

BYRON IN ROMANTIC AND POST-ROMANTIC SPAIN¹

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The title of this paper seems to require a definition of Spanish Romanticism and post-Romanticism. What the terms Romanticism and post-Romanticism might mean in relation to Spanish literature has been a permanent debate among scholars. Spanish Romanticism as an aesthetic movement has been insistently questioned by many literary historiographers, adducing diverse and even opposed reasons and causes to support their albeit common agreement on its “failure”. It is generally assumed that it flourished late and had “too short a lease”. Spanish nineteenth-century literature, poetry in particular, is fascinating because of its complexity for the literary historian, its resistance to be reduced to limits, to be encapsulated and easily digested in pill form. An overview of the debate through the voices of reputed scholars of the period may illustrate the controversy.

The first usual reference when dealing with the development of Spanish Romanticism is to Edgar Allison Peers’ *A History of the Romantic Movement in Spain*. Peers considered that political causes are not a sufficient explanation for the “failure” of Spanish Romanticism. The problem, he argued, lay in the weakness of Romantic ideas among Spaniards. What he called the “Romantic revival” was “in the main a native development, and foreign influences upon it have often been given more than their due importance”.²

Sharing this idea of a failure of the movement, Vicente Llorens put his emphasis upon the persistence of Neoclassicism in the first decades of the nineteenth century. Thus, he began his study *El romanticismo español*³ with the debate on Calderón’s drama which was initiated in 1814 between Johann Nikolas Böhl von Faber and José Joaquín de Mora. Llorens then moved on to the study of the activities of the Spanish exiles during the so called “ominous decade” of the restoration of Ferdinand VII’s Absolutist Regime (1824 to 1834). He argued that the contact of the exiles with European Romanticism, the British in particular, gave way to their conversion to the new ideas. The real Romantic revolution, according to him, took place with the return of the exiles and the importation of British and French Romanticism. But it came when it was fading away abroad and new tendencies were appearing. Spanish writers were thus in a counter-current struggle that explains the sense of failure voiced by Mariano José de Larra and Antonio Alcalá Galiano, and the disappointment and subsequent rejection of “Romanticism” in favour of more “moderate” trends. Consequently, Llorens did not go beyond the first half of the nineteenth century in his study, which was somehow a reply to Peers. Llorens argued that the censorship of native and, above all, foreign Romantic works gave way to an anachronism through the implantation of foreign worn out models that caused the weakness of the movement.

The reply to Llorens came by the hand of Russell P. Sebold in his *Trayectoria del Romanticismo español*.⁴ Sebold tackled the problem approaching it from an aesthetic perspective and going directly to the questions of the concept and the chronology. Sebold’s concept of Romanticism is based upon the idea of the *Weltschmerz*, whose origins he finds in Lockean empiricism. To him, the first expression of this concept is found in the phrase “fastidio universal” (universal tedium) which appeared in a Spanish poem, “A Jovino el melancólico” (to the melancholic Jovino), by Juan Meléndez Valdés, one of the leading poets of the turn of the eighteenth century. In his more recent *Lírica y poética en España, 1536-1870*,⁵ Sebold propounds a hundred-year period for Romanticism in Spain, from 1770 to 1870, coexisting with Neo-classicist and Realist tendencies at different times, and, in certain cases, within the same writers. He divides Spanish Romanticism into four stages: a (pre-)Romanticism (1770-1800); a subterranean Romanticism (1800-1830), the time of political repression and exile in which Neoclassicists were favoured by power; a second Romanticism (1830-1860), much longer than what has traditionally been considered the heyday of Spanish Romanticism, usually limited to ten-fifteen years; and a post-Romanticism (1850-1870) which allows him to include, among others, such a central figure as Gustavo Adolfo Bécquer.

1: I want to thank Richard Cardwell and Peter Cochran for having read this paper and improved it with their learned comments and insightful suggestions.

2: I am quoting from the abridged version (*The Romantic Movement in Spain. A Short History*, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1968, p.25).

3: Vicente Llorens, *El romanticismo español* (Madrid: Fundación Juan March, 1979).

4: Russell P. Sebold, *Trayectoria del romanticismo español: desde la Ilustración hasta Bécquer* (Barcelona: Crítica, 1983).

5: Russell P. Sebold, *Lírica y poética en España, 1536-1870* (Madrid: Cátedra, 2003).

We find more extreme pronouncements that locate authentic Spanish Romanticism in the transitional years between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, taking the emblematic date of 1898 (loss of the last Latin-American colonies) as the starting point. This was Philip Silver's contention in his *Ruin and Restitution*.⁶ Silver considered the transcendence of the reception of some British Romantics by early twentieth-century writers such as Miguel de Unamuno, and the renewal process that took place in Spanish poetry at that time.

Leonardo Romero Tobar, in his thorough analysis *Panorama crítico del romanticismo español*,⁷ argued that the metamorphoses of Romantic discourse, since its earlier expressions until the adumbrations of symbolist poetry at the very end of the nineteenth century, were the various faces of artistic modernity and the tensions that were an intrinsic part of its birth and development. Spain is probably the Western European country where this thesis can be most plausibly proved. Iris M. Zavala claimed more than twenty five years ago in her introductory chapter to the volume *Romanticismo y Realismo*⁸ that the reception of foreign literatures is central to an understanding of the complexity of the process in Spain. Reception studies are constantly shedding light on the relevance of cultural exchange for Spain that began in the late eighteenth century. The analysis of this phenomenon is necessary to illuminate the intricacies of cultural development in nineteenth-century Spain.

From this perspective, the reception of some eighteenth-century writers and critics was central for a shift in the literary taste at the turn of the eighteenth century. Among the works that found their way into Spain, we find James Thomson's *The Seasons* and Thomas Gray's *Elegy*,⁹ which was immediately associated with Edward Young's *Night Thoughts*, already present in Spanish literature in the 1770s by means of José Cadalso's poetic adaptation *Noches lúgubres*, composed in the early 1790s though not serially published until 1789. The European rage for Ossian reached Spain in 1788 with translations of the poems *Carthom y Lathmon*.¹⁰ *Fingal* was translated in 1800.¹¹ The impact of these authors and their works is also notorious in native writers. Conspicuous echoes of the *Night Thoughts* are found in compositions by Cadalso's disciple Meléndez Valdés, who was to become the model for more vehement followers of Young or Macpherson such as Antonio Quintana and Nicasio Álvarez Cienfuegos, both very productive in the early nineteenth century. Central to this shift in literary style was the translation of Hugh Blair's *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres*, published between 1798 and 1801.

Among the early enthusiasts of Blair's treatise figure two great personalities of Spanish politics and literature in the first half of the nineteenth century, Antonio Alcalá Galiano and José Joaquín de Mora. In a biographical account, Alcalá Galiano relates the enthusiasm that Blair's text awoke among them.¹² Another crucial work for the formation of a Romantic style in Spain was Edmund Burke's *Philosophical Enquiry*, translated in 1807. These were the works from British literature that shaped the style of the early Spanish Ossianic poets, as they were termed during the first two decades of the nineteenth century. The denominations Romanticism, Romantic, Romantics were not associated with the new taste until 1818, in a new round of the debate between the German Nikolas Böhl von Faber and José Joaquín de Mora on the excellencies of Calderón's drama which had begun in 1814.¹³ Böhl von Faber was trying to introduce Schlegel's ideas in Spain. The debate had followed the well-known paths of the confrontation between Neoclassic and Romantic poetics: unities and decorum versus originality and genius. But the link of the Neoclassic tenets with the political revolutionary ideas of the Enlightenment that he abhorred was deeply fixed in Böhl von Faber's agenda since he associated Calderón's drama with the Spanish genuine national spirit, founded on Catholic and Monarchic ideals, which he found threatened by the French Enlightenment and Republicanism. In his first reply (*Mercurio gaditano*, 1814), Mora

6: Philip Silver, *Ruin and Restitution: Reinterpreting Romanticism in Spain* (Nashville, Tenn.: Vanderbilt University Press; Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1997).

7: Leonardo Romero Tobar, *Panorama crítico del romanticismo español* (Madrid: Castalia, 1994).

8: Iris M. Zavala, *Romanticismo y Realismo* (Barcelona: Crítica, 1982).

9: See Edgar Allison Peers, "Minor English Influences on Spanish Romanticism" (*Revue Hispanique* LXII (1924), 440-58).

10: James Macpherson, *Obras de Ossian, poeta del siglo tercero en las montañas de Escocia. Traducidas del idioma y verso gálico-céltico al inglés por el célebre Jaime Macpherson, y del inglés a la prosa y verso castellano* (José Alonso Ortiz trans., 1788). It was translated directly from the English.

11: James Macpherson, *Fingal y Temora, poemas épicos de Osíán, antiguo poeta céltico; traducido en verso castellano por Pedro Montengon*; tomo primero (Madrid: En la Oficina de Don Benito García y Compañía, 1800). As a matter of fact, only *Fingal* seems to have been translated.

12: See Chapter V (Part I) of his *Memoirs (Memorias de D. Antonio Alcalá Galiano*, Jorge Campos ed.), at Biblioteca Virtual Miguel de Cervantes: <http://bib.cervantesvirtual.com/servlet/SirveObras/01372742022460729977024/index.htm>. (Last accessed 22 July 2012).

13: For a detailed account of the controversy, see Camille Pitoulet, *La querelle caldéronienne de Johann Nikolaus Böhl von Faber et José Joaquín de Mora reconstituée d'après les documents originaux* (Paris: Alcan, 1909).

defended Neoclassic literary tenets and allowed himself an ideologically tinged criticism of Calderón's male characters who, he stated, appear as "assassins" escaping from Justice, robbing their friends' sisters, and stabbing their own sisters' lovers.¹⁴ This is obviously a criticism of the hypocrisy underlying the ideals of nobility and honour, the moral values on which Calderonian drama is based. It is also an implicit criticism of contemporary retrograde politics.

The restoration of Absolutism in Spain in 1823 obliged liberals to exile themselves to avoid prison or even death penalties. This was the case of intellectuals of the highest rank such as Alcalá Galiano, Mora, and Ángel de Saavedra, the later Duke of Rivas. Most of them found refuge in England. The obvious question would be, how much of Byron so far in Spain? The answer is: very little. We have a translation of *The Siege of Corinth* published in the periodical *La Minerva o El Revisor general* in 1818 and some passages from the third Canto of *Childe Harold*, translated by Mora. Notwithstanding his diatribes against Northern writers and Byron himself in his dispute with Böhl von Faber, Mora had made his first apologetic reference to Byron in Spain in his periodical *Crónica científica y literaria*, including translations of passages from *Childe Harold* III in 1818. Byron was presented by Mora as the most popular English poet, "whose muse sings afflictions unknown to common men and the pains of a melancholic fantasy".¹⁵ Mora also noted the difficulty of translating into Spanish prose "the beautiful verses of the English original".¹⁶ The translation is no more than half a page of various stanzas often without marking omissions. Mora was following a translation that had appeared in the Geneva periodical *Bibliothèque Universelle* in 1817.¹⁷ The French translation was incomplete but covered a good deal of the poem subjects, a choice of 38 stanzas with omissions not always acknowledged.¹⁸ The English version was given in the footnotes. Mora's rendering was limited to seven stanzas, 2-4, 7, 62, 70, and 92-93. Although he followed the French version quite closely, he made his own choice of passages that fitted the Ossianic style of some contemporary Spanish poetry. For instance, he picked up the lines in bold type from the following stanzas, thus transcribed in the *Bibliothèque Universelle*, to produce his own Spanish version:

62

(...) Above me are the Alps,
The Palaces of Nature, whose vast Walls
Have pinnacled clouds their snowy scalps,
And throned Eternity in icy halls
 Of cold Sublimity, where forms and falls
 The Avalanche – the thunderbolt of Snow!
 All that expands the Spirit, yet appals,
 Gather round these summits, as to show
 How earth may pierce to Heaven, yet leave vain Man below.
 (...)

 70
 (...)

The race of life becomes a hopeless flight
To those that walk in darkness: on the sea
The boldest steer but where their ports invite;
But there are wanderers o'er Eternity
Whose bark drives on and on, and anchored ne'er shall be.

Mora's translation:

Los alpes se elevan a mi vista; los alpes, palacios de la naturaleza, cuyos muros penetran en las nubes con sus blancas cimas: palacios en que *domina la eternidad en un trono de hielo*. La carrera de la vida está desnuda de esperanzas para el que camina en senderos oscuros. Los que se aventuran á atravesar las olas, esperan llegar al puerto; pero hay hombres que *navegan en océanos sin límites*, y su barco, siempre vagabundo, no echará jamás el ancla.¹⁹

14: Guillermo Carnero, "Juan Nicolás Böhl de Faber y la polémica dieciochesca sobre el teatro" (*Anales de la Universidad de Alicante. Historia moderna* 2 (1982), 291-317), p.308.

15: José Joaquín de Mora, *Crónica científica y literaria*, April 7th 1818.

16: Idem.

17: *Bibliothèque Universelle* V (1817), 72-100. For an account of Mora's acknowledged or attributed translations of Byron between 1817 and 1819, see Richard Cardwell's "Byron's Romantic Adventures in Spain" in these Proceedings: (<http://www.internationalbyronsociety.org>), p.3.

18: The stanzas translated, completely or partially, with commentaries whenever a new subject according to the translator appears, are 2-4, 7-8, 18-21, 24-5, 27-8, 36-40, 42-5, 62, 70-1, 85-7, 92-3, 111, 113, 115, 118.

19: José Joaquín de Mora, op.cit., 1818. My italics in all the quotations in this page.

Stanza 62 begins in the middle of the first line in the French translation, and in stanza 70 four lines are omitted, but it runs on to stanza 71. Mora limits his rendering to the lines in bold type. We find a description of Nature fitting the taste for the picturesque and a lyric exaltation of the poetic persona. Interesting changes are made. Whereas in Byron the Alps have “throned Eternity in icy halls”, in Mora’s translation “Eternity presides on an icy throne” – the French version follows the original quite literally. The protagonism of Nature has been passed to Eternity. Similarly, in the next stanza, the “wanderers o’er Eternity” are rendered as wanderers in endless oceans. The changes seem to suggest that the Spanish poet found theological problems in Byron’s lines.

Mora translated again in his *Crónica científica y literaria* from Canto III of *Childe Harold* in 1819 (December 31st), specifically stanzas 65-7 and 72-80, though now only to present them as an instance of “piled up nonsense”.²⁰ Given his previous praise of and later enthusiasm for Byron, Mora’s apparent contempt should be understood as a consequence of his controversy on Romanticism with Böhl von Faber rather than as a firm conviction.

It was exile that made possible for Spanish writers a closer and wider knowledge of British literature. Contemporary writers attracted their attention powerfully. One of the greatest Spanish writers of the period, José María Blanco White, who had exiled himself in 1810 for personal and ideological reasons, acted as their direct or indirect guide. Blanco White insistently commended British literature as the model that Spanish writers should imitate. In 1824, he penned in the periodical *Varietades* that “the true school of naturalness is to be found in England”.²¹ *Varietades* was edited by Blanco White for Rudolph Ackermann, a German publisher who took advantage of the presence of the Spanish exiles in London to issue books and periodicals for the Latin American market, now opened to the free book trade thanks to the recently achieved independence of various former Spanish colonies, a fact Byron hymns at *The Age of Bronze* (261-71). In 1826 Mora contributed to the *European Review* with a series of three articles on Spanish poetry. In one of them, he wrote that “Spanish poetry was still too French and consequently too artificial” and, echoing Blanco White, he commended the British literary model for Spanish writers in the following terms:

The enlightened Spaniards have now no other country but England, and it is there they will find models analogous to the vigor [sic] and vivacity of their own imagination. The English style, free, natural, energetic, sometimes gloomy, but always independent, is much better suited to Spanish poetry, than the poverty, slavishness, and uniformity of the writers of the court of Louis XIV.²²

I have highlighted in italics the qualities that were searched to renew Spanish poetry: independence and naturalness. Spanish poetry was a slavish copy of eighteenth-century French models. Mora has undergone a radical change in his literary opinions if we consider his Neoclassic attack against Calderón in the debate with Böhl von Faber. Now he even praises Schlegel and disparages Horace and Boileau. I have elsewhere argued that at this stage Mora’s poetics were significantly indebted to Hugh Blair, whose *Lectures* he knew since an early time.²³ The Scottish Professor vindicated primitive poetry as authentic and genuine not only in the *Lectures* but mostly in his *Critical Dissertation on the Poems of Ossian*. In London, Mora became better acquainted with Blair’s work. He translated Blair’s *The Grave* for Ackermann in 1826.²⁴ He also edited several periodicals for him. In one of them, the *Correo Literario y Político de Londres*, he published an adaptation of his “On Spanish Poetry” articles for the *European Review*, where he suggested to the poets of the New World

the reading of English poets, who by cultivating their art have obtained as many advantages from literary freedom as their nation from political freedom. Thus, whereas France had only two poets, Lavigne and Lamartine, Scott, Moore, Campbell, Wordsworth and the immortal Byron were shining in England.²⁵

20: See Derek Flitter, “‘The Immortal Byron in Spain’: Radical and Poet of the Sublime” (*The Reception of Byron in Europe*, Richard Cardwell ed., London: Thoemmes Continuum, vol. 2, pp.129-143), p.131.

21: “La verdadera escuela de naturalidad es la Inglaterra”, quoted in Vicente Llorens, *Liberales y románticos. Una emigración española en Inglaterra (1823-1834)* (Madrid: Castalia, 1968, 2nd. ed.), p.234.

22: José Joaquín de Mora, “On Spanish Poetry”, quoted in Vicente Llorens, *ibid.*, p.368.

23: M. Eugenia Perojo Arronte, “British Literature and José Joaquín de Mora’s Critical Thought” (*Liburna. Homenaje a Jaime Siles*, 4 (2011), 279-85).

24: He was one of the few Spaniards who translated directly from English at the time. He is reputed for being the first translator of Scott’s *Ivanhoe* (1825) and *The Talisman* (1826), both published by Ackermann in London.

25: “la lectura de los poetas ingleses, que en el cultivo de su arte han sacado tantas ventajas de la libertad literaria como su nación de la libertad política, ventaja que se percibía en el hecho de que mientras Francia tenía solo dos poetas, Lavigne y Lamartine, brillaban en Inglaterra Scott, Moore, Campbell, Wordsworth y el inmortal Byron.” (“De

In the first part of this quotation, we see that, when writing for the Americans, Mora intersperses politics with his literary opinions in a more direct manner. The literary independence that Spanish writers find in British literature is, in their view, a consequence of the political freedom that the British nation enjoys. In the second part, we find a sample of Mora's canon. What did he, as a Spaniard, find in these writers, Wordsworth included? He found easiness and naturalness in their styles, however different they may seem to us. The style of Wordsworth's poetry, particularly nature poetry, has been traced in some of Mora's compositions. Wordsworth's Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* must have also attracted his attention powerfully. Equally, the stylistic simplicity of the Wordsworthian compositions was congenial to Mora's poetic ideal.

But, at the same time, he was much more eclectic than other Spanish converts to Romanticism. Mora did not exclude Byron's favourite, Pope, from his British Parnassus. When already in South America, in 1829, he wrote an article in the periodical *El Mercurio chileno* praising a translation of the *Essay on Man* and encouraging again poets to study English writers and to abandon the worn out models of the Latin and the French. He referred to Shakespeare, Milton, Thomson, Dryden, Scott, Moore and Wordsworth as models to follow, adding "above all, the divine raptures of Byron offer us an immense gallery of studies of which the Spanish muse has not taken any advantage yet".²⁶ The influence of Byron on Mora's work became more conspicuous from his American period onwards. While in London, Mora had been commissioned by Rudolph Ackermann to edit the Spanish version of the popular *Forget me not* almanacs that the German publisher was popularising among the British female readers. Six volumes came out of the Spanish version, those corresponding to 1824-1829. Mora wrote the ones for the years 1824-1827. They were targeted to the South American readers. Translations of the English version were sometimes found, but generally the editor followed his and/or his readers' interests.²⁷ Only one of Byron's poems appeared in the *Forget me not* series, which ran from 1823 to 1847. It was "To My Dear Mary Anne", for the 1830 volume.²⁸ However, Luis Monguió has noted that in the 1825 *No me olvides* Mora published a poem entitled "El árbol de la infancia" (the tree of childhood) inspired by Byron's "Lines Written Beneath an Elm in the Churchyard of Harrow".²⁹ And further reference to Byron appeared in an article in the 1827 *No me olvides* entitled "Viaje a Chillón en el lago de Ginebra" (trip to Chillón, by the lake Geneva), where Mora evoked Byron's visit to the spot, qualifying the inspiration of his muse as "sober and melancholic" and the author himself as a "relentless enemy of tyranny".³⁰ Mora was underlining at this stage the characteristic features of the "Romantic" Byron, i.e., the lonesome outcast and the political rebel. This may have been either a personal perception or the exploitation of the most popular Byronic cliché for his readers, or both. But in later compositions the Spanish author was rather appealed by the satiric and humorous vein of the English poet.

In 1833 Mora published two poems presented as "Imitations of Lord Byron".³¹ Monguió has rightly indicated that one of them seems to be an adaptation of Byron's "The Devil's Drive",³² which was not published in any collection during Byron's lifetime. Mora could only have access to the incomplete version that appeared in Thomas Moore's *Life of Byron* (1830), a further proof of his deep interest in everything Byronic.³³ Mora transformed into a sonnet the first five stanzas of Moore's transcription. Although the last three lines bear slight traces of the burlesque mode of Byron's poem, the overriding tone and expression of the whole is more in consonance with the agonies of the Byronic hero as Mora understood it at the time. The other one is a lyric composition which Monguió has related to "Stanzas to a

la poesía castellana", *Correo político y literario*, 1826, quoted in Luis Monguió, *Don José Joaquín de Mora y el Perú del Ochocientos* (Madrid: Castalia, 1967), p.82.

26: "sobre todo los raptos divinos de Byron nos ofrecen una inmensa galería de estudios, de que todavía no se han aprovechado las musas castellanas." (Idem).

27: See Vicente Llorens, "Una publicación romántica olvidada" (*Nueva revista de filología hispánica* 7:1-2 (1953), 279-290).

28: Katherine D. Harris, "Forget Me Not: A Hypertextual Archive of Ackermann's 19th-Century Literary Annual." [Updated January 28, 2007]. *Poetess Archive*. General Editor Laura Mandell. (Last accessed 18 July 2012): <http://www.orgs.muohio.edu/anthologies/FMN/Frame_1.htm>.

29: Luis Monguió, op.cit., p.81.

30: "inspiraciones tan adustas y melancólicas de su musa"; "enemigo implacable de la tiranía" (ibid., p.82).

31: One of them, a sonnet, appeared in the *Mercurio Peruano* for 2 January 1833 and the other one in the same paper for the 31 January 1833 issue. The references can be found in Luis Monguió, op.cit.

32: Ibid. p.77.

33: *The Devil's Drive* is in the notes of Moore's *Life*. I have had access to it through the Project Gutenberg digitized copy of the 1854 edition (*Life of Lord Byron. With Letters and Journals*, 6 vols., London: John Murray, 1854, vol. 2, pp.471-474): http://www.gutenberg.org/files/16570/16570-h/16570-h.htm#Footnote_103_103#Footnote_103_103 (last accessed 24 July 2012).

Lady, on Leaving England”.³⁴ It might be, although it is not very clear. In any case, this “imitation” proves that the lyric was not Mora’s forte. The love theme of Byron’s “Stanzas” hardly appears in Mora’s version. Instead, the poetic voice laments his solitude in a style that sounds completely artificial by the use of worn out expressions and adjectival syntactic constructions which show that Mora has not freed himself from the Neoclassic poetic diction characteristic of the odes or pastoral compositions of Spanish earlier poetry. But these poems must have been among Mora’s favourite ones since both appeared in the two extant editions of his *Poetry* issued during his lifetime.³⁵

Mora’s poetic talent had its natural vent in narrative. His initial enthusiasm in support of the establishment of democratic systems in South America turned into a bitter disenchantment with politics and politicians in his later years. He saw himself forced to move from one country to another as he faced the corruption and mean interests of politicians during the years he spent in South America, an area to which Byron thought (briefly) of emigrating before he was discouraged by experts. Thus his ideals came to pieces and literature became an outlet for his dejection and anger. In some letters of these late years he showed his bitterness and inserted satiric poems that added a more emphatic expressiveness to his criticisms. He used the ottava rima form, together with an easy, natural, even colloquial style, and a burlesque tone.³⁶ One of these letters dated January 12, 1837, contained four ottava rima stanzas in which Mora railed against the banner of “Principles” under which politicians conceal their corruption. Significantly he signed the letter with the pseudonym “Don Juan Tenorio”. Miguel Luis Amunátegui, his biographer, explained this identification as a personal transposition of the moral debaucherie of both Tirso de Molina’s and Byron’s Don Juan into a kind of political debaucherie.³⁷ However, Mora’s identification with Don Juan points to a better knowledge of Byron’s work than that of his biographer, as can be seen in another letter of the same year, where he announced that he was composing his own version of *Don Juan*. He stated that he had been “carried away by an innocent maliciousness, seeing things as they are and laughing at all the moral evils of humankind.”³⁸ He added that his *Don Juan* was very much advanced and that he had made of it “a review of all our miseries and weaknesses”.³⁹

Mora’s poems were published in periodicals until 1836, when a small octavo volume containing a selection of his published and unpublished compositions was issued in Cádiz. A quotation from Byron’s *Don Juan* headed the collection: “My muse do not care a pinch of rosin / About what’s called success or not succeeding” (XII, 434-5). Mora’s appropriation was unfaithful to Byron’s meaning in this stanza. What Mora meant with this maimed quote has to be contextualised within the contemporary Spanish literary milieu. The restoration of the constitutional system after the death of Ferdinand VII in 1834 had put an end to censorship, and Spain was flooded with translations of Scott and Byron, mostly from the French. Byron’s narrative poems were translated in prose and publicised as “novels”. But Mora’s works show a better understanding of Byron. In a letter dated 1835, Mora wrote:

I have thrown myself into the arms of poetry with the aim of introducing among my fellow countrymen a small schism against *quintanistas* and *melendiztas*, and their Anacreontics and epileptic odes, trying to overcome some difficulties and produce some innovations. I have touched all the keys, and I have used all kinds of rhythms. Although I will make as much noise in the world as a mouse in a concert, I have achieved my main purpose, which is to entertain myself.⁴⁰

Mora was showing his disenchantment with the two orientations of Spanish contemporary poetry. On the one hand, the school of the poet Antonio Quintana, whose adepts used an inflated rhetoric and a vehement Ossianic style. On the other, the followers of Meléndez Valdés, whose compositions were cool, Neoclassic adaptations of Anacreontic poetry. Mora’s collection offers a variety of poetic styles, genres

34: Luis Monguió, op.cit., p.78.

35: See José Joaquín de Mora, *Poesías* (Cádiz: Librería de Feros, 1836), pp.18-19, for the poem beginning “Nadie sonr e en torno; nadie enjuga”, and 121-2 for the one beginning “Luzbel crey  que el orbe de la tierra”; and Jos  Joaqu n de Mora, *Poes as* (Madrid, Paris, 1853), pp.96-7 and 213 respectively.

36: Some of these poems and letters are transcribed in Mora’s biography by Miguel Luis Amunátegui (*Jos  Joaqu n de Mora. Apuntes biogr ficos*. Santiago de Chile: Imprenta Nacional, 1888), p.265 *passim*.

37: *Ibid.*, pp.308-310.

38: “me he dejado llevar por una malignidad inocente, que ve las cosas como son, i que se r e de todos los males morales de la especie humana” (*ibid.*, pp.313-14).

39: *Ibid.*, p.314.

40: “Me he echado en brazos de la Poes a con el  nimo de introducir entre mis compatriotas un peque o cisma contra los *quintanistas* i *melendiztas* i sus anacre nticas i odas epil pticas, tratando de vencer algunas dificultades i de aventurar algunas innovaciones. He tocado todas las teclas, i he usado de toda clase de ritmos; i aunque har  tanto ruido en el mundo, como un rat n en un concierto, logro mi objeto principal, que es divertirme” (quoted in Miguel Luis Amunátegui, op.cit., p.311).

and forms: we find lyric, meditative, satiric, epigrammatic, and narrative compositions. The style is adapted to each kind. It is usually colloquial in the satires, which are either political or literary. The presence of Byron is pervasive. There are several mottos to the poems taken from his works, as well as references to Byron within the poems themselves. In one of them, the poetic voice claims how much needed of a Byron Hesperia is. The volume ends with a poem entitled “El convite” (the banquet). It is clearly inspired by the banquet of Canto XV of *Don Juan*, with a hint of the model through a reference to Byron’s surrender to love in Italy. Mora intersperses his political satire into his list of gastronomic delicacies. The poem ends with a heated debate at the ancient Roman Senate on how to cook a turbot, meant as a satire against the futility of political debates in contemporary parliaments, echoing Horace’s Second Satire (Bk II, 41-52).

Mora’s best known work is his *Leyendas españolas*, published simultaneously in Paris, Mexico, London, and Cádiz in 1840, the so called *annus mirabilis* of Spanish Romanticism. Between 1840 and 1841, some of the most reputed works of Spanish Romanticism came out, among them Espronceda’s *El estudiante de Salamanca* and some parts of his *El diablo mundo*. Espronceda is the most reputed Spanish Romantic poet, greatly indebted to Byron in these his two masterpieces.⁴¹ Mora’s *Leyendas* follow the Romantic revival of Spanish traditional ballads, popularised all over Europe through the compilations of Georg Bernhard Depping (1817) in Germany and John Gibson Lockhart (1823) and John Bowring (1824) in England, among others.⁴² It was a phenomenon that entailed both antiquarian and ideological pursuits. August Wilhelm Schlegel and Böhl von Faber had showed a great interest in these compositions. Faber himself had published his own compilation, one of the best philological works of the time on traditional Spanish ballads.⁴³ In his youth Mora had written poems within this tradition.⁴⁴ At this early stage Mora viewed Spanish ancient ballads as an example of popular, native, spontaneous genius. This view is maintained during his London period (1823-1827), as is reflected in an article for the *European Review* published in 1824, in which he describes Spanish traditional ballads as “treasures which art has not adulterated”.⁴⁵ Along with Schlegel’s ideas on traditional literature, Mora, as has been previously stated, was well acquainted with Hugh Blair’s work, and shared his ideas about the value and authenticity of primitive poetry.⁴⁶ However, in his later *Leyendas* nothing of the stereotyped Romantic idealization of Spanish history or the stylistic features associated with Ossianic primitivism are found, rather the reverse. Byron’s satires undoubtedly played a determinant role. In the Introduction to the work, Mora rejected the classical-romantic opposition:

In my view, the classicist who disdains or ridicules the new artistic elements that have been introduced in the literature of Southern nations and the better knowledge of German and English literatures is as incomprehensible as the romantic who treats with disrespect and hostility the models of perfection that abound in the other school (...) In a word, the author does not want his Legends to be judged either as classic or romantic, but *his own*.⁴⁷

41: For a thorough analysis of Espronceda’s Byronism, see Richard Cardwell’s “‘El Lord Sublime’: Byron’s Legacy in Spain”, op.cit., and “Byron’s Romantic Adventures in Spain” in these Proceedings.

42: Georg Bernhard Depping, *Sammlung der besten alten Spanischen Historischen, Ritter und Maurischen Romanzen* (Altenburg; Leipzig : Brockhaus, 1817); John G. Lockhart, *Ancient Spanish Ballads: historical and romantic* (Edinburgh; London: William Blackwood; John Murray, 1823); John Bowring, *Ancient Poetry and Romances of Spain* (London: Taylor & Hessey, 1824).

43: Johann Nikolas Böhl von Faber, *Floresta de rimas antiguas castellanas*, 3 vols (Hamburg: Perthes und Besser, 1821-5). For a thorough study of Faber’s philological work, see Carol Tully, *Johann Nikolas Böhl von Faber (1770-1836). A German Romantic in Spain* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2007).

44: In 1813, while exiled in France, he sent three Spanish ballads to Faber’s wife, Francisca Larrea, a learned woman with whom he had a very good relationship too. The Böhl von Faber couple were in close contact with August Wilhelm Schlegel. Doña Francisca found Mora’s ballads worthy of being sent to Schlegel as a good instance of the recovery of the genre in Spain. The ballads are “Las Granadinas de la Reyna Isabel”, “Bustos” and “Zaide”, reproduced by Camille Pitollot, op.cit., p 77-9. For an account of the story, see Guillermo Carnero, *Los orígenes del romanticismo reaccionario español: el matrimonio Böhl de Faber* (Valencia: Universidad de Valencia), p.163, and Carol Tully, op.cit, pp.106-107. Two of them were reproduced in the 1824 *No me olvides*. (See Vicente Llorens, “Una publicación romántica olvidada”, *Nueva Revista de Filología Hispánica*, 1-2 (1953), pp.279-90).

45: Quoted in Vicente Llorens, op.cit., 1968, p.310.

46: The *Lectures* were widely disseminated in Spain at the turn of the eighteenth century by means of José Luis Munárriz’s translation (*Lecciones sobre la retórica y las Bellas Letras*, 4 vols, Madrid: Oficina de D. Antonio Cruzado, 1798-1801).

47: “tan incomprendible es a mis ojos el clasico que desdeña, desprecia o ridiculiza los nuevos elementos artisticos que han introducido en la Literatura de los pueblos meridionales, el mayor conocimiento que han adquirido de la alemana y la inglesa, como el romantico que trata tan irrespetuosa y hostilmente a los modelos de perfeccion que abundan en las filas contrarias (...) En una palabra, no desea que las Leyendas sean juzgadas como classicas, ni como

He took the same stand Byron had taken in his projected dedication of *Marino Faliero* to Goethe, rejected by Murray for the 1820 edition of the work:

I perceive that in Germany as well as in Italy there is a great struggle about what they call “Classical and Romantic”, terms which were not subjects of classification in England – at least when I left it four or five years ago. Some of the English scribblers (it is true), abused Pope and Swift, but the reason was that they themselves did not know how to write in either prose or verse – but nobody thought them worth making a sect of. Perhaps there may be something of the sort sprung up lately – but I have not heard much about it, and it would be such bad taste that I should be very sorry to believe it.⁴⁸

It was in the late 1830s and 1840s that the debate about classical *versus* Romantic literature reached Spain, provoking what has been termed a literary eclecticism that Mora’s words would reflect. Mora used historical and legendary narratives both to ridicule the heroic ideals attributed to past times and to make an implicit criticism of contemporary events and society in general. He exploited the literary device of mock epic to ridicule and degrade ideas of greatness by its juxtaposition with the vulgar or colloquial, either in conceptual or in linguistic terms. The antithesis, the paradox, the sudden and abrupt inversion of values provokes the burlesque effect. The most common poetic forms are the ottava rima and the hendecasyllabic couplet – the Spanish version of the English heroic couplet. Mora used perfect rhyme instead of traditional assonance. The effect intensifies the burlesque aim, the same as with Byron’s polysyllabic rhymes and assonances. The different structural features of Spanish and English require in this case opposed technical devices to produce the same effect. In the ottava rima stanzas, the comic inversion frequently occurs in the final couplet, thus producing an abrupt transition that ridicules the hauteur of previous lines.

The targets of Mora’s satire were the monarchy, the Church, a sterile nobility, the worn out scholasticism yet prevalent at Spanish universities, and hypocrisy in moral behaviour.⁴⁹ Mora did not rely only on the resources of mock epic but constantly resorted to digressions that interrupt the narrative and frustrate the literary expectations of naïve readers. Moreover, the intrusive narrator seems to be trying to establish complicity with its implied reader, as in the following lines from “Don Opas”, probably the most popular of Mora’s *Leyendas*:

It used to be Calpe, today it is a rich city,
Where commerce is carried out.
If you are surprised to see there people say
Good morning instead of *buenos días*,
I will make an impertinent digression,
As all my digressions usually are.
Let literary men criticise me if it pleases them,
Digressions are a good entertainment.⁵⁰

Nothing of the kind had yet been seen in Spanish literature, with the exception of the part of Espronceda’s *El diablo mundo* that had appeared in the same year than Mora’s work. The best-known South American writer of the time, Andrés Bello, who had coincided with Mora in his first London period and later in America, immediately recognised his models. On November 27, 1840, Bello wrote a review of the *Leyendas* in the periodical *El Araucano* where he penned a very acute critical assessment of Mora’s work:

This is a collection of poems worthy of the fine style of their author, who has tried with them a kind of narrative compositions that seems to be new in the Spanish language, quite close to

romanticas, sino como *suyas*” (José Joaquín de Mora, *Leyendas españolas*, Salvador García Castañeda y Alberto Romero Ferrer eds., Sevilla: Fundación José Manuel Lara, 2011, pp.8-9).

48: I quote from Peter Cochran’s Introduction to his online edition of *Marino Faliero* (pp.18-19): http://petercochran.files.wordpress.com/2009/03/marino_faliero.pdf (Last accessed: 22 July 2012). For a study of Byron’s stand in relation to the concept of “Romanticism” and his “Romantic” contemporaries, see Peter Cochran, *“Romanticism” and Byron* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009).

49: See Salvador García Castañeda, “José Joaquín de Mora ante la España de su tiempo” (*Los románticos teorizan sobre sí mismos*: Actas del VIII Congreso (Saluzzo, 21-23 de Marzo de 2002). Bologna: Il Capitello del Sole, 2002, pp.133-42).

50: “Antes fue Calpe, y hoy ciudad potente, / donde se venden sendas mercancías. / Si extrañas por qué allí dice la gente / *Good morning* en lugar de *buenos días*, / Haré una digresión impertinente, / como acostumbraban a ser todas las más. / Critiquenme siquiera los literatos; / Las digresiones dan muy buenos ratos” (“Don Opas”, 4, XXVIII).

Byron's *Beppo* and *Don Juan* in the way in which festive and powerful styles are alternated, in their long and brilliantly fanciful digressions, and in the easiness of their rhyme, which seems at play with difficulties.⁵¹

In 1844 Mora published his *Don Juan*, where he repeated the devices used in his *Leyendas*. Mora's *Don Juan* is practically unknown in Spain. Only a few of his critics mention it. The only extant edition is the 1844 one.⁵² The composition, like Byron's, is incomplete. Mora invokes Byron at the beginning of his poem:

Oh, if you lived, noble lord, you would see
How your plans turned into chimeras,
How fire turned Bavaria's
solid hand into cold ashes!⁵³
And how the Greeks claim the days
In which they were lesser the slaves,
And curse the vessel that brought on board
A king that will not listen to their prayers.⁵⁴

These lines may serve to reflect the kind of scepticism we find in Mora. It is not the vital, existentialist agony that Romantic heroes – real or fictional – enacted. It is down to earth and proper for a child of the Enlightenment who had committed himself to political revolutionary ideals that were finally frustrated. The references to the débâcle of politics in the South American former Spanish colonies prove that Mora began its composition a few years after his arrival to the American continent, where he had expected to fulfill his revolutionary ideals.

In literary terms, this *Don Juan* is explicitly aimed to be a revisionist rewriting of Byron's. The narrator states that the British poet did not quite understand what an Andalusian libertine should be like, thereby missing Byron's point to draw a passive, innocent version of the figure. The story begins *ab ovo*, relating the birth and early years of Juan in Seville. His mother is a widow described as mystical, grave, caustic, and sharp. She is a very rigorous moralist and zealous in matters of honour. Her confessor, a Franciscan, was the only man who trespassed within her doors: "Alto cual torre, y fuerte como risco" (Tall like a tower and as strong as a mountain),⁵⁵ hinting that she was in very good male company, an attack against hypocrisy in morality. Juan is soon affected by the charms of Sevillian clime and sensuality becoming an artful seducer. His seduction of Doña Isabel, the virtuous wife of an army officer, obliges him to escape by sea. The adventures of the second Canto follow Byron's poem more closely: we have the same characters, a similar place – an island near Samos – and the same incidents. The only relevant exception is that this Don Juan is cunning enough to cheat Cefisa's (Haidee's) father and run away in the guise of a corsair which will, supposedly, work for him. But his only purpose is to run away from the island. In the third Canto, Don Juan's ship is attacked by a Maltese galleon. His life is spared because he is a member of the Spanish nobility, and the story continues with his unexpected encounter with his old Sevillian friend Vasconcelos among the crew, now surprisingly become a friar. Mora uses this incident to attack the Church. The former libertine had been wisely advised by his tutor at the monastery, teaching him that a life of privations was not necessary for a member of the Church: "For the profane, fear and discipline / But here another doctrine applies".⁵⁶ Cantos IV and V divert from the narrative thread to turn mostly into satiric digressions on Spanish contemporary literature, politics and society. In all the copies I have had access to, the poem ends abruptly in Canto V.⁵⁷ It is futile to speculate on the way in which Mora would have continued this composition. We cannot even be sure that he intended to do it. We know that the first three Cantos were already composed in 1834 because he mentions them in a letter, where he

51: "Esta es una colección de poesías, digna de la fecunda y bien cortada pluma de su autor, que ha ensayado en ellas un género de composiciones narrativas que nos parece nuevo en castellano, i cuyo tipo presenta bastante afinidad con el *Beppo* i el *Don Juan* de Byron, por el estilo alternativamente vigoroso i festivo, por las largas digresiones que interrumpen a cada paso la narración (i no es la parte en la que brilla menos la viva fantasía del poeta), i por el desenfado y soltura de la versificación que parece jugar con las dificultades." Quoted in Miguel Luis Amunátegui, *op.cit.*, p.328.

52: *Don Juan. Poema*, tomo 1º, Madrid: Establecimiento Tipológico é Imprenta Peninsular, 1844.

53: It is an allusion to the Congress of Vienna (1814-1815), in which slave trade was condemned.

54: "¡O, si vivieras, noble lord, verias / Como tu plan se convirtió en quimera! / Como el fuego tornó cenizas frias, / La apelmazada mano de Baviera; / Como el griego reclama aquellos dias / En que menos esclavo que hoy era, / Y maldice el bajel que trajo á bordo, / Un rey que á sus plegarias se hace sordo." (*Don Juan*, I, 15).

55: *Don Juan*, I, 27.

56: "Para el profano, miedo y disciplina: / Mas aquí dentro reina otra doctrina" (*Don Juan*, III, 103).

57: I was using an incomplete copy of the poem, the one at the Biblioteca Nacional, containing only the first three Cantos, until Sara Medina Calzada informed me of the existence of two more Cantos in the copies held at the University of Seville and the Spanish Real Academia de la Historia, for which I am much thankful to her.

writes that the first Canto had been concluded in Chile and the third in Lima.⁵⁸ Why did he publish them nearly fifteen years later? Did he do it with the intention of completing it? There is no answer for the second question. As to the first, there is an interesting coincidence. In the year of its publication, 1844, Mora wrote the Prologue to a collection of critical essays by Alberto Lista, who was the literary teacher of several Romantic writers, such as Mora himself and Gustavo Adolfo Bécquer. He was also a lifelong friend of Blanco White. They all admired and respected him greatly. Lista was a classicist, an admirer of the great poets of Spanish Renaissance such as Garcilaso de la Vega and Fray Luis de León; the latter was the model of simplicity and purity of style that Mora aimed for Spanish poetry. In this Prologue, Mora complains about the wrong path that Spanish poetry is following. He finds in it the excesses of a “culteranismo (baroque style) of the worst taste” in which “a phraseology neither decent enough to be called inflated nor intellectual enough to deserve the name of metaphysical is displayed”.⁵⁹ He blames for it the Spanish imitators of French Romanticism, who had thus become the imitators (the Spaniards) of bad imitators (the French). And he regrets the oblivion and ignorance to which ancient writers had been condemned by contemporary poets.

Perhaps Mora, with the publication of his Byronic poem, was trying to show writers what could be done to free Spanish poetry from the yoke of stylistic affectation. In his *Don Juan*, he writes: “I shall paint Don Juan’s perdition, / Giving a simple style to my narration”.⁶⁰ Mora in his *Leyendas* and his *Don Juan*, and Espronceda in his *El diablo mundo*, found in Byron’s satires the path to a new style for Spanish poetry.

How many of Mora’s contemporaries found a model in him is uncertain. The only reference that has been made so far is to Ramón de Campoamor,⁶¹ who was also greatly indebted to Espronceda. Campoamor was the most popular poet of the last third of the nineteenth century. In spite of the popularity he enjoyed during his lifetime, Campoamor was later considered a superficial poet, only good for female, i.e., non-serious, readers. Of great significance for a reassessment of Campoamor was Luis Cernuda’s *Estudios sobre poesía española contemporánea*, published in 1957. Cernuda became an anglophile during his exile after the Civil War. His first destiny was England. Cernuda’s concern in this work is basically stylistic, focused on the renewal of poetic diction in Spanish poetry. The nineteenth-century poets he includes are Gustavo Adolfo Bécquer, Rosalía de Castro and Ramón de Campoamor. He attributes to Campoamor the merit of having liberated Spanish poetry from the “supposedly poetic language used both by the Neo-classics and the Romantics”,⁶² adding later “whatever one may think of Campoamor as a poet, writers have to acknowledge how greatly indebted to him they are for having left our language bare of all the worn out ornamentation and the false phraseology that tied it up”.⁶³

Campoamor (1817-1901), under the influence of Espronceda, dedicated his life to politics and literature. He has been described as conservative in politics and a rebel in literature. He was appointed member of the Real Academia de la Lengua in 1861, was offered the laureateship three times and rejected it three times. His first three books of poems, published between 1840 and 1841, are basically youthful lyric outpourings. However, some critics have pointed out their similarity with and probable influence on Bécquer’s famous ‘Rhymes’. A radical change can be perceived in the volume of poetry published in 1846 under the curious title *Doloras* (his own coinage). With this collection Campoamor offered a personal and original style. In their first edition, he defined these poems as “poetic compositions in which lightness and feelings, on the one hand, and concision and philosophical import, on the other, should be blended”.⁶⁴

Campoamor’s style has been described as realistic, dramatic, epigrammatic, ironic, sceptic, humorous, and, of course, satiric. It was further elaborated in his later book *Los pequeños poemas* (1872). In both cases, the collections were progressively augmented, with new enlarged editions being issued

58: See José Luis Amunátegui, pp.268 and 314.

59: “culteranismo de pésimo gusto”; “fraseología que no es bastante decente para que se le pueda llamar pomposa, ni bastante intelectual para merecer el nombre de metafísica” (José Joaquín de Mora, “Prólogo” to Alberto Lista, *Ensayos literarios y críticos*, Sevilla: Calvo-Rubio y Compañía, 1844, p.vi).

60: “Pintaré de Don Juan los estravios, / Dando á mi narracion giros modestos.” (*Don Juan*, I, 11).

61: Guillermo Carnero, “José Joaquín de Mora, precedente de Campoamor” (*Ínsula* 26 (1971), 28).

62: “el lenguaje supuestamente poético que utilizaron neoclásicos y románticos” (Luis Cernuda, *Estudios sobre poesía española contemporánea*, Madrid: Guadarrama, 1957, p.36).

63: “Dígase lo que se que se quiera de Campoamor como poeta; no por eso debe dejar de reconocerse la deuda que nuestra poesía tiene con él por haber desnudado el lenguaje de todo el oropel viejo, de toda la fraseología falsa que lo ataba.” (Ibid., p.37).

64: “una composición poética en la cual se debe hallar unida la ligereza con el sentimiento y la concisión con la importancia filosófica” (Ramón de Campoamor, *Poesías escogidas*, Alicante: Biblioteca Virtual Miguel de Cervantes, 2000). Digitized edition (Barcelona: Biblioteca de Arte y Letras, 1910). URL: <http://bib.cervantesvirtual.com/servlet/SirveObras/p350/01593529213474801870035/index.htm>. (Last accessed, 31 August 2012).

throughout his lifetime. The dynamics of these compositions is based on an interplay of oppositions or antitheses, as Vicente Gaos puts it, between what things seem to be and what they really are. Hypocrisy is one of his main targets. The basic figures he uses for it are the pun, the conceit, the antithesis and the paradox. Víctor Montolí has pointed out that Campoamor was countering the sentimental, naïve Romanticism of José Zorrilla, whose *Don Juan Tenorio*, a popular success, had appeared in 1845, one year before Campoamor's *Doloras* (1846). The same as Cipriano Rivas Cherif and Vicente Gaos,⁶⁵ Víctor Montolí calls the attention to Campoamor's "La beata de máscara" (the fake pious lady), where we have a simple and clear instance of his reply to José Zorrilla's poem "Oriental", which begins:

Lady of the black veil,
Lady of the purple habit,
For a kiss from your mouth
Boabdil would give Granada away⁶⁶

Campoamor de-romanticises Zorrilla's idealised woman in the first lines of his own composition:

Lady of the black cloak,
Lady of the lace veil,
Charmer of a thousand men...
I bet your chest
Is not so holy as your garment⁶⁷

Campoamor very frequently inverts in the last lines the idealised picture previously presented. The following "dolora" shows how much he can sometimes leave to the reader's speculation in his ironic turn:

AFTER THEIR FIRST SLEEP
They got married and, on the next day,
The bride, with an innocent accent,
As she awoke, asked her husband,
– Do you still love me?⁶⁸

In my view, in his shorter poems, the ones to which he owes his popularity, Campoamor picked up Byron's satiric devices and colloquialisms, condensing them in a new genre for Spanish poetry. It has been stated that his method of composition was to begin with the final epigrammatic lines and then invent the story that might lead to that conclusion. Throughout time there is in Campoamor a progression towards the merely epigrammatic on the one hand and towards longer narrative compositions on the other. The latter are reminiscent of earlier Romantic works such as Espronceda's. One of his contemporaries, Laverde y Ruiz, described him as an Epicurean first, a sceptic later, and, finally, a believer, summarising this development with the following references: Horace, Byron, and Calderón.⁶⁹

Byron was the poet that Campoamor admired most as he insistently penned in his *Poética* (Poetics), where Byron is referred to as "the greatest of poets". In this treatise, Campoamor defended that there is hardly any difference between spoken language and poetic language. Of course, some of us have found a Wordsworthian echo in these words. But Campoamor added that the only difference lies in rhythm and rhyme, praising Byron's poetic achievement: "When such a poet like him grasps those ideas that, as Mr. Lista says, belong to common speech for their antiquity and constant repetition, and writers use them since the origin of languages with no other ornament than the rhetorical figure called hyperbaton, then these ideas, which had become a kind of wandering Jews, stop walking and are fixed forever by the poet in the sculpture of rhyme".⁷⁰ It is hard not to recall Byron's words in *Don Juan*: "Prose poets like blank-verse, I'm fond of rhyme, / good workmen never quarrel with their tools".⁷¹

65: Vicente Gaos, Prologue to Ramón de Campoamor, *Poesía* (Zaragoza: Clásicos Ebro, 1938), p.18 and Cipriano Rivas Cherif, Prologue to Ramón de Campoamor, *Poesías* (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1966), p.74.

66: "Dueña de la negra toca, / la del morado monjil, / por un beso de tu boca / diera Granada Boabdil". See Víctor Montolí, Prologue to Ramón de Campoamor, *Antología poética* (Madrid: Cátedra, 1996), p.58 note.

67: "La del enlutado manto, /La de la toca de encaje, /La de mil hombres encanto... /¿Cuánto va que no es tan santo / tu pecho como el ropaje?" (Ibid., p.108).

68: "DESPUÉS DEL PRIMER SUEÑO: Se casaron los dos, y al otro día / la esposa, con acento candoroso, / al despertar, le preguntó al esposo: / -¿Me quieres todavía?" (Ramón de Campoamor, *Poesías*, op.cit., 1966, p.173).

69: Quoted by Víctor Montolí in Ramón de Campoamor, *Poesías*, op.cit., 1996, p.62.

70: "Cuando un poeta como él se apodera de todas esas ideas que, según dice el Sr. Lista, pertenecen al lenguaje común por lo viejas y repetidas, y que sin mas que usar la figura que en retórica se llama hipérbaton, las vienen tomando unos de otros todos los escritores desde el origen de los idiomas, entonces esas ideas, que eran una especie

In the collection entitled *Pequeños poemas* (1872), we find Campoamor's own version of *Don Juan*. The poem was later published independently. It is a brief composition in two Cantos, with a variety of stanzaic forms. The male figure that Campoamor chooses is presented thus in the first lines:

When Byron's Don Juan grew old,
He was full of apprehensions,
Looking at his tongue in the mirror,
And prisoner of rheumatism in Cartagena.⁷²

This hypochondriac old man bears certain similarities with Campoamor's manias in his old age. The foolish Don Juan, to entertain himself, writes a letter to five of his former lovers arranging a date with each of them, in the hope that they will not reply to it. These beauties are respectively an Italian (Catalina *Ariosto*), an English (Fanny *Moore*), a Spaniard (Julia *Calderón*), a German (Margarita *Goethe*), and a French (Luisa *Chenier*). In this game of literary names, Byron's presence is pervasive. To Don Juan's surprise, the five ladies accept his invitation. He has a fit of panic and runs away to hide in a cave in the nearby mountains. Four of the five ladies are detained on their way by their happy encounters with very attractive men; only Doña Julia perseveres and manages to find poor Don Juan, who, astonished and in despair, dies of a passionate kiss from the amorous matron. The second Canto deals with Don Juan's last judgment at the gates of Heaven, a scene reminiscent of Byron's *The Vision of Judgement*. His arrival coincides with those of the five ladies he had once loved, or rather not loved. Don Juan's sins are too heavy and he is to be condemned for them. The ladies try to compensate the balance with some of their virtuous actions in his favour, but they only offer trifles or pretensions of virtue which are completely useless. It is only the ardent Spaniard who, desperate to see her loved one condemned to Hell for all eternity, arrogantly offers her own person in exchange for his, and is herself condemned for this selfish fool, only to receive in exchange the envious comments of the other four and a pair of crocodile tears of her fake lover.

The story is in itself a parody of Zorrilla's drama *Don Juan* (184), which was written as the Catholic, conservative response to Byron's poem. In it, Doña Ines's love finally saves the soul of Don Juan from damnation. It must be said that despite its enormous popularity, Zorrilla did not think much of it. Campoamor satirises not only this idealised, unrealistic, Romantic view of love but also, and above all, the sad figure of the seducer, whose masculinity is constantly ridiculed in the poem. Some years later, Miguel de Unamuno dedicated essays and a closet drama, *El hermano Juan o el mundo es teatro* (Brother Juan or the world is a stage), composed in 1929 though not published until 1934, to de-construct Tirso de Molina's myth. Byron's puppet Don Juan, a poor victim of circumstances, always carried away by them, opened the doors for this revision of a Spanish myth at a time in which a cultural regeneration of Spain was being desperately searched by Spanish intellectuals. But this is another story. What matters, in any case, is the central position that Byron occupied in this constant process of development and adjustment in nineteenth-century Spanish literature, and beyond.

de *judíos errantes*, dejan de caminar, fijadas por el poeta con la escultura de la rima." (Ramón de Campoamor, *Poética*. Valencia: Librería de Pascual Aguilar, 1890, 2nd. ed., p.133).

71: *DJ*, I, 1605-6.

72: "Cuando el Don Juan de Byron se hizo viejo, / pasó una vida de aprensiones llena / mirándose la lengua en un espejo, / prisionero del reuma en Cartagena." (*Don Juan. Pequeño poema*, I, 1). I am quoting from the following edition: Ramón de Campoamor, *Don Juan. Pequeño poema* (Madrid: Francisco Álvarez, 1872), p.7.