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## The travel writer in disguise: *Ali Bey* and the construction of a national Hispano-Arabic discourse (1800 – present)

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### ABSTRACT

Between 1803 and 1818, the Catalan entrepreneur Domingo Badía y Leblich (1767–1818) toured North Africa and the Middle East disguised as a certain ‘Ali Bey’, an Abbasid prince from Aleppo whose alibi for his faulty Arabic was his long-term residence in Europe. Billed as a scientific exploration, Ali Bey’s journey was commissioned by Carlos IV’s Prime Minister, Manuel Godoy, who viewed Badía as an agent of Spanish colonialism. The memoirs in which Badía recounts the details of his journey, plagued by elements of ambiguity and hyperbole, have sparked interest at telling historical junctures while vexing those who seek clear, unassailable meanings. The scientific merits of Badía’s account notwithstanding, the lure of his text over the past 150 years, from Ramón Mesonero Romanos, Antonio Cánovas del Castillo, Joaquín Costas and Benito Pérez Galdós in the nineteenth and early twentieth century to (more recently) Juan Goytisolo, among others, derives less from the political realities of Badía’s day and more from the discursive construction of Ali Bey as a tool for reflecting on Hispano-Arabic political relations and on the Hispano-Arabic foundations of Spanish national identity.

**KEYWORDS** Orientalist travel writing; Domingo Badía; Ali Bey; Hispano-Arabism

The appearance of Juan Goytisolo’s essay ‘Los viajes de Ali Bey’ (‘Ali Bey’s Travels’) in *Crónicas sarracinas* in 1981 and its inclusion as the prologue to the 1982 edition of Domingo Badía y Leblich’s *Viajes por Marruecos, Trípoli, Grecia y Egipto* (1803–1807)<sup>1</sup> mark a fundamental crossroads on multiple planes of Spanish cultural history.<sup>2</sup> On the personal level, the project gave the novelist the opportunity to exercise his personal skills as an essayist by reflecting on travel writing, a genre that Goytisolo himself had cultivated at a formative stage in his career and that served to shape his output as a novelist, essayist and public intellectual. As discussed below, travel writing links directly to Goytisolo’s pursuit of the conditions – long-term residence in Morocco, command and knowledge of Arabic language and culture – that

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would facilitate his becoming one of Spain's leading public spokespersons for matters pertaining to the Maghreb, Arabic cultures, and Islam. These texts reflect a desire that is shared widely by travel writers to make the foreign intelligible by constructing bridges back home, bridges that for Goytisolo hold special meaning given the Spain's *Andalusí* heritage and subsequently entangled relations with its neighbours to the south. The traveller's narrative commonly represents an epistemological model for addressing many of the questions that had already come to dominate Goytisolo's thinking by 1981: identity, alterity, borders, and intercultural relations in today's world. For Goytisolo, it is also an explicitly educational model, one designed to shape new social attitudes regarding Spain's sense of its *self vis-à-vis* its quintessential *other*: the Arab (*Andalusí* or Morisco) that endures within us and, concurrently, the Arab who lives just beyond our border.

If we step back to consider Goytisolo's 1981 essay within a broader cultural and theoretical framework we should be able to perceive some of the far-reaching implications of an important historical phenomenon. Editorial and media data point to a significant spike in interest among Spaniards for the story of the 'Catalan adventurer' (Otazu 2017) subsequent to Goytisolo's 1981 essay. The success of Goytisolo's own prologued edition of 1982 is reinforced by reprints in 1984 and 1994. The philologist-Arabist-diplomat Santiago Barberá Fraguas brought out a uniquely valuable critical edition of Badía's Moroccan diaries in 1984, and that edition was reprinted in 1997, one year following the first mass-market publication in Spain of Badía's entire *Viajes por África y Asia* (Badía y Lebllich 1984). In 2012, Roger Mimó published a new complete edition of Badía's diaries, replete with full-scale maps and colour plates that the editor created after retracing Badía's steps over a 10-year period (Badía y Lebllich 2012). While others (McGaha 1996; García Valdés and McGaha in Badía y Lebllich 1999; López García in Badía y Lebllich 2010) have laboured to bring out further writings by Badía (Badía y Lebllich 1996, 1999, 2010), Ramón Mayrata published the first edition of his historical novel, *Alí Bey, el Abasí*, in 1995, one year prior to the exhibit 'Ali Bey, un peregrí català per terres de l'Islam' ('Ali Bey, a Catalan pilgrim in Islamic lands') organised by Barcelona's Museo Etnológico, and the novel was reprinted six year later (Mayrata 1995; Delgado 2016). More recently, the Moroccan director Souheil Ben Barka has begun filming 'Le songe du caliphe' ('The Caliph's Dream') a movie based on Badía's life (Otazu 2017). This flurry of activity stands in stark contrast to the previously checkered history of interest in a topic that, over the past two centuries, has sparked interest sporadically among Spanish intellectuals and always at telling historical junctures: around the time of Spain's *Hispano-Moroccan War* (1859–60), for instance, and in conjunction with the seemingly interminable *Rif Wars* (1893–94, 1909–10 and 1920–25).

The various strategies adopted today to market Badía's incursion into what has been, for many Spaniards, something of a recondite *heart of darkness* tend

to blend fact and fantasy, history and fiction, a construct that is nurtured by elements of enigma and adventure inherent in the profile of the traveller himself, such as it has been constructed and leveraged over time.<sup>3</sup> The enterprising Catalan toured North Africa and the Middle East with support from Spain's Prime Minister, Manuel Godoy, purportedly to satisfy Godoy's (and Badía's?) colonialist ambitions by opening Africa up to Spanish trade and influence. As Ali Bey, Badía is commonly showcased as Spain's predecessor to Richard Burton (Burton was familiar with Badía's writings) and even T.E. Lawrence (another subject of Juan Goytisolo's interest). Like Burton, Badía travelled under the guise of a turban and haik, a pseudonym – Ali Bey el-Abassi – and false genealogy, claiming to be an Abbasid prince from Aleppo, descendant of the Prophet, whose long-term residence in Europe was his alibi for his faulty Arabic. Like Burton and a host of similar travellers who set out to explore Africa in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries,<sup>4</sup> Badía undertook his 'adventure' *because he could*, a fact that bears relating to the social, economic, and political junctures at which Spaniards' interest in Ali Bey spikes. These are moments in which the *possibilities* of or potential for redefining Spain's relationship with Arabic culture, especially with Morocco, and with Spain's own *Andalusí* cultural heritage acquire renewed meaning and, for some, a renewed degree of urgency. They are also moments of heated public debate over how and why to redefine that relationship, how to rethink (as mentioned) Spain's sense of its self vis-à-vis its *other*. Given the slippage commonly practiced today between the meanings of *traveler* and *migrant*, two related albeit distinct cultural signifiers,<sup>5</sup> it may also be the case that the image of Ali Bey, strategically hybridified in Spain's collective imagination, has something to do with our mistrust, in this age of mass displacement, of 'the very concepts of homogenous national cultures' as a basis for cultural comparativism (Bhabha 5; see also Appadurai 1990; Hannerz 1996).

Hence, the story that we turn to now, of the enigmatic adventurer's reception in Spain, has to do less with the historical truths that have eluded many scholars and politicians over time than with the ways in which Ali Bey has tested our conventional understandings of borders, our sense of cultural homogeneity and our faith in preexisting power dynamics on a transnational plane. This story has to do with an Ali Bey transformed into a roving and highly ideologized modifier of a national *Andalusí* (*Hispano-Arabic*) legacy, of Hispano-Moroccan cultural and political relations, and ultimately of interculturalism in and of itself as both concept and practice.

### Goytisolo's 'new' Ali Bey

As indicated, Juan Goytisolo's edition of Badía's *Viajes* is significant for the renewed attention to Badía that it foreshadows in Spain and for the fact that it is the first to be prologued by a fellow travel writer. Goytisolo

approaches the problem of Ali Bey, in fact, with the tools and perspective of a novelist who for roughly 30 years had processed in his own fiction many of the themes he encountered in Badía's travel memoirs. The twists and turns of Goytisolo's rhetorical posturing are crucial in this regard. Although he focuses initially on the phases of Badía's journey and on the places and people he encountered, his ultimate goal is to move us from the object of Badía's gaze to the intimate realities that are enmeshed in the gaze itself. In the end, Goytisolo privileges an apparent processual or transformative pilgrimage in the most intimate sense, suggesting that Badía's diary has more to do with the self than with the space and culture he moves in.

A brief overview will serve to elucidate these assertions. Goytisolo contextualises his analysis with personal reflections that are of a historical nature and that are intended to condition the reader to appreciate what Goytisolo most values in Badía: his evolution toward sincerity and toward the ability to transcend his own cultural boundaries. He sets these qualities off against traits that he considers to be endemic in Spain: a certain parochialism of intellectual outlook and a general disregard for honest and intimate self-reflection. Regarding the former, he claims that the spirit of discovery died with the last of Spain's seventeenth century *chroniclers*, and that the dearth of Spanish scholarship concerning foreign literatures and cultures has forced his compatriots to access the world beyond their borders vicariously, in translation and through foreign sources. As to the latter, Goytisolo describes Spain's contribution to memoir writing as, on the whole, 'amnesic, opportunistic and self-aggrandizing' ('desmemoriado, oportunista y autojustificativo'; Goytisolo in Badía y Leblach 1982, XVII), claiming that his compatriots are generally 'uncomfortable' with the degree of sincere self-exposure that is second-nature to autobiographers from other cultures. By all appearances, Goytisolo's intentions are to resurrect the memory of Badía in relation to these two ideas: exploration and adventure, on the one hand; introspective memoir writing on the other. No surprise that the invitation to prologue the 1982 edition of Badía's *Viajes* should appeal to an expat and self-reflective novelist who treats writing as an inherently processual exercise.

Nor should it come as a surprise that Goytisolo's portrayal of Badía should seem so self-interested, inflected as it is by the novelist's sense of his mission as a writer. This is made clear as he charts Badía's progression from deception and disguise toward the very sincerity of self-expression, enlightenment and personal fulfilment that Goytisolo finds woefully lacking in Spanish literature. In doing so he highlights particulars of style and content, while identifying what he considers to be a singularly important moment in the traveller's biography. According to Goytisolo, Badía's departure from Morocco for the Middle East (13 October 1805) coincides with a definitive break in his correspondence with Manuel Godoy, the Spanish Prime Minister who organised the financial support Badía needed to prepare for his trip – schooling in the

Arabic language and culture in Paris and London – and to execute it. Goytisolo embroiders his representation of this pivotal juncture with telling rhetorical flair, imagining Badía as ‘laughing privately at his duped and generous protector’s gullibility’ (‘[riéndose] interiormente de las buenas tragaderas de su burlado y generoso protector’; Goytisolo in Badía y Leblich 1982, XVII). He leads us to believe that by leaving Morocco, Badía abandons as well his commitment to the covert imperialist pretenses for his journey.

While marking Badía’s retreat from politics, Goytisolo construes this moment as signalling the start of Badía’s departure from disguise and progress toward self-discovery through travel. The prologist conveys this idea rhetorically through a strategic shift in his field of interest. The ‘memory lapses and omissions’ (‘olvidos y blancos’) that he highlights initially as signs of ‘highly unreliable’ Badía yield eventually to the ‘delicate and complex’ rhetorical challenges of a travel writer aiming to reconcile the dual pull of his split self. We follow the elusive *Domingo Badía*, ‘who remains within the spectrum of fiction as he writes about his feats and adventures’ (‘[que] mantiene la ficción en la escritura cuando redacta sus proezas y andanzas’) as he slides across the arc of his duplicitous identity to take up residence, it appears, in the realm of his fictitious *Ali Bey*. Goytisolo buttresses this vision by characterising Badía’s *Viajes* as something of a *rihla* or spiritual journey not unlike Ibn Battuta’s, a narrative paradigm that justifies rhetorical self-aggrandizement for the revelatory conversion that it portends. As Goytisolo represents it, this *rihla* corresponds to the guileful traveller’s allegorical passage through political intrigue (Morocco) toward a culminating epiphany (the Middle East) of transnational and transcendental proportions: toward his qualified rejection of the European cult to progress and social order that a reborn Ali Bey understands, finally, to be potentially stifling.

I sense that I am no longer the same Ali Bey ... Certainly, society is a great thing; certainly, humankind’s greatest fortune is to live under a well-organized government, one that through the prudent use of law enforcement can assure each individual’s peaceful enjoyment of private property; but I also believe that what human beings gain in safety and tranquility, they lose in energy.<sup>6</sup>

Goytisolo thus culminates his presentation of Badía’s *Viajes* with the image of what he himself holds in the highest esteem: the malleability of those protean individuals who are uniquely able not only to understand divergent cultural perspectives but to bridge them in their own being. A certain type of hybridity, in short.

To be sure, Goytisolo’s essay on Badía is not the last time he applies such paradigms of understandings to Orientalist travel writing. He would do so once again and in similar terms in his 2012 commentary on Richard Burton, the English traveller who in 1852 emulated the memory of Ali Bey as he

embarked for the Middle East under the disguise of a certain Mirza Abdullah. Goytisolo's essay on Burton is a thinly veiled apology for the Englishman whom Edward Said deemed an 'imperial scribe' by virtue of the supremacy encoded in his writing:

Everything about [the Orient] is presented to us by way of Burton's knowledgeable (and often prurient) interventions, which remind us repeatedly how he had taken over the management of Oriental life for the purposes of his narrative. And it is this fact ... that elevates Burton's consciousness to a position of supremacy over the Orient (1979, 196).

Goytisolo counters Said's perceptions by insisting on the 'human spirit's inalienable right' to 'immerse itself in foreign cultures and societies' ('penetrar en las culturas y sociedades ajenas'; 2012, 37). He defends 'the fruitfulness of intercultural exchange' ('la fecundidad de los trasvases culturales'; 2012, 38). He uses Burton as an example of what he considers to be 'universally valued qualities': 'a curiosity based on sincere human sympathy, the spirit of self-criticism, the ability to question the foundations of one's own tradition' ('la curiosidad basada en una simpatía humana real, el sentido de autocritica, la facultad de poner en tela de juicio los fundamentos de la tradición recibida'; 2012, 39).

Goytisolo bases his vindication of Burton ultimately on the same 'lack of ethnocentrism' (2012, 37) that culminates his Ali Bey reflections. The veracity of the reportage matters less, in the end, than the pattern of thinking or temperament that it reflects, something that is clearly rooted in Goytisolo's own postmodern predisposition. It should be noted in this regard that, as Goytisolo insists and like Ali Bey, Burton also travels to Mecca 'fed up with progress and civilization' (Goytisolo 2012, 38) and he also experiences a spiritual regeneration in the desert: "'It is curious how the spirit can revive itself in a landscape that, at first glance, can seem so uninspiring'" ("Es curioso cómo el espíritu puede recrearse en un paisaje que presenta a primera vista tan pocos alicientes"; Burton cited by Goytisolo 2012, 40). Burton's revelatory experience is thus made to echo the 'new' Ali Bey's Romantic appreciation of 'primitive authenticity' that emerges, like a star, 'in the midst of African or Arabian deserts', and that thereby underscores the archetypal framework implicit in the mythos – the putative *rihla* – that Goytisolo promotes. Such correlations remind us, once again, of how Goytisolo's decision to conclude his Ali Bey's essay with this epiphanic outcome-as-destination aligns with personal structures of understanding that privilege *identity* over *disguise* and that form the underpinnings of his fictions.

### **Between Goytisolo's essays and fiction: finding oneself in a foreign land**

That Goytisolo should fixate on questions of truth and identity in relation to the supposed processual or transformative nature of Badiás travels is a stark

reminder of the many novels within the so-called *western* canon (European, North American predominantly) featuring starry-eyed travellers, like Goytisolo's Badía, who quest from north to south or west to east into unfamiliar and, for them, challenging terrains in conscious or, more often, unconscious search of some deep-level transformative experience. It bears repeating what so many critics have shown in so many ways. Such narratives as Paul Bowles' *The Sheltering Sky* or E.M. Forster's *Passage to India*, to name just two, concern primarily the *self*, rarely the *other*, a fact that is made patent by the systems and structures of authority and (as) knowledge that are integral to such narratives, and by the underlying ideological implications of those systems and structures.

It bears recalling that Goytisolo turns to travel literature shortly after moving to Paris and that his two best known travel narratives, *Campos de Nijar* (*The Countryside of Nijar*, 1960) and *La Chanca* (1962), written shortly thereafter, are acts of both dissidence and self-discovery and are both situated in Andalucía.<sup>7</sup> As has been the case with so many other travel writers and artists from the north (consider, for example, the nineteenth century painter, Mariano Fortuny), Andalucía proves for Goytisolo as well to preamble his subsequent movement beyond, to the North African experiences that would eventually become the bedrock of his narrative endeavours. This includes *Don Julián* (*Count Julian*, 1970) and *Juan sin tierra* (*Juan the Landless*, 1975), two of the three novels comprising the so-called Mendiola trilogy that helped to propel Goytisolo onto the world stage of literature in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Included as well is his prolific corpus of essays that have won him acclaim as a leading spokesperson, as mentioned, for Maghrebi matters in Spain.

The notion that Ali Bey's diary might contain lessons concerning identity, transculturation, and self-awareness, that it might model departure as dissidence, or that Badía's disguise could be construed as a threshold leading to eventual disavowal of one's past and self holds obvious appeal for the novelist who fictionalised that very experience in his celebrated trilogy. In *Señas de identidad* (*Marks of Identity*, 1966) Mendiola launches this process by assessing the multiple ills that Goytisolo himself repudiates, a position that leads to *Don Julián*'s opening salvo: 'harsh homeland, the falsest, most miserable imaginable, I shall never return to you' (1974, 3; 'tierra ingrata, entre todas espuria y mezquina, jamás volveré a ti'; 1985, 83). The process culminates in the *landlessness* that Goytisolo celebrate in book three, *Juan sin tierra*. Although personal transformation is what most shapes this trilogy, it is important to remember that mutability has held deep-rooted appeal for the Spanish novelist from the earliest stages of his career. His first novels of the 1950s all include a distinctively protean character, the *mixtificador* ('mystifier') as a sort of second-string catalyst for changes that affect his protagonists.<sup>8</sup> Like Ali Bey, the *mixtificadores* of the 50s hint only vaguely at the promise of deep-level



personal change. The Mendiola cycle, on the other hand, turns the Maghreb into a privileged locus for the complex interaction of identity and travel, for a pattern of thought that is integral to Goytisolo's encounter with Badía.

The travel-based identity paradigm that emerges in the Mendiola cycle seems at first glance to counter notions of specificity, rootedness and homeland by celebrating a type of transcendence that is literally utopic (*ou-topos*, 'no-place'). On the one hand, Goytisolo presents a reformulation of identity divested of nationhood: 'one's true homeland is not the country of one's birth' ('la patria no es la tierra, el hombre no es el árbol'). Identity is rooted in images of weightlessness and placelessness: 'bear me aloft to the realm of more luminous truths' ('a luz más cierta, súbeme'). It is associated with his muse, Luis de Góngora, whose high Baroque style Goytisolo celebrates as distinctively global in scope: 'help me to live without roots: ever on the move: my only sustenance your nourishing language: a tongue without a history, a hermetic verbal universe, a shimmering mirage' (1974, 104; 'ayúdame a vivir sin suelo y sin raíces: móvil, móvil: sin otro alimento y sustancia que tu rica palabra: palabra sin historia, orden verbal autónomo, engañoso delirio'; 1985, 195). Allusions abound throughout this stage of Goytisolo's writing to a Bakhtinian notion of language, conceived of – to quote James Clifford – as a 'diverging, contesting, dialoguing set of discourses that no 'native' – let alone visitor – can ever control' (1997, 22). This notion recurs in *Disidencias*, where Goytisolo rails against the logocentrism of European culture that, like the social order questioned by Ali Bey, fosters 'the peculiar situation of a world in which pleasure must hide behind the mask of reason' ('la situación aberrante de un mundo en el que el goce debe ocultarse tras la máscara de la razón'; 1977a, 185). If the Mendiola trilogy is about divesting ourselves of such 'masks' so as to transcend the *self* and our immediate circumstances en route to some utopic renewal, this message is fully realised in *Juan sin tierra*, in Goytisolo's defense of a somatized language as the ultimate tool for definitive emancipation: from the same 'falseness' ('imposturas') that, as he claims, Ali Bey comes to disavow in the deserts of Saudi Arabia.

The model developed herein resides, in short, above and not beyond borders. It foreshadows current tendencies to devalue race and homogeneity as identity markers, an ideal heralded by such contemporary writers as Amartya Sen and Anthony Appiah (Sen 2006; Appiah 2006), as well as others mentioned above (Appadurai 1990; Hannerz 1996; Bhabha 1994).

Yet there abounds in Goytisolo's writing strong evidence of the appeal of transposing rather than superseding, of swapping the self out through realignment on the *other* side. In his prologue to Badía's *Viajes*, for instance, Goytisolo exhibits a striking insistence on using the confrontational first-person plural 'our' ('nuestro') to frame the narrative historically in relation to:

'the lack of interest in things foreign that characterizes *our* literary tradition';  
 'the literary genius of the New World chroniclers [that] died with *our* conquests';  
 '*our* [meager] contribution to the study and knowledge of other cultures';  
 'the portrayal of *our* national reality [that] we owe largely to foreign scholars'.<sup>9</sup>

Such rhetorical posturing is rooted, ideologically, in the oppositional paradigms that permeate Goytisolo's writing and thinking throughout his career. This ideology emerges in a dissenting glorification of marginality in the 1950s that anticipates his eventual attraction to Morocco and his tendency to identify with the Arabic-speaking world. Determinists might argue that Goytisolo's profile, inflected as it is by this belligerence, is essentially post-war, the enduring scar of his Franco-era upbringing. As to his fiction, the emergence of the Maghrebi *medina* as metaphor in the Mendiola cycle marks the coalescence of this pattern of thinking and is therefore fundamental in this regard. The Moroccan *medina* evolves into a sort of *texturological* homeland or *habitus*, as a set of practices and dispositions that tie the individual inextricably to his new home beyond the straits. This figurative intertwining of identity and city begins with *Don Julián's* Joycean narrator's quest 'penetrating deeper and deeper' (1974, 73; 'hacia dentro, hacia dentro'; 1985, 161) into the web of his own psycho-cultural reality. It is a quest of mythical proportions that is circumscribed by the patterns of Tangier's historic byways such as the narrator experiences and internalises them: 'finally splitting in two to tail yourself better, as though you were another person ... knowing that the labyrinth lies within: that you are the labyrinth' (1974, 40; 'y desdoblándote al fin por seguirte mejor, como si fueras otro ... consciente de que el laberinto está en ti : que tú eres el laberinto'; 1985, 126). That such reality should seem 'irrational' and 'chaotic' can only reinforce our sense of the underlying principles of cross-border antagonism: 'chaos' there, 'order' here. This reality does indeed 'defy interpretation', as Goytisolo affirms, depending of course on where one situates oneself vis-à-vis the formidable border that transects these fictions.

It is in this regard that Goytisolo's celebration of such a border and of his newly acquired position on the other side becomes significant. This tendency manifests itself most strikingly at *Juan sin tierra's* end, where the prose gradually frees itself from the laws of 'doña Hakademe' as it morphs progressively into an Arabic script that is impenetrable for non-Arabic speaking readers and that celebrates in both style and content these very notions of alienation and impenetrability:

Those who fail to understand me should cease to follow me. Our relationship has ended. I am here, no doubt, on the other side with the poor, endlessly sharpening my knife (Goytisolo 1975, 304–305; Goytisolo 1977b, 269).<sup>10</sup>

It is striking, moreover, that Goytisolo should find Qur'anic inspiration for his last farewell, for he prefaces his own words – and thereby creates a

conspicuous analogy – with the opening verses of the Surah of ‘The Disbelievers’ (Figure 1):

Say, ‘Oh disbelievers!’  
I do not worship those that you worship;  
neither do you worship Him Whom I worship.  
nor will I worship those whom you have worshipped;  
nor are you going to worship Him Whom I worship.  
To you is your religion, and to me, my religion. (*The Qur’an*, 109:1–6)<sup>11</sup>

The correlation that Goytisolo draws between his Mendiola cycle and Ali Bey, at the precise moment of their respective conclusions, is, at this point, self-evident. Like a ‘new Ali Bey’, *Juan sin tierra*’s narrator undergoes a certain death and epiphanic renewal, a liberation that is conveyed textually as he divests himself of the ‘well-organized government’ and ‘forces of public order’ (Badía y Leblich 1982, XXXI), of the ‘mask of reason’ (Goytisolo 1977a, 185) of Spain’s ‘doña Hakademe’ (Goytisolo 1975, 304; Goytisolo 1977b, 268) only to be reborn, on the other side, with renewed ‘energy’ and according to a different script and sacred code. It goes without saying, however, that each script and code conforms to its own ‘reason’ and that one individual’s ‘mask’ can be another’s reality. Goytisolo himself has acknowledged the tension implicit in the notion of an ‘Orient’ that with its ‘tatters and squalor’ (‘andrajos y miserias’) offers the European traveller the ‘promise of Liberation’ (2012, 42). Yet this acknowledgment notwithstanding, suggestions of a utopic belonging that transcends difference, dispersed as they are

desacostúmbrete desde ahora a su lengua, comienza por escribirla conforme a meras intuiciones fonéticas sin la benia de doña Hakademia para seguir a continuación con el abla ef-fetiba de miyone de pal-lante que diariamente lampean sin tenén en cuenta er código pená impuetto por su mandarinato, orbidándote poco a poco de cuanto tenseñaron en su lúcido i boluntario ejersisio danalfabetim-mo que te yebará ma talde a renunsial una traj otra a la parabra delidioma a remplasal-la por tém-mino desa lugha al arabya eli tebdá tadrús chuya b-chuya, lugha saiba bissaf ualakini eli thab bissaf, sabyendo ken adelante lassmék t-takalem mesyan ila tebghi tsáfar men al bildan mselma ua tebghi taáref ahsán r-rjal keinp-piraron tu tét-to piro ke no lo lirán, rjal mín Uxda Tenirá Uahran Ghasauet El-Asnam Tanxa Dar-Bida Kuyo trato a pem-mityo er konosimyento Kabal de ty mimmo i la posyvilidá dep-presal-lo lyberándote de tu hantiryor ympot-tura i, grasias ha la prat-tyca dun language cuép-po, dun belbo beldadelamente echo canne, de tebdá kif uáhed l-arbi al idu sghera ua min baád al idu Kbira bex temxi l-xamá ua tqrá al surat eli thab

qul ya ayuha al-kafirún  
la a budu ma ta budun  
ua-la antum abiduna ma a bud  
ua-la ana abidum ma abattum  
ua-la antum abiduna ma a bud  
la-kum dinu-kum ua-li-ya din

الانسان لي ما ينصرونيش ما يعاونو شعوري  
علاقتنا انتصفت  
أنا بدون شك في الجنة (الأخرى)  
مع المساكين لي دائما  
يعودوا المسكين

**Figure 1.** Juan Goytisolo’s *Juan sin tierra*’s conclusion.

throughout his writing, do seem ultimately to be overshadowed by *substitution* and *opposition*, that is, by patterns of thought that recall Goytisolo's post-war roots and that characterise the discursive construction of Ali Bey from the nineteenth century forward: namely, the construction of identity through a binary logic (Bhabha 1994, 3) and an emphasis on location-based identity.

### **Telescoping retrospectively: Ali Bey and the *Hispano-Moroccan War* (1859–1860)**

It is striking how the idea of Ali Bey has remained so vivid in the Spanish political and intellectual imagination despite the pitted history of Badía's diary itself. By 1820, two years after Badía's death, the diary was published in Paris, London, Philadelphia, Milan, and Weimar, in corresponding translations, yet the first Spanish edition would appear only in 1836, a defective translation of Badía's original French (Barberá Fraguas in Badía 1997, 123). Between 1836 and 1982, Badía's *Viajes* would appear at times partially (the Moroccan diaries) and often as a recycled version of a previously unreliable text. Salvador Barberá Fraguas' highly revised and authoritatively documented 1984 version of the Moroccan diaries is the first scholarly version of any portion of Badía's *Viajes*<sup>12</sup> and Roger Mimó's 2012 edition, with maps and plates, is the first authoritative edition of the complete diaries.

Meanwhile, the memory and meaning of Ali Bey as one of Spain's nineteenth century *claros varones*<sup>13</sup> was clearly embedded in the nation's political thinking as a hot topic for debate, especially at the most conspicuous historical junctures.<sup>14</sup> This is signalled poignantly by essays that appeared in conjunction with Spain's invasion of Morocco, the Hispano-Moroccan War of 1859–1860. Ramón Mesonero Romanos, a writer commonly associated with the *costumbrista* strain of Spanish Romanticism, recycled his 1836 profile of Badía by publishing it twice, first in 1859, in the weekly traditionalist review *El Museo Universal*, and again in 1860 as the prologue to the Puerto Rican edition of Badía's *Viajes*. Mesonero is explicit in affirming what he deems to be his dutiful response, as a writer, to the groundswell of popular fervour surrounding Spain's declaration of war: to rescue from oblivion the memory of the 'likable' and 'majestic' envoi, whose 'sublime and energetic temperament', 'vast knowledge', 'unparalleled astuteness and talent', meticulous command of Arabic and 'truly oriental demeanor' (1859, 154) enabled him to garner brotherly affect and penetrate as a native into the most intimate zones of Moroccan political power. Although his portrayal of Badía is outwardly descriptive, in the *costumbrista* mold, his reliance on Godoy's memoirs to highlight the covert political plot and Carlos IV's decision to thwart it betrays the link between Mesonero's act of remembrance and the current political climate.<sup>15</sup> Everything about the Badía we see in this portrait represents a

veritable marvel to behold, something that is underscored by what must have truly bedazzled the readers of *El Museo Universal* in the 1859 version of this piece: the image of a turbaned figure wearing his haik, his cartographic tool in hand and the name 'Domingo Badía y Leblich' scripted below. Reappropriated from the frontispiece of the original editions of the *Viajes* (Paris, 1814; London, 1816) and relocated within this telling political framework, the portrait iconicizes Mesonero's aim of revitalising the dormant yet 'noble' idea of personal transformation through discovery and travel, on the one hand, while evoking the politically expedient echoes of the nation's Hispano-Arabic legacy on the other (Figure 2).

Antonio Cánovas del Castillo labours similarly and with parallel effects in 1860, the year of the Treaty of Wad Ras, by showcasing Badía as a major player on the stages of Moroccan history in his *Apuntes para la Historia de Marruecos* (*Notes on the History of Morocco*). Cánovas encases Badía's project within a broadly constructed historical framework that stretches from primitive times to the present, leaving no doubt as to that framework's irredentist basis and to Badía's pivotal role in it. In the first of his 17 chapters, Cánovas intertwines geography and Roman history to conclude *tout court* that



**Figure 2.** Ali Bey in *El Museo universal* (1859).

Rome lost no time in determining, with natural instinct and skill, that Spain's natural Frontier to the south is not the narrow strait that conjoins two seas, but rather the Atlas mountain range, which stands in opposition to the Pyrenees ('Roma no tardó en comprender, con su ordinario instinto y acierto, que la Frontera natural de España, por la parte del Mediodía, no es el canal angostísimo que junta los dos mares, sino la cordillera del Atlas, contrapuesta al Pirineo'; 1991, 15).

Cánovas takes up the nineteenth century colonialist enterprise, and Badía's role in it, in the final chapters of his essay, to suggest by implication the culmination of a geographically preordained historical drama. In dealing with Badía, Cánovas, like Mesonero, also paints a detailed portrait (chapter 15), emphasising all that is marvellous in the man and his project. Badía portends unforetold fruits for a fertile land gone fallow: '[Ali Bey] saw uncultured fields' ('vio siempre campos incultos'; 1991, 208). According to Cánovas, Badía's supreme ruse, as spy, was to be embraced by Moroccans as their own counter-spy, the Messianic emissary of their own providential mission to reconquer Al-Andalus: 'Nothing would make me happier, the Sultan [Muley Suleiman] told Badía, transformed into Ali-Bey, than bringing to fruition our empire's divine promise of reconquering Spain' ('Nada llenaría mi alma de contento, le decía el sultán [Muley Suleiman] a Badía, transformado en Ali-Bey, como ver cumplida en nuestros días la divina promesa que a este imperio le está echa de recobrar la España'; Cánovas del Castillo 1991, 204). As in Mesonero, so too in Cánovas do processes of appropriation become evident. Cánovas lifts this highly questionable version of Muley Suleiman's words from Godoy's wishful memoirs, for instance, without citing his source according to conventions (quotation marks). He lifts similarly and more or less verbatim Badía's description of his noble adversary, Muley Suleiman, as it appears in his *Viajes*:

At the time, that prince was around 40 years old, he was tall of stature and extraordinarily hearty; his visage, none too dark, bore the imprint of his kind nature and was marked above all by two large eyes full of vitality ...<sup>16</sup>

By appropriating and recontextualizing this and much more, Mesonero and Cánovas reveal themselves to be self-conscious agents in an intertextually discursive relay. The fact that Cánovas, a 'great professional historian' according to his prologist Manuel Fraga Iribarne (Cánovas del Castillo 1991, 1), interweaves archival materials seamlessly and often without acknowledgement is an especially glaring example of the complex systems of transmission that carry the unquestioned and unmediated ambiguities of the original story forward in Spanish political and scholarly thinking over time. This is reaffirmed by the reappearance of Cánovas' *Apuntes* at critical historical junctures: in 1913, around the time of Spain's second Rif War (1909–1010), and more recently in the 1991 edition prologued (as mentioned) by Manuel Fraga

Iribarne, when the former Minister of Information and Tourism (under Francisco Franco) was spearheading the resurgence of Spanish conservatism in the name of a new *Partido Popular*. The political reverberation of Badía's 'timely remembrance' ('oportuno recuerdo'; Fraga Iribarne, 'Prólogo', in Cánovas del Castillo 1991, 2) through such editorial mechanisms is yet another example of a time-worn truth. Without critical scholarly intervention, the messianic basis for Godoy's project – or any other such historiographic myth – clearly takes on a life of its own. Like all historical truths, it is embedded in the vulnerable processes of remembrance that are crafted and channelled through images manipulated concertedly and strategically over time.

### **Deconstructing the myth: from Joaquín Costa to Benito Pérez Galdós**

Along with the Hispano-Moroccan War, Spain's Rif Wars (1893–94, 1909–10 and 1920–25) would also prove to be a powerful testing ground, as suggested earlier, for exploring new rhetorical strategies in relation to Spain's political role in the Maghreb. Ali Bey and the purported Hispano-Arabic kinship with which he was by then closely associated figure prominently in those debates, something that Benito Pérez Galdós conveys poignantly in his 1905 *episodio nacional* (historical novel), *Aita Tettauén*, a critical retrospective on the first war – the Hispano-Moroccan war of 1859–60 – that connects with the sentiments of a war-weary society around the time of the second.

In the opening chapters of this novel, Galdós foregrounds the basis of his personal skepticism – the government's more or less latent colonialist motives – in his characteristically theatrical style. In lengthy dialogues unmediated by the voice of the omniscient narrator, with popular mass hysteria raging on the streets below, the patriarch of the traditionalist Ansúrez family justifies the invasion by characterising the hostilities as a conflict among kindreds whose outward appearance betrays their essential ties. This is a war, he claims, between 'Spanish Mohammedans' and 'Moors disguised as Christians' ('españoles mahometanos' and 'moros [disfrazados] de cristianos'; Pérez Galdós 1989, 13). It is unfolding, in short, within in a single cultural sphere circumscribed geographically, by the Atlas and the Pyrenees.

To be sure, positivist-era debates regarding Hispano-Arabic consanguinity were already in full swing by 1904, when Galdós set out to write this novel. Of particular relevance is the case of Galdós' friend and fellow *regeneracionista*, Joaquín Costa, who evoked the topic within the political arena two decades prior, in 1884, addressing the Sociedad Española de Africanistas y Colonialistas as follows:

And if it is true that Spain, owing to its geology and flora, is linked to Africa and not to Europe, it is also true that the Spanish people, given their psychology and culture, should seek the cradle of their civilization and their spiritual lineage on



the opposite side of the Straits [of Gibraltar] and not in Europe; it is no exaggeration to state that, just as with *natural history*, Africa begins at the Pyrenees, so too in terms of *human history*, Africa, for each and every Spaniard, extends from the soles of our feet to the hair on our heads. (Loud and prolonged applause). (*emphasis mine*)<sup>17</sup>

The analogy Costa draws between *natural* and *human* history, in the interest of a national 'spirit', recalls the particular brand of scientific determinism that was pervasive in late nineteenth century Spain while it echoes Cánovas del Castillo's arguments aimed at rationalising Spain's declaration of war in 1859. In this vein, it is important to note Costa's reference to the topos of civil conflict – he likens Spain's invasion of Morocco to Carlist hostilities in the Pyrenees – even though he evokes this idea backhandedly as a non-interventionist warning. More telling are the rhetorical strategies by which Costa pays honour to the memory and singularity of 'our illustrious traveler' ('nuestro insigne viajero'), with the language of *marvel*, while citing the presumably unwanted consequences of his supreme act of 'trickery' ('fingimiento'), that Muley Suleiman might embrace the spy in disguise as the potential conduit to the realisation of his own (Suleiman's) imperialist dreams:

Morocco and Spain must maintain their mutual independence, renouncing altogether any imperialist designs that one might harbor toward the other. At the beginning of this century, Charles IV, king of Spain, commissioned our *illustrious traveler* Domingo Badía to travel to Africa, *disguised* as a descendant of the Prophet, in the interest of some plan for Spain to conquer Morocco; the occasion of his trip gave rise to the *unique coincidence* that the Moroccan emperor, Muley Suleiman, chose to trust the false Abbasid with his *supreme ideal*, the reconquest of Spain. (*emphasis mine*)<sup>18</sup>

In the end, Costa claims to marshal these and other arguments in support of Spain's role as the 'protector and guarantor of the Moroccan nation, insofar as it is unable to protect itself' ('fiadora y garante de la nación marroquí, en lo que no alcance a garantizarse a sí propia'; Costa 2003, 64), not as a rationale for invasion. Given that Spain's hegemony in the western Mediterranean over England and France was at stake, one may wonder where one might draw the line when that hegemony is threatened, something that points to the differences that separate Costa and Galdós, in terms of their shared *regeneracionista* resistance to interventionism. To be sure, Galdós encodes *Aita Tettauén* not only in relation to the 1859 war, but with the sensitivity he and Costa shared concerning current social and political affairs: the turn-of-the-century emergence of working class consciousness, the recent 1898 debacle along with ongoing hostilities in the Rif.<sup>19</sup> Galdós interweaves these ideological debates, however, into the construction of two key characters so as to shed new light on the issue of identity, bringing it to the centre of the debate over Spanish-Moroccan relations and Spain's Hispano-Arabic legacy in what can now be seen as a disruptive way.



Key in this regard is Galdós' fictionalisation of Pedro Antonio de Alarcón, the author whose *Diario de un testigo de la guerra de África* published and reedited in 1860 and 1880, had garnered enormous popularity in the decades immediately prior to the publication of *Aita Tettauen*. In this novel Galdós situates Alarcón in opposition to the idealistic Juan Santiuste, the roving witness and poet whose pacifism (*Santiuste* = 'saintly' and 'just') contrasts with Alarcón's bellicist leanings. Their dialectic – the sword against the word – is synthesised in the novel's final sentence, where Santiuste addresses Alarcón as follows: 'If your people have achieved a great conquest of war with sword and gunpowder, with a very different powder I have achieved a conquest of peace. Which will endure, Perico ... ?' ('Si vosotros con el acero y la pólvora habéis hecho una gran conquista de guerra, yo, con pólvora distinta, he hecho una conquista de paz. ¿Cuál será más duradera, Perico ... ?'; 1989, 208) More to the point, through Santiuste's impressionable eyes we access *as feigned* the hybridity that the Granadino war correspondent was wont to promote in his real life,<sup>20</sup> along with the confusion that such pretense spawns in Santiuste:

Santiuste *had the impression* that before him stood a neighbor from the Atlas mountains. "If I weren't *awake* – he thought while *blinking his eyes*–, I would believe that one of those long and agile-legged horsemen, of dashing appearance with a weathered face, had entered the tent in order to record there an *epic* account of the battle, transposing questions of patriotism ironically ... The *history of Spain* thus emerges from what ought to be the *history of Morocco* ... Perico, you moor from Guadix, you are a Spaniard in reverse or a baptized Mohammedan ... Your writing is Castilian, your thinking and feeling Muslim ... *You are the Muslim ... I, the Christian.* (*emphasis mine*)<sup>21</sup>

With the subtle irony that characterises this modern-day disciple of Cervantes, Galdós neutralises the idea of the 'baptized Mohammedan' by bringing the very processes of fictitious deception itself into full view. As his references here and throughout the novel demonstrate, he does so with the explicit goal of inciting his reader to question the transmission of those ideas and images by which supposed truths – national epics and histories – are fabricated. He funnels distinct national histories – 'history de Spain' / 'history of Morocco' – into the decidedly unreliable question of identity – a 'you are/I am' construct – in which Galdós' spectrum of reference, in the broadest sense, is firmly rooted.

The implications that may thereby be derived from Galdós' fictionalisation of the *authentic* Alarcón are magnified on a much grander scale through one of Galdós' characteristically Cervantine ruses: the invention of the apocryphal author of the third part of this four-part novel, Gonzalo Ansúrez. A member of the traditionalist clan introduced in the first chapter, this Ansúrez resides in Morocco as a 'a most prestigious renegade or Muslim, in the style of Ali Bey' ('musulmán o renegado de alta escuela, al estilo de Ali Bey') who

manages to 'captivate' not only Juan Santiuste but also 'an entire people' thanks to his 'near-perfect, prodigious transformation' ('*prodigio de una metamorfosis bastante perfecta*' (1989, 202). His strategies for achieving his goals mirror Badía's in that they are essentially cosmetic. He assumes a false name: Sidi El Hach Mohammed Ben Sur El Nasiry. He disguises his prose as if it were an *aljamiado* text, with Arabic and Qur'anic elements – dates, conventions, and citations – modelled on Galdós' Arabic source of inspiration.<sup>22</sup> Most importantly, El Nasiry's chronicles, like Ali Bey's travel diaries, are intended for a benefactor who, like Godoy, is far removed from the scene of his operations. He is a wealthy Moroccan merchant in Fez who, in El Nasiry's case at least, is the openly targeted victim of the correspondent's literary '*marrullería*' (chicanery).

*El Nasiry weighed the advantages of living in Morocco as a moor, disguised for the task by language, customs, and religion, and he praised the enormous benefits that resulted from the scarcity of laws, a rudimentary legislative system that compensated for the Sultan's barbaric despotism. This was not so intolerable for those malleable and clever men who are able to adapt to the land, adjust their lungs to the atmosphere of a country free from excessive government, from blind and capricious tyranny. It was a matter of chicanery, of the study of mankind and of the knowledge of Maghrebi learning, which amounts to a Dark Grammar.*<sup>23</sup>

It would be hard not to acknowledge in this exposure of the unreliable – in this case, overtly deceptive – basis of writing anything less than an intentional reference to the prototype, Ali Bey, with whom El Nasiry is explicitly likened ('in the style of Ali Bey'). Most important is the text or textuality itself, El Nasiry's perfidious chronicle – his 'Dark Grammar' – that stands in for the travel chronicles sent to Godoy by 'our illustrious traveler', as Costa would have it, whose 'knowledge' and 'learning' politicians and scholars prior to Galdós seem to have taken by and large at face value. By bringing El Nasiry's boastful acknowledgement of his own artificiality into full view not only does Galdós cast dark ('*parda*') shadows on Badía's true aims, in the spirit of *regeneracionismo*. He pries open the hyphenated zone linking the polar extremes of various binaries, the disguise and the man, surface and content, 'Hispano' and 'Arabic' – anticipating thereby more recent scholarly treatments of Ali Bey and the very issues of identity, alterity, and the ethics of representation as they are being debated today. His final advice to Santiuste – "'My son, return to Spain at once, get thee to any civilized country, for in Africa you will become nothing but a beggar if you do not master the various arts of trickery ...'"<sup>24</sup> – serves to enact, through irony, Galdós' uniquely mordant warning concerning the ethical bases of transculturation, particularly with respect to representations of Africa as an idealised zone of personal European or Spanish self-fulfilment.

## Foregrounding performativity: Ali Bey as legend

To sum up, it may be said that Galdós takes aim at the many who have laboured extensively to make clear sense of what eludes fixed or definitive meaning in Badía's writing. Although Goytisolo ultimately highlights elements of sincerity in Badía and uses them to veer away from Badía's well-recognized ambiguities ('memory lapses and omissions'), he nevertheless acknowledges emphatically and in fruitful ways the very problem that has vexed so many: the 'propensity to lie' ('hábito de la mentira') that, according to Salvador Barberá Fraguas, 'produced in [Badía] the tendency, in the end, to confuse lies with reality, whether discussing his political goals or his genealogy' (Badía y Lebllich 1997, 108).

The pretense and often hyperbolic claims linked to this 'propensity' have, in fact, sparked considerable controversy among scholars of late regarding the traveller's intentions on all levels of his experience. Focus on Badía's decision to undergo a circumcision in London, in preparation for his journey, and whether this decision confirmed hidden intentions of infidelity or how this decision accorded with his avowed celibacy while in Africa are, at best, curious examples of that 'prurient' attention to detail that Edward Said, Fatema Mernissi and so many others discuss in relation to European orientalist travel writers and painters (Said 1979, 196; Mernissi 2001; *Fantasies* 2003). Of much greater value is the thesis that Salvador Barberá Fraguas develops in the prologue to his edition of Badía's Moroccan diaries, where he denies claims that Badía intended to conspire secretly for political power in Morocco. 'The "political objectives" of his travels', Barberá insists, 'were nothing more than a decoy that Badía mobilised so as to win the support and financing for his scientific exploration project, determined as he was to become a new Mungo Park' (Badía y Lebllich 1997, 11). Barberá has been denounced, meanwhile, as a 'anti-colonialist maurophile', his thesis as 'unsustainable' (García Valdés and McGaha in Badía y Lebllich 1999, 11; McGaha 1996, 14).

These controversies notwithstanding, there is a general agreement among scholars today that Badía was indisputably disingenuous and that his propensity toward pretense and self-aggrandizement, whatever his motives, has greatly hindered all attempts to disentangle fact from fiction in his writing. It may also be the case, as Goytisolo and others suggest, that, as an aspiring player on the stages of European politics, Badía became increasingly cognizant of the value of his disguise and of the performative dimension of all that he did and said, and that his travels inspired him to cultivate performance increasingly and intentionally, with the net result that, toward the end of his life, Badía himself became the prime instigator of his own ensuing 'legend'. Goytisolo seems to suggest this in stating: 'Ali Bey seems to allow himself to become possessed by his own enthusiasm for performing his character's role' ('Ali Bey parece dejarse invadir por el entusiasmo con que desempeña

el papel de su personaje'; Badía y Lebllich 1982, XVIII). He thus alludes to the progressive dimension of Badía's egomania ('parece dejarse invadir' = 'allows himself to become possessed') and to the very actor-character split ('desempeña el papel de su personaje' = 'performs his character's role') that Galdós exploited fully and that is part and parcel of heightened performativity. Barberá offers ample suggestions of the same throughout his lengthy and meticulously documented analysis of Badía's life. He portrays Badía as suggesting to Godoy, from Egypt in 1806, the 'fantastic idea' of a new commercial route from Spain to the Philippines via Cairo in order to beguile the Prime Minister of the material support needed for his scientific explorations (Barberá Fraguas in Badía y Lebllich 1997, 88). He describes how the exiled *afrancesado* attempts to cultivate Louis XVIII's favour later on in Paris, in 1816, using as bargaining chips his presumed ties and widespread popular support among the people of the Maghreb: 'City dwellers as well as the Bedouins in the desert thought that Ali Bey should return' (in Badía y Lebllich 1997, 102). Increasing insistence on the 'chimerical'<sup>25</sup> has had the effect of foregrounding the portrait of Badía instrumentalizing Ali Bey, as it were, for personal gain. It has also brought into play the paradoxical notion that pretense or performance (Badía's role or 'papel') are, in and of themselves, the only truly meaningful reality that may be derived from this story.

This theory is supported in uniquely significant ways by the 'chimerical' 'Constitución de los Pueblos de Occidente' ('The Constitution of the People of the West'; Badía y Lebllich 2010) that Badía composed in 1817, one year before his death, and by the strategies he employed to sell himself, the bearer of this document, as Morocco's liberator and moderniser. He alludes to this project as early as 1803 (June 29), in one of his last letters from Morocco in which he states:

I have the support of Sheik Suleiman and of the other political leaders of Oujda and of the sheik of Bouanane. They all desire the new Constitution so as to bring to an end the horrible misery in which they find themselves; but their forces are extremely limited and the country is completely open to attack (Barberá Fraguas in Badía 1997, 71).

This reference coincides chronologically, more or less, with diary entries (chapter 17) in which Badía claims that he sought to convince Muley Suleiman and his entourage of the 'nature and advantages of a constitutional system' (Badía y Lebllich 1997, 77). However, these passing references merely anticipate the spectacle of full-blown self-aggrandizement between 1815 and the year of his death, 1818, through the flurry of political and literary endeavours undertaken by the exiled *afrancesado* in the Paris of Louis XVIII.

The fact that constitutions were a hotly debated topic in post-Napoleonic Europe in general, and in Fernando VII's Spain and Louis XVIII's France in particular, may very well have induced Badía to tie his fortunes to a constitutional

plan for Morocco, as has been suggested (García Valdés and McGaha in Badía y Leblich 1999, 25–26). Whatever the reason, this is the plan that Badía presents unabashedly to the Duke of Richelieu on 21 October 1815,<sup>26</sup> in which he alleges recalling how the masses clamoured for him and for his constitution during his visit to Marrakesh 10 years prior:

The pasha of Morocco, in the company of other pashas and individuals of distinction, honored me with an outdoor celebration. At the meal's end, everyone shouted: Sidi Ali Bey, the Constitution, the Constitution, and I responded with eyes closed: Yes, the Constitution will be had one way or another. Upon hearing this they threw themselves at my feet and sought my right hand, hastening to cover it with their own, and thus, with each and every right hand resting on mine, they proclaimed with enthusiasm the Muslim oath, promising that Sidi Ali Bey will bring them their Constitution.<sup>27</sup>

Similarly and around the same time, Badía appears to have penned an apocryphal 'Memoria' ('Report') to Muley Suleiman's brother, Muley Abdsulem,<sup>28</sup> antedated to 1805, in which he explains his departure from 'Garbí' (Morocco) as motivated by the lack of a 'Canún' (constitution). The orthography and grammar reveal how style and content interacted within Badía's imagination, in support of a performance that, for the pretentious writer, is essentially textual:

Without Canún, he could not bring his Patrimony here nor could he stay here to live, for if today's Sultan is very good, maybe tomorrow there could be a bad Sultan; and because of this Ali Bey left for the Levant ('Si no se formaba el Canún, no podía traerse aquí sus Caudales ni quedarse aquí a vivir, pues si hoy hai un Sultán muy bueno, quizá mañana pudiera haber un Sultán malo; y en virtud de esto marchó Ali Bey para el Levante'; López García in Badía y Leblich 2010, 14).

It should come as no surprise, therefore, that the culminating act of a man so 'enthusiastically' invested in his writerly performance should correspond to Badía's five-act *Tragedia de Ali Bey en Marruecos* composed roughly a year before his death (ca. 1817), in which the threads of Badía's political, literary and performative enterprises are thoroughly intertwined within the fabric of his increasingly conspicuous disguise.

As the title of the work suggests, Badía theatricalises in his *Tragedia* a series of personal episodes that he had already narrativized in his *Viajes*, with their characteristically heightened degree of theatricality. He leverages his scientific knowledge and political prowess for accruing friendships and making inroads into Muley Suleiman's court, inroads that catalyse, in turn, a range of palace intrigues. Ali Bey's efforts to win Muley Suleiman's support for his constitution are at the core of these intrigues and they buttress all that is dramatic in this work: the dialogic antagonism of the *civilized* European and the noble yet *savage* Oriental around the core values of nineteenth century liberalism, namely, respect for private property and political stability based on a

rationalised transfer of power (succession to the throne). These are, in essence, the principles that Badía inscribes in his 'Constitución' of 1817 and they are the same values that he summarised in his *Viajes* years prior, as follows:

In a nation where private property does not exist, where everything belongs to the sultan, where humans lack the freedom to sell or reap the fruits of their labor, where, in short, they are prohibited from enjoying those fruits or from sharing them with their compatriots, one can easily understand the source of their inertia, apathy and destitution.<sup>29</sup>

The indices of order and progress that Badía dons at this point in his life as a full-fledged 'mask' of his own idiosyncratic 'reason' mirror in telling ways the values that (as mentioned above) Goytisolo seems to think the 'reborn' Badía transcends: 'un gobierno bien organizado' ('a well-organized government') and the 'uso prudente de la fuerza pública' ('the prudent use of law enforcement') in support of each individual's 'disfrute pacífico de la propiedad' ('the peaceful enjoyment of property'; Goytisolo in Badía y Lebllich 1982, XXXI). One is left to wonder whether Badía's 'denunciation' of European parochialism ('lamento ... contra la estrechez del mundo europeo') that Goytisolo highlights to conclude his portrait of Badía can be trusted any more than the early identity-based appropriations of Ali Bey that Galdós, Barberá and Badía himself so craftily disrupt. Their examples lead us to understand how the two questions commonly linked to the discursive construction of the Ali Bey myth – Hispano-Moroccan political relations and the Hispano-Arabic foundations of Spanish national identity – are *literally* neutralised by the more dominant question of the *who, when, how, and why* of historiographical representation.

### Politics and culture, in short

Along those lines, Américo Castro's 1954 essay, *La realidad histórica de España* (*The Spaniards: An Introduction to Their History*) may serve as a useful tool for putting into historical perspective Ali Bey's role in the construction of a national Hispano-Arabic discourse. Castro's essay is generally regarded as a singularly important reflection on Spain's *Andalusí* cultural heritage, a topic that concerned the author throughout much of his career. Castro published the essay during his postwar exile, when Spanish society was besieged by such officially sanctioned enterprises as Carlos Arévalo's *¡Harka!* (1941), a movie aimed at glorifying the memory and heritage of Francisco Franco's Moroccan mercenaries who 'gave their all for Spain' ('que lo dieron todo por España'; *¡Harka!*, credits) during the Spanish Civil War. The hybridified or *Ali Bey-esque* construction of the film's protagonist, Santiago Balcázar, is crucial in this regard. As the Spanish captain of a Moroccan unit or *harka* active during Spain's military campaigns in the Rif, Balcázar (rhymes with 'Alcázar', Hispano-Arabic fortress) dresses in Moroccan garb, rides a white

steed reminiscent of his namesake, Santiago, and is renowned – like Badía – for his exceptional powers of persuasion among those he has come to conquer:

No one understands the Moroccan mind better, his bonds of identification are that deep. Sidi Absalom Balcázar, that's how they call him. And yet, no one as Spanish as Santiago Balcázar!<sup>30</sup>

One of the few editions of Badía's *Viajes* to appear in the twentieth century prior to Goytisolo's was prologued by Guillermo Díaz-Plaja, in 1943 coincidentally, that is, two years after Arévalo's movie came out and just four years into Franco's dictatorship.

Against this backdrop, it is interesting to note that even though the literary and textual representations of Santiago (*Apóstol*, *Matamoras*, *Peregrino*) feature prominently in Castro's essay, the author eschews any reference to Badía's experience or writing. To be sure, this should come as no surprise, given Castro's overarching aims. He applies his skills of philology to represent a 'realidad no fabulosa' ('an authentic' or 'non-mythical reality'; Castro 1965, 1) while exposing the very processes that have contributed to such discursive slippage as what we have seen in the treatment of Ali Bey: 'once myths become imbedded in collective fantasy and memory ... they slide across time' ('los mitos, una vez instalados en la fantasía y en la memoria de las gentes ... se deslizan a través de las generaciones' (Castro 1965, 265). Castro's essay thus provides a useful point of reference for framing how so many others have succumbed to the seductive powers of Badía's hyperbole, ambiguity, and disguise and to the powers of myth itself as they propagate ambiguities of their own. In response to those who leveraged Ali Bey's presumed hybridity for bridging *cultural* identity and international *politics* – *Hispano-Arabism* and Hispano-Arabic relations – Castro helps us parse the equation, reminding us that not only may *cultural* and *political* domains be discrete, but that, especially in this age of travel and migration, they may in fact work at cross-purposes.

## Notes

1. There is no established uniformity regarding the bibliographic citations for Badía's travel diaries. As Salvador Barberá Fraguas indicates (Badía y Leblích 1997, 80), the first five editions of this work, published between 1814 and 1817, give no indication of the author's real name or identity. Barberá himself cites 'Ali Bey' as the author of his edition, Goytisolo includes Badía's name in parenthesis. Since the relationship between the real person and his fictitious alter ego is the subject of this study, works authored by Badía will be referenced as such. The pseudonym will refer explicitly to Badía in his various disguises.
2. The essay appeared as well in the journal *El viejo topo* in January 1982.
3. The cover of the 1995 edition of Mayrata's *Alí Bey, el Abasí* promises that the 'Memory of History' offered within the pages of this novel concern 'the extraordinary adventure of a man who lived intensely between the Orient and Occident'

- (‘la insólita aventura de un hombre que vivió con intensidad entre Oriente y Occidente’). The 1997 Barberá Fraguas edition of Badía’s *Viajes* appears in Ediciones B’s ‘Biblioteca Grandes Viajeros’ series.
4. In Part III of their anthology, Bohls and Duncan include excerpts from a diverse collection of travel narratives pertaining to Africa and written between 1732 and 1822 (Bohls and Duncan 2005, 182–257).
  5. Consider, for instance: ‘Domingo Badía thus came to model all that an immigrant is: someone who, like him, remains trapped for good within those *interstitial areas* that tend to endure between one world and another’ (‘Domènec Badia se convirtió así en el paradigma de lo que todo inmigrante es: alguien que, como él, se ve para siempre atrapado en uno de esos *intersticios* que a veces pueden quedar entre mundo y mundo’; Delgado 2016; *emphasis mine*).
  6. ‘Tengo la impresión de que no soy el mismo Ali Bey ... Indudablemente, la sociedad es un gran bien; indudablemente, la suerte mayor de los hombres es vivir bajo un gobierno bien organizado que, con un uso prudente de la fuerza pública, asegure a cada individuo el disfrute pacífico de la propiedad; pero también me parece que, cuanto el hombre gana en seguridad y reposo, lo pierde en energía’ (Goytisolo in Badía y Leblich 1982, XXXI). This and all subsequent translations from the original Spanish are mine, unless otherwise noted.
  7. Goytisolo published the account of his trip to Cuba, during this same period, under the title *Pueblo en marcha: Instantáneas de un viaje a Cuba* (1963).
  8. *Juegos de manos* (1954), *Duelo en el Paraíso* (1955), *Fiestas* (1958a), *El circo* (1957) and *La resaca* (1958b). See Buckley (1968, 145–182).
  9. ‘la falta de interés por lo ajeno que caracteriza a *nuestras* letras’ (Badía y Leblich 1982, IX); ‘el genio literario de los cronistas de Indias [que] se extinguió con *nuestras* conquistas’ (Badía y Leblich 1982, IX); ‘*nuestra* [parca] contribución al estudio y conocimiento de otras culturas’ (Badía y Leblich 1982, IX); ‘la expresión de *nuestra* realidad peninsular [que] *debemos* en gran parte a autores extranjeros’ (Badía y Leblich 1982, X; *my emphasis throughout*).
  10. I am grateful to my colleague, Aberrahman Aissa, for this translation of the Arabic script.
  11. Translation of Surah 109 retrieved from <http://www.islamicstudies.info/tafheem.php?sura=109> on 12 March 2018.
  12. I cite from here on from the 1997 reprint of this edition.
  13. The term, a courtly trope rooted in early-modern humanism, derives from Hernando del Pulgar’s *Claros varones* (ca. 1483), a series of portrayals of Spain’s eminent male leaders.
  14. Barberá surveys the major contributions to this debate, within the field of nineteenth and early twentieth-century historiography, in the section of his prologue entitled ‘La leyenda en la historiografía’ (Badía y Leblich 1997, 80–86).
  15. ‘Godoy tenía al corriente de estos preparativos al rey así como los informes de Badía. Al tomar conocimiento Carlos IV del favor que había alcanzado su espía en la corte marroquí declaró: “Jamás consentiré que la hospitalidad se vuelva en daño y perdición del que la da benignamente ... .”’ (Barberá Fraguas in Badía y Leblich 1997, 56). (English translation: ‘Godoy kept the king abreast of Badía’s preparations and of his reports. When informed of the favors granted to the spy by the Moroccan court, Charles IV exclaimed: “I shall never allow for benign hospitality to cause damage or loss to the host.”’)
  16. ‘Tenía a la sazón aquel príncipe como unos cuarenta años, su talla era alta y su robustez extraordinaria; el rostro, no muy moreno, llevaba impresa la bondad de



su carácter, haciéndose notar en él, sobre todo, sus dos grandes ojos llenos de viveza ...' (Cánovas del Castillo 1991, 202–203). Compare Goytisolo's (Badía y Leblich 1982, 50) and Barberá's (Badía y Leblich 1997, 208) versions of this passage.

17. 'Y que si es verdad que España por la geología y por la flora, se enlaza con Africa y no con Europa, también el pueblo español, por la psicología y por la cultura, ha de buscar al otro lado del Estrecho, más que al otro lado del Pirineo, la cuna de la civilización y la ascendencia de su espíritu, pudiendo decirse sin hipérbole que, así como para la *historia natural*, el Africa empieza en los Pirineos, en términos de *historia humana*, el Africa, para cada español, empieza en las plantas de los pies y acaba en los pelos de la cabeza. (Ruidosos y prolongados aplausos)'. (Costa 2003, 58–59; *my emphasis*).
18. 'Marruecos y España deben conservar su mutua independencia, renunciando en absoluto a conquistarse una a otra. En los primeros años de este siglo, el rey de España Carlos IV, comisionó a *nuestro insigne viajero* Domingo Badía, para que,  *fingiéndose* descendiente del Profeta, fuese a Africa a realizar cierto plan que había de dar por resultado la conquista de Marruecos por España; y *coincidencia singular*, en aquella misma ocasión, el emperador de Marruecos, Muley Suleymán, *quiso confiar al fingido abasida la reconquista de España*, por la cual suspiraba como *el mayor ideal de su vida*' (Costa 2003, 62; *my emphasis*).
19. 'En 1901 Costa era mucho más radical y decía con duro lenguaje, que hoy suena a leniniano: "Resistamos la nueva política militar, en que los fracasados de la vieja nos embarcan forzosamente para seguir desangrando a las clases trabajadoras". No es de extrañar que la guerra de África empezara a ser vista bajo una óptica revisionista: "La guerra de 1860 fue un acto de estéril y perjudicial quijotismo", afirmaba en la misma fecha de *Aita Tettauén* Manuel Maura Gamazo. El recuerdo del Noventa y ocho bastaba para inducir un gran cambio en la opinión popular. Recuértese que la triste campaña del Rif en 1909 y la Semana Trágica de Barcelona se hallaban sólo a la vuelta de la esquina' (Márquez Villanueva 2003, 7–8). ('In 1901 Costa was far more radical, affirming in a harsh tone that today would sound Leninist: "We shall resist the new politics of militarism, by which the losers from the old system force us to continue bleeding the working classes". It comes as no surprise that our war in Africa should be viewed from a revisionist point of view: "The war of 1860 was a sterile and damaging quixotic move", Manuel Maura Gamazo affirmed the same year in which *Aita Tettauén* was published. Memories of 1898 were enough to produce a major swing in public opinion. Remember that the pathetic Rif campaign of 1909 and Barcelona's *tragic week* were just around the corner').
20. 'Granadino y con pinta de moro, que él mismo gustaba de cultivar, profesa el furor anti-islámico de un cruzado' (Márquez Villanueva 2003, 11). ('*Granadino* (from Granada) with a Moorish appearance, which he himself happily cultivated while professing the Islamophobic wrath of a crusader').
21. 'Santiuste llegó a *sentir la impresión* de tener delante a un vecino del Atlas. "Si no estuviera yo *despierto* – pensaba *parpadeando* –, *creería* que uno de esos caballeros de zancas ágiles, de airosa estampa y de rostro curtido, se había metido en esta tienda para escribir en ella la relación *épica* de los combates, trabucando irónicamente el patriotismo ... Así le sale *historia de España* lo que debiera ser *historia marroquí* ... Perico, moro de Guadix, eres un español al revés o un mahometano con bautismo ... Escribes a lo castellano, y piensas y sientes a lo musulmán ... Musulmán eres ... El cristiano soy yo.'" (1989, 72; *emphasis mine*).

22. Márquez Villanueva (2003, 12–13) explains how Ricardo Ruiz Orsatti introduced Galdós to Tangier and to the text that inspired his construction of this character: *Compendio de la historia de Almagrib Alaksa*, by Ahmed ben Jalid el Nasiri (Cairo, 1895).
23. 'Ponderó El Nasiry las ventajas de vivir en Marruecos en calidad de moro, disfrazándose para ello de lenguaje, de costumbres y de religión, y ensalzó el beneficio grande que resulta de existir allí muy pocas leyes, simplificación legislativa que compensaba el bárbaro despotismo del Sultán. Este no era tan intolerable para el hombre flexible y astuto que supiera adaptarse al suelo, y hacer sus pulmones al ambiente de un país sin gobierno excesivo, tiranía ciega y caprichosa. Era cuestión de marrullería, de estudio de los hombres y de conocimiento de la fundamental ciencia del Mogreb, que es la Gramática Parda'. (1989, 203; *emphasis mine*).
24. "'Hijo, vete pronto a España, vete a cualquier país civilizado, que en Africa no tienes más carrera que la del mendigo si no estudias todas las artes del fingimiento ...'" (1989, 204).
25. Bernabé López García includes the term 'quimera' in the title of his edition of Badía's *Constitución de los Pueblos de Occidente* (Badía y Lebllich 2010).
26. Barberá Fraguas discusses this episode and its related documents in the section of his prologue titled 'La versión final de la conspiración' (Badía y Lebllich 1984, 76–80).
27. 'El Pacha de Marruecos, acompañado de otros Pachas y personas de distinción, me dio una fiesta en el campo. Al fin de la comida todos gritan: Sidi Ali Bey, la Constitución, la Constitución y yo dije cerrando los ojos: Sí, se hará de una forma u otra la Constitución. Apenas oyen esto, se arrojan a mis pies, me piden la mano derecha que todos se apresuran a cubrir con la suya y así con las manos una sobre otra apoyadas en la mía, pronuncian con entusiasmo la gran fórmula del juramento musulmán, prometiendo que Sidi Ali Bey les dará la Constitución'. (Barberá Fraguas in Badía y Lebllich 1997, 78–79).
28. The full title of the document is: 'Memoria ilusoria embiada desde Laraisch a Sidi Mulei Abduselem Príncipe del Garbi' (López García in Badía y Lebllich 2010, 13–14).
29. 'En una nación en que no existe la propiedad, pues el sultán es dueño de todo, en que el hombre no tiene la libertad de vender o disponer del fruto de su trabajo, en fin donde no se le deja gozar de él o hacer ostentación ante sus conciudadanos, fácil es conocer la causa de su inercia, embrutecimiento y miseria'. (Badía y Lebllich 1997, ch 17 392).
30. 'Nadie comprende mejor la psicología del marroquí, tan identificado está con él. Sidi Absalom Balcázar, así le llaman. Y, sin embargo, ¡nadie tan español como Santiago Balcázar!' (*jHarka!*, 5:07).

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