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Twice-Told Tales: Anglo-Spanish intertextuality in José Joaquín de Mora's "El abogado de Cuenca" (1826)

Sara MEDINA CALZADA
(Universidad de Valladolid, SPAIN)

RESUMEN:

El objetivo del presente trabajo es analizar "El abogado de Cuenca", un relato breve de José Joaquín de Mora (1783-1864) incluido en su almanaque literario *No me olvides* en 1826. Esta narración se inscribe en un contexto anglo-hispano puesto que Mora la escribió cuando estaba exiliado en Inglaterra, la publicó el editor alemán afincado en Londres Rudolph Ackermann e iba dirigida al público hispanohablante de las recién independizadas repúblicas hispanoamericanas. Este contexto transnacional se refleja en la historia a través de la presencia de referencias intertextuales a la ficción popular británica contemporánea y la tradición literaria española. El relato de Mora se inspira en "Barbitó, or the Spectre of Cuenca", un cuento anónimo ya publicado anteriormente por Ackermann, que el autor español reescribe por completo incorporando elementos de las leyendas de Don Juan y Lisardo. Mora se apropia de estos textos y trata de adaptarlos a su ideario religioso, filosófico, literario y político.

Palabras clave: José Joaquín de Mora, No me olvides, Don Juan, Lisardo, relaciones anglo-hispanas, intertextualidad

ABSTRACT:

The purpose of this paper is to examine "El abogado de Cuenca", a short story written by José Joaquín de Mora (1783-1864) and included in his literary annual *No me olvides* in 1826. This narrative was produced in an Anglo-Spanish context as it was written when he was exiled in England and was published by the London-based publisher Rudolph Ackermann, who distributed it in the recently-established Spanish American republics. This transnational context is reflected in "El abogado de Cuenca" through its combination of intertextual references to British contemporary popular fiction and the Spanish literary tradition. Mora's text is inspired by "Barbitó, or the Spectre of Cuenca", an anonymous short story that had appeared in some of Ackermann's publications too, which is thoroughly rewritten by including elements from the legends of Don Juan and Lisardo. These texts are appropriated by Mora, who tries to make them conform to his own ideas on religion, philosophy, literature, and politics.

Key words: José Joaquín de Mora, No me olvides, Don Juan, Lisardo, Anglo-Spanish relations, intertextuality

1. INTRODUCTION

The retellings of the Don Juan tradition published by E. T. A. Hoffman, Lord Byron, Prosper Mérimée, José de Espronceda or José Zorrilla, among others, prove that the story of the Sevillian seducer created by Tirso de Molina in the seventeenth century was recurrently and successfully reinterpreted in European Romanticism. Although significantly less popular than the above-mentioned versions, "El abogado de Cuenca", a short story about a libertine who mends his ways after attending his own burial, also participates in this vogue for the myth of Don Juan. The story was published in the literary annual *No me olvides* in 1826 by José Joaquín de Mora (1783-1864), a Spanish lawyer, teacher, diplomat, journalist, and writer whose eventful life and the unstable political situation of Spain in the nineteenth century led him to live in France, Britain, and Spanish America. When he wrote "El abogado de Cuenca", he was living in London, where he had found refuge in 1823 after the restoration of Ferdinand VII's absolutist regime. As a liberal exile in London, writing became his main means of subsistence and he was employed by the German publisher Rudolph Ackermann, who was interested in exporting Spanish books to the recently independent Spanish American republics. *No me olvides*, the annual in which "El abogado de Cuenca" is included, is precisely one of the works that Mora composed under Ackermann's editorship. This particular transnational context in which Mora's short story is inscribed, which will be carefully examined in this paper, sheds light on the reasons why this text combines elements from both British contemporary print culture and the Spanish literary tradition, namely the interconnected legends of Don Juan, Lisardo, and Miguel de Mañara. As the following pages will prove, Mora appropriates these elements and creates a new narrative that allows him to tackle issues related to his own philosophical, literary, and political agenda.

2. "EL ABOGADO DE CUENCA" IN ITS ANGLO-SPANISH CONTEXT

"El abogado de Cuenca" is one of the few original short stories that Mora included in the 1826 volume of his *No me olvides*, the literary annual that he edited in London from 1824 to 1827. Ackermann introduced the tradition of the literary annual in Britain in late 1822 with the publication of *Forget Me Not: A Christmas and New Year Present for 1823*. The idea of

producing an illustrated pocket book with poetic and narrative writings that could be sold as a Christmas gift was borrowed from Germany, where Heinrich Clauden's *Vergissmeinnicht* (which literally means "forget me not") had been successfully published since 1818. The enormous popularity of the first *Forget Me Not* led to a sudden proliferation of literary annuals in Britain¹ and induced Ackermann to publish a literary annual in Spanish so that he could distribute it in Spanish America. It is worth noting that the emancipation of the Spanish former colonies in the 1810s and 1820s and the subsequent commercial blockade with Spain offered profitable opportunities for British traders in Spanish America. Ackermann was willing to seize these opportunities, so he published around eighty different Spanish titles (Roldán Vera, 2003: 243-259), which apart from numerous teaching manuals include six volumes of the literary annual *No me olvides*. Mora, who was by far the most prolific collaborator of Ackermann's Spanish publishing venture², edited the first four issues (1824-1827), but after his departure to Buenos Aires in December 1826, he was replaced by Pablo de Mendíbil, another Spanish liberal exiled in London, who edited the volumes of 1828 and 1829³.

A good number of the short stories that Mora decided to include in his *No me olvides* were translations or adaptations of other writings that had been published in other British publications, especially in *Forget Me Not*, which is the most important source of the Spanish literary annual. In this particular case, "El abogado de Cuenca" is the Spanish version of the short story entitled "The Advocate of Cuenca", written by Mora himself and published in 1825 in *Christmas Tales*, another literary annual produced by Ackermann. There are no differences between the English and the Spanish story and the texts do not contain any clue that may indicate the language in which it was originally written. Given the dates of publication and Mora's fluency in English, it is not altogether impossible that first he composed it in English and then he translated it into his mother tongue.

On the other hand, the spelling of the name of the main character (Baltazar) led Roas Deus to suggest that Mora's short story may have been based on an English work (2000: 495). He was partly right because, although the name of the protagonist was chosen by Mora, "El abogado de Cuenca" contains significant echoes of "Barbito, or

the Spectre of Cuenca. A Spanish Tale”, an anonymous narrative that had been published in several works produced by Ackermann as well. “Barbitó” first appeared in 1812 in *The Repository of Arts*, the successful illustrated magazine aimed at middle-class female readers that was edited by Frederic Shoberl and published by Ackermann’s press. Eleven years later, in 1823, this anonymous short story was included in *Ghost Stories*, a collection of prose fiction writings that was also published by Ackermann. Furthermore, “Barbitó” was translated into Spanish by José Urcullu, another Spanish exile who worked for Ackermann, and was included in *Cuentos de duendes y aparecidos* in 1825. Mora could have known both the English and the Spanish versions and, as the following analysis of the two short stories reveals, he had certainly read the story of Barbitó before writing his narrative.

“Barbitó, or the Spectre of Cuenca” is set during the reign of Philip II and tells the story of Don Lopez, a man who decides to fake his own death so as to make his relatives and friends happier than ever after realizing that he never died. However, when he finally reappears, he is not received as expected. His wife, Donna Beatrix, thinks that he is ghost and his nephews, who are now the owners of his possessions, believe that he is an impostor. Don Lopez ends up being put on trial by the Inquisition and is eventually absolved thanks to the assistance of his dog, Barbitó, the only one that recognizes him. As for “El abogado de Cuenca”, Mora also sets the action in the Spain of Philip II and borrows the idea of the fake burial from “Barbitó”, but he alters the story significantly. The protagonist of his narrative is Don Baltazar, a reputed lawyer who leads a dissipated life. One night, he sees that a service is taking place in the chapel of one of the convents of the town and he decides to go and see the type of rite that the monks are celebrating at such a late hour. To his surprise and bewilderment, it is his own funeral. This incident makes a great impression on him and transforms him into a pious and virtuous person. However, the apparently ghostly experience that motivated his sudden conversion has a rational explanation. At the end of the story, the reader is informed that Beatrix, Baltazar’s wife⁴, could not stand his husband’s behaviour and planned to arrange a fake burial in order to scare him and make him mend his ways.

Apart from this, there is another obvious similarity between the two stories, which is even indicated by their titles: the action takes place in the Castilian town of Cuenca in both narratives. The choice of Cuenca is discussed by Valera Villalba (2014), who ignores the existence of “Barbitó”, and wonders why Mora would have decided to place the action in this town, with which he had no connection. However, the decision is even more striking if we bear in mind that the anonymous British author was the one who chose the setting in the first place. In any case, it should be noted that the selection of a Spanish setting may be related to the context of publication of “Barbitó”, which was first published in 1812, that is, during the Peninsular War (1808-1814). British troops were sent to the Iberian Peninsula in 1808 to help Spain and Portugal expel the French invaders and they did not only become actively involved in the conflict, but were instrumental in the eventual defeat of Napoleon. The Spanish cause was warmly supported by the British public opinion and British citizens eagerly followed the news of the Iberian campaigns. The interest in Spanish affairs and the redefinition of the relationship between Spain and Britain, which had traditionally been enemies, had an effect on British print culture and led to a proliferation of literary writings that imaginatively recreated Spain and its people, as Saglia has thoroughly examined (2000; 2010). “Barbitó” would thus participate in this vogue for Spanish themes as well.

Despite the popularity of Spain in Britain at that time, the vast majority of the British readers of “Barbitó” would have never heard of Cuenca –or rather Cuenza, as it is spelled in the story. However, some of them may have been able to recognize traces of the traditional depiction of Spain in Britain as the story incorporates elements of the so-called Spanish “Black Legend”, such as the presence of the Inquisition. In spite of the triviality of Don Lopez’s actions, he is seized by the officers of the Inquisition and tortured through the forced ingestion of water in order to confess that he was possessed by a demon. However, the anonymous author mocks the Holy Office and the tone of this passage is essentially comic. Humour and irony are also present in the author’s implicit criticism of the Church through the depiction of Father Ignacio, a monk who personifies hypocrisy, gluttony, and laziness. Furthermore, the story refers to the excesses of the Habsburg monarchs by introducing an alleged mistress of

Philip II and commenting on a legend that tells that Charles V commissioned the celebration of his own funeral when he was still alive.

Similarly, the image of sixteenth-century Spain portrayed by Mora in "El abogado de Cuenca" perpetuates the Spanish Black Legend, but employs a bitterer tone than the English story. Philip II is depicted as a modern Nero, a cruel tyrant whose ascent to the throne caused terrible evils to the Spanish Monarchy:

Felipe apareció en el trono como uno de aquellos meteoros, que anuncian desolación y muerte. Sus miradas terribles, la torva majestad de sus modales, su profundo disimulo, sus planes de intolerancia y exterminio, disfrazados bajo la máscara de la religión, de la probidad y de la justicia, llegaron a ser el modelo de las costumbres públicas en su corte, y después en la nación entera. (Mora, 1826: 131-132)

Mora underlines the hypocrisy, fanaticism, and superstition of the Spanish people and blames the Church and, above all, Philip II himself for the degeneration of the Spanish national character. His views are perfectly in tune with the assessment of Philip II and the monarchs of the Habsburg dynasty that can be found in the works of nineteenth-century Spanish liberals, who believed that the arrival of the Habsburgs marked the beginning of absolutism in Spain (Moreno Alonso, 2000: 119). Mora's criticism of Philip II would thus establish an implicit connection between his reign and the absolutist regime of Ferdinand VII, which the Spanish author fiercely opposed as it was the reason why he was exiled in London from 1823 to 1826.

Few of copies of Mora's *No me olvidas* could have circulated in the Spain of Ferdinand VII because the work was mainly distributed in Spanish America. Peninsular Spanish readers could not become acquainted with "El abogado de Cuenca" until 1847, when it was reprinted in Madrid in Mora's *El gallo y la perla*. Some years later, in 1863, Mora's short story was translated into French by Nestor David and published in *Fleurs d'Espagne, contes et nouvelles traduits de l'espagnol*. This French work also contains the translation of two other texts by Mora: the above-mentioned novella *El gallo y la perla* and the short story "La audiencia y la visita" (David, 1863). Therefore, being published

in English, Spanish, and French, Mora's short story was not only produced in a transnational context, but also reached a transnational audience.

3. REVISITING THE SPANISH LITERARY TRADITION: DON JUAN, LISARDO, AND MAÑARA

Although partly inspired by an English short story, Mora's "El abogado de Cuenca" features a series of elements extracted from three interconnected Spanish literary traditions: the legends of Don Juan, Lisardo, and, to a lesser extent, Miguel de Mañara. First of all, the characterization of Don Baltazar certainly echoes the Don Juan type: he is an arrogant libertine and artful seducer, who predatorily deceives, dishonours, and abandons women. As the following extract illustrates, he is both feared and admired:

Pocas mujeres había en el pueblo que se negasen a concederle media hora de conversación al través de una celosía: y a esta condescendencia seguía la ruina de la imprudente que había caído en sus lazos. Cuando alguna doncella faltaba de su casa; cuando se alteraba la paz de una familia, todo el pueblo fijaba los ojos en D. Baltazar, como autor de aquellos desaguisados. Los maridos lo miraban con horror: las madres se santiguaban al oír su nombre. (Mora, 1826: 136)

Don Baltazar does not show the slightest intention of changing his behaviour until he is faced with the inevitability and nearness of death. Although Mora probably borrowed the idea of the fake burial from the story of Barbito, the episode is rewritten following the legend of Lisardo, as Martín López (2006: 280) and Varela Villalba (2014) have pointed out. This legend, whose evolution in Spanish literature has been discussed by Sutherland (1992), has its origin in the folklore of Galicia and Asturias (Allegra, 1982: 29), but was first recorded in written form in Antonio de Torquemada's *Jardín de flores curiosas* (1570). Torquemada narrates the story of a "galán de monjas", a rich man who has an affair with a nun. One night he goes to her convent and discovers that the Church is open and a burial service is being conducted. He asks one of the monks about the identity of the deceased and he is told that it is himself. He asks the same question to another monk and, of course, he receives the same answer.

He feels terrified and decides to go back home, but he is followed by two mastiffs that eventually devour him.

Torquemada never refers to the name of this character, but a century later Cristóbal Lozano names him Lisardo and portrays him as a student from Cordova in *Soledades de la vida y desengaños del mundo* (1658). Lozano also introduces the affair between the young man and the nun, but modifies the scene of the funeral. Before going to the convent to meet his lover, Lisardo witnesses his own death as he encounters a gang of men who stab someone to death. He does not see the face of the victim, but he hears that he is called Lisardo. Then, he sees a group of people forming a burial procession and follows them to the church. As in Torquemada's work, the character asks about the identity of the dead man twice and in both cases he is answered that the deceased is Lisardo. However, at this point, Lozano's narrative distances from Torquemada's story and his hero is not punished with a violent death, but is offered an opportunity to reform. Consequently, he enters a monastery and, from then on, he devotes his life to God.

Given the similarities between the stories of Lisardo and Don Baltazar, Mora must have been acquainted with Lozano's *Soledades*, a work that was remarkably popular in the eighteenth century and was still reedited in the nineteenth, as documented in the studies by Ripoll (1991: 96-104) and Gidrewicz (2001: 614-619). In addition, the legend of Lisardo was widely disseminated thanks to the popular ballads ("romances") inspired by Lozano's text, which narrated the story in verse and contributed to its spread among the lower classes. In the words of Agustín Durán, a contemporary of Mora's, the legend of Lisardo was so popular that most Spaniards knew it by heart (1851: 266). Whether Mora knew it by heart or not, the truth is that the denouement of "El abogado de Cuenca" reproduces the conversion experienced by Lisardo in Lozano's version of the legend and, consequently, he omits the passage of the dogs that can be found in Torquemada's version. Nonetheless, there are some differences in the way in which Mora and Lozano describe how their heroes are presented with their own deaths. Mora's short story is closer to Torquemada's version in this respect because he does not refer to the stabbing and the burial procession. Then, as both Torquemada and Lozano, Mora recreates the ghostly

and gloomy atmosphere of the ceremony that is taking place in the church and the episode in which the character asks the monks about the identity of the deceased:

Entra, y ve el aparato de una ceremonia fúnebre. En medio de la iglesia se alzaba un sarcófago de terciopelo negro, rodeado de cirios encendidos. Delante estaba un féretro, cubierto con un paño de tumba. Los frailes, puestos en dos filas, entonaban el oficio de difuntos. (...) No pudiendo permanecer más tiempo en tan penosa incertidumbre, se acercó a uno de los frailes, y le preguntó quién era el sujeto a quien consagraban aquellos sufragios. "¿Y quién sois vos," le dijo el fraile, "para venir a interrumpirnos en nuestras santas ocupaciones?" D. Baltazar no pudo replicar: cuanto estaba viendo y oyendo era superior a su inteligencia. Retirose a un rincón de la iglesia, donde estaban arrodillados algunos criados del convento. Aproximose con timidez a uno de ellos, y le repitió la misma pregunta. "El muerto," respondió con la mayor naturalidad el criado, "es D. Baltazar... ese abogado que ha hecho tanto ruido en Cuenca." (Mora, 1826: 139-140)

Furthermore, Mora's "El abogado de Cuenca" is also inevitably connected with the story of Miguel de Mañara, a historical figure who lived in Seville in the seventeenth century and became celebrated for his charity works, which included the foundation of the Hospital de la Caridad in Seville. His pious and generous actions were supposed to be the result of a conversion motivated by an incident in which he was in danger of being killed, so his biography soon acquired fictional elements related to the legends of Don Juan and Lisardo and has been fruitfully exploited in numerous literary works, as Piveteau (2010) or Vega Rodríguez (2013) have expounded. Mora could have known about Mañara, but the traces of the story of this Sevillian philanthropist that can be found in his narrative are precisely those that the accounts of Mañara's life have incorporated from the above-mentioned literary types.

Mora's reworking of the Don Juan myth and the legends of Lisardo and Mañara

anticipates the later conspicuous presence of these themes in Spanish Romanticism, as in Espronceda's *El estudiante de Salamanca* (1840) and Zorrilla's *El capitán Montoya* (1840) and *Don Juan Tenorio* (1844). Mora himself deals with them again in his *Don Juan* (1844), an unfinished five-canto rewriting of Byron's homonymous work. It is well known that Byron's poem transforms the predator of women into the prey of women's desires, but apparently this naïve and passive hero did not meet Mora's expectations. As Medina Calzada has argued (2013), although the Spanish author imitates the stylistic features of Byron's poem, he deliberately revises the characterization of the hero and brings him closer to the traditional type. His *Don Juan* is an amoral and arrogant seducer who kills the husband of one of his victims, an incident that forces him to flee Seville. Then, he initiates a journey around the Mediterranean in which he behaves like a shrewd but coward rogue, who actually resembles the characters of the picaresque genre. The poem is unfinished and it is not possible to guess whether it is possible that the hero would eventually feel remorse for his deeds, mend his ways, and save his soul. Nonetheless, in the third canto, Mora introduces the story of a reformed libertine with the appearance of fray Vasconcelos, a friend of *Don Juan* (stanzas 44-106). Vasconcelos tells *Don Juan* the story of his conversion: he was in love with a young lady, who had been forced to enter a nunnery by her superstitious and fanatic father, so he planned to elope with her and arranged to meet her in a church. However, instead of finding his lover there, he only encountered a corpse. Suddenly, the Devil and a group of demons emerged and started to torture the dead man, who was condemned to hell for his wickedness. Vasconcelos admits that he was very impressed by this scene, which may have been just a dream, but made him realize that he should become a monk. Although in this case the reformed sinner does not witness his own burial, this episode certainly echoes the conversions of Lisardo, Mañara, and *Don Baltazar*.

4. THE UNEXPLAINED EXPLAINED: MORA, THE SUPERNATURAL, AND THE PROMOTION OF RATIONALISM

It is now time to consider Mora's treatment of the supernatural in "El abogado de Cuenca" and its connection with his ideas on literature, philosophy, and literature. According to Roas Deus (2000: 495), if

Mora's narrative had not included the rational explanation for Baltazar's burial, it would have been one of the best fantasy short stories of its time, especially bearing in mind that it was written at an early stage of the development of the fantasy genre in Spain. However, Mora did not want to write fantasy or gothic literature. On the contrary, his story offers a logical and rational explanation for an apparently uncanny event because he rejected those literary works that promoted irrationality through the presentation of ghostly appearances and preternatural creatures. These ideas are expressed in an article that he published in his periodical *Crónica Científica y Literaria* in 1819, a few years before his London exile and the publication of "El abogado de Cuenca":

¿Qué legión de espíritus tenebrosos se ha apoderado de los escritores de nuestros días? ¿Qué sed de horrores atormenta sus desarregladas imaginaciones? (...) Gracias a la literatura de los pueblos septentrionales, los personajes de los dramas y novelas son asesinos, salteadores, brujas, magos, corsarios, diablos y hasta vampiros. Sí señores. Un vampiro es el héroe de cierto poema que se atribuye a Lord Byron por la conocida propensión de este alegrísimo joven a semejantes personajes. (Mora, 1819: 3)

This article is part of Mora's campaign in favour of Neoclassicism and against Romanticism during the so-called *querrela calderoniana*⁵. This literary dispute, which started in 1814 and continued until 1820, set him against Johann Nikolaus Böhl von Faber, who argued for the introduction of Romanticism in Spain and vindicated Calderón's drama and the old values of chivalry that it represented. Mora had a limited knowledge of Romantic literature at that time, but he understood that Böhl's proposals were a challenge to the universal rules of good taste, the ideals of the Enlightenment, and the principles of political liberalism. Therefore, he linked Romanticism with irrationalism and, as the preceding quote shows, he condemned contemporary British and German literature for the obscurantism that dominated their works, which was not typical of modern educated nations. His literary ideas moved closer to Romanticism during his London exile (1823-1826) but not to the extent of defending the inclusion of supernatural

elements in fiction, as, for instance, José María Blanco White did. Blanco, who was also exiled in London at that time and acted as Mora's literary mentor, claimed that "non-verisimilar imaginations" could please the imagination and open new paths for literature (Blanco White, 1824). Mora disagreed with him and always showed contempt for the gothic and fantasy genres. As Monguió has noted (1967: 60), Mora was especially reluctant to combine sacred and profane issues in literature, which shows that his attitude was closer to the Enlightenment than to Romanticism.

In addition, Mora's well-rooted faith in reason did not only shape his ideas on literature, but also his religious views. Leaving aside his possible conversion to Protestantism⁶, his writings reveal that he argued for a rationalistic approach to religion because he believed that faith and reason did not exclude each other. As Monguió indicates:

Eran estas actitudes del gaditano hijas de su fe en la razón y en la posibilidad de una religión y una moral en armonía, que no en lucha o en contradicción, con los mandatos de la facultad intelectual, todo ello derivación del deísmo y el filosofismo del siglo XVIII que iban unidos en él a su educación primera "por un santo clérigo jansenista." (Monguió, 1967: 60).⁷

Above all, Mora's understanding of religion was opposed to intolerance, fanaticism, and superstition. In his view, these three issues had been promoted by the Catholic Church and the Spanish monarchy for centuries and were evils that should be eradicated. As a result, his short story "El abogado de Cuenca" can be read as a mockery of superstition. In fact, Don Baltazar's superstitious beliefs led him to regard the fake burial as a ghostly experience instead of as a trick devised by his wife. This is a new interpretation of the legend of Lisardo because the relationship between religion and the supernatural is absolutely different from those described by Torquemada and Lozano. As Martín López explains (2006: 282), the uncanny phenomena featured in Lozano's *Soledades* are caused by divine intervention, but in Mora's short story, the supernatural becomes a logical and real situation thanks to the rational explanation added at the end of the narration, which shows that the conversion of the main

character is only the result of human intervention.

Mora's desire to counteract superstition distances his short story from other accounts of the legend of Lisardo or the Don Juan myth, but connects it with "Barbito, or the Spectre of Cuenca", the tale by which it was inspired. As mentioned in section 1, "Barbito" was first published in *The Repository of Arts* in 1812 and then reproduced in *Ghost Stories* in 1823. This collection of short stories was aimed at mocking gothic fiction and superstitious beliefs, as indicated by its complete title: *Ghost Stories; Collected with a Particular View to Counteract the Vulgar Belief in Ghosts and Apparitions and to Promote a Rational Estimate of the Nature of the Phenomena Commonly Considered as Supernatural*. Ackermann, who was the publisher of both *Ghost Stories* and Mora's *No me olvides*, was "firmly attached to the proto-Romantic values of the sublime which characterised contemporary German aesthetics" (Tully, 2011: 155), but his publications generally have a moral purpose and promote rationalism. Mora's short story is thus perfectly consistent with the editorial projects of his publisher.

5. CONCLUSION

The analysis of "El abogado de Cuenca" reveals that Mora's short story is the result of the transnational context in which its composition and publication are inscribed. It certainly participates in an intertextual Anglo-Spanish dialogue with British contemporary prose fiction and the Spanish literary tradition. Mora borrows elements from the plot of the anonymous "Barbito, or the Spectre of Cuenca" and creates an original short story about a reformed libertine by combining these elements with others from the legends of Don Juan, Lisardo and, by extension, Miguel de Mañara. This is an unromantic reworking of a literary myth that became particularly attractive to the European Romantic imagination, but is appropriated by Mora so as to promote a rational understanding of religion. His narrative thus gives voice to his own religious, philosophical, literary, and political concerns, which include his faith in reason, his contempt for the fantasy and gothic genres, and his support to the liberal cause.

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NOTES

1. The phenomenon of the literary annual in Britain has been recently studied by Harris (2015), who contrasts the commercial success of these publications between the 1820s and the 1840s and the little critical acclaim and scholarly interest that they have received ever since. Literary annuals, which were mostly aimed at a female middle-class readership, compiled verse and prose writings composed mostly by minor authors, many of whom were women. However, some canonical Romantic and Victorian literary figures, such as William Wordsworth, Mary Shelley, Walter Scott, or Elizabeth Barrett Browning, also acted as contributors to this type of works. The *Forget Me Not* series was also the result of multiple authorship, although all the volumes that were published by Ackermann and his followers between 1823 and 1847 were edited by Frederic Shoberl.

2. During his brief but fruitful collaboration with Ackermann from 1823 to 1826, Mora published an impressive number of works belonging to different genres and dealing with different topics. He authored catechisms of geography, chemistry, political economy, and Latin and Spanish grammar; works on the education of women (*Cartas sobre la educación del bello sexo*, *Gimnástica del bello sexo*); books on history (*Cuadros de la historia de los árabes*, *Historia antigua de México*); periodical publications (*Museo Universal de Ciencias y Artes*, *Correo Literario y Político de Londres*); literary works (*No me olvides*, *Meditaciones poéticas*); and translations of Walter Scott's novels (*Ivanhoe*, *El talismán*). A list of Ackermann's Spanish publications –including those by Mora– can be found in Roldán Vera (2003: 243-259). Moreover, Monguió provides an appendix that records all the works Mora published (1967: 351-362).

3. For an analysis of *No me olvides*, see the classical study of the Spanish liberal exile in London by Lloréns (1968: 229-257) and the recent examination of the translation activities of these liberal exiles by Durán López (2015: 93-113).

4. In the Spanish text, Mora is notably ambiguous when describing the relationship between Baltazar and Beatriz, which may be the reason why Roas Deus (2000: 496) and Valera Villalba (2014) describe her as his fiancée instead of his wife. However, in the English version published in *Christmas Tales*, the author indicates that Baltazar and Beatriz were married (Mora, 1825: 257).

5. The Calderonian polemic, which is frequently mentioned in the histories of Spanish literature when discussing the onset of Romanticism in Spain, was first documented by Pitollet (1909) and then analysed by Carnero (1978), Tully (2007), and Pérez-Magallón (2010: 181-214), among others.

6. Mora could have been converted to Protestantism, although he never acknowledged it publicly. The thesis of the conversion is supported by Fernández Campos (1986), Vilar (1995) and Zazo Esteban (2016), who argue that Mora wrote a series of Protestant hymns that were published in the 1850s and collaborated in the Protestant periodical *El Alba* (1854-1862). According to Zazo Esteban (2016: 132), Mora did not embrace Protestantism during his exile (1823-1826), but he probably did so three decades later when he returned to Britain after being appointed Spanish consul in London (1850-1851, 1853-1854, 1856-1858).

7. This phrase refers to a letter that Mora wrote to José Hegan on 22 January 1855, in which he comments that he was educated by a Jansenist clergyman. According to Monguió (1967: 60), this clergyman could have been Cayetano María de Huarte.

Inevitably, commemorations and re-enactments also show another side, that of commercial interest and mass tourism, and many critics are unhappy with what some refer to as the theme-park kind of context created around events. Those organizing a re-enactment face a difficult balancing act between education and providing entertainment, that is, getting the facts right, without perpetuating myths and legends, while still making it a gratifying experience (Frost and Laing, 2013: 93). Yet re-enactments are a part of popular culture, providing an enjoyable and educational experience for a broad range of social groups. Commemorative events may lack the scientific rigour of museum displays but they attract interest, and they constitute an attractive and colourful spectacle, revealing cultural values and how communities identify with figures, periods and deeds from the past.

Contacto: <smedina@fyl.uva.es>

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