, but the chief one was the pervasive and progressively irreligious (sacrilegious, blasphemous, and, above all, immoral) behaviour he claimed to observe in Portugal.¹¹⁹ As in Mendizábal's Spain, the radical reforms of Mouzinho da Silveira further unhinged Portuguese society in the 1830s. One of its effects, Herculano claimed, was to leave monuments – a capacious term encompassing monasteries, religious buildings, small palaces and castles, pilgrimage sites – unprotected, vulnerable to looting and other forms of vandalism, where they were not neglected entirely.

In a series of articles, at first published anonymously, in *O Panorama*, in 1838–9, he appealed for the government's protection of these *monumentos* in order to stave off further destruction. Herculano identified many complex reasons for their dire state, not least the corruption of taste that had occurred in the eighteenth century, which meant that his generation could not 'comprehend the

¹¹⁷ Rivas had been a political enemy of Mendizábal and had conspired to oust him from power in 1836, as a result of which he joined newly installed ministry of Francisco Javier de Istúriz, together with his long-time political and literary collaborator Alcalá Galiano.

¹¹⁸ Duque de Rivas, 'Discurso parlamentario [en defensa de Bienes Eclesiásticos]', 1 Mar. 1838, in Alberto Derozier, ed., *Escritores políticos Españoles (1789–1854)* (Madrid, 1975), pp. 282–4.

¹¹⁹ Alexandre Herculano, *A voz do profeta*, in Herculano, *Opúsculos*, 1 (5th edn, Lisbon, n.d.), pp. 64, 76–7 (n.b. split-text format; the citation is taken from the original *O Panorama* text).

sublime majesty of the Middle Ages'.¹²⁰ He argued that their lack of protection resulted from not only the absence of comprehension, but, more importantly, from a liberal ambition to erase the past, to raze old foundations, and erect a new Portugal unmoored to its historical patrimony. Yet Portugal, Herculano insisted, was 'covered with mementos of the past: every historical fact was embodied in a church, a house, a monastery, a castle, a wall, or a sepulchral stone', which survived to document a given historical act, fact, or personage. Liberalism's disdain and neglect threatened to destroy the things which 'remained immobile in the midst of thousands of changes' and belonged to every political party, 'indubitable testimony to that we were an ancient, glorious, and prosperous nation'. To allow such monuments and buildings to decay or to become despoiled, Herculano argued, led inexorably to barbarism: 'Art, the remnants of the past, the memories of our parents, the conservation of things whose loss is irremediable, national glory, the past and the present, the works most stimulating to human understanding, to history and religion ... these things matter.'¹²¹ Like Espronceda and Rivas, then, Herculano expressed a romantic liberal distrust of market mechanisms and untrammelled economic individualism, often aided and abetted by the liberal state in the 1830s.

VII

With regard to France, it has been argued that romanticism 'led post-revolutionary liberalism to seek the solution to its perplexities in literary creation'.¹²² But such a view neglects the possibility that, in Spain and Portugal at least, literary creation itself may have altered liberalism's trajectory or provided liberalism, at certain times and in some places, with many of its arguments, tropes, images, modes of expression, appealing genres, and intellectual fashions. Or that, instead of 'solutions', the fleeting conjugation of liberalism and romanticism generated fresh 'perplexities', created new, unforeseen cleavages, instigated disquieting internal criticisms, and revealed the complexities, or, alternatively, deficiencies and shallowness, of traditional liberalism's concepts of dependence, interference, and constitutionalism.

What do the individuals and texts treated in this article suggest about the history of liberalism more generally? This article has provided new evidence to support the view that liberalism was multi-faceted and polycentric in nature in the first half of the nineteenth century. Instead of calling for recognition of a broader liberal tradition, however, fresh doubt has been cast on the existence of a single, common, or shared liberal tradition. Iberian political thought in the second quarter of the nineteenth century was a palimpsest upon which

¹²⁰ A. Herculano, 'Monumentos pátrios' (1838–9), in Herculano, *Opúsculos*, 1, p. 186.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 192, 195, 200.

¹²² Manent, *Liberalism*, p. 92.

multiple convergent historical traces were superimposed.¹²³ Pan-European literary romanticism jostled with contemporary Franco-British economic and political doctrines on the terrain of medieval and early modern Iberian juridical traditions, into which was interpolated the political thought spawned by the Ibero-Atlantic Age of Revolutions. Recognition of this hybridity begs the question of whether Iberian romantic liberalism (or indeed any type of liberalism) should be considered part of a single tradition in which there are merely slight 'variations on a small set of distinctive themes'.¹²⁴

The study of romantic liberalism also can shed insight on nineteenth- and twentieth-century politics in Spain and Portugal. Romantic liberals' preoccupations with a glorious past, 'spontaneity' (supposedly discoverable in that past), and the perils of unbridled markets could ossify into an inwardly directed cultural nationalism, if not chauvinism, impervious if not hostile to exogenous forces. These and similar ideas could become converted into an apology of the political status quo, a romance of order, national 'exceptionalism', an emotional anti-intellectualism, an over-valorization of folk traditions yet denigration of the popular capacity for self-government.

Such a transmutation would have horrified the political writers treated in this article, who sought to rescue what they called 'liberalism' from the excesses spawned by its adherents. With the benefit of hindsight, however, it is possible to glimpse romantic liberalism's unintended, unwitting contributions to the cultural substratum of twentieth-century political ideologies they likely would have reviled. In the writings of the avatars of romantic liberalism discussed in this article, it is possible to recover a humanistic, backward-gazing, anti-technocratic, ambivalently secular, unapologetically erudite, auto-critical liberalism. These were liberals unsatisfied with freedom from interference as the chief aim of political and economic life.

¹²³ The author is indebted to Professor Richard Drayton for assistance in developing this formulation personal communication (25 Apr. 2013). See also Drayton, 'Synchronic palimpsests: work, power, and the transcultural history of knowledge', in Klaus Hock and Gesa Mackenthun, eds., *Entangled knowledge: scientific discourse and cultural difference* (Münster, 2012), pp. 31–50.

¹²⁴ John Gray, *Liberalism* (2nd edn, Buckingham, 1995), p. xiii; a more recent general account of liberalism shares a disquiet similar to that expressed in this article. See Paul Kelly, *Liberalism* (Cambridge, 2005), p. 18.