

## **El retablo de Maese Federico: Lorca's *Romancero gitano* as puppet theatre**

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This article considers the profound influence that puppet theatre had on Federico García Lorca's poetic vision and practice at the time that he was writing the poems that would eventually make up the *Romancero gitano* (1928). Taking the 'Romance sonámbulo' as its main example and focusing on elements such as setting, stage space, lighting and décor, characterisation, movement, choreography, and the complicit relationship between puppeteer, character and audience, it shows how Lorca draws on and plays with all the machinery and conventions of puppet theatre in this collection and, to all intents and purposes, transforms each of its poems into a mini puppet play. The article ends by considering the wider consequences for our reading of the *Romancero gitano* of Lorca's puppet aesthetic.

In a recent piece, I argued that the poems of the *Romancero gitano* can be seen and read as paintings, as two-dimensional canvases onto which Lorca applies images that are principally visual in nature but also tactile, auditory, olfactory and gustatory. Such an approach foregrounds the plastic and the painterly qualities of the poems and also allows them to be read in terms of the major artistic movements of the time, from Impressionism and Cubism to Expressionism and Abstraction (see Roberts 2009).

In this companion piece, I wish to claim that the *romances* can be seen not only as canvases but also, and at the same time, as puppet theatre. By this, I do not mean that each poem simply provides the story-line and often dialogue of what could become an individual puppet play but that it gives us the total experience of such a play, from setting to choreography, from décor to drama, from a sense of space to a sense of movement. As in the earlier piece, I shall be illustrating my thesis mainly through reference to one of the most famous poems in the collection, namely the 'Romance sonámbulo'.

Lorca's lifelong interest in puppet theatre is well-known and documented, from his early exposure to the work of travelling puppeteers in Fuente Vaqueros and the performances he put on as a child in his toy theatre at home to his largely unsuccessful attempts to have his adult puppet plays produced in the 1930s.<sup>1</sup> But his period of greatest activity in this area was without doubt the early 1920s, which saw the composition of his first full-length puppet play, *La tragicomedia de don Cristóbal y la seña Rosita* (1921-22), and various puppet collaborations with Manuel de Falla and the engraver and designer Hermenegildo Lanz. The performance of three puppet plays – two with glove puppets and one with cut-out figures – in Lorca's Granada home on 5 January 1923 has become an almost legendary event in the history of modern Spanish theatre, a moment when Lorca, Falla and Lanz pooled their literary, musical and designing talents to offer a spectacle that married traditional stories and puppeteering with avant-garde sets and music. For Falla and Lanz, the event was an opportunity to test out ideas and techniques that would then feed into their production, later that same year, of Falla's puppet opera *El retablo de Maese Pedro*. For Lorca, there is no doubt that the event represented a key moment in his development as poet, dramatist and artist. For one thing, he was able to write and perform a play, *La niña que riega la albahaca y el príncipe preguntón*, that both drew on local folklore and paid homage to the Andalusian traditions of puppet theatre. For another, he was able to combine his writing, painting and performance skills by participating in the creation of the texts and set designs, and by manipulating some of the glove puppets themselves, including that of don Cristóbal, who supplied the entertainment during the intervals between the plays. And, finally, the event confirmed him in his passionate conviction that puppet theatre could offer an antidote to the staid and conventionally realistic drama that dominated the Spanish stage of the time. Since at least January 1922, Lorca and Falla had been exploring the idea of creating an Andalusian puppet company that could tour both locally and internationally, and the January 1923 performance encouraged Lorca to continue refining his own puppet texts for the proposed *Títeres andaluces de Cachiporra*.<sup>2</sup> Although these plans did not in fact come to fruition, Lorca would never lose his enthusiasm for puppet theatre, and he managed, in March and April 1934, to oversee one-off performances of his *Retablillo de don Cristóbal y doña Rosita* in Buenos Aires and Madrid. More importantly, though, he would incorporate many of the ideas and techniques of puppet theatre into the drama that he started to write for human actors from the mid 1920s

onwards, starting most obviously with *La zapatera prodigiosa*, which he referred to as ‘una comedia (por el estilo de Cristóbal)’ (1997, p. 241), that is a puppet-like work;<sup>3</sup> and he would also incorporate puppet (or puppet-like) characters into the more experimental plays that he wrote during and after his stay in New York.

This intense immersion in the world of puppet theatre in the early to mid 1920s furnished Lorca with an intimate knowledge of all aspects of puppetry: how both glove and cut-out puppets are made and manipulated, how they look, feel and move; how puppet theatres and their sets are designed, constructed and worked; how puppet movement is choreographed and how the puppets interact with their surroundings; how voice, sounds and music are used to punctuate, underscore or offset that movement and interaction; how the puppeteer relates not only to his puppets but also, through them, to his audience. And it is out of this intense and total experience of puppetry and puppet theatre, I claim, that the poems of the *Romancero gitano*, most of which were written at this time, emerge and take their final shape. It is the central contention of this article, in fact, that each of these poems is conceived, shaped and bodied forth with the vision and imagination of a puppet master.

The main evidence for this view of the *Romancero gitano* will come from the poems themselves, as we shall see in a moment. But there is also a fascinating piece of ‘external’ evidence that should be considered first, namely Lorca’s description of the collection, in his ‘Conferencia-Recital del *Romancero gitano*’ (probably 1933), as ‘un retablo de Andalucía con gitanos, caballos, arcángeles, planetas, con su brisa judía, con su brisa romana, con ríos, con crímenes, con la nota vulgar del contrabandista y la nota celeste de los niños desnudos de Córdoba que burlan a San Rafael’ (1986a, vol. 3, p. 340). The key word in this quotation is ‘retablo’, a term that Lorca uses again later on in the ‘Conferencia-Recital’ when introducing the character of Antoñito el Camborio (1986a, vol. 3, p. 345). Relatively little attention has been paid to this word, and most of that focuses on the idea that Lorca is likening his collection in some way or other to an altarpiece or reredos.<sup>4</sup> No approach that stresses the painterly and compositional qualities of the *Romancero gitano* can in fact overlook the thematic and formal appropriateness of the view that the collection – and each poem within it – is akin to an altarpiece: thematic, because the *Romancero* presents us with the stories of a series of iconic figures, several of whom are in fact

Saints or Archangels themselves; and formal, because each of these stories is told as a series of vignettes that are juxtaposed, sometimes in the form of diptychs or triptychs, in order to create an impression both of narrative and of simultaneity of event that is directly reminiscent of Medieval, Renaissance or baroque altarpieces.<sup>5</sup>

But some altarpieces can themselves show how two-dimensional art tries to become three-dimensional, as bas-reliefs or full-blown statues emerge from the flat and colourful décor that constitutes their surroundings. Little surprise, therefore, that the word ‘retablo’ should also have come to mean a board on which the background decoration for a puppet play is painted and displayed, and, by extension, an actual puppet stage or theatre itself. Lorca’s reference to the *Romancero gitano* as a ‘retablo’ carries with it both the sense of a particular type of religious representation, with its own specific forms of characterisation, story-telling, composition and organisation, and the sense of a puppet play with the same rich mixture of characters who now stand proud of their backdrop and play out their dramas by interacting with it.

There is, of course, an obvious antecedent for Lorca, one which, thanks to his association with Falla and Lanz, was very present in his mind when he started to write his *romances*. In fact, Lorca’s reference to the gypsies, horses, archangels, smugglers and children that populate his puppet show can easily make us think of the emperor, king, lords, lady, cavalrymen and horses that Cervantes’ Maese Pedro will bring onto the stage of his own portable puppet theatre in Chapters 25 and 26 of Part 2 of *Don Quijote* (see Cervantes, 1998, vol. 1, pp. 839-855). Maese Pedro presents himself as the master puppeteer who transports the puppet theatre around with him, assembles it, prepares the stage and décors, and then works his puppets from within, producing appropriate music and sound effects as he does so. But he also relies on the efforts of his young assistant, the *trujamán*, who, standing out front and making use of a wand, acts as narrator, commentator and interpreter of the events taking place on stage, addressing the audience directly and thereby forging a direct relationship between those events and the people watching them. It is precisely the combined role of puppet master and *trujamán* that we shall see at work in the poems of the *Romancero gitano*, as each *romance* provides us with what can only be called a total puppet experience.

And so to our chosen puppet poem, ‘Romance sonámbulo’:

Verde que te quiero verde.  
 Verde viento. Verdes ramas.  
 El barco sobre la mar  
 4 y el caballo en la montaña.  
 Con la sombra en la cintura,  
 ella sueña en su baranda,  
 verde carne, pelo verde,  
 8 con ojos de fría plata.  
 Verde que te quiero verde.  
 Bajo la luna gitana,  
 las cosas la están mirando  
 12 y ella no puede mirarlas.

Verde que te quiero verde.  
 Grandes estrellas de escarcha  
 16 vienen con el pez de sombra  
 que abre el camino del alba.  
 La higuera frota su viento  
 con la lija de sus ramas,  
 y el monte, gato garduño,  
 20 eriza sus pitas agrias.  
 Pero ¿quién vendrá? ¿Y por dónde?...  
 Ella sigue en su baranda,  
 verde carne, pelo verde,  
 24 soñando en la mar amarga.

—Compadre, quiero cambiar  
 mi caballo por su casa,  
 mi montura por su espejo,  
 28 mi cuchillo por su manta.  
 Compadre, vengo sangrando,  
 desde los puertos de Cabra.  
 —Si yo pudiera, mocito,  
 32 este trato se cerraba.  
 Pero yo ya no soy yo,  
 ni mi casa es ya mi casa.  
 —Compadre, quiero morir  
 36 decentemente en mi cama.  
 De acero, si puede ser,  
 con las sábanas de holanda.  
 ¿No ves la herida que tengo  
 40 desde el pecho a la garganta?  
 —Trescientas rosas morenas  
 lleva tu pechera blanca.  
 Tu sangre rezuma y huele  
 44 alrededor de tu faja.  
 Pero yo ya no soy yo,  
 ni mi casa es ya mi casa.  
 —Dejadme subir al menos

48 hasta las altas barandas,  
 ¡dejadme subir!, dejadme  
 hasta las verdes barandas.  
 Barandales de la luna  
 52 por donde retumba el agua.

Ya suben los dos compadres  
 hacia las altas barandas.  
 Dejando un rastro de sangre.  
 56 Dejando un rastro de lágrimas.  
 Temblaban en los tejados  
 farolillos de hojalata.  
 Mil panderos de cristal  
 60 herían la madrugada.

Verde que te quiero verde,  
 verde viento, verdes ramas.  
 Los dos compadres subieron.  
 64 El largo viento, dejaba  
 en la boca un raro gusto  
 de hiel, de menta y de albahaca.  
 —¡Compadre! ¿Dónde está, dime,  
 68 dónde está tu niña amarga?  
 —¡Cuántas veces te esperó!  
 ¡Cuántas veces te esperara,  
 cara fresca, negro pelo,  
 72 en esta verde baranda!

Sobre el rostro del aljibe  
 se mecía la gitana.  
 Verde carne, pelo verde,  
 76 con ojos de fría plata.  
 Un carámbano de luna  
 la sostiene sobre el agua.  
 La noche se puso íntima  
 80 como una pequeña plaza.  
 Guardias civiles borrachos  
 en la puerta golpeaban.  
 Verde que te quiero verde.  
 84 Verde viento. Verdes ramas.  
 El barco sobre la mar.  
 Y el caballo en la montaña. (1986c, pp. 56-59)

Lorca's 'Romance sonámbulo' draws on and plays with all the machinery and conventions of puppet theatre, as we shall see now when considering elements as varied as setting, stage space, lighting and décor, characterisation, movement, choreography, and the complex relationship between puppeteer, character and

audience. The poem starts with an incantatory couplet that marks the entry into a world of magic and of performance and will be repeated, in differing forms and in an ever more troubling manner, at key moments throughout. This couplet also helps to paint the backdrop of the stage and to cast an eerie green glow over the events that will unfold there. The moon and the stars will play an increasingly important role in that backdrop, controlling the shifting intensity of the light that is projected onto the stage and picking out certain key objects in turn: the eyes of the gypsy woman (v. 8), the tin lanterns on the roofs (vv. 57-60), the body of the gypsy woman on the surface of the cistern (vv. 77-78).

The stage itself has all the magical complexity and impossible perspectives of the best puppet theatre. It is made up of an interior space, where the three gypsies are to be found, and an exterior space – perhaps glimpsed through windows, arches or balconies – representing the natural world beyond the house. There is also the suggestion of a more immediate exterior space with the reference, at the end of the poem, to the Civil Guards banging on the front door. The interior space itself is divided up into a higher level, the domain of the gypsy woman, and a lower level, where the two gypsy men have their initial discussion. These levels are themselves connected by a staircase which witnesses much of the action at the heart of the poem-play. A sense of how Lorca may have imagined this space can perhaps be gleaned from a coloured drawing entitled *Verde que te quiero verde* that he appended to a copy of the ‘Romance sonámbulo’ in 1930 (reproduced in García Lorca, 1986b, p. 207). Like so many of his drawings of rooms or houses, *Verde que te quiero verde* demonstrates a complex interplay of inner and outer spaces that has more to do with stage sets than with reality. This drawing, which does not include any of the characters in the poem (even if it is tempting to see the two trees in the centre standing in for the two men or, perhaps, for the young gypsy couple), seems to offer a sketch of the theatrical space in which the drama of the ‘Romance sonámbulo’ can be played out, and it is a space that has been carefully arranged and made eminently ready for the entrance of puppet figures: the banister in the lower right-hand corner where the ghostly gypsy woman will stand and dream, silhouetted against a night sky beyond; the banisters at the top of the house where she used to wait in the past for her lover to return; the central courtyard where the gypsy men have their first exchange of words; and the improbably-placed stairs in the top left-hand corner which the men

climb as they search for the gypsy woman. The evidence provided by the drawing indicates, therefore, that the relationship between the different spaces (and times) that *Verde que te quiero verde* reveals simultaneously to us is dictated not by logic but rather by the demands of performance and visibility. The same is true of the poem itself: just as Maese Pedro's backdrop and stage will encompass a room in Charlemagne's palace, the balconies and corridors of one of the towers in the Aljafería, the streets of Zaragoza and the road that leads to France, so Lorca's backdrop and stage will have room for the courtyard, balconies and roofs of an Andalusian house and will also afford glimpses of distant landscapes and the threatening world that lies beyond the main door. And, just as Cervantes' puppeteer and *trujamán* constantly shift our attention between the different parts of their stage, so the 'Romance sonámbulo' takes us from the gypsy woman by her banister to the men at the bottom of the house and then climbing the stairs, and then once again to the gypsy woman, who is now floating on the surface of the cistern. The final suggestion of the presence of the Civil Guards leads us into the closing incantation that will bring the performance to an end.

This constant shifting of attention between different parts of the stage and between different characters is typical of puppet theatre. And the way these characters look and move can also be seen to echo the appearance and movement of puppets. Contemporary photographs of the performance of Lorca's *La niña que riega la albahaca y el príncipe preguntón* in January 1923 reveal that Hermenegildo Lanz's glove puppets were composed of large and finely-carved wooden heads, and long, flowing colourful clothes that would hide the puppeteer's hand and forearm.<sup>6</sup> In the 'Romance sonámbulo', the characters are similarly defined by their appearance, dress and attributes. The state, state of mind and emotion of the characters are all conveyed, not through facial expression, but through appearance. With the gypsy woman, there is a particular emphasis on her head and on the colour of her flesh, hair and eyes, while, with the younger gypsy man, attention is concentrated on his belongings – his horse, saddle and knife – and on his blood-stained clothes. This emphasis on appearance and on recognisable attributes or characteristics transforms the protagonists into the sort of stock characters that populate puppet theatre and also allows for certain impressive visual effects, such as the changing colour of the woman's face and hair, and the powerful presence of the blood-stained belt or sash,



which one can imagine falling from the young gypsy's waist and metamorphosing into the trail of blood left behind him as he ascends the staircase. Furthermore, as in all good puppet theatre, there are evil characters threatening violence, and, just as Maese Pedro probably represented the Moorish cavalry in his 'Retablo de la libertad de Melisendra' with the use of a single large puppet, it is tempting to see a similar device being used to portray the group of drunken Civil Guards in the closing scene. Meanwhile, this stereotypical and even knock-about representation of the repressive forces of law and order could easily find a lyrical counterbalance in the earlier portrayal of the fig tree and the mountain in vv. 17-20 of the poem, since it is perfectly possible to imagine glove puppets being used to animate these natural elements and to reproduce their unusual movements, a device that would have the additional benefit of offering a literal illustration of Lorca's claim that there is only one character in the *Romancero gitano* and that this character, 'la Pena', 'se filtra en el tuétano de los huesos y en la savia de los árboles' (1986a, vol. 3, p. 340).

The puppet qualities of the 'Romance sonámbulo' encompass not only setting, character and choreography but also dialogue and stage directions. The poem contains within it a script that is made up of two finely balanced sequences of exchanges between the two male characters. The gypsy men's words themselves contain clues as to how these particular sections of the poem-play should be staged – including possible visual references to the younger man's longed-for steel bed and to the gypsy woman waiting for him at the green banister –, but the main stage directions in the poem are to be found in the more descriptive lines that surround these exchanges. It is here, in the two opening stanzas and in stanzas 4, 5 and 6, that we come across the poem's *trujamán*, that is, the implied voice of a narrator, interpreter and commentator. The description of place, character and action is so precise at these points that one can almost imagine an invisible figure standing in front of the stage and pointing them out to us with a wand. Indeed, on one occasion that voice acts in an even more explicit way and allows itself to address the audience directly and to form a dramatic, story-telling relationship with us that is very familiar from puppet theatre: 'Pero ¿quién vendrá? ¿Y por dónde?...' (v. 21). And this complicit relationship between puppeteer, *trujamán*, characters and audience is cemented even further, albeit in a more mysterious way, when the young gypsy man himself, again like many puppet figures before him, directs his supplications not just to the 'tú' of his older companion but to

a ‘vosotros’ that must include us, the spectators who are being drawn into the dramatic spectacle unfolding before us:

—Dejadme subir al menos  
 hasta las altas barandas,  
 ¡dejadme subir!, dejadme  
 hasta las verdes barandas. (vv. 47-50)<sup>7</sup>

Finally, this puppet play would not be complete without its special effects. Some of these have to do with the staging, including the use of unusual puppets, such as those of the fig tree, the mountain and the group of Civil Guards, alongside those of the three gypsy figures. Others would be auditory, including the rustle of the wind and the fig tree (vv. 17-18), the implied metallic sound accompanying the reflections of the tin lanterns-tambourines (vv. 57-60), and the drunken knocking of the Civil Guards (lines 81-82), all noises that would emanate from the heart of the puppet theatre, just as the sounds of drums, trumpets, cannons and horses’ whinnies had issued from inside Maese Pedro’s. And yet more of these special effects – perhaps the most impressive of all – would be visual, ranging from the use of colour in décor and dress to the dramatic lighting effects that come to a climax with the piercing of the gypsy woman’s body with the shaft/icicle of moonlight (vv. 77-78). It is important to make clear that these effects – and, more generally, the machinery, devices and conventions of puppet theatre – are by no means exclusive to the ‘Romance sonámbulo’. Each poem within the *Romancero gitano* can in fact be seen and experienced as a mini puppet play, with a similar use of setting, characterisation, script, dialogue and choreography, and with a similar atmosphere and sense of complicity with the audience. Indeed, the elements of puppetry present in the poems may help to shed new light on some of the collection’s most striking and mysterious effects, such as the transformation of St Gabriel into a doll-like figure that seems to walk through the air, the provenance of the voice that questions Soledad Montoya’s actions and intentions in the ‘Romance de la pena negra’, or Antoñito el Camborio’s call on Federico García – his puppet master – to fetch the Civil Guard, that is, of course, to bring them onstage (see García Lorca, 1986c, pp. 73-75, 65-66 and 79). From this perspective, even a violent and denunciatory poem like the ‘Romance de la guardia civil española’ takes on the shape and exploits the effects of a particularly rich and complex puppet play (see García Lorca, 1986c, pp. 86-90).

There is no doubt that all of Lorca's poems in the *Romancero gitano* are fundamentally dramatic or, at the very least, that they contain dramatic elements within them, and it is only fair to say that such elements derive from a number of sources, including the Spanish ballad tradition in general and the story-telling conventions associated with *romances de ciego* and *aleluyas*.<sup>8</sup> But the specific type of drama found in the 'Romance sonámbulo' and the other poems in the collection, reliant as it is on a particular form of setting, atmosphere, characterisation, movement and relationship with the audience, appears clearly to point to the pervasive influence of puppet theatre.

By saying this, I am neither denying the influence of other art forms on the collection nor claiming that Lorca simply set out in the *Romancero gitano* to write puppet plays in miniature. Rather, my aim is to call attention to how Lorca wrote these poems, at least in part, with the imagination and vision of a master puppeteer, of someone who was deeply involved at the time in the creation and production of puppet theatre and who brought into the poems a sense of space, movement and complicity derived directly from that form of theatre. Given this fact, it would seem appropriate to conclude by inquiring into the wider consequences for the *Romancero gitano* of this aesthetic choice and vision.

The main point to make at the outset is that Lorca's puppet aesthetic in the *Romancero gitano* has consequences that have as much to do with form as with content or theme, if not more so. Apart from at certain key moments in the collection – one thinks especially of the depiction of the Civil Guard in the 'Romance sonámbulo' and the 'Romance de la guardia civil española' –, Lorca's aim in creating puppet-like figures is not to strike a satirical or an existentialist chord such as that found in other contemporary puppet works including Valle-Inclán's *Los cuernos de don Friolera* (1921).<sup>9</sup> This is not to say, of course, that Lorca's characters are not playthings and sometimes victims of forces beyond their control, but the 'Pena' that filters through the marrow of their bones and the sap of the trees means that they are cosmic victims who more often than not resist and fight out against those forces. They may be manipulated *títeres* but they are not degraded *fantoques*, which means that the emphasis in the poems lies not so much on what they represent as on the way in

which they are represented. Lorca's puppet-characters, in other words, bring with them into their poems and help to establish a certain tone, texture and atmosphere, one that lies somewhere between the typical or *costumbrista* and the childlike, playful or even outright surreal. They inhabit and are part of the natural and man-made spaces that make up their complex stage sets; their dramas are forged out of simple and direct conflicts that are both typical of puppet theatre and have all the power of mythical or fairy tales; and those dramas and tales are often punctuated with the magical, humorous, mechanical and even slapstick effects that are also characteristic of this type of theatre.

And, finally, viewing these poems as puppet plays throws up interesting questions about the structure and unity of the work as a whole. Just as it is possible to imagine the *Romancero gitano* in terms of a collection of discrete altarpieces or of one vast altarpiece that recounts the lives of a whole host of different characters, so it is also possible to see it either as a succession of different puppet performances or as different scenes or moments within one huge and complex puppet play. The advantage of this latter approach is that it sheds new light on the structuring devices, that is, on the echoes, parallels, repetitions and patterns that help to hold the collection together and to endow it with a sense of unity. In fact, such an approach serves to underline the constants and metamorphoses that feature so centrally throughout the *Romancero gitano*. Seeing the moon, for example, not simply as a poetic symbol but as a painted presence on the theatre backcloth or even as a puppet in its own right, allows us to appreciate the way in which it plays an active role in 'Romance de la luna, luna', is transformed into a tambourine in 'Preciosa y el aire', becomes hidden by the hard light of afternoon in 'Reyerta' and then returns to play a leading role once again in the 'Romance sonámbulo' and other poems (including the very puppet-like 'Burla de Don Pedro a caballo') right through to its final 'eclipse' by the sun in 'Thamar y Amnón' (García Lorca, 1986c, pp. 49-59 and 97-103). And, as far as the characters are concerned, it is possible to imagine them being portrayed by a restricted number of puppets that simply change costume between the scenes and act out their dramas against a series of different sets representing both interior and exterior, real and imagined spaces. Even more radically, and following Lorca's own comments on the collection, all the major characters could in fact be played by one single puppet, a

device that would give flesh to the idea that each poem-scene simply presents a variation on the central and overarching theme of ‘Pena’.

In short, the poetic puppet plays that make up the *Romancero gitano* provide Lorca with a space in which he can bring together his literary and painterly interests, give free rein to his visual and dramatic imagination, try out new poetic effects, make the imagery of his verse stand up and take on a plastic form, and, finally, fuse tradition and novelty in a radically modern way. Lorca’s Andalusian puppets, in other words, inhabit a truly avant-garde world.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Francisco García Lorca (1998, pp. 267-283); Lima (1963, pp. 3-16 and 67-95); Soria Olmedo (1986); Gibson (1989, pp. 17-18 and 117-126); Ucelay (1990, pp. 9-126); Hernández (1992); García Lorca (1992); George (1995, pp. 43-46); Aszyk (1996); Calderón Calderón (2000); Mata (2003, pp. 23-45).

<sup>2</sup> See the letters that Lorca sent, among others, to Adolfo Salazar, Manuel de Falla, José de Ciria y Escalante, and members of his own family between early 1921 and late 1924, in García Lorca (1997, pp. 135-252 *passim*). Lorca’s continuing attempts throughout the later 1920s and early 1930s to have his puppet plays put on are reflected in further letters to Melchor Fernández Almagro, Guillermo de Torre, Angel Ferrant, and his family written after February 1926 (see García Lorca 1997, pp. 331-704 *passim*).

<sup>3</sup> When the *zapatero* puts on his show for the benefit of his wife in Act 2 of this play (see García Lorca 1986a, vol. 2, pp. 352-357), he is not in fact staging a puppet show but rather reciting a *romance* and using a wand to point to a series of illustrations painted on a large sheet (see note 9 below). Despite this, he is using a poetic form and a story-telling device (that of the narrator or *trujamán*) which, as we shall see shortly, are of great relevance when considering the ‘Romance sonámbulo’. As Lorca’s letters to Melchor Fernández Almagro of late July and early August 1924 attest, the ‘Romance sonámbulo’ was written at the same time as the first Act of *La zapatera prodigiosa* (see García Lorca 1997, pp. 241 and 245).

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, Maurer (2007, pp. 16-38 [p. 18]). Herbert Ramsden and Eric Southworth, meanwhile, stress more generally the influence of Medieval and early Renaissance artists on Lorca: see Ramsden (2008a, pp. 47-50 and 53-58), and Southworth (1999, pp. 87-102 [pp. 96-102]).

<sup>5</sup> On this point – and on the fact that Lorca’s use of simultaneity can create effects that appear both traditional and avant-garde at the same time –, see Roberts (2009, pp. 165 and 167).

<sup>6</sup> Photographs of this performance are included amongst the illustrations in Francisco García Lorca (1998), and can also be found in García Lorca (1992, pp. 35, 41 and 43-47) and in Dempsey and Lelie (1997, p. 40). Later, colour photographs of the puppets Lanz made for the performance are found in Mata (2003, pp. 2-3, 24 and 30-31).

<sup>7</sup> In some editions of the ‘Romance sonámbulo’, as Mario Hernández has pointed out (in García Lorca 1986c, p. 204), vv. 39-40 are rendered as ‘¿No veis [instead of “No ves”] la herida que tengo / desde el

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pecho a la garganta?', an alternative that would emphasise even further the complicit relationship between the characters and events on stage and the audience.

<sup>8</sup> On Lorca's interest in both these artistic forms, see Calderón Calderón (2000, pp. 199-200). On the nature of the *aleluya*, a series of illustrations printed on paper or cloth that, together, narrate a story, and Lorca's use of this medium in his own drama, see Ucelay (1990, pp.13-26).

<sup>9</sup> Or, one could add, some of Lorca's own later and more experimental plays: see Higginbotham (1976, p. 74).

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