

THE 'ROMANCE' IN SENDER'S 'RÉQUIEM POR UN CAMPEÑO ESPAÑOL'

Though no more than a long short story of 17,000 or so words, *Réquiem por un campesino español* has a place of honour in the canon of Ramón J. Sender, having been described by its author as 'más cerca de mi corazón que otros libros míos'¹ and acclaimed by its most thorough commentator to date as 'su más acabada realización'.² That Sender should have felt an attachment to this narrative of pathos set in the Civil War is hardly surprising, given his own involvement and the loss of both his wife and his brother at the hands of the Nationalists;³ but it is remarkable that material which goes straight to the heart of the tragic conflict should be handled with the consummate control and sober objectivity which makes *Réquiem* such a finished literary artefact. While many features combine to forge a classical tone in the work, one of the foremost, it seems to me, is the felicitous interspersing in the prose narrative of a *romance*. Admissible here on realistic grounds, in that the events of the Civil War gave this supreme form of popular poetry a new vogue,⁴ this *romance* not only serves to highlight and intensify thematic, temporal, and stylistic features in the prose, but is, as I wish to show, the matrix of the work's mythic dimension.

The *romance* is recounted in the text in the form of twelve fragments, all but one recited by the *monaguillo* who comes and goes between the church and the sacristy, where the village priest, Mosén Millán, sits recalling events in the life of Paco el del Molino, the hero of the *romance*. The only fragment not uttered aloud is the eighth, which is recalled in remorseful silence by the priest himself. The full text of the *romance* is as follows:

Ahí va Paco el del Molino,
que ya ha sido sentenciado,
y que llora por su vida
camino del camposanto.

(p. 11)⁵

... y al llegar frente a las tapias
el centurión echa el alto.

(p. 12)

... ya los llevan, ya los llevan
atados brazo con brazo.

(p. 18)

Las luces iban po'l monte
y las sombras por el saso ...

(p. 23)

¹ See the author's preface in Ramón Sender, *Mosén Millán*, edited by Robert M. Duncan (Lexington, 1964), p. v.

² Marcelino C. Peñuelas, *La obra narrativa de Ramón J. Sender* (Madrid, 1971), p. 137.

³ For biographical details see, for instance, C. L. King, *Ramón J. Sender* (New York, 1974), pp. 11 ff.

⁴ See the prologue by A. R. Rodríguez Moñino to *Romancero general de la guerra de España* (Madrid, 1937). Even at this early date there could be published 300 *romances*, collected mostly from newspapers, and chosen from 'una copiosa colección que casi les triplica en número' (p. 9).

⁵ All references are to the Destino/Ediciones 62 edition of Ramón J. Sender, *Réquiem por un campesino español* (Barcelona, 1980).

... Lo buscaban en los montes,
pero no lo han encontrado;
a su casa iban con los perros
pa que tomen el olfato;
ya ventean, ya ventean
las ropas viejas de Paco.

(p. 42)

... en la Pardina del monte
allí encontraron a Paco;
date, date a la justicia,
o aquí mismo te matamos.

(p. 46)

— Ya lo llevan cuesta arriba
camino del camposanto ...

(p. 64)

aquel que lo bautizara,
Mosén Millán el nombrado,
en confesión desde el coche
le escuchaba los pecados.

(p. 65)

Entre cuatro lo llevaban
adentro del camposanto,
madres las que tenéis hijos,
Dios os los conserva sanos,
y el Santo Ángel de la Guardia ...

(p. 76)

En las zarzas del camino
el pañuelo se ha dejado,
las aves pasan de prisa,
las nubes pasan despacio ...

(p. 92)

... las cotovías se paran
en la cruz del camposanto.

(p. 95)

... y rindió su postrer suspiro
al Señor de lo creado. — Amén.

(p. 104)

Much of the spirit of the old *romance* is caught here in the sparseness of presentation, and it displays many features typical of the tradition: placenaming; direct speech; confusion of tenses; echo lines, notably the fatalistic 'camino del camposanto'; rhythmic repetitions, such as 'ya los llevan, ya los llevan', 'ya ventean, ya ventean', with its standard 'ya actualizante';⁶ parallelisms, such as 'las aves pasan de prisa, | las nubes pasan despacio';⁷ a general emphasis upon movement, coupled

⁶ The phrase is Menéndez Pidal's and is noted, together with other points mentioned here, by C. Colin Smith, *Spanish Ballads* (Oxford, 1964), p. 37 and *passim*.

⁷ A beautiful example of parallelism, which also includes the motif of birds alighting, similar to Sender's *cotovías*, is found in the famous *romance* of Conde Arnaldos:

los peces que andan al hondo
arriba los hace andar,
las aves que andan volando
en el mástil las hace posar.

(*Spanish Ballads*, p. 209)

with the inevitability of the metaphorical *halt*; and, lastly, a sense of truncation, owing to the *monaguillo's* knowing only 'algunos trozos' (p. 11), which is of course perfectly in keeping with oral poetry's *fragmentismo*.

However, before discussing the bearing that these stylistic matters have upon the text, I shall first consider the broader implications of the *romance* as regards theme and structure. To begin with, it is clear that by having composed a *romance* about Paco the people show that they have their own way of honouring their hero, that is, a way distinct from that set down by the Church and, in particular, by the village priest, Mosén Millán. Indeed, their absence from the requiem Mass tacitly accuses Mosén Millán of complicity in Paco's downfall, while the fact that the priest is the only named person in the *romance* other than Paco — 'Mosén Millán el nombrado' (p. 65) — is tantamount to voicing the same accusation. Mosén Millán is sensitive to this verbal signal — 'el cura quería evitar que el monaguillo dijera la parte del romance en la que se hablaba de él' (p. 65) — and he sends the boy out on an errand at the critical moment, though the 'accusation' is then all the more poignant for the lines' being remembered by the priest in silence.⁸ As regards this central issue of remembering, it would seem that the villagers' absence from the Mass is in ironic accord with the theme of the priest's most recent service: 'Mosén Millán, el último domingo dijera usted en el púlpito que había que olvidar' (p. 47). Yet not only is Mosén Millán himself quite unable to forget, as is evident from no fewer than twenty-two instances of the verb *recordar* with the priest as subject,⁹ but it is also patently clear that the *romance* defies the priest's directive, since it is an oral piece which exists precisely through *memory*, a point emphasized by the boy's efforts, 'tratando de recordar' (p. 18; see also p. 42). Two forces are in conflict here, the people and the establishment: the *romance*, which, as is traditional, 'la gente sacó' (p. 11), enjoys a prophylactic anonymity and is in its collective authorship suggestive of an egalitarian principle, all of which contrasts pointedly with the hierarchical system of the Mass to be offered by Mosén Millán and for which three named persons offer to pay. In short, the *romance* is a very strong counterpoint to the Mass and it constitutes nothing less than the villagers' own secular requiem for Paco.

I now turn to some of the structural implications of the *romance*. It is apparent that the various interpolations have a decided influence upon the way we read the prose narrative, especially in the early sequences where the prose describes Paco's young life and the *romance* insists schematically on his death. This juxtaposition instigates a closed and fatalistic pattern, while its cyclical nature is further highlighted by having the *romance* recited by a *monaguillo*, once Paco's own role. Another of its effects is to produce an extremely fluid time-sense, for the temporal location of the *romance* bisects the 'present' — Mosén Millán in his sacristy — and the 'past' — Paco's youth — by referring to the culminating events of one year ago. Here the traditional instability of verb tenses in the *romance* is very functional. In essence it confuses past and present tenses: there are ten instances of past tenses (five imperfect, three

⁸ The power of naming is brought out in the prose: Paco's last words are 'El me denunció . . . Mosén Millán, Mosén Millán . . .', and the priest, 'oyendo su nombre', is for once unable to pray (p. 103). Again, in the text's penultimate sentence, 'Creía oír su nombre en los labios del agonizante caído en tierra: " . . . Mosén Millán"' (p. 105), which brings to a culmination the text's exploitation of the alliterative force of the priest's name.

⁹ See pp. 13, 14, 15, 18 (twice), 23, 41, 42, 46, 47, 52, 54 (twice), 56, 61, 63, 66, 76 (twice), 84, 89, 103. The noun *recuerdo* also applies (pp. 10, 17, 48, 95), and the verb *pensar/pensar en* often has the same force as *recordar*, for instance on pp. 48, 84, 89, 103, 105.

perfect, one preterite, and one imperfect subjunctive, 'bautizara', which is both morphologically and dialectally equivalent to the pluperfect indicative) and seventeen instances of the present tense. This fluctuation relates well to Mosén Millán's ruminations, while the predominance of the historic present — so typical of the traditional *romance* in its actualization of past events — further tips the scale of *olvidar-recordar* in favour of the latter, as is seen in the comment following the recitation of the third fragment: 'El monaguillo tenía presente la escena, que fue sangrienta y llena de estampidos' (p. 18). Similarly, the *romance* has the precise function of jogging Mosén Millán's memory, with the *monaguillo's* awareness of this being not entirely innocent. A definitive pattern emerges: the priest recalls a sequence of Paco's life; he returns to the present to ask if any villagers have arrived to attend the Mass; the *monaguillo* replies in the negative and then recites a piece of the *romance* which prompts further recall on the part of Mosén Millán, starting the cycle anew (see, for instance, pages 23, 42, and 76). In this way the *romance* both punctuates and links the segments of prose narrative, with a clear instance of its total integration in the text on the occasion when it functions as dialogue: 'don Gumersindo le preguntó: — Eh, zagal. ¿Sabes por quién es la misa? El chico recurrió al romance en lugar de responder . . .' (p. 64).

The specific details contained in each fragment of the *romance* are mostly taken up some time later in the prose: the 'centurión' (p. 12) and the tracker 'perros' (p. 42) are given narrative development (pp. 86 ff. and 88 respectively); 'justicia' (p. 46) becomes the 'tribunal' (p. 97); the 'confesión' (p. 65) is described in full (pp. 99–101); and finally, the intriguing 'pañuelo' of the *romance* (p. 92) is expanded to 'pañuelo' and 'reloj' (pp. 103 and 104). In two instances the prose precedes the *romance*, the baptism (pp. 13 ff. and 65) and the lyrical reference to 'cotovías' (pp. 51 and 95), a reversal which augments the elasticity of time-sense. Certain advantages accrue from having details — or pairs of references to the same events — separated from each other in the text. First, the reader's memory is also jogged, and he thus shares in Mosén Millán's central activity, remembering. Secondly, since events are usually depicted in the *romance* first and their amplification in the prose is considerably delayed, the reader is similarly embroiled in a suspenseful waiting, Mosén Millán's second most important activity, to judge from the several instances of the verb *esperar* with the priest as subject.¹⁰ The most decisive effect, however, which is perhaps so self-evident that it might be overlooked, is that the reader's awareness of detail is sharpened by this order of presentation which, as it were, puts the end first. We are invited to attend closely to the events of Paco's life, for, like Mosén Millán himself, we wish to know precisely what *caused* the ultimate tragedy. Thus, to an exceptional degree, temporal continuity is made subordinate to the notion of logical consequence, with each detail assuming prophetic or exemplary force. Sender adheres to the prescription meticulously, filling his text with indices of the most cardinal kind: Paco's sympathy for animals (p. 25), his prank with the revolver (pp. 26–27), and the high-spirited serenading which earned him a night in jail (p. 52) are all examples of minor events with seminal significance which find correspondence later in the text.

It is this sense of total signification which makes *Réquiem* such an impressive work. In poetry, notably the ballad, we are accustomed to assigning cardinal importance to each and every one of the handful of images and details introduced. That the same or something similar should happen in prose is perhaps not entirely unexpected in a

¹⁰ See, for instance, pp. 9, 10 (twice), 14, 23, 46.

work of this length, but there is no doubt that the process is intensified here by the presence of the *romance* which, being a perennial model itself, has the effect of relating the twentieth-century situation to an historical continuum in terms of both literature and politics. The confluence of times present and past is much assisted by the figure of the *centurión*, a strangely archaic military term used by the *Falange*, as the *monaguillo* senses: 'Eso del centurión le parecía al monaguillo más bien cosa de Semana Santa y de los pasos de la oración del huerto' (p. 12). Though *centurión* — leader of a *centuria*, one hundred men — is part of the vocabulary of the Civil War, Sender does not fail to exploit the parabolic connotations of the term, notably in the transparently biblical context of the three *reos* (pp. 99 ff.), and the parallel has a detemporalizing effect, increasing the sense of 'literariness'. The same applies to the entrance of Paco's *potro* into the church, a sequence which brings to a culmination the derealization, literariness, and what might be termed the 'romancification' of the prose; for this is a sequence in the spirit of ancient legends, which typically give prominence to the hero's horse, and in the magical mood of Carolingian and Novelesque ballads.¹¹ But the vital point is that these two conspicuous features — the *centurión* and the *potro* — are only symptomatic of a pervasive system of literariness, as will be seen from a brief consideration of the prose style.

Systematic repetition, so common in oral poetry, is the principle upon which the stylization and literariness of the prose is based, and it produces ultimately a language that is intensely formulaic in texture. Besides the repetitions centred on Mosén Millán which I have already noted — 'Recordaba Mosén Millán . . .', 'Pensaba el cura en Paco' (see note 9), to which might be added the enigmatic sign, 'Mosén Millán cerró los ojos' (p. 23; see also pp. 46, 47, 63, 64, 66, 91, 92) — there are many minor instances of formula. One is the traditional feature of stock epithets which are assigned, for instance, to the *potro*, 'que anda, como siempre, suelto por el pueblo' (p. 9), 'que solía andar suelto por el pueblo' (p. 93), and to the *centurión* in particular: 'hombre con cara bondadosa y gafas oscuras' (p. 87), 'El centurión de la cara bondadosa y las gafas oscuras' (p. 88), 'El centurión de la expresión bondadosa' (p. 89). Such epithets are virtually expanded appellations, of the type 'Paco el del Molino', and their original function in oral poetry of providing unambiguous and immediate identification applies with pointed exaggeration in the modern text. Indeed, the whole procedure of Sender's narrative magnifies the clarity of traditional story-telling almost to the point of pastiche. The telling of Paco's life, with its systematic focus upon baptism, youth, adolescence, courtship, and marriage, is a case in point; another is the recounting of the successive arrivals at the church of the three rich men who offer in turn to pay for the Mass (pp. 44, 66, 91), an orderly predictability akin to that of folk-tales. The three rich men also contribute to the formulaic texture of the language in their epithetic associations. Don Valeriano's identity is reinforced by references to his mayor's chain of office: 'una gruesa cadena de oro con varios dijes colgando que sonaban al andar' (p. 47); 'Don Valeriano arrollaba su cadena en el dedo índice y luego la dejaba resbalar. Los dijes sonaban' (p. 66); and this is elaborated in that one of the *dijes* curiously contains 'un rizo de pelo de su difunta esposa' (p. 66), 'el guardapelo de la difunta' (p. 70). Don Cástulo's identity and status are clarified by his ownership of a car which makes several

¹¹ The term 'realismo mágico' is applied to other novels of Sender by Francisco Carrasquer, *Imán y la novela histórica de Sender* (London, 1970), pp. 276 ff.

appearances — finally serving as a 'confesionario' (p. 99) — and which he offers as a sop first to the honeymoon couple, 'el señor Cástulo intervino, y ofreció llevarlos en su automóvil' (p. 59), and then to the Nationalists: 'lo llevaban en el coche del señor Cástulo. (Él lo había ofrecido a las nuevas autoridades)' (p. 99). Don Gumersindo has no such insistent attachment, for the point about his boots — 'se oían en la iglesia las botas de don Gumersindo. No había en la aldea otras botas como aquellas' (p. 64) — is not picked up again, though its Fascist implications are echoed in the actions of the intruders, who 'juntaban los tacones' (p. 87). Similarly, his pompous speech-mannerisms — 'como el que dice' (pp. 64, 65) — echo don Valeriano's affected 'desembolsar' (p. 47) and 'como quien dice' (p. 87), so that these indices tend to link Gumersindo to a class mentality rather than to characterize him distinctively. The three rich men are also linked by their successive and joint actions. Their departures from the village in the period of Paco's Anarchist government (pp. 76, 79) balance their arrivals at the church. In the final sequences they act in the most concerted unison: '[Mosén Millán] vio a los tres hombres sentados enfrente. . . . Las tres caras miraban impasibles a Mosén Millán' (p. 91); they are ashamed of having offered to pay for the Mass: 'Don Valeriano y don Gumersindo explicaban a Cástulo al mismo tiempo y tratando cada uno de cubrir la voz del otro que también ellos habían querido pagar la misa' (p. 92); together they expel the *potro*: 'Salieron los tres', 'Los tres hombres aseguraban que las puertas estaban cerradas', 'Salieron los tres con el monaguillo'; this done, they sit down to hear the Mass, 'Don Valeriano, don Gumersindo y el señor Cástulo fueron a sentarse en el primer banco' (p. 95). The syntactical order of this last sentence — Valeriano, Gumersindo, Cástulo — is one that has already been noted (p. 92), and it conforms both to the temporal order of their arrival at the church and to their place in the secular pecking-order. The reference to 'el primer banco', where the three would also undoubtedly have sat had the church been full, is now an ironic continuation of the 'lugares de honor' (p. 87) which Mosén Millán and Valeriano occupy in front of the whole village at the *ayuntamiento*, and of the 'presidencia' (p. 61) which Mosén Millán and Cástulo enjoy at the wedding — 'Sin darse cuenta habían ido situándose por jerarquías sociales' (p. 59) — a sign which has steadily grown more conspicuous since Mosén Millán's occupation of one of the 'cabeceras' (p. 17) at the baptismal celebration.

It is of course significant that there are three rich men, not only because they form a perverse trinity which will find correspondence in the three *reos*, Paco's Christlike passion,¹² but also because the very idea of number points up the mood of magic and superstition — personified in *La Jerónima* — and because number-superstition is itself such a traditional aspect of story-telling. Number is always imbued with meaning, and the specific number of times an event or sign is repeated creates mystery as well as factuality. Here number is consistently highlighted: for instance, when the three rich men stare impassively at Mosén Millán, 'las campanas de la torre dejaron de tocar con tres golpes finales graves y espaciados' (p. 91); Paco pleads the innocence of his fellow *reos* on three occasions (pp. 100–102), and, similarly, as though there were some set stipulation, he replies to Mosén Millán's question about repentance only when it is asked 'por cuarta vez' (p. 101). Number is

¹² Related topics are discussed by Cedric Busette, 'Religious Symbolism in Sender's *Mosén Millán*', *Romance Notes*, 12 (1970), 482–86.

part of the process of repetition, and insistence upon number creates syntactical formulae in the most innocuous of contexts:

Mosén Millán estuvo dos semanas sin salir de la abadía. (p. 69)

Mosén Millán estuvo dos semanas sin salir sino para la misa. (p. 104)

La pobre mujer [La Jerónima] . . . estuvo tres días sin salir. (p. 82)

Moving on more specifically to repetition, it is not difficult to find many instances embedded in the language. One clear pattern is established early by the movements of the *monaguillo* between the sacristy and the church:

Iba y venía el monaguillo . . . (p. 9)

El monaguillo iba y venía . . . (p. 11)

Entraba y salía el monaguillo . . . (p. 12)

But what is striking is that this same formula is applied to several other characters:

El padre del niño iba y venía. (p. 16)

[Paco] entraba y salía por las cocinas. (p. 24)

La madre iba y venía. (p. 40)

La Jerónima iba y venía. (p. 81)

Las idas y venidas de las mozas. (p. 60)

Vio ir y venir a la joven esposa. (p. 85)

Most significant, however, is that while this stock phrase may occasionally suggest nothing more than animation, in six of the above nine examples it has the express purpose of externalizing anxiety in the person or persons concerned, and it is in this sense a very clear verbal formula. As a formula it has the virtue of being succinct, and, as in oral poetry, it is this twofold pressure of the need for economy and clarity which gives rise to repetitious linguistic patterns, of the kind:

Terminada la ceremonia salieron. (p. 55)

Terminada la entrevista . . . (p. 75)

Espantado de sí mismo . . . se puso a rezar. (pp. 89-90)

and to parallelistic structures, such as:

Las mujeres con mantilla o mantón negro. Los hombres con camisa almidonada. (p. 15)

Nadie lloraba y nadie reía en el pueblo. Mosén Millán pensaba que sin risa y sin llanto . . . (p. 85)

On the question of repetition and clarity it is instructive to look at the way paragraphs begin. Those that begin with a proper name are excessively plentiful. A second type gives immediate definition to time: 'Al día siguiente' is one formula used (pp. 82, 86, 90), another is the simple use of *después*: 'Veintitrés años después . . .' (p. 41), 'Siete años después . . .' (p. 63), 'Tres semanas después . . .' (p. 67), 'Media hora después . . .' (p. 90), 'Un año después . . .' (p. 91), 'Momentos después . . .' (p. 98). There is also the somewhat vaguer variation, *más tarde*, 'Mucho más tarde . . .' (p. 23), 'Más tarde . . .' (p. 51) and 'Pocos días más tarde . . .' (p. 82). A third type of opening defines spatial location. These are too numerous to cite, but it will be clear from the following cluster that such openings approximate to the formulaic. I refer to three successive paragraphs which begin: 'En el caracol se decía . . .', 'En el pueblo de al lado estaban . . .', 'En los terrenos del duque había . . .' (p. 77). These straightforward openings, offering immediate identification of person, time, or place, are a further example of patterning by which means the text captures the traditional mode and spirit of story-telling.

Repetition, like number, is always meaningful, and in this case it is not difficult to see some of its correlative functions. Much of it bears on the central character, Mosén Millán, for repetition both results from and, in its excess, gives texture to his brooding fixations, confirming the unforgettability of his experience. More particularly, Mosén Millán's 'automatismo' in prayer (p. 10) and the way he executes his duties 'mecánicamente' (p. 101) is indicative of a *tedium vite*, his institutionalized mentality, which is corroborated in the linguistic metaphor of a systematic prose, itself a kind of ritual in story-telling. In the broader perspective, the mythic and archetypal tone which results from stylized repetition is very much a part of the book's 'message'. The book depicts, as Sender says, 'una de las causas del problema nacional español desde la remota Edad Media',¹³ and the *romance*, together with what I have called the romancification of the prose, is an accurate medium for conveying the timeless and protohistoric nature of this theme. In this connexion one thinks of Lorca's use of the *romance*, the point of the *centurión* in particular being made explicit in 'Reyerta':

El juez, con guardia civil,
por los olivares viene.
Sangre resbalada gime
muda canción de serpiente.
Señores guardias civiles:
aquí pasó lo de siempre.
Han muerto cuatro romanos
y cinco cartagineses.¹⁴

But if the confrontation is one which endlessly repeats itself in the Spanish context, it is also true that the moral issues pertaining to individuals — friendship, betrayal, and the like — are perennial ones which find their proper habitat in the stylized format, that is, in a *literature* which perforce polarizes Hero and Villain.

It is in this last sense that the literariness of the piece is most persuasive, for it ultimately condemns Mosén Millán and brands him the villain. Ambiguities which meticulously provide him with a defence are to no avail; all escape-routes are red herrings, for there can be no Jesus without Judas. It is pointless to speculate whether Mosén Millán consciously or unconsciously deceived the father into revealing Paco's hideaway. No matter what mitigating human weaknesses are present, the overwhelming congruity of the narrative demands that Mosén Millán is party to, and agent of, the 'trampa' (p. 85). It is a question of narrative coherence, of meaning and logic inherent in events which are consequential rather than simply consecutive. The condemnation of Mosén Millán is thus determined by the literary logic of this most traditional narrative language with its strong combinatory — one could almost say conspiratorial — tendency. That the precise meaning of certain combinations is not always clear or explicable is of lesser importance; what is important is that such parallels or correspondences exist. It would, for instance, be difficult to ascribe *meaning* to the continuous motif of sounds — 'campanas' (p. 12 etc.), 'matracas' (p. 31), 'bolas' (p. 45), 'cadenas' (p. 48), 'botas' (p. 64), 'yunques' (p. 84), 'tiros' (p. 102) — but the fact that strident and mostly metallic sounds stand out so regularly in the narrative is clearly *meaningful*. Precisely the same difficulty would

¹³ Ramón Sender, *Mosén Millán*, p. vi.

¹⁴ F. G. Lorca, *Obras completas* (Madrid, 1963), p. 429.

apply to the more pointed connexion between the stains associated with Mosén Millán, the 'mancha oscura' his head makes on the wall (pp. 12, 42) and the 'mancha de sangre' on his vestments (p. 104). Then again, the bloodstain seems mysteriously linked with the sign of the 'pañuelo' on the 'zarzas' (p. 92), while the 'zarzas' themselves are certainly a further echo of the 'fajo de ramitas de olivo' in the sacristy, and especially of the 'ramitas de un arbusto' (p. 9). Finally, this last bush, which holds a 'saltamontes atrapado', may make us think again about the 'pañuelo', about Paco, and even about Mosén Millán who is equally *trapped*. The combinations are exceptionally plentiful, but the main point is that such allusions and parallels are integrational factors which are accumulative in value and which pervade every aspect of the narrative style from its syntactical form to its verbal units and to its depiction of events. The fact that they exist is meaningful — more meaningful, that is, than the speculative interpretations they invite — for by existing they contribute to the total network and interdependence of signs from which emanates the sense of an inevitable narrative logic: specifically, in the final analysis, Mosén Millán's guilt.

The *romance*, as I hope to have shown, is no mere folkloric backdrop introduced for the purpose of adding *costumbrista* colour. Nor does it belong to that category of novelistic tricks, which usually take the form of discovered manuscripts or letters, whereby extraneous authorship seeks to create the illusion of authenticity or objectivity, reality as opposed to art, the author as author having disappeared. On the contrary, the veracity of the *romance* is put in doubt from the beginning: 'Eso de llorar no era verdad, porque el monaguillo vio a Paco, y no lloraba' (p. 11); and it is a quite different use of *folklorismo* and a different kind of objectivity which obtains. The *romance* puts *folklorismo* in the foreground with the precise effect of increasing our awareness of the piece as a literary artefact: we read the tale as a tale, twice, in fact. The catalytic interference of the *romance* in the prose narrative, recharging language-style, structure, and theme with its own ancient and traditional values, has the final purpose of emphasizing that our reading of the text or texts is a literary experience governed by certain rules. This, curiously, relieves Sender of partisanship, for when narrative with its primitive rules takes over, it is this rather than Sender which points the finger at Mosén Millán.

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