RAMON SENDER: A LITERARY SURVEY

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by

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Introduction

The most widely translated of the contemporary Spanish novelists is perhaps Ramón José Sender. His works are more popular abroad than they are in his own country and have been successfully translated into fifteen languages (Chinese, Czech, Danish, Dutch, English, Finnish, French, German, Hebrew, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Swedish, Ukrainian, and White Russian). He is acclaimed by many critics and writers, including Ernest Hemingway, as Spain's foremost novelist.¹ Lloyd George, in the House of Commons, called him "the most distinguished of all the modern Spanish writers,"² and Pío Baroja praised him early in his career: "Tenemos entre los jóvenes un poeta: García Lorca. Y un novelista: Sender."³ He was awarded the Premio Nacional de Literatura in 1935 for his novel Mister Witt en el cantón and has successfully essayed the various fields of Journalism, Drama, Essay, and Poetry.

Despite Sender's world-wide popularity and his growing distinction as a creative writer, very little recognition or critical investigation has been made of his contribu-

tions. Like so many other Spanish authors, he is a prolific writer, and his numerous works vary accordingly in merit. The purpose of this thesis will be to give a general report on Sender, a book-by-book survey-review, as it were - and a summing-up of his literary development as a novelist.

In a study of this sort the personal attitude of the writer cannot be held entirely in abeyance. Criticism of necessity assumes some of the individual likes and dislikes of the critic, although he may try to be as impartial as human nature permits.

The paucity of bibliographical material has been a handicap in the preparation of this thesis and has entailed much time-consuming research. Though all minor items have not been traced, the bibliography listed at the end is as complete as present information could make it. It is included with the hope that someone will make it more so.

To Professor Claude E. Anibal of the Department of Romance Languages, Ohio State University, I owe a sincere debt of appreciation and admiration. Without his enthusiasm and interest this work would never have been undertaken. Miss Alma King and Mr. Louis Yura have also been extremely helpful.
Biography

Ramón José Sender was born in Alcolea de Cinca, a small village in upper Aragon, February 3, 1902. His parents were modest farm owners, strong Catholics and conservatives, who later moved to the provincial capital, Huesca, and thence to Zaragoza, where his father engaged in business.

As a child, Sender received his early education from tutors and later attended a monastery school in Reus. Trouble with his family about parental discipline caused him to leave home at the age of fourteen and live independently. He entered the Instituto de Zaragoza and received his bachelor's degree in 1918, and then proceeded to the Universidad Central de Madrid to study law. He was graduated Licenciado en Filosofía y Letras from this university in 1922. During his career as a university student in both cities, he financed his studies by working as a pharmacist's assistant. He was also editor of a country newspaper, La Tierra, published in Huesca.

In his early youth he became engaged in conspiracies and political movements against the Monarchy. Like many other young intellectuals of his time, he was aroused by the conditions of the working classes all over Spain and by the belief of the upper classes that their interests were the same as the interests of the country as a whole and
that they were exercising a moral obligation in defending them, even by violence. He was once imprisoned and paroled to his family, who claimed him as being under-age. For three years he lived with them, editing a small newspaper. Rearrested, he was exiled from Huesca, but he continued his Republican activities. At one time he was forced to go into hiding while his fellow conspirators were captured and summarily executed by the government.

At the age of twenty he served his compulsory military training in Morocco during the disastrous and bloody uprising of the Moors under the leadership of Abd-el-Krim. He quickly arose from the ranks of enlisted men to be commissioned lieutenant. It was during this trying period that he amassed the experiences which he was later to incorporate into his first novel, \textit{Imán} (1929).

In 1924 he returned to Spain and became editor and literary critic of \textit{El Sol}, Madrid's most important liberal newspaper, then almost a Republican organ. He associated with the best known literary men and free-thinkers of the times, Unamuno, Valle-Inclán, Benavente, Baroja. He was an active member of the Ateneo, the oldest and most distinguished literary club in Spain, and in 1929 he became a member of its governing board and secretary of the Ibero-American Section. \textit{El problema religioso en México} (1927) is his first important publication during this period of
great activity.

In 1927 he was retained for three months in Madrid's Cárcel Modelo. Primo de Rivera ruled Spain with an iron hand and Sender was imprisoned on general principals, without trial and without accusation of any sort. His activities and his newspaper articles, highly spiced with radical doctrines, had doubtless made him appear very suspicious. Freed by the intervention of the Press Association, his prison experiences are incorporated into Orden público (1931), a poetic and ironical novel which, because of its prophecy of things to come, later became the first of a trilogy entitled Los términos del presagio. Viaje a la aldea del crimen (1933) and La noche de las cien cabezas (1934) conclude this trilogy, not recognized as such until 1941.¹

From 1930 until 1936, the time of the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War, Sender continued his literary career in Madrid. Serving as a free-lance writer, he contributed to El Sol, La Libertad, and other periodicals, publishing essays, novels, and plays. El verbo se hizo sexo (1931) and Siete domingos rojos (1932) are novels written during this time. The former reveals his somewhat mystic attitude and the latter shows his increasing interest in the Spanish

¹. See preface to O.P. (Orden público), Mexico, Publicaciones Panamericanas, 1941.
proletariat and in their efforts toward self-conscious organization. Despite his pro-Republican activities, he declined public office and remained critical during the brief regime of the Republic.

In 1933-34 he traveled through most of Europe, a keen and sympathetic observer. He was warmly received in Moscow, his ultimate destination, by the Writer's International Union. All that he saw and heard in Russia and in the other countries through which he passed impressed him deeply and influenced his political philosophy, already liberal, to a greater degree. Madrid-Moscú (1934) and Carta de Moscú sobre el amor (1934) reveal much of what he saw and his attitude toward communism.

His novel Mister Witt en el cantón (1936) was awarded the Premio Nacional de Literatura for 1935 by a jury including Pío Baroja, Antonio Machado and Pedro de Répide, and is his last work of fiction published in Spain.

Contraataque (1938), first published in translation in Great Britain and France, describes his participation in the bloody Civil War during the first six months of battle. He enlisted as a private in the Republican army as soon as the Franco revolt broke out and soon attained the rank of brigade commander. His brother and his wife (Amparo Barayón, whom he had married in 1933 and who had borne him two children, Ramón and Andrea) were killed by fascists.
Sender was forced to flee to France in 1937. Through the services of the International Red Cross he managed to have his children sent safely to him. He is the actual person upon whom the Manuel of André Malraux's well-known war novel *L'Espoir* is based.  

While in Paris he served as Spanish delegate to the International Congress of Writers, delivering the speech "El escritor y la lucha por la libertad." He was also active in enlisting aid for the Spanish Loyalists. In 1938, sponsored by the North American Committee to Aid Spanish Democracy, he and José Bergamín, essayist and founder of *Cruz y Raya*, toured the United States with Carmen Meana as representative-spokesmen of the Spanish Republic. During the war he also held positions with the National Council of Culture and the Alliance of Intellectuals for the Defense of Democracy.

Sender arrived in Mexico in March of 1939, finding the country very inducive to writing and contemplation. *Proverbio de la muerte* (1939) reveals the searching introspection of an idealist trying to find himself and create a new set of values. *El lugar del hombre* (1939) is a temporary return to his native province, Aragon, and is an attempt to find the place of man, any man, in society.

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Hernán Cortés (1940) and Mexicayotl (1941) show that he has succeeded in understanding and interpreting the people and the history of his adopted homeland. In Epitalamio del Prieto Trinidad (1941) we have the symbolic picture of the ideals that exist in life, and in Crónica del alba (1942) the author turns once again to the scene of his childhood.

A Guggenheim Fellowship brought Ramón Sender to the United States for study in 1942. He lived for a time in Santa Fe, later teaching at Amherst College (1944-45) and lecturing at Harvard, Denver, and other institutions. Since 1947 he has been Professor of Contemporary Spanish Literature at the University of New Mexico. He became a citizen of this country in 1945 and has resumed his literary career, making frequent contributions to various reviews and continuing his career as a novelist. He is married to Florence Hall, of the staff of the University of New Mexico and editor of the classroom edition of Crónica del alba. His most recent novel, El rey y la reina (1949), was published in English before making its appearance in Spanish. In Mexico it was the selection for the Book of the Month Club, the first time a Spanish author had thus been honored.

Sender's present work in progress is a novel awaiting publication with the tentative English title of The Affable
Hangman. He is also adding the final touches to a collection of his unpublished poetry and plays.

Describing his life and his accomplishments, Sender has the following interesting observation to make:

They tell me I was born in 1902. I do not believe it. My impression is that I have lived always, and I remember with more clarity, for example, Mediaval Spanish scenes than episodes of my childhood or youth. The editors ask that I explain what I am like. That is the greatest problem. I cannot explain it because I do not know it.

Dictionaries teach more than books do to friends, enemies, women, and, above all, children. In my books I find it necessary to express things which I cannot say to friends, enemies, women, or children. Perhaps I ought not to say them at all. But only thus, by writing things to be read, can I give the impression of individualizing myself sufficiently, of 'diluting myself in my time' in such a way that by incoherence and perhaps by violence I can make myself more tolerable to myself. Also because I am out of tune with the affairs, the people, and the customs of my time, I have that feeling I have mentioned, of never having been born, and that other notion (which is the same at base and is inseparable from it) of not dying. This has nothing to do with academic ideas. It is a biological feeling.3

If the following pages of book analyses, arranged in chronological order, are read carefully, the reader will find that Sender's literary work peculiarly reflects the various phases of his personal life and philosophy, and also the political and social life of contemporary Spain.

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EL PROBLEMA RELIGIOSO EN MÉJICO (1928)

The morning of August 1, 1926, found all the Catholic churches in Mexico vacated of priests and other clergymen; services were entirely suspended as a protest against the Constitution of 1917. This drastic move was the culminating point which climaxèd over eight years of unrest and political turmoil, a period of agitation during which the Mexican Catholic Church had resorted to all sorts of methods to retain the power and glory which were traditionally hers, but which she now saw being usurped by the new democratic government. On July 25 of the same year, a group of thirty-six bishops and archbishops representing the dignitaries of that holy organization had affixed their names to a paper which suspended all Catholic rites in the entire Republic. This was tantamount to open rebellion, and the government, as was expected, proceeded to retaliate by demanding that function of the churches be restored.

A deadlock ensued. Neither the Church nor the Mexican government deigned to yield. Uprisings were incited and the country rapidly approached a state of revolution.

This problem of religion in Mexico had existed almost from the very beginning, and possibly had been foreseen by Cortés when he asked Carlos V to send padres to the New World rather than Bishops who would dispute authority. All
Catholic countries of the world were deeply concerned about the situation in Mexico. Spanish newspapers were filled with various conflicting reports, frequently biased by personal opinions and prejudices.

Ramón Sender, finding that the importance of the subject had already created an interested public, hurriedly compiled the notes he had obtained from detailed research and published *El problema religioso en México: Católicos y cristianos* on October 1, 1928.

This timely book purported to "...sencillamente dar una idea documentada e imparcial del problema religioso en México y abrir sus obscuras entrañas al gran público español, desviado por la falta de información o por la información interesada."¹ The research involved with a problem so complex was obviously tremendous, but Sender, making the most of his training as a journalist, digested and interpreted and presented the situation in as clear a fashion as time and the nature of it would permit.

Taking for granted a pre-created knowledge of the problem on the part of his public, he chose to sacrifice a chronological survey of the Church in Mexico for a somewhat confused skipping back and forth over various decades, to show exactly how similar the problem had always been

¹. Page 24.
and how the Church had not changed its attitude throughout the periods of Viceroyalty, Empire, and Republic. He thus sacrificed some historical clarity in order to achieve and maintain a less static and more popular journalistic approach.

Recognizing that the problem is not a recent one, he endeavors to explain it as an entity of situation and not one solely dependent upon time alone. He has delved into ancient and modern chronicles, quoted from magazines, periodicals and newspapers. He has cited from personal letters, speeches and government records, and arranged all his material in such a manner as to make it palatable and interesting. "Dar a este libro un orden cronológico riguroso y un carácter didáctico sería quitarle esa animada levedad que puede hacerlo fácil de lectura, comprensible y ameno."²

Inasmuch as the book was designed to be read mostly by the people of Spain, it has achieved the purpose for which it was written. Reading it twenty years later, when the timeliness of its publication has been forgotten, the reader finds it still interesting and of current importance, for the essential problem of the Church in Mexico has still not been solved.

2. Page 114.
In his prologue, Ramón del Valle-Inclán says that Sender, "periodista especializado en la política hispano-americana...mantiene en todo el libro una posición ecuánime. Su honradez al explicar el problema, aunque no oculta su opinión personal sobre él, tiene forzosamente que ser reconocida por amigo y adversario." Although the facts are overwhelmingly against the Catholic Church, the author has sought vainly to find something to justify the attitude of this religious body, but he has found none. He does, however, insist on mentioning information beneficial to the Church, though this is very scarce. He can only say, with names, that some Church officials were sincere and honorable men.

The author's conclusion is that all the social classes of Mexico will unite against this common enemy, and success will be theirs. "El pueblo mejicano cuidará mucho de no comprometer los frutos logrados después de setenta años de combate."³

Interior evidence indicates that the book was compiled hurriedly, probably at the request of the editor who wished to capitalize upon the immediacy of the problem. Publication was on October 1, 1928, and one of the sources cited by Sender was dated September 10 of the same year.

so it is unlikely that he had sufficient time to give it
the editing and final polishing which it needs.

As a piece of journalistic reporting, an interpreta-
tion of the political scene of the day, this book is a
commendable effort and should be judged as such.
In the prologue to this novel, Sender states that he has had these notes for a period of three years and, upon the request of Editorial "Cenit", has allowed them to be published 'apenas ordenadas'. He claims also that "El libro no tiene intenciones estéticas ni prejuicios literarios," and such seems to be the case. Íman is the record of his military service in Morocco during the uprising of Abd-el-Krim, which resulted in the death of twelve thousand Spanish soldiers and the fall of the Allende-salazar government.

This novel is a jumbled, occasionally incoherent, relation of an endless nightmare which takes place on the battle-scarred, desolate plains of Morocco. Choosing to present his material in a novelized form rather than adhering directly to his notes, the author has not always made the proper correlation between fact and fiction. His fine journalistic reporting, when fused with fiction, is sometimes prolix. Certain events are much elaborated upon, and others, meriting equal attention, are often referred to and dismissed. Though written in the first person, the personality and character of the narrator is completely suppressed and sublimated to that of the protagonist. As a result, this is an overwhelming book, one written with great sincerity and keen insight, but one of uneven values.
The chaos of the battlefield, the desperation of defeat, the devastating confusion of sudden attack, and the relentlessness of death are stamped upon each page, reflected in a style now fast and graphic, now lumbering and stumbling. Sender is so intense in his re-creations of these ghastly scenes that the reader is inclined to believe that for the moment he has forgotten that he is an author, one who should follow certain prescribed literary rules and conventions, but has lost himself in his own reliving of the nightmare, experience by experience.

Imán begins as a relation of barracks life and garrison duty in an outpost of the Spanish army in Morocco. The hopeless despair, the heart-heavy weariness and the utter futility of the men are captured and dwelt upon in great detail. Small scenes stand out sharply: rows of unevenly piled corpses awaiting burial, card games in which dead rats are used for money, decapitated bodies suspended in the snarls of barbed-wire, tired men trying to escape reality by singing songs of their homeland. Over this grim background, permeating the pages of the book, floats the stench of decomposing flesh and the acrid odor of gunsmoke.

With no warning other than a few quotation marks, Viance, the protagonist, begins telling his tale to Don Antonio, the author, and the story, which has been told in a mixture of first and third person, suddenly goes back for
its main action to a third person account of Viance's experiences two years previously. The transition is abrupt and inconsistent. Now it is Viance who is relating the story in the past, then the action is in the present, now Don Antonio assumes the narration, and then again some unknown omniscient being relates what neither of them could be aware of. Clarity is completely lacking for several pages until the relation gets well under way.

The element of time is completely forgotten as Viance recounts his tragic boyhood and his ultimate enlistment and service in the army. His battalion had replaced the troops of outpost R. and then were obliged to stand helplessly by as the Moorish hordes surrounded and slaughtered the relieved forces. After days of incessant barrage and relentless attack, accentuated with an overpowering thirst, the remaining eighty-eight men of the original three hundred are overwhelmed by a final surging forth of the enemy. Hell and death run rampant, ear-splitting discharges, shrapnel and screams of agony pierce the air as Viance, already out of his mind from weariness and thirst, flees blindly into the wilderness. He is no longer a human being with rational instincts and emotions; rather he is an unthinking animal in pain, a man made inhuman by the constant presence of fear and death, a stumbling, staggering symbol of defeat that refuses to surrender.
Now begins the nightmare, the terror into which Viance plunges in his flight to Annual, to Dar Drius, to other outposts, all fallen and all populated by horribly mutilated corpses. Miraculously escaping detection by maurading patrols, driven onward by thirst and a horror of dying again, already wounded several times, he finally joins a group of soldiers who are soon captured and slain or put to slave labor. Escaping under cover of nightfall, he arrives at Melilla, the only remaining fortification under Spanish control, where he is confronted with the red tape and insensitivity of Spanish bureaucracy, hardly less cruel than the enemy. Ordered back to the front by the company doctor, he rebels, is imprisoned, and is forced to remain for two more years in Morocco.

The story is now brought back to the beginning of the relation and is continued from there, but this narration by Viance forms the bulk of the novel and is, indeed, the very body of the work. It is in these chapters that Sender excels at presenting human desperation and brutality, the degradation of war without quarter. Horror is the sustaining emotion that drives Viance onward and that holds the reader in nerve-wracking tenseness until he arrives at Melilla. There, ironically, the futility of his flight begins anew.

Having finally served his period of enlistment, Viance
leaves for Spain. All that is left in his life now is his home town, the small village where he was born, where his parents toiled the fields for the Duke and died without leaving a trace of their existence. He realizes that his only salvation lies in the soil and he hurries through the cities until he arrives at his valley. Sneered at by civilians and ridiculed by children, he approaches his village and sees that all is submerged under the waters of a newly created dam. Forced once again to flee into the unfriendly night, he has nothing to carry with him but the bitter memory of his medal, self-awarded, swinging on the breast of a prostitute.

Horrible, inescapable truth, entirely devoid of melodrama, is the primary merit of this most unusual novel, and irony is the keynote. The style in which it is written is often obscure and of uneven quality, but the brutal impact, the realities of life in climax, are so vividly captured that the confusion in style is almost pardonable. This lack of clarity, indeed, at times augments the actuality of the crisis. Wars and indiscriminate slaughter are seldom lucid.

Viance, although a symbol of the typical Spanish soldier who "se puede 'comprobar' en la mayor parte de los obreros y campesinos que fueron allá sin ideas propias, obedeciendo un impulso ajeno y admirando a los héroes que
salen retratados en los periódicos, is also an individual. He is the *Imán*, the magnet that attracts bullets and disaster. Dehumanized and made brutal by the constant presence of death, forced to revert to the depraved actions of an animal, he maintains his sense of personal dignity until the very end. It is this innate quality which carries him through defeat after defeat until the final one, and which makes his experiences more vivid. He is purified by his ordeal rather than degraded by it. He has learned the falseness of patriotism and the blind obedience of orders, he is morally and physically annihilated, but at the end he remains a hero. He remains a hero because he has been defeated by tremendous forces which he does not understand nor about which he has the slightest interest nor emotion.

*Imán* is a shocking book, but an impelling one. It loses nothing in comparison with *All Quiet on the Western Front*, the two books have very much in common. It is written amid the actualities of war "*con la voz del paisaje africano en los oídos*" and it is punctuated with bayonet thrusts and machine-gun bullets.

1. Prologue.
2. Ibid.
Sender constantly plotted against the dictatorial government of the Spanish Monarchy as represented by Primo de Rivera. In his early youth he was paroled to his parents as a result of his political activities. Several years later, after renewed intrigues, he was forced to go into hiding while his fellow conspirators were apprehended and executed by the government.

**O. P. (Orden público)** is his ironical account of an imprisonment in Madrid. It is a day-by-day relation of life in a Spanish jail as seen and experienced by a political prisoner. Obviously autobiographic, it is, nevertheless, written in the third person, a technique previously employed with success in **Imán**.

**El Periodista** views life and his fellow prisoners with the cool, objective eye of a journalist. A sensitive man, he is interested in all he sees, but more preoccupied with analyzing his own peculiar reactions to this new life into which he has been forcibly introduced. In the solitude of his darkened cell he makes friends with the wind, the symbol and very spirit of freedom, with whom he talks and exchanges philosophies. The wind is personified to such a degree that it soon assumes the proportions of an alter-protagonist, the counterpart of the Journalist through which he can be seen from many angles. Indeed, the tenta-
tive title for this book at one time was *El viento en la Moncloa*. The wind also acts as a narrator of what is going on in remote parts of the jail; it gives exposition of what has previously transpired to bring this strange assortment of men together, and it pricks into their very beings, causing them to cry out in anguish. Its main function, however, is to give the author opportunity to engage in poetic and impassioned outbursts against Public Welfare, cruelty and injustice, against all the alien forces which have placed him, an idealist, behind these prison walls. It is in these passages that Sender reveals himself as a political idealist with advanced, but somewhat nebulous, ideas of government reform. Disaster is predicted for Spain unless the situation is soon remedied, and possibly chaos.

The book gives the impression of having been written during the actual time of his imprisonment. Various chapters begin with references to 'hoy' or 'ayer', but the exact element of time remains somewhat indefinite. Life in a prison is not measured by days, but by events, and it is with this subject that Sender occupies himself. Each of his fellow inmates is made believeable with a few carefully selected sentences. The ever-present interest of the newspaper man is apparent here in the journalistic interviews which are developed into tightly-written vignettes
that depict the lives of the people around him. These are fine narrations in which character and situation are skilfully brought forth: Chino, a political prisoner, who was cruelly tortured and left for dead by the police, but who refused to reveal his associates; the Professor who tried to hang himself from a refreshment booth in El Retiro; the author's naive mother who comes to comfort him, but causes him mental turmoil when he reminisces about his childhood. All of these episodes, and many more, reveal a keen insight and a fondness for understatement.

Ten years later, in exile in Mexico, Sender republished this book because he believed the events of the past decade warranted it. "Lejos geográficamente de la patria, con el corazón un poco más duro y la cabeza más fría," he decided that it would be futile to re-edit the book entirely. "El arrepentimiento no es sino la valoración de un hecho anterior, en el que pusimos una fe y un entusiasmo excesivos."2

Comparing this new edition with the previous one, a few minor, but significant, changes are noted. Lack of social justice is amplified from being necessary to 'diecinueve millones de españoles' to 'cientos de millones de hombres';3 In his dialogues with the wind, the rhetorical

and passionate quality of '¡Cobardes! ¡Canallas!' is consistently subdued to a plaintive '¿Por qué? ¿Por qué?' or an even less impressive '¡Oídme!' Certain tenets of communism are made somewhat clearer, expressions native only to Spain are changed into a more universal phraseology, a pun is omitted, various sentences are rewritten, and chapter headings are compressed.

These changes all reveal a more matured and calmer outlook on life, and a universal rather than a national sense of perspective. Few changes are without reason. In the original edition he sometimes forgot he was writing autobiography in the third person and allowed several 'nos' and 'nosotros' to slip into the text. This was corrected in only one instance.

Orden público was reprinted because Sender believes that with it La aldea del crimen and La noche de las cien cabezas have unintentionally formed a trilogy. "Se escribieron cuando comenzaba a incubarse en la vida española ese salto en el vacío de 1936-39." He calls this trilogy Los términos del presagio because they

5. Compare page 116 (S) with page 122 (M).
6. Compare pages 171, 172 (S) with pages 176, 177 (M).
8. Compare page 79 (S) with 85 (M).
embody that 'terrible certidumbre' of imminent disaster. "Esa calidad es la única que pueden exhibir los libros de esta trilogía, pero quizá esta calidad basta para justificarlos."\(^{10}\)
EL VERBO SE HIZO SEXO: TERESA DE JESUS (1931)

This novel, as the subtitle indicates, is a biography of the outstanding Spanish saint and mystic writer of the Renaissance. It is a poetic attempt to probe into her personality and explain psychologically her life and religious philosophy. The author's aim is to present her as a believable, living woman, rather than "una imagen de madera festoneada de oro y de pañoletas rizadas."¹

Accordingly, Sender has refrained from a too strict adherence to biographical detail and circumstantiated fact. He has preferred to trace her mental growth from childhood to maturity rather than re-create the historical period. To keep Teresa the center of interest, he has relegated the outside world to the background. Teresa preferred to live in a world of her own illusions and values, one in which she could commune directly with God. Therefore, although the life of the sixteenth century surges about her and forms the tumultuous background against which she is presented, it is subdued to a minor, but ever-present key.

Teresa, as a young girl of fifteen, lives so much within herself that she sees little of the everyday life that surrounds her. At church services in the great cath-

¹ Preface, page 9.
edral she enters into a theological debate with herself, entirely unaware of the corruption and base motives of her fellow worshipers. In the street, at her home, and eventually as a novice, her eyes are turned inward and the outside world is almost completely removed from their scope. She likes to think that earthly life is sad and futile and only the spiritual one is of merit. Her eyes see, but her mind cannot interpret.

Her home life and the formative years of growth are described briefly. Protected and sheltered by her parents and brothers, she enters the convent at an early age and shows little interest in men. Not incapable of love, she believes that a part of God exists within each of His creatures. She cannot be contented, though, with this small fraction; she wishes to love the whole entity. She adopts the name Teresa de Jesús because, above all else, she desires to be His bride in reality as well as in name. Her whole life is a striving toward this goal.

She was always frail in health, and an attack of consumption at the age of twenty causes her to leave the convent and move to the country. The illness grows progressively worse, and she passes into a death-like coma for five days. All believe her to be dead, but Teresa lies in bed and her uncontrolled soul is allowed to roam at will. She is in a new world, one of snow and crystalline air.
Searching for God, she is wafted upward by breezes into the Holy Presence and feels Him enter her soul. When she awakens, after a long delirium, she gasps, "Señor. ¡Béseme con beso de tuya boca!" The crisis has passed.

It is this experience which forms the turning point of her life and initiates the beginning of a new period. She returns to the convent contented with life, and dreams of establishing a feminine order of knights-errant with "Amor a Jesús" as motto. She takes voluptuous pleasure in reading the intoxicating eroticism of the Song of Songs, picturing a crucified Jesus rather than an abstract God.

In the pursuit of union with God she now assumes an active rather than a passive role. Her intense meditations have not achieved the desired goal, so she proceeds to torture her flesh with a cílice. Standing nude before a crucifix, she enters into a period of sublime ecstasy and is rewarded by hearing an unknown voice.

Inspired now to organize her order of Barefoot Carmelites, she melodramatically flees one night with three other novices. "Teresa sintió las mismas emociones, probablemente, que un enamorado que saliera a raptar a su dama." Until a wealthy widow joins the group, her convent of San José barely manages to survive. An angel appears to Teresa

and they are mystically united, spiritually and physically.

Years pass and Teresa founds more convents. Her fame grows. Her visions increase in frequency to such a degree that her confessor orders her to write them down so that a higher authority may judge them. This means judgment by the Inquisition and possible trial for heresy, but she begins her Vida and tells all in minute detail. Her book is condemned by a board of Church officials, and Felipe II tells the Pope's envoy, "Hay que quemarla o canonizarla." Thirty years after her death her coffin is opened during canonization services and her body is discovered to be miraculously untouched by time.

The title of this book reveals the main thesis of the novel. Sender states in his preface: "No me he propuesto al decir 'el Verbo se hizo sexo' rebajar al Verbo, ni a la santa, sino en todo caso elevar al sexo, que tanta importancia tuvo en el misticismo...el sexo es al misticismo lo que el corazón al romanticismo." But Teresa, although she wrote one of the most sensual books written in Spanish, knew very little about sex. "...no fué una histérica sexual, porque para serlo le faltaba la conciencia de su propia carne y de la carne ajena, y desconocía por completo...la feroz estética de los sexos."3 She was rather unaware

of the physical aspects of love, which is not surprising when one considers her sheltered upbringing. Capable of an heroic love, but not finding anyone worthy, she directed it all to God and delivered it so intensely that she achieved union with his earthly ambassador, the Angel.

In describing the first unión with this Heaven-sent Angel, Sender has found it fitting to let Teresa tell it in her own words, as recorded in chapter twenty-nine of her autobiography:

Esta visión quiso el Señor la viese así; no era grande, sino pequeño; hermoso mucho; el rostro tan encendido que parecía a los ángeles muy subidos que parece todos se abrasan. Viale en las manos un dardo de oro largo, y al fin de el hierro me parecía tener un poco de fuego. Este me parecía meter por el corazón algunas veces y que me llegaba a las entrañas. Al sacarle me parecía las llevaba consigo y me dejaba toda abrasada en amor grande.\[4]

The novel is divided into four parts, each a natural sequence in Teresa's evolution as a woman dedicated to God. Each part is divided into chapters, which in turn are subdivided into shorter passages. This journalistic technique of short, rapidly narrated episodes is typical of Sender and will assume more prominence in his later works. The author intrudes upon his story only once, and that is to justify his title and underscore its importance to the development of his theme. He has integrated parts of Santa

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Teresa's autobiography into his narration, but has re-written them in his own words. His style is at all times poetic. Images, metaphors and imaginative conceptions are much in evidence, since the nature of the subject requires a poetic treatment rather than a prosaic one. A poet can see more clearly into the psychology of a person and can present intangibilities in more evocative forms. Sender is keenly perceptive to light, color, sound, and movement. He has the talent to penetrate the hidden importance of everyday occurrences, and a gift for understatement.

The latter part of the book deals principally with the judgment of Teresa's controversial autobiography. In a rapid series of dialogued scenes, Sender presents the members of the Inquisition, their debate, the discussion between Felipe II and the Pope's envoy, the disenterrment of Teresa's body when she is canonized. Except in the last of these scenes, which takes place thirty years after her death, the element of time is not mentioned. Time is a void and only the spirit of the Saint is of importance.

Santa Teresa's first miracle, that of maintaining her body pure, even after death, is the miracle of her life. "Si por el espíritu nos encaramos con la eternidad y la conquistamos, su carne - que no era el lenguaje de su alma, y su misma alma, poderosa y firme - será eterna en la gloria de lo incorruptible, do lo imperecedero; será
su carne inmortal."\(^5\)

Despite notice to the contrary in the preface, Sender has maintained an accurate adherence to the facts of Teresa's life. He has selected only the most dramatic moments for elaboration and has allowed the more trivial details to pass without comment. He has made his protagonist step down from the pedestal of Sainthood and reveal herself as a living, sympathetic woman.\(^6\)

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5. Page 263.
6. In the article "Orden del día: Teresa de Jesus" of Proclamación de la sonrisa, Sender describes the reception of El verbo se hizo sexo by various spokesmen of the Church. He was condemned for applying Freudian principals to explain the behavior of the saint. This essay is his reply to these charges which he calls false.
These two volumes of essays are not listed with the Library of Congress as being in any public or university library of the United States. The following information, therefore, is merely an identification of the material they contain and their general characteristics.

**Teatro de Masas** is possibly the least known book Sender ever wrote. It seems to have escaped all the critics and to have been immediately forgotten by the author, for he never refers to it again. It is a collection of various articles published in the newspaper **La Libertad** in 1931.

**Madrid-Moscú** is a series of on-the-spot impressions of the author's trip to Russia as a member of the Writer's International Union. It is a description of Russian life and customs which other journalists, more interested in political issues, usually overlook. This attitude of being more concerned with man as an individual rather than an abstract being is very typical of Sender. Writing hurriedly, however, he does not have time to probe deeply into what he sees. These essays were published in **La Libertad** in 1934 and are quite favorable to the Soviet regime.
SIETE DOMINGOS ROJOS (1932)

Before releasing this novel for publication, Ramón Sender evidently believed it required some sort of an introduction, a justification, as it were, for its existence, and an explanation of the literary form it assumed. He states in his preface that "El libro podrá parecer, a veces, inconexo y desarticulado." An so it is. The book is not directed "al entendimiento del lector, sino a su sensibilidad porque las verdades humanas más entrañables no se entienden ni se piensan, sino que se sienten. Son las que el hombre no ha dicho ni ha probado a decir porque cumplen su misión en la zona brillante y confusa del sentir." The author further claims that he has not tried to capture a novelistic reality in these pages, that his reality is "una realidad simplemente humana, con lo estúpido y lo sublime. Lo estúpido también porque miro a los hombres a la hora de escribir sin la superstición intelectualista del hombre por el hombre, que en fin de cuentas es en los novelistas la superstición pedante y insosportable de sí mismos."2

The siete domingos rojos of the title refers to the six sporadic days of revolutionary uprising in Madrid incited by various labor unions, the seventh Sunday being

1. Preface.
2. Ibid.
the day of rest, the day in which defeat is recognized
They are red because Sundays on calendars are usually
printed in that bloody color and, by a poetic quirk, the
calendar of Villacampa lists seven red Sundays in a row,
rather than the usual days of the week. The Syndicalists,
a labor union, had violated a city law when they used
loudspeakers in the streets of Madrid during a political
assembly. A riot resulted when the law was enforced and
several members of their group were killed. As a protest
they organized a general strike which almost paralyzed
the city and surrounding countryside before it was
crushed. At its most successful period the strike assumed
the beginnings of an anarchical revolution.

The structure of the novel itself is somewhat bulky
and unwieldy, formless and rambling, yet with a curious
overall unity which keeps it from falling entirely apart.
Eight people relate what their role was during this tumult-
uous week of fervent activity. One of these narrators is
Doña Luna of the solar system, but the others are members
of the revolutionary group. Not content to let the story
be told entirely in a first-person manner, Sender has
bound these various narrations together with a third-
person relation and interpretation of action, - the omni-
scient author who sees and knows all that his characters
are unaware of. The result of this artifice is frequently
confusing. The lack of transition between the various narrators who alternate with the author makes many passages obscure in meaning and difficult in reading, and leaves one often uncertain of the identity of the speaker. In the midst of a third-person relation the subject often changes to a first-person who is neither the author nor any of the protagonists concerned. Chapter seven is told in the first-person, but the speaker's identity is never revealed. Likewise a first-person passage will suddenly change into a third-person account, and then revert to the original subject without any apparent reason. Carelessness on the part of the author is perhaps the only reason to account for this phenomena. The same weakness of transition occurs in Imán, although there it is restricted to but a few pages.

Each of the three protagonists, — Samar, Villacampa and Star, alternates with various minor characters and the author in the narration of the story. Each of them is fighting for an ideal which he wishes to attain through unification with the other dissatisfied comrades. Samar is the only educated man among them, the only one who realizes, with the uncontrolled violence of the strike, what a serious thing they have undertaken. He wishes to direct this powerful force into appropriate channels, but he is defeated by the unthinking exuberance of his compatriots.
Ironically, it is this very spiritual superiority and devotion to an ideal which brings about his moral disintegration and his ultimate downfall. He has worked so hard to attain his goal, cancelling true love in the process, that his sense of values has become distorted. Love was his only salvation, and he never recognized it as such until he had killed it and he was left without a soul.

Star and Villacampa are typical radicals who live for the excitement of the moment, for the joy of doing something for the party. They have only an obscure idea of what they want from society. They are propelled negatively through life because their sense of values exists only in negation of those claimed by the social classes that control the Republic. They do not know what they want; they only know what they do not want. The force which motivates them is their hatred of the bourgeoisie and of anything with bourgeois values. The reason for this hatred is never explained or justified. Within each of the many figures it is taken for granted as an integral functioning which causes them to revolt and do the things they do. The evils of the existing society are apparently law and order and placid well-being; realities incomprehensible to the mind of the revolting workers.

Each character strives to remove all bourgeois sentiments from his makeup. Love, loyalty to the country,
Christian religion, and all such humanizing elements are rejected as being typical of the bourgeois classes and therefore not akin to the revolutionary temperament of these radicals. They feel no respect for death or for religion. Their sole motivation is hatred for the existing social system and a blind faith in their own power — in the power of violence and anarchy without plans for the future. They live for the present and future, although they are incapable of forming tangible goals and aspirations. "Destruction before Construction" seems to be their motto, with emphasis on the former.

Sender claims in his preface that he is not seeking in this novel a useful truth, social, moral, political, aesthetic, or otherwise: "La única verdad — realidad — que busco a lo largo de estas páginas es la verdad humana que vive detrás de las convulsiones de un sector revolucionario español. Voy buscándola en la voz, en las pasiones de los personajes y en el aire y la luz que las rodea y con las que se identifican formando una atmósfera moral turbia o diáfana, lógica o incongruente." Just what this truth is, however, is never made clear, unless it is the right for people to revolt against society when they feel themselves compelled to do so. Indeed, the book is at times an impassioned declaration, a fervent proclamation of this right.
The poetic element is never lacking in any of Sender's work, and is very evident in the present novel. It is impossible for him to avoid a poetic challenge, for through poetry one can see more clearly into the minds of people and through poetry one can express more clearly what has been observed there and what the innate values are. Since Sender is mainly interested in the reaction of the various characters to the events around them, he has availed himself of this property of poetry.

The poetic aspect of Siete domingos rojos, however, is quite often ill-suited to the occasion and unconvincingly incorporated into the more prosaic passages. The bourgeois Lady Moon who narrates chapter five is somewhat coy and femininely vicious in her comments. She proceeds to intrude several times throughout the progress of the novel during intensely realistic and dramatic moments. Her interruptions are abrupt and ridiculous; they detract rather than add to the impact of the drama. Equally ridiculous is the scene where Star is attacked by a scarecrow.

These passages, though disconcerting, are fortunately in the minority. More typical passages are the semi-soliloquies of Samar with various things incapable of expression: a speeding locomotive, a pair of trousers on a clothesline, insects crawling on a relief map of Spain in the Moncloa, the body of his dead finacé, Amparo, etc.
The description of the *ley fuga* in action is graphic and relentless in its realism; the narration by Tía Isabel is priceless in its character revelation; and the surging, teeming movement of men who plot in back rooms by day and act by night is intensely exciting. The following passage, one of the best in the book, is especially interesting because it reveals the state of frenzied ecstasy that anarchy incites within its advocates, and also because it is a fine example of Sender at his dramatic best, hence poetic:

Entonces Graco se pone a rezar una cosa rara, como una letanía:
- ¡Los ministros, los directores generales, los obispos, las putas duquesas...
- ¡Moriréis a nuestras manos!
- ¡Los intelectuales elegantes, los periodistas serviles, los maricas de las carreras de lujo!
- ¡Moriréis a nuestras manos!
- ¡Los diputados, los gobernadores, los sacerdotes!
- ¡Labraréis la tierra uncidos a nuestro arado!
- ¡Las monjas!
- ¡Sonreirán por primera vez sacando leche de sus pechos tiernos!
- ¡Los santos de las iglesias!
- ¡Hechos astillas calentarán la sopa de las brigadas de choque!
- ¡Las custodias! ¡Los cálices!
- ¡Condecoraremos con ellos el día de la grande y definitiva blasfemia!
- ¡Los títulos de la deuda, las ejecutorias de nobleza, los testamentos y los blasones!
- ¡Les pegaremos fuego y nuestros chichos se socarrarán las botas brincando por encima!
- ¡La Virgen!
- ¡Parirá con dolor!
- ¡Jesús! ¡Dios hijo!
- ¡Le enviaremos a una escuela de anormales!
- ¡Dios uno y trino, todopoderoso!
- ¡No hay Dios! ¡Se ha acabado Dios ya! Con los cendales benditos de su ritual les lavaremos
el culo a nuestros alegres recién nacidos.
-¿No hay más que la Revolución?
-¡La Revolución!
-¡Sólo?
-Sólo. Como emblema admitimos un género de máquina: la virgen Joquis (the machine gun). 3

Siete domingos rojos is extremely difficult to read and understand. It contains much that is typically Sender, but it does not achieve the clarity of purpose which is one of his most outstanding characteristics. People who believe that dehumanization of themselves aids in achieving a goal are defeated before they begin their struggle. So is the reader. One has relatively little interest in reading of people with whom he cannot associate himself.

VIAJE A LA ALDEA DEL CRIMEN (1934)

From seven in the morning until one in the afternoon of January 11, 1933, the village of Casas Viejas, municipality of Medina Sidonia, province of Cádiz, was in the power of its impoverished peasants. A mass meeting in the plaza the preceding night resulted in the establishment of the Sindicato de Campesinos as governing party. Their intention was to make 81,000 acres of untilled farm land available to the starving populace who had been five months without work. For generations they had been subjugated to a cruel feudal system of powerful landowners who kept them in constant debt and misery. Labor laws forbid their migrating elsewhere in search of work. They were given a small subsidy by the government to keep them alive, but this tended to aggravate the situation for it took away the only thing left them - the dignity of their work and their earned wages.

Although the telephone lines had been cut, news of the uprising soon reached the outside world. The town sheriff and police force were beset by an armed group of peasants, but there was no rioting. All was functioning well; no uncontrolled theft, no unnecessary violence, no destruction of property. Then came the Guardia Civil. The revolutionists returned quietly to their homes to await further developments. With the entrance of these
forces came bloodshed and cruel, unreasoning injustice. People were shot in the streets, a whole family was burned to death in their squalid hut or shot while attempting to escape. The next day a score of men, young and old, were herded up and relentlessly slaughtered at the foundations of the still smouldering pyre. The occupying troops were ordered to take no prisoners, alive or wounded. The city was placed under civil, military and federal law until the revolt was completely extinguished. Four hundred frightened men fled into the barren mountains surrounding the town.

Ramón Sender as a reporter for a Madrid newspaper visited this scene of disaster four days after the violence had occurred. Traveling by plane, he arrives four days before the events take place. This technique of projecting himself backward in time permits him to describe in great detail the economic situation of the village, the power of the landowners, the squalor and hopelessness of the poor, the sullen atmosphere of hostility, and the inevitability of bloody conflict.

Writing in short, terse sentences, Sender recounts the events as though he were a witness to them. To achieve a more graphic presentation, he cites the coroner’s report and allows the mothers of the victims to tell their part of the story in their own words. Interviews and public
statements including the names of the actual participants are incorporated into the text and the outline of the tragedy gradually reveals itself in ever-mounting tension.

These events occurred during the tenth, eleventh and twelfth days of January, 1933. Sender was on the scene within four days and a large part of the book appeared as newspaper articles only eight days after the described episodes took place. The book, completed in February, 1933, and published a year later, is relatively short (202 pages), but it is divided into forty-nine chapters. These rapidly moving relations carry the reader onward, step by step, through the crisis and climax until the gloom and futility of the bitter end. He has tried to maintain a disinterested attitude, to "no hacer comentarios que implican censura para nadie,"¹ but it is impossible for him to remain aloof in the midst of such tragedy and injustice. As a journalist, he states the facts and describes the events, but it is as a poet that he interprets their meaning and discovers their value. As a poet he allows the earth to cry out and engage in dialogue with the desperate men who have fled into the mountains; as a poet he talks with María Mármol, a centuries-old statue in Medina Sidonia, who tells him the bitter history of the land; it is Sender

¹. Page 169.
the poet who compares their martyrs to those of Numancia and the heretics of Valladolid and Toledo who died while fighting for their beliefs. His sympathies are with the downtrodden and he does not hesitate to condone their motive. He praises their actions and eulogizes their sacrifices, expressing the sincere hope that their condition will be improved in the future.

It is interesting to note that subsequent investigation conducted by the government completely refuted many of the episodes emphasized by Sender in his interpretation of the events. The history of those turbulent days was never made clear, but it was ascertained that the peasants had not initiated and did not lead the uprising, which was under anarcho-syndicalist inspiration, and well armed with revolvers and explosives. Furthermore, many of the participants were not from the village, and the estate of the Duke of Medinaceli was actually on the point of being distributed to these peasants.

Sender's presence in town was particularly annoying to the powerful landowners who suspected adverse criticism. Rumors were circulated that he and his companions were responsible for the uprising, and the Guardia Civil requested him to leave. On returning to Madrid, he found that public indignation had forced the government to make an investigation into the affair. The results were practi-
cally nil: each party placed the blame upon another.
"Era, en definativa, un pleito entre verdugos, donde se
trataba de vacilar si las ejecuciones habían sido realizadas
correctamente o no."²

Viaje a la aldea del crimen: documental de Casas

Viejas forms the second volume of the trilogy Los términos
del presagio and reflects the same spirit of Orden público.
It is a bitter attack against injustice and prevailing
conditions; a plea for reform, for sympathy and under-
standing. It is excellent and creative journalism, but,
above all, it is an ominous forecast of impending tragedy
for the entire nation.

CARTA DE MOSCU SOBRE EL AMOR (1934)

This didactic epistle of one hundred and thirty-four pages was written in July, 1933, while the author was still in Moscow. It is addressed to a nameless Spanish girl, twenty-two years old, chaste but curious. The writer of the letter is Sender himself and the observations he makes about love, Spanish and Russian style, are peculiarly his own.

The letter is a frank attempt to persuade this innocent young girl to change her values and prejudices about sexual love between man and woman. The first half of the letter consists of a general discussion of what love means to the Spanish people of small bourgeois society. Sender attacks the religion-inspired doctrines of spiritual and material love, the 'sentido ético-religioso' of mysticism, so popular among Spanish women, the system of education, the social structure of the country, - everything that prevents young people from enjoying the God-given delights of a normal and healthy sex life.

Love, he concludes, is a neurotic illness in Spain. It is a perverted instrument of the church, a misunderstood phenomena, commercialized by capitalism and prostituted by a tradition-bound moral code which restrains the natural expression of natural instincts. The same is true of Italy and France and all other capitalistic countries.
not enlightened with the great truth of communism. (Indeed, this word is scrupulously avoided).

In contrast with the world at large, the Soviet Union is a perfect paradise of happy social adjustment to the pleasant demands of the sexual urge. Men and women work together in perfect harmony and have equal political and social rights. The double standard does not exist, nor does prostitution. Marriage is a normal union, completely removed from religious domination and easily attained. Divorce is equally simple. Love is free and the farce of chastity and fidelity to one's mate has been cancelled along with other such cumbersome conventions of the Czarist regime.

Sender has implicit faith in the unerring judgment of natural instincts. Instinctive reasoning will out, he seems to be saying here. Despite the provocative subject and the insinuating title, this letter is quite misleading. The tone of the whole is one of preaching, of didactic doctrinization. The author sounds as if he were talking down to the reader, as though he were aware that a limited intelligence could not grasp the importance of the subject and the truths he is revealing. He pursues these "truths" through various obscure labyrinths of personal philosophy as didactic as that which he decries in the Catholic Church. The book becomes pleasantly readable and
palatable only in the closing pages where he becomes anecdotal and relates some of the adventures which he witnessed while in Russia, or which happened to friends there.

This Carta de Moscú sobre el amor (A una muchacha española) is quite frankly an eulogy of the Russian way of life as compared to the hum-drum, restricted life in Spain. Everything Russian is covered with the rosy glow of a dream world, - the never-never land where truths and ideals are easily obtainable, but where spiritual love does not exist. Biology seems to have replaced it.

This letter is sadly lacking in humor or any sort of levity. It is dreadfully earnest and the tone involved is somewhat condescending. In order to glorify Russia, the author feels obliged to condemn everything that is not Russian. The book has some interesting ideas on love, many of them revealing a remarkably discerning insight, but as a whole it is extremely dull and lacking in literary merit.

Sender does achieve one point, however: he makes the Russian idea of sex and marriage about as casual and as romantic as a lamb-chop.
This volume of 221 pages contains some fifty-eight articles written for newspaper publication over a period of several years. They vary in interest and scope, but are all of about equal length.

Variety is the keynote to this collection, and the articles represented here were probably chosen intentionally for this reason. We have criticism of books, plays, and movies; interpretations of Garcilasso de la Vega, Cervantes, Goethe, André Gide, Gerard Hauptmann, and others; communistic propaganda and searing political criticism of certain existing social conditions; costumbristic sketches which are very leisurely written and utterly charming in their simplicity; satiric cuadros de costumbres and observations about contemporary life; conversational remarks of a roving reporter - and obituaries of dead communists.

As never before we see Sender as a chronicler of his time. Certain articles such as "El domingo madrileño y la incongruencia" and "1933 de la era cristiana" are distinctly reminiscent of Larra. When Sender describes his visit to the ruins of Carmona, when he sees the famous Manchegan windmills for the first time, or when he is merely wandering the streets of Madrid, he paints these scenes with a reserved and romantic irony. They are highly satiric and are written with a subtle appreciation for understatement.
Sender himself frequently assumes the personality of "Figaro" brooding over his beloved Madrid.

This volume in itself is relatively unimportant and caused very little comment when it was first published. Its value has increased with the years, however, and today it affords an admirable backward glance at Sender during an extremely interesting period of his life. Being more or less autobiographical, the book contains Sender's ideas about his contemporaries. He does not hesitate to call Unamuno or Benavente rather bitter names: "Benavente, el elegante y el artístico, o Unamuno, el tozudo y el beodo del espíritu."\(^1\) He praises Pío Baroja and Valle-Inclán, finding them the foremost intellectuals of the Generation of '98. He gives valuable information on his concept of "El realismo y la novela", the peculiar Spanish tendency toward combining mysticism with realism, etc. He manifests a clear outlook on life, and many of these short essays treat discerningly of the fleeting interests of daily existence as seen and jotted down by a rapidly-writing reporter.

Sender has consistently revealed himself as a man not particularly interested in formalized religion. Here, however, for the first time we have a concrete statement

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1. Page 55.
about his personal religious philosophy:

Yo no creo en Dios... creo en la divinidad de todos los hombres a través de mí. Ellos creen en Dios a través de todos los hombres... yo nunca he pensado en tragarme a los curas - el anticlericalismo es burgués. 2

This condemnation of things bourgeois is a familiar characteristic of Sender's attitude during these important years. It is a communistic outlook toward life which was apparent in Siete domingos rojos and Carta de Moscú sobre el amor, and which manifests itself in a condemnation of all things alien to the Russian code of ethics and values. This attitude remained constant for a number of years before altering completely and assuming the very characteristics which he had previously condemned.

The least satisfactory quality of this book is that many of the articles lack contemporary interest. Whereas certain things become quaint with the passage of time, and therefore become costumbristically interesting, others tend to lose interest completely because their appeal is only momentary. This is perhaps an unjust criticism, for it is something Sender could not know when compiling his collection; he did not have the perspective which time alone can give. A dozen or so fine articles, however, stand out sharply from the others and by their presence suffice to make the book valuable.

2. Page 32.
LA NOCHE DE LAS CIEN CABEZAS (1934)

When Evaristo el Rano and his unknown friend freeze to death one night in a Madrid cemetery and are later interred in a common grave, their shadows return to the site of their death and lurk in the protecting gloom of a funereal niche. There they remain, silently watching and waiting.

This silence of the grave is rudely shattered one evening when a tromba sweeps down from nowhere and rains severed heads upon the ancient cemetery. The word tromba is applied to the whirlwind which gathers up these heads from the streets of Madrid and transports them to the cemetery, and also to the revolution, the uprising which was responsible for the death of these people. Just what this disturbance was about is unnecessary to the development of this unusual novel, and the cause of it is never revealed. The important thing is that these heads are brought together in a place where they can talk over their lives and exchange their ideologies.

During the night-long rebellion these heads await the dawn which brings their final death. The whirlwind continues its ghastly chore of sweeping the streets and bringing new loads of flaming heads to keep the conversation from languishing. Other objects are picked up by the wind, including books by Kempis, Spengler, and Fran-
cesco de Sanctis, which fall open at pages peculiarly appropriate to the situation and which are quoted by the author. Throughout the night these heads scamper and float about, reliving past emotions, discussing destinies and philosophies, ceasing to talk only when the first rays of dawn appear.

These heads represent all types and levels of Spanish society. They are a cross-section of Spain and they symbolize the various vices with which that society is plagued. Few of them possess a definite character, although they are all quite loquacious and anxious to reveal their innermost secrets to the attentive audience of other heads who impatiently await their turn. They can be labeled more or less accurately according to the human frailty which indirectly brought about their destruction: "el intelectual, el aspirante a héroe, el de la omnipotencia, la alegría, la inteligencia, el fuerte, el débil, el que no veía claro en sí mismo, el perseguido por su sombra y el que dudaba de la duda", etc.

It is the less important characters that achieve the most salient character delineation. Those who voice their own complaints and lament their own weaknesses are far more interesting than those who merely reveal the author's ideas about social evils and bourgeois values. They do not dominate the book, but numerically they do form the
majority of the victims. They argue among themselves, discuss marriage, love, greed, sex, religion, and other such subjects in a spirited and moving manner, which is not quite what happens when Sender expounds the evils of bourgeois society.

The last chapter of this book reveals Sender's deep interest in communism. Whether this is a result of his recent trip through Europe and to Russia, where he was made welcome as a sympathetic observer, or whether his ideology coincides only incidently with that of the Russians is not quite clear. The same attitude, this condemnation of the bourgeois classes and glorification of the working man's unions, is the main theme of *Siete domingos rojos* which was written at least a year before he began this journey.

In this novel, especially in the latter pages when dawn (the symbol of a new and harmonious life) finally breaks through and stills these querulous heads, Sender passionately attacks and condemns all individualists. Individualism is a gallows to life and makes one a defeatist, always in rebellion against society. Desolation is the usual result of this conflict. The only way to progress without fear of the future is to unite and work for the common good of mankind. Be like the bee who has formed the perfect society, and sacrifice all such
individual traits to common welfare:

No hay en la vida soluciones totalizadoras para el hombre aislado. Nada es un fin: ni el amor, ni la familia, ni mucho menos la riqueza. Son soluciones mendaces en las que el hombre confiesa su insuficiencia y su agonía desde que se conserva el primer testimonio escrito o plástico de su pensamiento. No son fines. Solo hay uno: la creación en común. La unión del hombre con el hombre para desarrollar sus capacidades sin fin, libres de la angustia de lo individual que han creado las religiones y amparado luego la cultura espiritualista, para proporcionar al hombre la estúpida evasión hacia lo divino. En todas las religiones hay un dios-hombre a nuestra imagen y semejanza. ¡Evádate! ¡Sé como él! Entretanto, esa evasión facilita el trasiego de la riqueza, la acumulación del poder y la perennidad de la ignominia.

Abra los ojos. Mirad la nube y el árbol, y ya reposado el ánimo, acercaos. Lejos de las religiones y de las culturas espiritualistas se ve más claro. Se ve, por ejemplo, que los hombres de las colmenas son inmortales. Green en la vida eterna por lo que hay en ellos de simple hambre, de instinto coordinado con otros instintos de otros hombres.1

With a final exhortation to follow the flag of the working-men's unions, to march onward, united, to future glory, Sender draws this novela del tiempo en delirio to a close.

Despite the above subtitle, one cannot consider this work a novel. It has no plot, no action, no protagonist, no unity other than time and place, no suspense and no sustaining interest. It is more a philosophical treatise, a dramatic presentation of the author's beliefs, - his

1. Page 132.
ideology - rather than a coherent narrative. The book is formless and contains all kinds of interpolated material. Like the whirlwind which indiscriminately gathers up the debris of the streets and deposits it willy-nilly in the cemetery, Sender has here assembled various literary devices and deposited them in the same fashion: a letter forms most of chapter eight, an unnecessary foot-note comprises half of chapter twenty-one, and a handbill is reproduced in chapter nine.

The beginning of the book is far superior to its ending. The story of Evaristo, the social misfit who makes a futile living hunting frogs and who dies without illusions, - for he never had any, is fine creative writing. One is sorry to see him forgotten in the sudden deluge of chattering heads.

Satire is, of course, the recurring note to this work, often impressively reminiscent of Quevedo's Sueños. The humor is grim, crude at times and the predominate quality is macabre. Realism becomes dull and heavy when overdone; it loses its impact through needless repetition. That is what happens in this work. The constant stress on the description of these gory symbols soon palls and makes reading difficult and tedious.

Although Sender is hardly precise in calling this work a novela, the word delirio does apply admirable to
the work as a whole. *La noche de las cien cabezas*, the last of the trilogy *Los términos del presagio*, does by no means lack creative imagination, but its main interest to the reader is the reflection of the author's ideology, his attitude toward contemporary society. It is significant of one of the important stages he has gone through in his evolution as a novelist.
MISTER WITT EN EL CANTÓN (1936)

Mister George Witt is consulting engineer to the naval arsenal in Cartagena. He is a cultured Englishman who worships science and order and who considers himself a political Liberal. He is fifty-three years old, slightly bald, loves good books, and reads the London Times. He is a typically staid Victorian gentleman whose only adventure in life has consisted of his sudden marriage fifteen years previously to Milagritos, eighteen years his junior. He lives in a comfortable home, has the love of his wife and the respect of his associates, and he is bored. Ultra-civilized, he finds himself a slave of civilization.

In July, 1873, a revolution takes place in Cartagena during the fifth month of the first Spanish Republic. The frigates in the harbor join the movement and the surrounding countryside quickly unites to provide defense from the inevitable attack by Republican forces of the Centralist government at Madrid. The results of this activity and the arduous siege that follows, gravely effect the lives of every one concerned, Mister Witt among them.

Mister Witt en el cantón was awarded the Premio Nacional de Literatura in 1935 and initiates the author's entry into the field of the historical novel. El verbo se hizo sexo, although it claims an accurate historical background, is more justly considered a fictionalized biography.
The present novel concerns the psychological change wrought within Mister Witt through his identification with the revolution and through his wife's activities in it. He shares the role of protagonist with the revolution itself and much of it is reflected through him and his reactions to it.

Sender has approached his theme very carefully and has developed it slowly, showing and justifying the motives of each of his many characters. The book is populated with numerous lesser figures, each a living person with aspirations and thoughts of his own, each contributing a profundity to the narration, and each completely understood by the author. It is here, in these descriptions of the various people of every walk of life, that Sender reveals a master's touch. Mr. Goronwy Rees, reviewing the English translation, says:

I believe I have seen Mr. Sender described as the young Tolstoy of Spain; and indeed it is of the young Tolstoy of the Sebastopol Tales that he sometimes reminds us in his descriptions of physical life. He has the same enjoyment of it, the same fresh, almost naive, response to it. One other gift they have in common, that of seeing men's moral responses and qualities as directly as if they were the colour of their hair or the shape of their noses. It is a gift very different from psychological insight, and even rarer; and it is perhaps the gift which justifies the novel as a form of entertainment. It is the one talent which makes the novel creative, for in life men are no more all morally differentiated than they are all handsome; it is a status they only achieve in the imagination, yet one to which they all tend. Because
the novel can give men this status, as no other art can, it has a claim on our intelligence equal to that of music, poetry or painting. For the same reason it is perhaps the art of an individualist era, ready to die when it is over and another is born in which not individuals but groups are the subject of experience.1

Mister Witt is at first somewhat amused by the preparations for rebellion. He becomes annoyed when his wife devotes herself to the cause. Though he is in sympathy with the movement, his ordered and analytical mind causes him to view events with a curiously mixed emotion. He wishes them success because he is a Liberal and in love with his wife who is an ardent supporter. Yet, at the same time, he desires their downfall because his scientific mind cannot countenance passionate and intuitive reasoning. They have upset the serenity of his life and caused unseemly thoughts to enter his mind. As the revolution progresses from street singing and demonstrations confident of victory to a grim and hopeless siege, a subtle change comes over Mister Witt. As spring progresses into summer and thence to autumn and winter, Mister Witt grows strangely old, whereas Milagritos, his wife, grows daily younger and more beautiful. Feeling himself cut off from all the activity surrounding him, he allows his emotions and suspicions to govern his mind and lead him almost to personal

destruction.

The exciting events which take place within the tortured mind of Mister Witt are duplicated in the violent activities in the streets and suburbs of Cartagena. Each protagonist, Witt and the Revolution, goes through a long period of siege, a trying ordeal of struggle, and then ultimate defeat. The exact maneuvers of the fleet and army are dwelt upon with great detail. Accuracy is the keynote to these descriptions, although they suffer at times from prolixity. The story tends to split into two distinct parts, for one sometimes forgets Mister Witt and his personal problems when Sender discusses the progress of the rebellion and its many ramifications. He paints a remarkable picture of what civil war in Spain actually means. Acutely sensitive to the varying temper of the inhabitants, the dissension in the ranks, the triumphs and the failures, the tragedies and even the comedies of war, he has represented the movement as a unified force composed of every imaginable social type. Each person is fighting for his own ideal as well as for that of his community.

Mister Witt, isolated from most of this turmoil, feels the first signs of old age. The conflict within his mind has caused his actions to become irrational, and he is motivated by guilt, jealousy, and a suspicion which he
no longer understands. He associates the revolution with the elemental nature of his wife. His life has always been governed by reason, but his love for Milagritos identifies him with the elemental, which he despises. He is divided within himself and this moral conflict is made more acute by his strange jealousy about his wife: he wilfully tortures himself with the thought that she has been unfaithful. The war has made her uncommunicative and she has discovered the secret that has been on her husband's mind for years: through apathy and indifference he had allowed her cousin, her suspected lover, to be executed by a firing squad. Witt knows that the man who despises himself is lost, so to square himself with his conscience about the injustice he has done, he must believe that Milagritos is unchaste. He no longer understands himself and, a victim of his now unreasoning passions, he commits an act of treachery which is disastrous to himself, to his wife, and to the defenders of Cartagena.

This novel was written between the second and twenty-fifth day of November, 1935, — a period of only twenty-four days. Therefore one would expect a somewhat hurried style, manifestations of carelessness, or other indications that it was superficially written. There are, however, none. Each individual character is nearly perfect in conception and execution. The plot, slight though it may be, is well
thought out and each event is integrated in proper correlation with the overall development. The most serious objection to the plot is that it is composed of two threads, one historical, the other psychological, which do not always unite to form a unified whole. Transition between the two divisions is sometimes abrupt and makes reading episodic. The fact that the chapters are arranged in a strict chronological order emphasizes the episodic progress of the revolution. The action within Mister Witt's mind, however, advances in a slow, ever-mounting sequence, one easy to follow.

The style is typical of Sender: frequent passages of short sentences, often of only one or two words; poetic descriptions and phraseology; a simple, but extensive, vocabulary. Popular songs, those sung by the people, reflect the spirit of the time and are used as a recurring estribillo which adds much dramatic intensity to many of the scenes. There is a wealth of costumbristic material.

Sender employs symbolism to add depth to his characters and their conflict, and to make it possible for the novel to be read at several levels. Mister Witt and Milagritos are the two most obvious examples. Like any true symbol, they are ambiguous, many-faceted, and elusive. Witt is Science, he is Intellectual Reasoning, he is a product of his civilization. Milagritos is the exact
opposite. She is the Elemental Quality in life, she personifies the Spain and the Spanish people that her husband cannot possibly understand. She is Passionate, Intuitive Reasoning; she is not a product of her civilization: she is her civilization. Mister Witt, representing the artificiality of modern civilization, is forced by his own ineptness and weaknesses to succumb to the inevitable superiority of his wife. It is she who saves him from destruction at the end. It is she who remains loyal to him and who will lead him back into a sheltered world, one of order and controlled values, where he will be able to regain his lost balance.

The use of symbols in a novel makes many interpretations possible. When these symbols break down into others, the number of interpretations is manifold. From whatever level Mister Witt en el cantón is read, one will find it more a serious "work of art" rather than a "form of entertainment" alone.²

² Rees, ibid.
CONTRAATAQUE (1938)

This autobiographical report is the last work by Sender published in Spain. Like Imán, the novel which first drew literary fame and attention to him, this book describes his experiences on war's bloody battlefields. This time, though, the theater of action is Spain itself, and the enemies are fellow Spaniards, aided and armed by German and Italian intervention. The agony of conflict, the brutality of war, the heroism of the common soldier, and the confusion of life at the front lines is, however, completely changed.

The lack of reason, complete absence of patriotism and individuality of the soldiers of Imán is in sharp contrast with the volunteer-regiments and troops of Contraataque. The men of the former novel blindly followed the orders of their inept officers, fought and died automatically, with no driving emotion of their own to sustain them except fear; they lacked unity of purpose and unity of equality with their superiors. The volunteers of the Loyalist army were primarily individuals fighting for their own individual ideals which were the common ideals of all their fellow soldiers. They possess unity of spirit and determination of purpose which welds them together as no other power can. Morally superior than the harrassed and disillusioned Moroccan troops, they accept defeat more
calmly and without despair because they know that victory eventually will be theirs.

Sender was vacationing in San Rafael in the Guadarrama Mountains, two hours by train from Madrid, when news of Franco's revolt in Morocco reached him. The rebels immediately seized control of the province of Segovia and from the very first days of the war Sender was under almost constant gunfire. He left his wife in what he thought was comparative safety and joined the defending troops of the Loyalist army. He entered the ranks as a volunteer, but was quickly promoted to captain by his fellow soldiers. The following months were passed at the front, suffering constant bombardment, strafing, anguish, fatigue, - and disappointment. Heroism was such a common, everyday occurrence, that he often wondered what could be expected on an extraordinary day.

**Contraataque**, then, is the story of the first six grueling months of the Spanish Civil War, from July to December, 1936, as seen through the eyes of a sensitive novelist who is at the same time an accurate observer and reporter. The reader lives with Sender and follows him from battle to battle and from village to village, through the chaos of the confused beginnings of resistance in the outlying sections to the determined and well-organized defense of Madrid during the disastrous siege.
Contraataque is also reminiscent of Viaje a la aldea del crimen because both are journalistic coverings of day-by-day occurrences in a society scourged by violence and bloodshed. Once again Sender views life through the probing eyes of a reporter and interprets what he sees with the insight of a poet. People crowd through both books, tell their story or live it before our eyes, and then are replaced by new arrivals. The sweeping events of the first part of Contraataque surge forth in a confused manner because nothing was well coordinated along the lines of defense or organization. As the months and the book progress, strict order is attained and maintained in both. The chaos of the beginning disappears and gives way to a well-ordered program of action and narration.

Sender's description of the struggle of the Loyalist defenders is a memorable tribute to their sacrifice and an exaltation of their heroism. Although inclined at times to overstatement, the very factualness of his reporting makes the import of his material tremendous. Political issues, previous history, and other explanations of causes and effects do not interest the author here. One can read them elsewhere. He is interested in capturing the emotions, the vibrant spirit of men and women fighting and suffering together, the inward compulsion which carries them onward through defeat after defeat in the pursuit of an ideal
which they know is just. People fighting against tremendous odds to preserve their dignity of free men, with Justice, God, and the sympathy of all democratic nations on their side are no fair match against an enemy supported by more tangible and death-dealing allies.

Carried away at times by vehemence and the distorted view of the eye-witness to a scene, Sender sometimes exaggerates or ignores a fact. He makes no mention of the aid received by the Loyalists from the communists of Russia, merely mentioning that it arrived; he believes in rumors and reports that 27,000 people were indiscriminately executed in Granada, 5,000 in Zamora, 17,000 in Pamplona, etc. He states that 30,000 people were killed at Badajoz although the original report listed only 1,500 to 2,000. Investigations conducted later completely discredited this report. Sender is inclined to trust his emotions, his sense of justice, and his dignity. These do not fail him, although at times they do respond without a high degree of accuracy.

Philosophical digressions and conversations with other serious young men give the book a depth and dimension which purely factual reporting could never hope to convey. The descriptions of the Spanish countryside are superb, those of Madrid being among the best of their kind. Poetic devices abound and heighten the dramatic intensity of the
scene, throwing values into quick relief and fixing with admirable clarity a small episode, a quickly passing event. The latter pages of the book, in which Sender describes the personal tragedy which overtook him—the callous murders of his wife and brother—are admirably restrained, poignant in understatement, sparing in detail.

The author, lying in shell holes and improvised trenches, with death always in the immediate vicinity, has managed to fuse himself with the very essence of the soil and being of his country:

Yo la (España) he andado a pie a lo ancho, he subido a sus montañas y he conocido la llanura castellana paso a paso. He dado mi sangre a esta tierra, mis risas, mis soledades y mis frenesíes. Nadie ha podido darle más que yo y nadie le pedirá menos. Nada deseo sino el lugar donde poner mis pies para andar, y nada espero más que la tierra que me ha de cubrir. Debajo de ella tengo a mi madre. En ella estoy yo. En el aire inconcreto, en el espacio indeterminado encima de la tierra están mis hijos, mi mujer, mis poemas y mis sueños. Yo represento a España. En su grandeza y en su miseria. En lo inefable y en lo concreto. La roca, el pájaro y la luz de España hablarán en mí, como hablan ya en los fusiles de los milicianos y en la sangre de los trabajadores asesinados ayer tarde.1

It is difficult to believe that much of this book was written in the trenches, frequently during actual bombardment, and that it was hurriedly edited for publication while the author was on leave in France. The book reveals the actuality of its conception, the immediacy of

its germination, in the impassioned vehemence with which it is written. The intense emotion which compels Sender to write down his impressions as he experiences them gives the book a spontaneity of being, a feeling of contact with the men and the ideals being fought for. Much of this heroism has been projected into this book by sheer proximity of contact with it.
This novel is Sender's first literary work since fleeing Spain. Written immediately after the fall of the Republican government, it accurately reflects the tortured and confused state of mind through which the author passed in his attempts to readjust himself to the loss of country and ideals. Almost entirely autobiographical, it is a tremendously difficult book to read, for it is the revelation of a man in search of a truth, a defeated idealist in search of a new ideal; as such it is overloaded with personal philosophy and top-heavy with symbolism.

The bare plot, extracted from the rest of the novel, would constitute only about one-fifth of the total number of pages. It is merely a necessary mechanism employed by the author as a framework upon which to suspend his philosophical beliefs and observations.

The brief story concerns one Federico Salla, Loyalist ex-icle, who boards the ship "Viscount Gall" in Le Havre, France, for New York. He intends to commit suicide, but time affords him ample opportunity to think matters over and change his mind. Proverbio de la muerte is the lengthy description of the thoughts which enter young Salla's mind as he lies drowsily in his steamer chair or gazes melancholically out to sea. Fascinated with the subject of death,
especially suicide, he spends the greater part of his time trying to penetrate its mystery, endeavoring to express it in concrete terms so that he can understand it and hence remove all fear and religious awe from it.

To do this, to prove to himself that death is no more than a convenient myth and that it actually does not exist, Saila, through uninterrupted contemplation, formulates a mechanistic philosophy which denies everything and which lends itself admirably to the cause for which it was created. This philosophy did not develop spontaneously or take form of its own accord. Indeed, Saila spends hours and hours on end arguing fine points with himself, rationalizing, reasoning, tearing down and building up, avoiding contact with his fellow passengers so he can pursue this problem to the very end. Not content to specialize in death, he attempts to solve practically all the enigmas of human existence and behavior. He so delights in his mental and metaphysical wandering that he frequently becomes lost in the complex pursuit of some obscure truth. The reader does, also.

The name Federico Saila is an obvious subterfuge for Sender, for Saila (=Alias) is quite frankly the author and the ideas he expounds so convincingly are actually those of Sender who created him, but who did not provide a foil of equal intellectual capacity to dispute him, and thus give
more depth to his observations. We see life only through Saila's eyes, and the view is somewhat distorted. Saila is such a lethargic individual that one frequently wishes he would succumb to the desire for self annihilation and thus terminate this involved and confusing book.

The other passengers on board this symbolic ship fleeing from Europe would be interesting were they given enough opportunity to develop into believeable human beings. As it is, they are little more than symbols, sketchily drawn and without much depth. Nor are their symbolic values quite clear. Eva is eternal womanhood, hence Love; an unnamed woman is motherhood in the abstract; Luisa represents Lust; Professor Ross is the Scholar, etc. Sender does not concern himself with them. The never-resting mind of Saila fascinates him almost as much as it does Saila himself, and the two explore it together and come to some surprising conclusions.

Proverbio de la muerte is, above all, a novel of ideas. But it is a work embodying such a profusion of them that it almost misses being a novel. The style employed here is not typical of our author. It is frequently obscure, difficult to decipher, and exceedingly verbose. He employs the phraseology of an advanced philosophy textbook, often not describing or justifying his choice. His theories seldom allow opportunity for argument or dis-
agreement, they are locked up in the tightly sealed mind of the protagonist. The following passage is typical of one of Saila's perplexing observations. It constitutes one-third of a page, of which, out of 250, approximately 200 are completely devoted to similar material:

En España - se decía Saila - hay una frase popular que expresa bastante bien la posición que en definitiva tiene el individuo en quien prima la hombría: presencia de ánimo. La presencia de ánimo, no de Ánima, que sería cuestión de la persona, nos da la plenitud del hombre. Percibimos en la 'presencia de ánimo', simultáneamente, un número infinito de vivencias en marcha en transcendencia. Percibimos y vivimos. El espíritu ve vivir al hombre. Pero al mismo tiempo vivimos en su vivencia de verno y el espíritu nos ve vivir en esa vivencia de nuevo. La 'presencia de ánimo' es una fórmula que nos basta, que excluye las catástrofes, las soluciones de fe beata. Esa presencia de ánimo nos permite vernos actuar en presente, impregnados de presente mismo. La presencia de ánimo es la facultad, la técnica, de la 'autoobjectivación' desde el fondo del 'presente'. El hombre que contempla su pasión 'desde fuera', pero en el presente, la va vencido sin esterilizarla.1

Sender, as is his custom, takes time out in his prologue to introduce the material that follows and to justify and explain himself in a more concentrated form. He reveals here that he has discovered that he is immortal and wishes to share this joy with his reader so that they might arrive at the same conclusion.

Various critics have welcomed this work and have

1. Page 165.
praised it as a "milestone in world literature,"² or merely as a "libro atormentado y extraño."³ Mauricio Magdalena, the eminent contemporary Mexican novelist, reviewing it in El Universal of Mexico City, says:

Un libro español, de punta a punta; un libro de espermas trágicas; un libro de gran poeta y de alucinados poderes líricos y un rico documento de la sensibilidad de nuestro tiempo...un genuino testimonio de hombre. En Sender, por sobre todos sus guarismos de poeta, hay un hombre - un hombre que vive y padece y se revuelve. Su obra escrita, por ello, impregnado está de ese áspero regusto de lo que primero se elaboró en las vísceras - placentia del ser - y luego fué concebido por intelecto y sentimiento...Sender, el de este profundo, el de este español, el de este entrañable 'Proverbio de la muerte'.

It is interesting to note that when this book was translated into English as The Sphere,⁴ it was radically changed in content and format. New characters were added or their names were changed from the original (Mr. Cash, Professor However, a talking dog, etc.), and a stronger plot was introduced. The ship is now set adrift and, at the mercy of the winds, it sinks and certain survivors are left swimming toward a symbolic island where they will begin their destinies anew. The new layout of

the book lends itself to easier reading, for italicized passages precede each chapter and contain digested versions of the philosophy and other abstract material, much of which has been completely eliminated.

Miss Hilda Osterhaut, reviewing the English translation, makes the following penetrating observation, which can similarly apply to the Spanish original:

'The Sphere' is one of those freaks or experimental failures that sometimes occur in the course of a writer's development when he forgets all the technique of his craft for the sake of a fixation or idea. It is a book Sender probably had to write to get his experiences with fascism out of his system. Inasmuch as it shows that baggage of emotional and intellectual sickness which a refugee from Nazi Europe carries with him today, 'The Sphere' is a significant document for history, if not for literature. Still, there is masterful social satire in 'The Sphere' and one is left at the end of the book with the feeling...that Sender himself will discard his baggage of mechanistic ideas, that he will...continue to develop his great potentialities as an artist.5

We shall see that Miss Osterhaut has made an accurate prediction. Proverbio de la muerte remains Sender's most puzzling and provocative book.

After the extensive philosophic and idealistic verbosity which characterized Proverbio de la muerte, the present novel is a natural aftermath in Sender's literary development. An inward compulsion obviously motivated the writing of the earlier book, and the author was doubtless carried away by the passion with which he wrote, the necessity to express his emotional reactions to certain conditions before these feelings should pass and be replaced by a more reserved intellectual attitude. One has the feeling that after the work was finished, Sender finally began to be aware that he was actually living in Mexico, a country of fascinating legend, history, and atmosphere. In this interim of relaxation and readjustment, when writing had 'la delicia de un juego infantil,' Sender began to think of the Spain that existed before the Civil War, the timeless Spain of his childhood, the never-changing province of Aragón, his home.

El lugar del hombre is Sender at his best. It is a mature work, a skilful blending of irony, satire, realism and poetry; it is characterized by a penetrating, understanding vision, and it is exceedingly subtle in its implications.

The story, possibly based on fact, is very simple:

1. Preface to present book.
a hunting party in the mountains discovers a 'monster' who turns out to be a former member of their village. This discovery disrupts the entire community and brings about serious readjustments in the lives of many people, for this outcast, Sabino, was believed to have been murdered and two men had been accused and convicted of the crime. The sudden reappearance of Sabino and the resultant complications are what primarily interest Sender. Against the sombre background of this small Aragonese community, peopled by simple and honest men, he has projected a drama which in its basic truths could apply to any race at almost any given historical time. Yet it is curiously very Spanish.

Sabino is the lowliest of his fellow men. Lacking character and determination, married to an unfaithful and uncaring woman, scorned by people no better off than himself, he suddenly responds to an urge to run away from it all, to escape from society. He flees to the wilderness of the highlands and spends sixteen years, three months and eleven days in complete isolation, entirely cut off from civilization. His disappearance is duly noted and it is assumed that he has been murdered. Juan and Vicente, two simple peasants from a neighboring town, are accused of the crime and are cruelly tortured until they confess. They serve fifteen years in jail and are discharged at the
end of that time, mere wrecks of men.

Sender has approached this part of his story in a very leisurely fashion, content to linger on minute details in the first chapters, to describe the countryside, the ordered and uneventful life of a closely-knit small town, the hard-working and simple people who live there. This costumbristic material evokes a fascinating atmosphere which is maintained throughout the novel. The soil and the smell of the earth is never far removed from any of Sender's works; its presence is usually felt intuitively by the reader because it is an innate feeling on the part of the author, one not requiring concrete expression. Like the typical Aragonese, Sender has a deep passion and a kinship for the earth.

It is quite apparent that the author has returned to his own childhood and to his own home and experiences for much of the material presented here. Many of these episodes have that curious quality of undeniable existence, of actuality, which characterizes truth. It is as though these passages were being described by a person who is completely familiar with a certain familiar custom, a scene or an activity with which he has been in contact so many times that it becomes an integral part of him. He feels so at home in this medium, so much himself, that he returns to it at greater length and with more detail
The brutal torture inflicted upon Juan and Vicente in an attempt to make them confess to the crime is so realistically described that the reader feels a sense of personal outrage that man could be subjected to such inhumanity by a fellow man. These bitter and compelling pages are written with the same pitiless detail that was so characteristic of Imán and that gave it a similar feeling of despair and utter futility. Strongly realistic passages are a recurrent trait of Sender, and are invariably used to emphasize dramatically the degradations to which a human being can be subjugated without the subsequent loss of his dignity as a man. Degradation, exerted by outside forces over which the victim has no control (society), always tends to ennoble him and to exalt his stoic resignation.

Juan and Vicente are finally forced to confess to this crime in order to save themselves from incessant torture. They are imprisoned for fifteen years and then discharged

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3. The episode of the storks in the tower of the ayuntamiento and how they upset the entire community is previously described with great warmth and detail in Proclamación de la sonrisa (see "La cigüena en el ayuntamiento", pages 99-102). This is frankly an autobiographical, costumbristic sketch which the author describes as taking place in his home town. The village is not identified in El lugar del hombre, nor in Proclamación de la sonrisa, although the latter refers to it as "gobernador de Huesca y obispo de Lérida, y entre obispo y gobernador el río Cinca." Alcolea de Cinca is the name of the village where Sender was born.
because of their exemplary behavior. It is tragic that during their trying hours of mental anguish and mutual suffering, neither could be entirely certain that the other was equally innocent. They understand each other only when Sabino makes his startling reappearance.

Many things can happen in sixteen years; people adjust themselves to hardships and are forced to accept or compromise with the ordeals distributed to them by fate. Juan's wife, certain of her husband's guilt, lives with his ex-rival and allows her son to grow up ashamed of his father; Sabino's wife, believing him dead, has remarried; Vicente's wife remains quietly faithful; Sabino's mother makes a promise to God; Don Jacinto, most powerful man in town, and head of the conservative party, gains a political victory by exerting pressure during the trial and making it a personal triumph over Don Manuel, rival head of the liberal group which had counted Juan and Vicente among their members. Thus the disappearance of the humblest of men, the escape of a nonentity from an oppressive society, has thrown that very society into serious convulsions and has disrupted the lives of innumerable persons. Imagine, then, the consternation which results when the monster turns out to be Sabino - the man who thought he could do as he pleased with his life.

El lugar del hombre is primarily a study in human
relationships; the simple elemental relations between men and women, parents and children, man and man. Above this, however, we have the titular problem of man in relation to the society in which he lives but which has provided no place for him. It is an unheeding and uncaring society that progresses only negatively, neither advancing nor retreatting, until some event interrupts its mechanism. What is the place of man in this civilization and in regard to his fellow men? This is the question Sender asks, and this novel is his reply.

A work treating principally of man's relationship to man must of necessity possess characters capable of coherent motivation and thought independent of that given them by the author. A character must live and breathe and be the natural result of his environment and the ingredients which have formed him. He must have psychological depth, be he peasant, priest or aristocrat. He must have a place in the structure of the novel. He must have a reason for being, both dependent and independent of the author.

The characterization in this novel is first rate. Each person assumes stature and credibility as the story advances and as he is seen in reaction to various situations. Sabino is perplexed by his sudden importance, taking a childlike joy in his new situation. As he slowly becomes aware of the changes he has caused, he matures and
at the end triumphs in a struggle of wills with his wife. Don Jacinto, the powerful terrateniente, is a clever hypocrite and an astute politician. When called upon to do so, however, he can conduct himself like a true man in defense of his honor and family. Don Manuel, Don Jacinto's rival, is as shrewd as the other, though much less cultured. Juan and Vicente are simple peasants who are wronged by the society in which they live and which they trust implicitly. They are symbols of mankind, but they do not lose their interest as individuals. As the story progresses and various factions and persons are thrown into conflict with others, their importance as symbols becomes evident and adds to the profundity of the novel.

Minor characters are no less well-drawn: Sabino's mother, quietly praying in her darkened corner, achieves perfect understanding with God and pays for it with her life. Ana Launer, the village witch, flits through the story like a malevolent spirit, contributing suspense and humor. Personifying the superstitious attitude of the Aragonese, she adds an eerie undertone to the background. Don Jacinto's regal mother has an ailment that has made her famous throughout the community and which is the subject of much malicious speculation. The grandfather of the narrator reminds one of Sender's own grandfather, a picturesque and outspoken old man of Aragón, who also
possessed a native shrewdness unimpaired by formal education.\textsuperscript{4}

The novel is divided into three distinct parts: the first describes the hunt which turns up the missing man; the second tells of the accusation and the torture of the two condemned men; the third treats of the consequences of Sabino's reappearance. Each of these divisions is characterized by a predominate note, a sustained, telling style. The poetic quality of the first part progresses naturally into the realistic and brutal descriptions of the torture scenes of the second; the third part is essentially satiric and highly ironical. But over all these divisions, binding them together, is the intense, understanding compassion of the author. By conscious withdrawal from the narration of events, Sender expresses his attitude more forcibly than he could were he to indulge in interpretive observations as is his usual custom. By not intruding upon these scenes, he has made them more graphic and starkly realistic. The plot here assumes more importance than is customary in a Senderian novel. It is clear in its outline, unobscured by unessentials.

The only serious flaw in the construction of this fine novel is the use of the first-person narration. The

\textsuperscript{4} See "My Grandfather was a Mountaineer", Harper's Magazine, March, 1943, pages 377-379; The same article appears in Scholastic, December 6, 1943, pages 19-20.
speaker is a young boy who goes along with his father on the hunt. The first part, therefore, is in keeping with the device employed. The child's mind grappling with adult problems and situations gives a subtle note of irony to these pages as various truths and values are misinterpreted by the youthful eyes of the observer. When he describes the events which transpired fifteen years before, however, and what happened later, he tells things which he could not personally have seen nor to which he had access of discovery. Sender seems to have forgotten that he was employing this device. He had this same weakness in *Imán* and in *Siete domingos rojos*. The discrepancies are not glaring, but they do mar an otherwise almost flawless novel.

Small costumbristic touches give the book a warm humor and a gentleness which alleviates the sombre tone of the circumstances. Sender here makes his debut as a regionalist, describing his native province with the same warmth and affection that characterized Blasco-Ibáñez' Valencian novels, Valera and Andalucía, Pereda and La Montaña. Though remote in time and distance from the events chronicled (the action takes place in 1925, with a lengthy digression to sixteen years previously), his imaginative recall is infallible.

Justice and injustice are also recurrent themes of
this novel. With Sabino wandering the streets, an officiously dead man, yet strangely alive, his very presence is a travesty of law and order. But who is guilty of this injustice? Sabino? Don Jacinto? The Spanish social and judicial system? The answer is difficult to ascertain. Equally difficult is the problem of discovering whom to punish, for justice for one person may cause injustice to another. The sins committed in the name of Justice have a tendency to bring others in their train, to repeat themselves until it is impossible to ascertain exactly where the fault lies and how it may be remedied. The torture inflicted by the Guardia Civil upon the two innocent peasants is the obvious focal point which brought about all this turmoil. It is the foremost and most tangible evil, but it is presented without comment. Justice becomes a further subject for satire when the two powerful men of the towns duel on the field of honor, - a further repurcussion of Sabino's return.

What, then, is 'el lugar del hombre'? What is man's place in society? Sender allows the answer to this puzzling question to be seen in the reaction of each character. The answer is not stated in so many definitive terms; it remains an elusive truth.

Juan, as he lies dying, voices the desperate opinion that "Cuando sobramos en el mundo, lo mejor que podemos
hacer es irnos." Human beings, deemed in excess by society, have nothing to live for except death. Flight, then, is their only recourse, the only vestige of dignity left them: "...en (la) soledad y en (la) plena naturaleza no hay miseria. No se puede decir...que los lobos ni los esparveres vivan una vida miserable, aunque padezcan hambre y frío. La miseria se sentía en el pueblo, en la relación humillada con los demás." Sabino fled because he was tired of being "un cero a la izquierda, de esperar sin esperanza." A communal existence in which man does not believe in his fellow man is of necessity a failure. Sabino's village is intensely ashamed of the fact that he preferred the wilderness to the environs of society. Yet they do not blame themselves.

A man who cannot respect himself, who finds that personal dignity has been denied him by his fellow human beings, out of sheer desperation will flee from contact with them. The only thing that distinguishes him from an unreasoning animal is this very dignity, and when that is gone, his soul dies and he does become an animal. Nature, then, is the only path left open to him, since civilization has failed. This negative approach to the problem would

5. Page 207.
7. Page 64.
indicate, therefore, that man's place in society is in the role where he most feels himself a man, where he can live in harmony with others and feel the fullness of a life that possesses dignity.

The subtlety of the question, the compassion of its presentation, and the provocative absence of a definitive reply, make this novel Sender's finest and most adult work.
HERNAN CORTÉS (1940) and other plays.

Hernán Cortés, a Retablo en dos partes y once cuadros, is Sender's most ambitious dramatic undertaking to date. His previous attempts at play-writing have been modest experimental dramas of one act or several scenes.  

This play was written hurriedly, at the request of an actor, a friend whom Sender happened to meet in Mexico several days after his arrival. The latter desired a vehicle containing something of an historical interpretation of Mexico and Spain, but that the finished commission has remained unproduced is perhaps best explained by the unusual amount of stagecraft it would demand for a successful and faithful production.

Hernán Cortés is a series of historical episodes bound together by the dominant and ever-present figure of its title character. Sender traces Cortés' career from Cuba to Mexico, through his various campaigns and defeats until final victory. The last scene takes place in a mystic world between reality and fiction, where a more complete summing-up and evaluation can be given.

1. Sender is also well informed about the backstage activities so necessary for the successful staging of a play. At the end of the Spanish Civil War, while in exile in France, he directed a successful benefit performance of Don Juan Tenorio at the Théâtre des Ambassadeurs in Paris. (See "Three Centuries of Don Juan", Books Abroad, Vol. XXIII, No. 2, Spring, 1949, pages 227-232).
The rapidly moving scenes of a pageant, the predominance of action, and quickly changing currents of plot usually render hopeless any intent at characterization in a drama of this type. Sender, has, however, succeeded admirably in his endeavor to bring Hernán Cortés and the surrounding personages to life with reality and understanding. Minor characters emerge with a third-dimensional depth and a sense of definite existence, which give profundity and an aura of actuality to the whole. Don Diego Velázquez, governor of Cuba, is revealed as a pompous and irascible Spanish gentleman, inept in matters of legislature and henpecked by his shrewish wife. Narváez is the reincarnation of the classical braggart soldier of early Spanish drama. Unwilling to accept ignominious defeat at the hands of Cortés, he contents himself with musings about his glorious war record in Flanders and Europe. Doña Marina is above all a woman. Torn between loyalty and love for two clashing civilizations and religions, she does her best to reconcile the two as amicably as her limited resources allow. Half savage and half civilized, she is the perfect mate for Cortés. A host of lesser characters surge around the protagonist, and are highlighted at times by a moment of glory, only to recede immediately to the background.

Hernán Cortés dominates the play and the other characters much as he doubtless did in real life. Shrewd
in his ability to gratify his own desires, he plays upon the loyalties of his men and succeeds in attaining every goal for which he fights. Loved by his soldiers, worshiped by the Aztecs, and feared by his enemies, he understood and sympathized with all of them, knowing exactly what to do to draw them to him as friends or to destroy them as enemies.

Sender pictures the Conqueror of Mexico as a man swept along by a compulsion, an inward necessity and driving force which he himself cannot understand. Cortés even goes so far as to compare himself with God, although Padre Bartolomé, the accompanying priest, usually keeps him from becoming too sacriligious.

The conception of the character of Cortés is epic and Sender has ingeniously captured this feeling by making Cortés a Cid among his men. He can do no wrong and he is idolized by all men; he is a leader, a symbol of his time, the embodiment of his civilization and a legend in the process of formation.

This epic and legendary quality is also expressed in the very structure and mechanical apparatus of the play, the basic framework upon which it depends for artistic and coherent unity. The play is divided into eleven distinct parts, each representing a progression in plot and time, and each with a separate and completely different setting.
From the governor's office in Cuba we go to the beach, to the camp in Mexico, to various temples and battlefields in that country, to Montezuma's palace, and thence to a shadowy and unreal room. To give unity to these many episodes and to continue the drama while the curtain is down and the scenery is being changed, Sender has recurred to an ancient, but effective and traditional device: the romance.

Throughout the course of the play, one is aware of its siglo de oro atmosphere, its subtle dwelling upon the pundonor, upon hidalguía, and upon allegiance to God and the King. Cortés has seduced the sister of the governor of Cuba in the most approved capa y espada fashion, and has continued his amorous exploits with Doña Marina. Conspiracies among his men add to the intrigue so necessary to a comedy of that time, and various themes popular in the sixteenth century are also present: the unpredictable adversities of fortuna, the value of true friends, the inscrutability of God, etc. However, what most successfully captures this spirit and emphasizes the very meter of the play, is the use of romance narration between scenes while the curtain is actually down. There are ten breaks during the production of this spectacle and during this period of inactivity, Sender has used romances five times to relate or underscore what has happened during the previous scene or what has transpired during a lapse of time. Alternated
with these ballads are other almost equally as effective
devices: soldiers answer roll call, decrees and other
announcements are read, Aztec music is played and chanted.

The following is typical of these ballads and shows
not only the effectiveness with which they are employed as
a dramatid timesaver, but also the fidelity with which
they are patterned after the romances of the Renaissance:

Pocos eran, pocos eran
los soldados castellanos;
pocos eran, pero todos
muy galanes y esforzados.
Mirad cómo Sandoval
acorre a los castellanos
que cerca de la victoria
se encuentran en un mal paso.
Mirad, mirad cómo vuela
en su ayuda don Hernando
y cómo el rey Cuauhtemoc
ya lo vienen apresando.
Mirad cómo cien tamemes
y doscientos castellanos
con grandes demostraciones
victoria vienen cantando.2

Perhaps the main reason Hernán Cortés has not yet
been produced is the demands it makes upon the resources of
the back-stage technicians. Sender makes generous use of
sounds, light and other effects more or less difficult to
reproduce. At various times the stage is lit by the sun,
the moon, the blaze of burning ships, the illumination of
campfires, the flickering light of torches. It is often
in darkness, or with a ray of light emphasizing a certain

2. Page 150.
character. Light and shadow are especially important in the macabre last scene in which practically all the cast, those living and those dead, reunite in an eerie nether world, in which Carlos V is also present. Sounds are also employed to give a dramatic tempo, a crescendo to many scenes. Drums and bugles, cannons and crossbows, are employed when Cortés and his men wage war in Mexico; native drums, gongs and cymbals interpret the pagan and barbarious temperament of the Aztecs. It is by the off-stage sound of bells, drowning out the sound of the martial drum during the romance previously quoted, that one is informed, without words, that victory has been achieved.

The ending of the play is bitter and ironical. Cortés, a year after his victory, is an unhappy and harrassed man. Deprived of wealth, maligned by nobles in Spain, tortured by the restless dead and persecuted and excommunicated by the Church, he desires only Dofia Marina and his son, knowing, though, that this is impossible.

This play represents Sender the Dramatist at his most ambitious and inspired moment. His shorter plays are completely different in concept and execution, and therefore worthy of some consideration.

El Secreto (1935) is a drama in one act which describes the inhuman brutality with which labor agitators
are treated in a Barcelona jail. It is a tense episode, a panegyric to the revolutionary men of the labor organizations who would rather die than reveal their party's secrets. It is very reminiscent of _Siete domingos rojos_ and has been presented in London, New York, Paris, Moscow, and Prague. ³

_Le Llave_ (1936), a playlet in three scenes, is a strange and symbolic story of hate and greed in a debased family of four people. Two women bring about the destruction of two men, and assume the possession of a coveted key, symbol of power, wealth and, perhaps, freedom. This play was staged in New York City in 1945 by a group of Broadway actors under the auspices of the art magazine _View_.⁴

_The House of Lot_ (1950) is a miracle play, published in English, in which Sender re-creates in classic symbolism the familiar story of Lot's salvation from the destruction of Sodom. A certain amount of ironical humor, a deft use of dialogue, and telling understatement, however, give new life to this ancient theatrical form.⁵

Other plays, _El Sumario, El Cristo, El Duelo_, are

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³. See page 8, preceding text of _El lugar del hombre_.
⁵. For a play of similar length and subject matter, see _La mujer de Lot_, by Rafael Guizado, _Revista de las Indias_, February, 1941, pages 415-426.
unavailable for comment, their manuscript being lost during the Spanish Civil War.

In all these plays one is more aware of Sender the Poet than of Sender the Novelist. He manifests here a keen sense of the dramatic importance of light and color contrasts, of music, and of heavy silence. He is excellent in his use of shadows and darkness. His stage directions are very elaborate and imaginative, and make reading of the plays a pleasant experience. His theater is, as yet, rather small, but it is probable that these representative pieces are just the beginning of an interesting new side of our author.
MEXICAYOTL (1941)

Sender's fourth book published during exile is a collection of five short novels and four tales which form a literary tribute to Mexico. It represents an endeavor to understand his adopted homeland, its cruel, exciting past, and its passive philosophy of resignation. The inspiration for these relations came from reading Sahagún and from wandering through the interior of the country. They reveal a new side of the author, one hinted at in various preceding books, but never present before to such a degree. He gives full vent to his poetic abilities and creates a world of symbolic values and meaning, a gloomy, mystic world of pre-Cortesian life in ancient Mexico, where destinies are fulfilled against an overpowering and remote landscape.

The author's original intention was to write but two short novels, Tototl o el valle and Nanyotl o la montaña, and publish them separately in small volumes. He wished to describe "la naturaleza virgen mexicana tal como yo la siento," but soon found that it was impossible to limit himself, - the subject was far too provocative. He found himself adding more tales to the original two; narratives of animals and legendary gods, of the desert, the lake and

1. Preface.
the volcano.\footnote{2} He chose his title, \textit{Mexicayotl}, from the Aztec word meaning "Song of Mexico" - and this book is exactly that. It is an exaltation of the glorious past, written for the understanding of the prosaic present.

The symbolism, the hidden truths, and the philosophy which are present in each of these tales reveal the mystic element in Sender, the meditative side previously apparent in \textit{El verbo se hizo sexo} and \textit{Proverbio de la muerte}, and so much a part of the Spanish heritage. Each of the four short novels is concerned with one being, usually supernatural and possessed or controlled by the gods, who finds himself at odds with his fellow men. This creature tries to fulfill his prophecy, to attain the vision that has been promised him by fate, but he fails either through his own weaknesses or those of the men about him. Ecatl swims the seven lakes of temptation and almost achieves wisdom and calmness, but he fails and dies because he has inadvertently misused the power thus obtained. Tototl is a noble, truth-speaking Indian who becomes a demi-god and then, misinterpreting his star, loses his virility and becomes a cruel and corrupted chief. Xocoyotl is a woman who seeks to speak with her gods by giving her body to all men.

\footnote{2: "Tale of the Hotland", Partisan Review, March, 1949, pages 272-276, translated by Edwin Honig, appears to be a tale written for this collection, but not included. In style and subject matter it is very similar.}
but she brings death and destruction to all involved and learns too late that motherhood is above godliness. The truth which each individual proclaims or seeks usually leads to his ultimate downfall.

The four short tales are primarily concerned with wild animals: the puma, the eagle, the fish, and the vulture. Utter simplicity of moral and symbolic elements is the prevailing tone of these "fables" and irony is the keynote.

These narratives give one the impression of seeing life in its primitive essentials, when each inanimate object was possessed with life and knew the unknowable secrets of that existence. The scenes evoked here form a haunting, weirdly beautiful and gloomy panorama. The ineffable quality which distinguishes folklore and fables, mythology and legend, has been captured in Sender's lyrical prose. He has created a world governed by titanic forces in which brutality and catastrophes, miracles and omens, are common occurrences and in which man bravely struggles to exist.

The subject matter treated here demands a light touch, one free from excessive ornamentation and philosophic digressions. The theme is fragile and Sender has emphasized this fragility - this evanescence - by his simple and lucid style, one which never intrudes upon the material
related, but which is essentially an inseparable part of
it. The conception and execution of his various themes
are lyrical. He has chosen words carefully for the conno-
tation of their sound as well as their philological
meaning. His syntax is amazingly basic and his vocabulary
is restricted. Aztec words are employed, especially proper
names, to give an aura of authenticity to the narration,
but their usage is carefully controlled.

Perhaps the most inspired passages are the songs
chanted by the trees, the birds, the mountains and the
other forms of nature. Used like a Greek-chorus, they
give exposition and provide the sombre mood against which
the action occurs. The song of Popocatapetl, from
Navalatl o el volcán, is a typical example:

Mil años, cien mil años
para la edad del sol que arde en mis entrañas
un millón de hombres muertos
para la vida que arde en mi pecho
eso es tan poco como la gota del rocío
o el canto del pájaro
o el suspiro de la joven sobre el pecho del hombre
o la muerte de cien emperadores.
Mi la edad, ni la muerte, ni el amor, ni el misterio
son nada, es decir, son solo
porciones vivas de mi fuego que no se extingue,
que se apaga en el que muere y se enciende en el que
millones de millones de veces cada segundo /nace
en la lejana ciudad. Por eso los árboles
los pájaros, los hombres
los seres todos del mar y de la tierra
sois mis hijos y debéis oír mi voz
en la hora de las dudas, para que sean dudas
encendidas de las que salga ese error caliente
que llamais la verdad.
Sender apologizes in the Preface that it has taken him a year to learn this song. The wonder is that he should have learned it so well in so short a time.
EPITALAMIO DEL PRIETO TRINIDAD (1942)

This strange and violent novel is hard to describe. It stands separate and distinct from Sender's preceding and following publications; yet, because of its symbolical depth, it has a certain elusive quality in common with them. It is an eerie and brutal tale, full of unleashed brutal instincts, callous degradations, and grotesque behavior. With the exception of the two protagonists, every person is some sort of a warped and animalistic criminal. The scene of this melodramatic novel is a penal colony in Central America, probably Guatemala. The action is restricted to a week or ten days; the time element is not important. Nightmares are of relatively short duration, no matter how endless they may appear.

Prieto Trinidad, overseer of a penal island off the Central American coast, marries an innocent city girl, Níña Lucha, and takes her to his island. He is killed on his wedding night before the marriage can be consummated, and his bride-widow is left to the mercy of a mob of monsters who see in her unprotected virginity the culmination of an ideal. The nightmare begins as various factions fight for possession of Níña Lucha. In this struggle various characters assume symbolic values and meanings, and react in accordance with that value.

Epitalamio del Prieto Trinidad literally teems with
characters. As can be imagined, the inmates of a penal island are not the most moral or lovable people in the world. We meet them the same time that Niña Lucha does, when they come to pay their condolences. As Zurdo, Rengo, Careto, Seisdedos, Cuate, Cinturita, Bocachula, Pito, and numerous others present themselves, we get a brief "case history" resumé of their respective crimes and previous history on the island. Murder is the predominate crime; lustful, brutal and unrepented murder.

Dario is the only trustworthy friend Niña has, but they are soon separated by the outbreak which engulfs the island and isolates it from the mainland. Dario is the school teacher for the children of the island. He is the only man there not against his will. He is the only one who realizes what the virginal Niña represents to the crazed eyes of these social lepers.

Events progress in a turbulent fashion. Conspiracies and counterconspiracies, drunken orgies and shocking brutalities pile up, one upon the other, until the reader is left fairly gasping for relief. This naturalistic dwelling upon gore and violence does not abate with the progress of the novel. The reader soon becomes immune to it, accepting it almost as casually as the criminals themselves.

Niña Lucha is the dream, the illusion, the ideal, for which all men strive. The convicts see only a sexual
fulfillment in her at first, but later, not realizing why nor even aware that they have changed, they see that she represents more than lustful gratification. The recognition of this fact, and their acceptance of it, gives a strange dignity to these debased and perverted monsters. It is the only shred of claim to manliness which is left them.

Dario is the Thinker. While all men about him go mad with desire for the Niña's pure body, he metaphysically ponders upon the hidden realities of life and existence. Just what life is all about, seems to be his big problem. He solves it when he recognizes that "La vida es un ideal en marcha. Un ideal en desarrollo, que nunca podrá ser cumplido, y que sin embargo se cumple en cada cuarto de segundo."  

Understanding the problem and being able to cope with it, however, are two different things. He needs Niña and she needs him. She is his ideal, yet he believes that the possession of an ideal of necessity kills it. One must integrate one's self to his ideal in order to maintain it. All these criminals have ideals, but they do not know the danger of the wrong approach.

Caretto, really a German-Jew and former Nazi, is the

1. Page 183. This philosophy extends to page 187 and is contrasted with the philosophy of Careto, pages 192-4.
only man on the island who does not have an ideal. Nifia means nothing to him except as a possible means for assuming control over the island. He is sexless, hence he is Nifia's greatest and most dangerous foe.

The clash and subsequent struggle between these people-symbols is interesting because of the many meanings that can be read into the resultant reactions. The story, though, which holds the symbolism together and provides a background for its presentation, is excitingly cruel in its realism, fascinatingly morbid. This mixture of detailed, earthy realism and soaring mysticism, of clinical naturalism and imaginative poetry, is unusual. One moment the author is describing in great detail (and with obvious relish) the rotting, unburied body of Trinidad (the Indians have carefully skinned him), recreating the stench, the sound of the dogs as they quarrel over his cadaver, the phosphorescent glow which surrounds his disintegrating head, etc.; the next moment we explore the lofty secrets of life and ideals. The changes are abrupt, but in the lush and steamy tropics where sudden changes and contrasts are blended together by the forces of nature, a lush style is strangely in keeping with the milieu.

Nothing is surprising in this novel. It is full of everything, from one extreme to another, with all the variations between. This cramming-together of material,
of kaleidoscopic scenes and events, sometimes obscures the thought. The symbolical value of certain people or their reactions becomes obscure in the general confusion which surrounds them. Reading gets tedious toward the end; the symbolism gives the impression of being too long-drawn out, thus losing much of its effectiveness.

Niña does not assume much stature as an individual, nor does Dario. They are mere pawns in the hands of the crazed convicts and in the hands of the author. They are overshadowed by the colorful characters which surround them and by the background against which they move. Niña does not leave the island at the end, although she has the opportunity. She finally realizes that her duty is to remain and try to help these men to find the lost road to their ideals.

Even for superficial value, Epitalamio del Prieto Trinidad is well worth reading, though somewhat difficult. Its vocabulary is more complex than is usual with Sender; the convicts speak a Mexican version of a highly idiomatic Spanish. In its brutality and in its relentless description of gross and inhuman men living together in an overpowering wilderness, this novel frequently reminds one of José Eustacio Ribera's La vorágine. Both are intrinsically poetic.  

2. For a comparison of this novel with King Lear, see Lionel Trilling’s review, The Nation, Apr. 21, 1943, page 603.
Sender's most universally acclaimed and most thoroughly enjoyable work is this heart-warming and profound Crónica del alba. It is more than a pleasant narration of an idyllic childhood spent in Aragón, and it is far more than a nostalgic remembrance of past happy days. It is a bitter protest against the futility and waste of war. Despite the predominate note of sustained happiness and joy of living, the novel can be more accurately considered a tragedy.

What gives the book this tragic quality is the brief preface which provides the device for this first-person relation. Pepe Garcés, a Spanish Loyalist, lies dying in a French concentration camp at Argelès. It is 1939, and only the possibility of success by the Spanish Republican forces keeps him alive. He continues hoping, - he must hope in order to live, but when the news of final defeat reaches him, he resigns himself to dying. Rather he wills his own death. Before dying, however, an inward compulsion which he cannot resist causes him to first write down all the recollections of his childhood. This re-creation of the happiest days of his life gives him the impetus to live for a few remaining weeks. When his work is done, he dies silently.

Crónica del alba, then, is the first-person narration
of the extremely happy and eventful tenth year in the life of Pepe Garcés. The scene of the story is Aragón, probably the same little village described in El lugar del hombre, and the time is approximately 1913. Pepe has just completed his tenth birthday and has discovered that the world about him affords exciting possibilities for adventure and for growing up. The series of childhood escapades which follow make for highly entertaining, adult reading.

Pepe's adventures are manifold, yet they are not exaggerated nor are they treated with the cloying sentimentality which is often the characteristic of a book of reminiscences. Sender understands the mind of a ten year old boy, and, more important, he respects the boy as an individual, as a man not yet grown, a person to whom secrecy of thought and motive is all important. Pepe, therefore, is at all times a completely credible and sympathetic youngster. His exploits never tax one's patience and he is too human to be merely a precocious lad.

Pepe's love for Valentina provides the emotion which governs and propels his young life. On the rooftop of his home, on the river-bank battle-ground, in the underground tunnel of an ancient castle, or in the hated classroom, it is his naïve love for Valentina which occupies his uppermost thoughts. He writes her poetry, sends her semaphore signals and proclaims himself "Señor del amor,
del saber y de las dominaciones\textsuperscript{1}; he sprinkles her with the blood of a sacrificed dove and performs all sorts of manly deeds to prove himself worthy of her adoration.

Sender's insight into the intricate workings of a young boy's mind is amazing in its clarity and infallibility. We do not have the impression that the author is an adult looking backward at childhood and interpreting all he sees with adult values. The world is distorted and full of wonderful possibilities to an eager and inquisitive ten-year-old. It is a world of magic and imagination, one where the past is not yet preterit and where the future is of little importance. It is a fantastic world, yet it is an incredibly real one because life then assumes the simplest forms, uncomplicated by the excessive trappings which are the result of the passage of years. It is a delicate and fragile world, difficult for a mature person to understand, let alone re-create as Sender has done here so successfully.

Childhood reminiscences almost inevitably entail a certain amount of autobiographical material, and \textit{Crónica del alba} is no exception. Sender's age and that of his protagonist are almost the same, varying in only a few months. Both are from the same part of Aragón. Both

rebelled against parental discipline, although Sender was more successful in his flight from home. Young Pepe is finally sent to a monastery school in Reus where he suffers stoically. Sender, at the same age, was sent to a similar school in the same city.

These, however, are obvious resemblences. A more interesting parallel and example of self plagiarism is in the character of Carrasco, mortal enemy of Pepe, and in the episode of the blind man whom Pepe aids. This knuckle-biting bully is described with the same name in Orden público eleven years previously, and the episode is the same, only more briefly drawn. The periodista of the earlier novel is quite frankly Sender, and this incident is caused by a visit of the author's mother to see him in jail. They both sit in silence and this memory, long forgotten, suddenly returns to Sender's mind, to make its reappearance a decade later.

In spite of the brevity of the introduction, it is as important as the material which follows. The bitter, unrelieved irony, the disillusion and despair and the futile death of Pepe are so graphically etched that they cannot be forgotten during the pleasant relations which

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swiftly follow. The contrast is a strong one, and this note of inescapable tragedy gives a poignant and haunting quality to the succeeding pages. The irony is all the more vivid when the security and stability of Pepe's youth is contrasted with the futility and hopelessness of his martyr's death, when the young boy's dreams are contrasted with the grown man's fate.

The inscription on the title page assumes greater importance after the novel has been read. Indeed, it contains the key to the enigma:

A los nómadas, antes de rasgar vuestras sábanas de lino y comerse vuestras terneras crudas en la plaza, les gusta recoger sus recuerdos para ponerlos a salvo de las represalias.

Like the nomads, Pepe returns to his childhood not in an attempt to flee from the present where all his ideals are dead, but to return to the time when they were newly born, when he was in the process of becoming a man. He wishes to isolate these memories from the rest of his life, to "ponerlos a salvo de las represalias," where their innate quality may remain undimmed and un tarnished by exterior changes. He tries to investigate the true values and meanings of life, when he believed in it, long before the world went mad and all was lost. Men without faith cannot hope to live, nor do they deserve to:

¿Qué va a decir el hombre sin fe? ¿Tú sabes lo que dicen en nuestra tierra cuando descalifican
a un hombre? No dicen "es un ladrón" ni "un criminal" aunque lo sean. Eso no tiene tanta importancia. Lo grave es si dicen: "es un 'sinsubstancia' o bien 'un dessubstanciado". En el hombre la substancia es la fe. Esa es toda la cuestion.3

Death, therefore, is the only dignified way out. An idealist must die for his ideals or he betrays himself.
The conquered must admit defeat and pay with their lives.
The theme of this novel is a variation of the problem presented in El lugar del hombre, namely: What is Man's role in society and in life? The answer is revealed in an ancient parchment discovered in the castle of Sancho Garcés, and which marks a definite change in young Pepe's life.
It gives it stability and purpose. He, the ideal man, should be a combination of Saint, Poet, and Hero; one should endeavor to attain love, courage and nobility.4 The irony of the situation, however, is that society invariably kills off anyone who attains any one of these qualities.
We leave Pepe, alone in his cell-like room wondering if he, too, will meet the same fate as all others who tried to attain the precepts recorded in the old manuscript.

Sender's original desire was to write a series of autobiographical novels interpreting the physical, political,

4. In the preface to Siete domingos rojos, Sender states that the ideal man should be as disinterested as St. Francis of Assis, as bold as Spartacus, and as able as Hegel and Newton. Saint-Hero-Sage, rather than Saint-Hero-Poet.
and spiritual life of Spain.\textsuperscript{5} The ambitious plan to publish one novel each year was never completed, although this novel, the first of the series tentatively entitled \textit{La primera jornada}, met with unreserved success and critical acclaim. It is stated that \textit{Crónica del alba} consists of only "los tres primeros cuadernos"\textsuperscript{6} of recollections, the implication being that more remain unedited. The closing line of the novel, "Eso vino mucho más tarde", also implies possibility of a continuation. That this series did not appear is probably due to the fact that the present book so admirably realized all the ideals and themes of the project that any further sequels were deemed unnecessary.

\textit{Crónica del alba} has also appeared in a very popular classroom edition which was edited by the present Mrs. Ramón Sender.\textsuperscript{7} The author recognizes this text as the definitive edition, he himself having authorized the necessary deletions. Comparison of the two texts reveals that the editing has been admirably done. No passages have been entirely deleted; all deletions are of short paragraphs, sentences, phrases, or merely single words.

\textsuperscript{6} Page 22 of 1942 edition, page 12 of 1946 edition
\textsuperscript{7} New York, F. S. Crofts & Co., 1946, edited with introduction, notes and vocabulary by Florence Hall.
The final form is more compact, more tightly-knit, and better integrated.

For one who purposely delays finishing a book because he wishes to prolong the pleasure of reading, the unedited edition of *Crónica del alba* is the superior. It is longer.
EL REY Y LA REINA (1949)

Sender's most recent important publication first appeared in English translation¹ and was later published in Mexico where it was the selection of the Book of the Month Club, the first time a Spanish-writing author had been so honored. It is a slight novel in comparison with the size of many of his other works, but its brevity by no means implies a lack of profundity. It relates a slow-moving story, a subtle tale of symbolic values and hidden meanings, a plot somewhat reminiscent of Mister Witt en el cantón, yet very much different.

The Duchess of Arlanza enjoys swimming nude in the basement swimming pool of the ducal palace. When Rómulo, the middle-aged gardener, arrives with a message, she allows the interview to be conducted without benefit of towel or other concealing garment. Her maid remonstrates with her, stating that Rómulo is a man. But the Duchess laughs lightly and says, "¿Rómulo un hombre?" The haughty arrogance of the Duchess, the utter contempt and lack of understanding she manifests in this scene prove to be the forces which cause her undoing. For Rómulo, for the first time in many years, is so astonished that for a moment he feels like someone else, for a brief instant he glimpses

¹. The King and the Queen, translated by Mary Low, New York, The Vanguard Press, 1948.
a forgotten dignity of his youth, and he is not content until he solves this enigma and discovers who and what this other self is.

The day that the Duchess shows her body to the gardener is the same day that the fascist rebellion breaks out against the Spanish Republic. She and her husband are active fascists and, when the duke is killed, she is forced to go into hiding in the spacious palace. Rómulo, the simple but puzzled servant, is now guardian and protector of the still arrogant, caste-conscious Duchess. El rey y la reina is the story of their ever-changing relationship to each other. Thrown into unavoidable contact, the conflict between them makes both realize and appreciate the fact that they are, above all else, a man and a woman, a King and a Queen, in the universe which surrounds them.

Like Mister Witt en el cantón, this is the story of an older man's emotional and spiritual reactions to a younger woman during a period of outward strife and duress. As this man progresses in his inward turmoil and seeks some sort of a truth, so does this outward battle (the siege of Cartagena in the former, the Civil War and siege of Madrid in the latter) proceed in intensity. Mr. Witt is defeated by both internal and external struggles and allows his wife to assume control of his destiny. His ideals have been proved false and he remains a lost and
pathetic man. Rómulo, however, is victor over both his battles. He attains supreme victory, regains his dignity as a man, and assumes the nobility which is inherent in courage and determination. His newly discovered and understood ideals save him from destruction. Whereas knowledge and civilization were responsible for the defeat of Mr. Witt, Rómulo achieves success because of the lack of these qualities: simplicity and elemental manhood are his two chief assets.

The symbolixm which allowed Mister Witt en el cantón to be read and interpreted from various levels also affords the same possibility in El rey y la reina. The present novel can be considered as a story of the sexual conflict between the Duchess and her gardener or merely as a realistic story, though somewhat melodramatic, of intrigue during the war; at the same time it is a philosophic presentation of life and a symbolic interpretation of the Spanish conflict. To be aware of all these gradations, one must read with the mind as well as with the emotions.

As Rómulo formulates his ideologies of life, the Duchess also grows in stature. While Rómulo elevates himself to a loftier and more spiritual plane of existence, the Duchess steadily comes down step-by-step to a more earthy and basic position. (Hidden on the fifth floor of the palace tower, she moves downward, one floor at a time).
When the two are at the same mutual level and can commune directly, when their souls respond and when the ideal state has been attained, then they both realize their destiny. But it is too late. The Duchess, comprehending the truth of Rómulo's illusion, dies because she is his ideal, his Queen. The realization of an ideal, says Sender in Epitalamio del Prieto Trinidad, necessarily entails its destruction. That is what happens here.

The ideal that Rómulo seeks is contained in the book Esiemplos de las Monarquías which the Duchess idly reads during her enforced incarceration. The following passage states the aim of man's place and role in life ('el lugar del hombre') much as the ancient document of Sancho Garcés did in Crónica del alba:

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El universo es una inmensa monarquía. Los pobladores del universo estamos sometidos fatalmente a ella y somos a nuestra vez reyes de la realidad que nos rodea. Todo lo que el hombre ha soñado, ambicionado, creado, lo ha sido por esta monarquía del hombre - rey - y la ilusión, su propia ilusión - reina -. El hombre y la ambición ideal que lleva consigo son el rey y la reina del universo.2
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The pivotal evolution of each character, the progress of the siege and the resultant excitement of the bombings and air-raids give an air of irreality, of fantasy, to the story of the Duchess and her gardener. The pace is accelerated toward the end, and a note of the grotesque

2. Page 220.
makes its appearance. "Elena", a misshapen dwarf, is the symbol of fascism. Forgotten in the basements of the palace, he fights rats almost as large as himself and rapidly deteriorates into insanity. The ghostly legend of a carefully sealed room repeats itself in the tragic last words of the dying Duchess. Puppets, when manipulated by Rómulo, seem to tell truths and make observations independent of their manipulator. Even when they lie lifeless on the floor, they have the appearance of hidden meanings. Though silent, both the Duchess and Rómulo can hear their shrill voices. Even the pictures and the tapestries on the walls have a curious, knowing quality.

*El rey y la reina* is a smooth and easily read novel, well constructed and ably written. Yet it lacks something, humor for one thing, that makes a good novel excellent rather than just very good.
Conclusion

Most of the outstanding members of the Generation of 1898 were still active public figures during Ramón Sender's literary apprenticeship. Unamuno, Azorín, Baroja, Ortega y Gasset, Benavente, and Valle-Inclán were still busily publishing plays, novels, and essays, uniting at popular spots for tertulias and conspiring against the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera. It was a period of great intellectual activity. These men were not content to let their country go the way of most dictatorships. They plotted and organized Republican groups, wrote essays and editorials, were exiled time and time again. But they always continued their conspiracies either at home or from abroad. A hatred for the degenerate Monarchy-Dictatorship, and a desire for a Republican government kept them intellectually stimulated and productive.

When Sender assumed his position with the newspaper El Sol in 1924, it was inevitable that he should incorporate himself with this group of dissatisfied patriot-thinkers. He had already engaged in conspiracies against the dictatorship and had suffered at its hands.

The generation succeeding that of 1898 could not be expected to have the same attitude toward life, nor the same approach to the solution of the problems concerning Spain. The Generation of 1898 had tried practically
everything; countless volumes of treatises and essays had been printed, thousands of speeches had been delivered, philosophies had been formulated, and numerous organizations had been formed. Each approach was different, of course, but each acceded in one respect: seriously and sincerely each desired an improvement in Spain. Yet, in the 1920's Spain was no better off than she had been a quarter of a century before. And pamphlets were still being printed; speeches were still being made.

The young writers of Sender's generation continually sought different ways to express themselves; ways that had not been tried previously. Restless under the constantly agitated and repressive milieu of the dictatorship, they tried to break with all that surrounded them. They looked abroad for inspiration, for some sort of a guiding philosophy, but not toward France. France was in practically the same sterile condition as Spain, and, besides, had disappointed the preceding generation who had sought her out for spiritual aid.

This period of unrest and uneasiness was not solely restricted to Spain. Russia and Germany were also in a revolutionary state of great agitation, but they had formulated a philosophy and a guiding principle that evidently worked successfully. It was inevitable, therefore, that this younger school of Spanish writers should
turn their eyes toward them for inspiration and leadership. These young Spaniards became extremists, political radicals and liberalists. The war in Morocco and the disaster of Annual in 1921 had channeled this general discontent into an ever-increasing feeling of outrage against the government. The books published during these years reflect the desperate state of the public's mind:

Spain is probably the country in which most books have been published about the Russian Revolution and post-war Germany. The younger Spanish writers, like the more advanced of the working classes, have devoured this literature feverishly.1

As a person grows older, however, the radical and impassioned tendencies of his youth are inclined to be replaced by the more clearly thought out, less impetuous decisions of maturity. Such is the case with this generation and with Sender. Indeed, Sender is an admirable example of the cooling-off of a radical, the simmering-down of a hot-blooded youth to a more understanding and meditative adult. The end result of this mixture of ideal-seeking tempered with the passage of years is, however, genuinely Spanish, and as typical of the attitude of its day as was the generation of 1898 of the preceding period.

Let us consider Sender, then, as a man keenly

1. The Spanish Omnibus, Note, page xxiii.
sensitive and responsive to the world about him, a man who continually reflects the life of that world in his own life and literature. The bitterness and helpless rage so evident in Imán and Orden público finds a less restrained outlet in Siete domingos rojos, Madrid-Moscú, Carta de Moscú sobre el amor and La noche de las cien cabezas. It is a negative release in which he condemns all that is bourgeois without providing or even suggesting a remedy for the evils of society. Extremely unhappy under the dictatorship, disappointed with the Republic (Viaje a la aldea del crimen), yet sincerely desirous of its success, Sender sees salvation for Spain only in the adoption of a communistic life and government. The books of this period reflect his admiration for Russia and the Russian people. It is the attitude of a disappointed and disillusioned young man, one seeking frantic escape to a dream world in which he feels compelled to believe. The Spanish Civil War came at a crucial moment in his life and renewed his faith in the democratic form of government. Communism had lost much of the charms he had seen in it only a few years previously. He did not deny its merits, but he saw them in a new light. Contraataque is almost as much a story of the struggle within Sender as it is the struggle within Spain. Once again he was fighting, but so differently from in Morocco. Instinctively he sought to defend the Republic, for he had
aided in its foundation and had fought to give it being. As he fought for his ideal, so did it become more tangible. Communists are treated casually in this narration. They are ordinary men, Loyalists fighting on his side; and he considers himself very much like them. Yet he has changed. They are not the unbelieveable paragons of ideal life that he had pictured in his earlier works. They have come down to earth, - and so has Sender.

As the war progressed beyond the time covered in *Contraataque*, Sender grew more antagonistic toward Russia, toward communism and its doctrines, toward all they stood for. When the war ended, so did Sender's affiliation with communism. He soon became one of its outspoken adversaries and has remained so to the present day, recanting all former allegiances.²

The fall of the Spanish Republic marked an end, rather a dividing line, to a part of every Spaniard's life, and created a new generation: the Generation of 1936.³ With Sender it initiated a period of more contemplative reasoning, and particularly of mysticism. In *Proverbio de la muerte*, *El lugar del hombre*, *Crónica del alba*, *Epitalamio del Prieto Trinidad*, and *El rey y la reina*, we see Sender weighing the values of life - seeking

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² See *The New Leader*, 1947, 48, 49. Exact date or other information not available.
them out slowly and inspecting their intrinsic merits, testing them with the touchstone of reality as he has seen and lived it. His literary career has run the gamut from youthful protest to stoic acceptance, which does not, however, imply resignation.

Ideas have always been more important to Sender than style, polish, and the more formalized precepts of fine writing. This, according to Angel del Río, is what makes his novels so successful outside of Spain: they are more valuable for their substance than for their form and lose nothing in translation. This is somewhat misleading, for Sender is not as unaware of style as Señor del Río would have us believe.

It is difficult to select one or two adjectives which would apply to Sender's style. It is protean, continually changing and assuming new aspects. His writing is at once

3. Homero Seris ('The Spanish Generation of 1936', Books Abroad, Autumn, 1945, Vol. XIX, pages 336-340) presents an interesting case for this date as the terminus ab quo of the generation rather than 1931, the time of the second Republic. Using the seven requisites essential for a literary generation (as described by Peterson and listed by Pedro Salinas in Literatura Española, Siglo XX, Mexico, 1941, pages 48-57), Seris concludes that the Spanish literary generation of 1936 is a living reality. Other members of this group, which includes Sender, are García Lorca, Rafael Alberti, Luis Cernuda, Pedro Salinas, Jorge Guillén, Dámaso Alonso, Benjamín Jarnés, Jacinto Grau (1), Alejandro Casona, and José Bergamín. Benjamín Jarnés is the only other novelist of the group.

realistic and mystically imaginative, reflecting a knowledge of people and life not gained from books. In general, his vocabulary and syntax are extremely simple and his presentation is direct and uninvolved. Yet in his more recent novels, especially Proverbio de la muerte, he shows a penchant for obscurity of thought, or for excessively involved sentences in which his purpose is not quite clear. One frequently has the impression that this obscurity is intentional. Symbolism demands a certain amount of obliqueness of thought. The loose construction, so typical of Crónica del alba, is his characteristic form, however, and affords a facility of expression and a suppleness of usage. It is an animated and exceedingly simple medium, one which Baroja would call "porous".

The word "poetic" can be accurately applied to Sender's style most of the time, yet it should not imply the mere

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5. Sender explains this curious mixture of realism and mysticism which is so inherent to Spain in Proclamación de la sonrisa ("Lo rojo y lo negro", pages 106-09): El realismo y el misticismo juntos - naturalmente exentos de superstición - son en España los dos elementos que unidos y fusionados han de expresar el nuevo pensamiento y han de trazar la organización de la nueva sociedad. Eso se está advirtiendo ya en la nueva literatura. Por la parte que a mi me toca como autor, debo confesar que no veo la manera de eludir esa tendencia que es un compromiso biológico, un deber contraído con la Naturaleza. Por ese deber y ese compromiso es por donde yo me identifico con mi tierra, siento mi españolidad, no de un modo nacionalista ni siquiera de trascendencia o de intención política, sino como un simple fenómeno etnográfico.
rhyming of words or the arrangement of syllabic groups.\footnote{PMIA, April, 1950, Vol. LXV, "Research in Progress" lists "Poetic symbolism in the works of Ramón Sender"; 5099a, by F. M. Kercheville, University of New Mexico.} The poetic element in Sender's various works has been stressed repeatedly in the preceding pages and stems more from the author's attitude toward what he is saying, his vision, rather than from the material itself. It is curious, this poetic element, because it crops up, sometimes unexpectedly and incongruously, in the most surprising places: amidst the strong naturalistic passages of Imán, in the realistic, melodramatic narration of Siete domingos rojos, and in the factual journalistic reporting of Viaje a la aldea del crimen.

The use of a recurrent estribillo is one of his most popular devices. It may be a song, a few lines of poetry, a haunting personal preoccupation, the call of a bird, or the sound of the wind. Whatever the choice, it is used as a thematic undertone employed to give unity and dramatic intensity to various scenes. It is the recurrent note by which certain characters are identified, by which subtle emotions are understood. This device is particularly noticeable in Sender's symbolical novels, especially Epitalamio del Prieto Trinidad, where a replete operatic treatment is given to an extensive and varied assortment of estribillos. As this symbolic novel draws to a close
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(the island is purged by fire and cleansed by a rain), so also do all these haunting refrains. They are blended together into a crescendo which admirably gathers up all the many themes previously introduced and brings the symbolism to a convincing denouement, strictly in accordance with the moral precepts stressed.

It is usually the beauty of the thought expressed, the hidden truth revealed, that is intrinsically poetic. The following examples are typical of the many illuminating observations which are characteristic of Sender's more serious novels. Being essentially poetic, these passages readily adjust themselves to easily recognized poetic forms:

He dado mi sangre a esta tierra,
  mis risas, mis soledades y mis frenesíes.
Nadie ha podido darle más que yo
  y nadie le pedirá menos.
Nada deseó
sino el lugar donde poner mis pies para andar,
y nada espero
más que la tierra que me ha de cubrir.
Debajo de ella tengo a mi madre.
En ella estoy yo.
En el aire inconcreto,
en el espacio indeterminado encima de la tierra
están mis hijos, mi mujer, mis poemas y mis sueños.
Yo represento a España.
En su grandeza y en su miseria,
En lo inefable y en lo concreto,
La roca, el pájaro y la luz de España hablarán en mí,
como hablan ya en los fusiles de los milicianos
y en la sangre de los trabajadores
asesinados ayer tarde.

(Contraataque, see page 71, this thesis).
Mientras se viaja
se vive un paréntesis neutro de la vida.
No se está aquí
ni allí.
Se ha estado
y se va a estar.
Se ha sido
y se va a ser.

(El verbo se hizo sexo, page 111).

Nuestra alegría
es una alegría de dioses,
nuestro dolor
un dolor de dioses,
nuestros sueños
son los sueños mismos de Dios.
Y, sin embargo,
estamos condenados a vivir como cerdos.

( Epitalamio del Prieto Trinidad, page 303).

La vida es un ideal en marcha.
Podemos dormir o velar,
andar o dejarnos caer en la playa,
reír o llorar,
tener la sensación de ser los más felices
o los más desgraciados.
Es lo mismo.
Ese ideal en marcha sigue su desarrollo
sin pausa y sin prisa,
y dentro de él estamos todos.

( Epitalamio del Prieto Trinidad, page 134).

Comparison between one of Sender's recent symbolical novels and an essay or article of the same approximate date would reveal that the style of the latter is the more lucid and direct. The impression that Sender writes best when space is limited becomes more vivid upon further comparison with other articles.

7. Note the similarity between these verse forms and those in Mexica-yotl, or compare with the poem quoted on page 102 of this thesis.
Pío Baroja is the Spanish author who has most influenced our author, and a detailed comparison of the works of these two men would prove very interesting. Various critics have noted a similarity between Sender and Pérez Galdós and between Sender and Blasco Ibáñez. That there are certain resemblances is undeniable, but the direct and most important source of influence is Baroja.

Both authors are extremely autobiographical, despite Sender's protests to the contrary. Although each has written historical novels, they prefer to write about their own period, depending upon their individual experiences rather than upon literary research. Both are more interested in describing the present than in re-creating the past. Each draws upon his personal reminiscences, his childhood or his experiences in life, to add depth and vitality to his narrations. Silvestre Paradox is as much Baroja as the young Pepe Garcés or the man Sáila is Sender. It is impossible for an author to extricate himself entirely from himself. With Sender and Baroja, as with Cervantes, it is a matter of exploitation rather than extrication.

Pío Baroja's novels are characterized by the innumerable amount of lesser characters, usually of the lower classes, who swarm through them and who assume temporary importance for a fleeting moment, as they do in life, and
then move on. Many of Sender's novels have this same formless quality, this incoherence of reality. Each author possesses a sympathy for these oppressed wanderers, a compassion for their futility, and a sincere preoccupation with their future. Both excel in brief thumb-nail sketches, vignettes of characterizations, that give an ambient of actual life to so many of their works. Both novelists are highly costumbristic and have an irrepressible anecdotal tendency.

Sender and Baroja are both interested in economic and political questions, finding communists and radicals a fascinating class to study and describe. Whereas Baroja inclines to extreme pessimism and occasional outbursts of romanticism which accentuate its gloom, Sender remains optimistic and hopeful. It is interesting to compare Baroja's trilogy *La lucha por la vida* with Sender's *Los términos del presagio*. The former represents Baroja's views concerning the dreams, the ideals, the desperation of the poor and the defeated in life. These three novels are quite frankly realistic and exceedingly pessimistic in tone; they are a penetrating criticism of a society that allows such vicious conditions to exist. Sender's trilogy, though almost equally as depressive and ominous,

8. *Mala hierba, La busca, Aurora roja*, all 1904.
has a saving optimism that entails hope for salvation. Baroja's trilogy was written as such; Sender's three novels became a trilogy only because time and events unified them. *Aurora roja* and *Siete domingos rojos* (though not a part of the trilogy) afford an interesting study in contrasts; both describe anarchist and syndicalist activity in Madrid during a crucial period, and both are very typical of their author's differences in outlook and treatment.

Both Sender and Baroja insist on a blending of realism with idealism as an indispensable feature of successful novel writing; both are advocates of a mixture of the genres, presenting a series of tableaux at one fantastic, humorous, appealing, and repellant; both are inclined to intrude in their narration and reveal themselves as the chroniclers of morals and of social and political conditions rather than as literal and precise historians. Both are fond of the grotesque and the macabre, frequently inserting them into passages of the utmost realism. Both are anticlericalists.

Baroja, then, is Sender's chief and most direct influence. This filiation is very apparent in our author's first novels, but his most recent books are quite unlike anything Baroja has written. Certain touches, however, cannot be eliminated.
It is always interesting to compare an author's aesthetic goal with his actual achievements. The following quotations are important because they illustrate Sender's philosophy toward his art. He seldom takes time out to explain himself or to tell what his attitude toward writing is. These isolated revelations, valuable because of their scarcity, are therefore doubly rewarding:

...no me gustan los eufemismos cuando se pueden decir las cosas por su nombre. Y todas se pueden decir directamente cuando no se trata de dar una impresión procaz con rodeos y parábolas.

(Carta de Moscú sobre el amor, page 6).

Siempre he escrito por cierta vaga necesidad de darme íntegra y despreocupadamente a los demás y no por esconderme.

(Contraataque, page 302).

Para hacer novela y, sobre todo, para continuar la tradición novelesca del realismo español, hay que desnudarse. Quedarse en pura y simple hombría. Así se quedó Rojas al hacer La Celestina y Cervantes al escribir el Quijote. Y Rabelais y Voltaire, y también Hugo y Dostoyewsky en sus mejores libros novelescos. Limitándose a nuestro campo, España, esa desnuda hombría es la de Quevedo en todas sus obras y es la que en Teresa de Jesús llega, en una exaltación sublime, a elevar la materia nuestra hasta el Dios absoluto por los caminos de un realismo áspero.

(Proclamation de la sonrisa, page 111).

It seems to me that the pre-eminent value of the novel is analysis; and with peoples, just as with individuals, analysis is an act of maturity. The novel demands points of departure, elements validated by a network of commonly accepted concepts of a poetic nature. That is to say, it needs an already established imagery. The relation of the earth to man, of man to destiny, is full of incidents in which new forms become apparent little by little. In this process the language of the metropolis
gradually takes on its proper accent, its flourishes, its colors, and in it society finds its expression as it unfolds and grows in love, in religion, in the thousand and one forms of the struggle against the Nature which is forest and mountain, or the thinking nature of mankind. In this mythology facts have a place of honor, and all beings and all familiar things an active part: the horse in the Argentine, the cactus in Mexico, the native flute in Peru. When such a mythology is an active force, it is very easy to generate the novel; and it is because of the novel that the mythology achieves its complexity and draws forth, so to speak, judgments of values.

(A Rhapsodic Age?, Partisan Review).

The theater is an art of synthesis (not of analysis, nor of gloss or rhapsody) and I believe that women cannot serve here because all their capacity of synthesis is concentrated in the exercise or hope of maternity.

("Women Playwrights", Books Abroad).

As we all know a poet does not need to be understood to be loved. It is enough if his images are incorporated into the common repertory on that plane of ineffable emotion where reason does not necessarily have to enter.

("Lorca; The Poet and his People", N.Y. Times).

No tengo intenciones ni por lo tanto tengo tampoco ese broche con el que cierran todo análisis los llamados "hombres políticos": conclusiones. Dicho pronto y mal: no era ni soy "escritor de partido".

(Orden público, Preface, Mexico, page 10).

El único placer de escribir está en satisfacer hasta el fin la necesidad de expresión que sentimos y que no podemos saciar en una visita a los parientes, en un diálogo amistoso o airado, en la intimidad del amor ni en los artículos de prensa.

(Prologue to Proverbio de la muerte).

Sender is an Aragonese. This entails an important fact which should never be underestimated in the evaluation of a Spaniard. The characteristics of each province are
peculiarly distinct from those of any other. The Aragonese are in some respects the noblest Spanish breed. Stubbornness is their dominant trait, but they usually know how to apply this obstinacy to a righteous purpose. They are the Spartans of their country in laconicism, in simplicity, and in endurance. The writers from this province (Gracián, the Argensola brothers, Joaquín Costa) are tersely vigorous and stoically virtuous, and lack the verbosity so characteristic of the Spaniard in general. Sender's fierce love for the earth and for the men who gain their livelihood from it is explained by the fact that he considers himself a peasant and associates himself with other men of the soil. He cannot escape this heritage.

At an early age Sender was inducted into the Spanish army and sent to Morocco, where he witnessed the ruthless carnage of war and the brutal massacre of his fellow soldiers. He was still but a youth and this experience so early in his adult life could very easily have been the reason that, from the very first, he has been intensely aware of, and preoccupied with his fellow men. Imán is a testament to this fact. He has never hesitated to use his talents as a writer to lend voice to the mass of humanity

which surrounds him. He has not always achieved success, but he has always written with sincerity of purpose.

Mr. David Lord, critic and personal friend of the author, has been able to appreciate this quality and evaluate it with a discerning insight:

Sender is a true solitary, a man who stands alone; but he is also a leader, a spokesman for the inarticulate masses. The instinctive merging of his viewpoint with the collective viewpoint is definite proof that what I have called the "common touch" is really the mainspring of his genius.

If the salient meaning of our time is the union of collective world and individual world, Sender has accomplished this transition to a far greater extent than most writers of the day. Through him the people have come alive; the mass has found its voice. The integration of the individual with the collective has taken place on a plane of high intellectual attainment.10

Sender himself is aware of this quality. His first book written in exile, Proverbio de la muerte, contains the following passage in its prologue:

Hasta ahora mis libros enlazan con el hombre más o menos sólidamente, al margen de ese monto de la vida diaria que lo limita y lo condiciona. Podría decirse que enlazan un poco "bajo mano" o aunque esto parece presuntuoso, "a espaldas de la sociedad". De eso yo no tengo la culpa. Debe haber algo mal organizado, algo fundamental que no marcha. Mi "hombria sociable", mi instinto de lo colectivo, son sanos. En ese desacuerdo, en ese entenderse "bajo mano", escritor y lector, está por hoy el hecho que nos hace necesarios a los escritores; quizá nuestra razón de ser.

Perhaps it is this feeling which causes Angel

Samblancat to exclaim: "Leyendo a Sender, siempre se tiene la sensación de que se le tocan la vida las entrañas."  

André Malraux and Ralph Bates, excellent novelists and men of action (both have fought in several wars and were on the side of the Loyalists during the Civil War), have praised Sender as being the most outstanding of the contemporary Spanish novelists. Hemingway has voiced similar praise for Sender, but he cannot be included here. Sender from Spain, Malraux from France, and Bates from England, all have something in common beside the external similarity of their lives and their mutual love for Spain. Each is deeply conscious of the social evils of the day, and each shows a serious interest toward his fellow man in his long and painful upward struggle. Each author has tried to determine and define man's role in society and in relation to other men, of man's pursuit of an ever-elusive ideal. This literary preoccupation is peculiarly appropriate to the thoughtful 1930's.

Sender's Imán, El lugar del hombre, Epitalamio del Prieto Trinidad, Crónica del alba, and El rey y la reina are various treatments of the same theme, best expressed

in *El lugar del hombre.* Ralph Bates, in *Lean Men, The Olive Field, The Fields of Paradise,* endeavors to solve the same problem: man in futile conflict with surrounding society. His approach is, as is to be expected, quite different, and his conclusions differ from those of Sender. André Malraux prefers a more action-filled, yet philosophical, approach to the problem, and his men are shown in continuous battle for a place in their society. *La condition humaine (Man's Fate)* and *L'espoir (Man's Hope),* with their insistence upon *la dignité humaine des hommes,* are intensely written novels of men living in the presence of death, fighting for some ever-changing goal. It is interesting to note that the Manuel of Malraux's *L'espoir* was based on the character of Sender; the two authors were friends during the war.

Each of these authors, so much alike yet so different, has succeeded to some varying degree in the search for a satisfactory solution to this provocative problem. But not content with one attempt, they have returned to the same theme again and again. It is this preoccupation with

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12. Professor Dorothy Penn of Mary Baldwin College has recently completed an article, to appear in a future edition of *Hispania,* in which she discusses one of the manifestations of this theme in six of Sender's works since 1937. She limits herself to a discussion of the "message" of these works, which she terms "the worthwhileness of sacrifice." This constitutes a great part of Sender's philosophy.
an ever-escaping truth, with an extremely important precept for the success of contemporary society, that elevates each author in his respective nation to a position above that of his fellow writers who have not yet assumed the responsibilities inherent in serious writing.
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