

La compilación se cierra con “Violencia social y violencia literaria: ‘El guardaespaldas’, de Nelson Marra”, por Alberto Mosquera. Sin duda uno de los cuentos de carga política más sutiles (su publicación causó la clausura de *Marcha* y el conocido exilio de los jurados que lo premiaron), Mosquera lo divide en 37 unidades para construir un discurso crítico en torno a los corolarios de la violencia y su representación. En pocos textos rioplatenses se textualiza tan bien la represión de los años setenta, y Mosquera muestra hábilmente como el cuento de Marras convierte todos esos horrores en literatura. Los detalles del análisis son ratificados por el cuidadoso trabajo empírico que el crítico muestra en sus abundantes notas, y son el correlato necesario para dar fin a su ensayo, y a la colección. Esta no censura nada, y no se pierde en sus referentes. Como resultado tenemos una colección exitosa y necesaria.

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Randolph D. Pope. *Understanding Juan Goytisolo*. Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1995. 182 pp.

Spain’s long-standing marginality vis-à-vis European or so-called “Western” civilization makes such a project as *Understanding Goytisolo* as difficult as it is important. How does one undertake introducing a writer as familiar as Juan Goytisolo is in the Spanish-speaking world to the general reading public in English-speaking countries, where he is scarcely known? In short, what are our tools for bridging cultural frontiers, for familiarizing the foreign?

Some of the answers to these questions are provided by Randolph Pope’s critical approach in this introductory work, published as part of the University of South Carolina’s “Understanding Modern European and Latin American Literature” series. To begin with, Pope identifies the stylistic features and thematic patterns that are fundamental to Goytisolo’s novels in unequivocal terms, thereby tracing a clear profile of the corpus of Goytisolo’s writing according to its various periods and trends, that is, according to its own internal structures and coherence. Served, secondly, by his own intellectual culture, Pope draws comparisons freely and conveniently between Goytisolo and a multitude of writers, autobiographers, philosophers, critics, religious

Piglia) son fructíferas. El linaje más importante, naturalmente para esta novela, es el de la escritura; y Berg conecta muy bien las ambiguas texturas de la historia autobiográfica con las de la parte de la novela en que se funden Tardewski y Kafka. El resultado es un relato policial, llevado a cabo por un crítico perspicaz.

La colaboración de María Coira, “Referencia y comunicación en textos narrativos de ficción”, es el que más acerca a la teoría en que quiere basarse el resto de esta compilación. Más que una teoría aplicada (especialmente al tipo de texto narrativo estudiado por los otros colaboradores), este extenso ensayo es un recorrido de las diferentes teorías basadas en el binarismo verdad/significado. A pesar de que la autora (en la primera nota a pie de página) menciona que el corpus textual “se acota a novelas publicada en México durante los recientes ochenta”, estos brillan por su ausencia (hay breves menciones en las páginas 159, y 165–166). Es claro que Coira sabe lo que quiere hacer, pero la impresión final es que este es un artículo para una enciclopedia de narrativa, algo fuera de serie en el propósito anunciado en el Prefacio de Calabrese. Por otro lado, el asunto de la verdad (véase Popper, Vargas Llosa) en este tipo de crítica tiene que ver, en última instancia, con la adecuación o cierre a la verdad del crítico a los muchos críticos que la han precedido al respecto.

Sylvia Lago, por otro lado, baja a la tierra la teoría con su “En torno a algunas estrategias narrativas: *Maluco, la novela de los descubridores*, de Baccino Ponce de León”. La novela de Baccino, ahora justamente canónica respecto a la re-escritura del discurso de las crónicas del descubrimiento, ha ocasionado una multiplicidad de interpretaciones. Es más, parece no haber suficientes aproximaciones críticas que agoten, aún momentáneamente, la riqueza significativa de la obra de Baccino. Lago no se aprovecha de lo que ya existe en torno a la obra que estudia, especialmente y como ella menciona, los aspectos específicamente históricos de la novela. En consecuencia su trabajo se limita a cierto repaso de una crítica bastante básica respecto a como “disfrazar” la crítica de un régimen autoritario en una obra “ficticia”, para de ahí pasar a la consideración de *Maluco* como texto “excéntrico, fantástico, ciencia-ficcional” (173). Ya está probado que la obra de Baccino es mucho más sutil. No obstante, lo que va cotejando Lago tiene el valor de hallar en la trama varias conexiones que no han sido aparentes para otros que han repasado el constructo [sic] ficticio de Baccino.

El penúltimo trabajo de la colección está dedicado a “Una para el poder: Eduardo Galeano”. En él María Alejandrina da Luz se propone analizar el relato “Los fantasmas del día de León”. Considerando que se ha escrito muy poco respecto a Galeano, especialmente en torno a su narrativa más “tradicional” (v.g. la colección en la cual se incluye el relato analizado por Luz), este ensayo examina un texto primordial para entender cómo Galeano comienza a ficcionalizar su papel de intelectual comprometido. Según DaLuz esto se lleva a cabo con la escisión de la voz narrativa en un “intelectual que observa, juzga y relata y aquellos que serán los héroes o protagonistas” (190). Luz lleva a cabo una lectura penetrante, especialmente en torno a las contradicciones de los intelectuales comprometidos que quieren presentar una verdad única.

leaders, and film directors from Europe and the Americas. He frames Goytisolo with a detailed portrait of that common ground shared by writers and, more importantly, *readers* on both sides of the cultural divide. He thereby provides his English-speaking audience with crucial leads for overcoming the obstacles of the “arcane artistic conventions and philosophical concepts” that, according to the series editor, characterize modern literature.

Pope’s study may be divided into two main parts, the first corresponding to the two introductory chapters that survey Goytisolo’s writing in its cultural and historical context. In Chapter 1, he focuses primarily on Goytisolo’s biography, drawing information from the author’s highly acclaimed autobiography, *Coto vedado* (1985) and *En los reinos de taifa* (1986). In this chapter, Pope highlights aspects of the writer’s biography that serve best to shed light upon the development of Goytisolo’s narrative: the pain the author suffered as a child, the “ unsuspected and tender love” that caused him to hide his Marxist ideology and homosexuality from his father, and the “pervasive sense of guilt” resulting from his sexually abusive grandfather. For the benefit of his readers, who are unlikely to be schooled in the topics of Spanish history, Pope occasionally relates these circumstances to the austere social, political, and economic backdrop of the 1940s and 1950s, showing thereby how the individual and the collective interface. Goytisolo’s conflictive relationship toward his father, we are told, parallels the scorn for all forms of authority (familiar, institutional, national) commonly felt by most writers growing up under Franco. Pope identifies the indelible imprint of a Roman Catholic upbringing in Goytisolo’s “unremitting quest for sincerity,” his “solidarity with the despised and the marginal,” his “radical” notion of virtuosity, and his austere moral stance (8), and he does so by reading below the surface of the writer’s declared iconoclasm, a dogma unto itself, and against the grain of those critics who take the writer’s declarations at face value.

These valuable insights, along with others concerning the correlations Goytisolo establishes between history, language, and self-representation, help to decipher the essential consciousness from which a whole corpus of literature emanates. Among the ongoing concerns that help to define that consciousness, two stand out as primary in Pope’s study. The critic reminds us that, like Kierkegaard and Nietzsche, Goytisolo treats “inconsistency” as a virtuous trait when dealing with life’s “shifting truths.” Readers of Goytisolo will certainly recognize the various planes on which this assertion holds true. So too they will upon encountering Pope’s discussion of Goytisolo’s tendency to other himself as an “alien incarnation,” in the tradition of Robert Louis Stevenson (as Pope asserts)—or in that of Sade and Maldonor, for that matter—a tradition rife with “images of demonic possession” that the novelist appropriates for conveying in visual form “the conflictive, even destructive interdependence between disparate aspects of his personality” (18–19). The search for truth, on the one hand, and self-consciousness, on the other: these emerge from Pope’s introductory portrait of Goytisolo as the definitive qualities of a *life in writing*, as the poles around which Pope organizes his lesson on how to read this author.

In Chapter 2 (“How to Read Goytisolo”) Pope passes from Goytisolo’s autobiographic imperative to the “peculiar philosophical and cultural traditions” of Spanish culture presented in compliance with the explicit instructions of the series editor (Editor’s preface, vii). Those “traditions” correspond here to the standard historical paradigms of Spanish literature since the Civil War, as developed by other literary historians and critics of Goytisolo: censorship and political commitment under Franco, the formalist-structuralist movement of the 1960s, democratization and the collapse of ideologies in postmodern Europe, Goytisolo’s adherence to transculturalism, and, finally, the techniques of intertextuality, montage, and fragmentation. In *Understanding Goytisolo*, these categories function as signposts along the author’s evolutionary path. They reflect the central role that change and renewal play in Goytisolo’s writing. In this regard, they serve to counterbalance the degree of permanence linked to an essential Goytisolo, a notion that derives in the first chapter from the psychological portrayal of the author in terms of his unending search for truth and his irrepressible self-consciousness.

The introduction offered in Chapters 1 and 2 appears as a microcosm of the main body of the study, where Pope represents in successive chapters the successive stages or concerns of Goytisolo’s writing: Spain’s social degradation (*Juegos de manos*, 1954; *Duelo en el Paraíso*, 1955) and insularity (*Fiestas*, 1958; *El circo*, 1957; *La resaca*, 1958), the author’s “documentary obsession” linked to his travel memoirs and social documentary (*Campos de Níjar*, 1959; *La Chanca* and *Fin de fiesta*, 1962), his personal liberation through fiction (*Señas de identidad*, *Don Julián*, and *Juan sin Tierra*), and, finally, postmodernism (*Makbara*, 1980; *Paisajes después de la batalla*, 1982; *Virtudes del pájaro solitario*, 1988; *La cuarentena*, 1991; *La saga de los hermanos Marx*, 1993). Each chapter is replete with cultural references specific to the period, such as: Freud and René Girard (Chapter 3); Fellini (Chapter 4); Azorín, Baroja, Unamuno, Buñuel and Cela (Chapter 5); Carlos Fuentes and James Joyce (Chapter 6); Lewis Carroll, Julio Cortázar, Dante, and the mystics, Spanish (Juan de la Cruz) and Muslim (Ibn al-Arabí) (Chapter 6). If at times the sheer quantity of references seems overwhelming, or their inclusion fortuitous, they do convey a sense of the magnitude and diversity of Goytisolo’s intellectual universe. They also contribute to building a rich and detailed portrait of his intellectual context, a wise pedagogical device, as mentioned, in a book intended for readers who might know little about Spain or Spanish literature.

The heterogeneity thus developed in Chapters 3 to 6 stands in direct contrast to the elements of permanence or coherence that Pope introduces in Chapters 1 and 2, and that he would have done well to develop more explicitly in the detailed textual analyses that follow. Goytisolo’s search for truth, for example, may be related to Pope’s discussion of the novelist’s “need for action,” search for justice, and sense of guilt as stemming, in his earliest works (*Duelo* and *Juegos*), from the character’s (and author’s) privileged social status in an age of scarcity and despair. Pope suggests how these conditions anticipate the “dissatisfaction with social conditions and historical moment” in the *Mañana efímero* trilogy (*Fiestas*, *El circo*, *La resaca*), the discovery

of an internally colonized Spain in need of being “recounted” (*Nijar, La Chanca*), the iconoclasm and anti-traditionalist impulse of the Mendiola trilogy, and, finally, Goytisolo’s crusade, begun in *Don Julián* and fully realized in *Virtudes*, for “rescuing” from oblivion and revitalizing the marginalized voices of a national tradition of heterodoxy. We thereby come to understand just how fundamental a sense of morality is in Goytisolo’s novels, based as it is on the author’s previously mentioned principles of sincerity and virtuosity, and his self-proclaimed solidarity with the poor and downtrodden.

As for the problematic of selfhood, this feature emerges in the context of the complex, fragile, and self-doubting character (Abel in *Duelo*, David in *Juegos*), portrayed often in affiliation with the inherently protean and highly symbolic *mixtificador* (such as “Tánger-Uribe” in *Juegos*), a veritable prototype within Goytisolo’s fiction who is given to charades, disguises, mirrors, in short, to the spectacle of self-representation and deceit. The implications of such a characterization are widespread, perhaps even more so than is immediately apparent in *Understanding Goytisolo*. They are felt in the writer’s insistence on introspection and reverie throughout the 1950s and in his travel essays, as Pope insightfully notes, where Goytisolo searches for his own “authentic voice” in a “depleted” yet soon to be exploited hinterland (74). More importantly, they reverberate in the “fragmented” or “heterogeneous” self that emerges from a radically innovative style of writing in *Señas de identidad* and beyond. Echoes of the oral tradition—one recalls the Arab story-tellers in Goytisolo’s beloved Jemaa al-Fna square (Marrakech)—resonate here in the flow and rhythm of the prose. As Pope reminds us, those echoes define what is most innovative about a style that emulates “emotions of a learned mind, where layers of ancestral culture and hundreds of voices compete for attention.”

Because of its insightful presentation of these topics and the valuable cache of information that it contains, *Understanding Goytisolo* will no doubt stand out as an exemplary addition to a series aimed at undergraduate and graduate students in the United States. Nonetheless, two clarifications seem to be in order here, clarifications that concern ideas suggested in the study yet needing further development. In Goytisolo’s latest and most difficult period, as Pope asserts, style is indeed our gateway to understanding the multifaceted self that he (the critic) relates aptly to postmodern theories of “ephemerality, fragmentation, discontinuity, and the chaotic” as “positive disruptions, liberating moves that counteract the unified and massive forces of global capitalism, the violence of superpowers, and the decay of centralized cities.” In short, style is only the correlative of change and renewal in Goytisolo. Nevertheless, one should not be blinded by stylistic innovation to the fact that the fragmented, ephemeral self described here incubates in successive stages throughout the various phases of Goytisolo’s writing, as does the writer’s Quixotic search for justice and for the heterodox Spain that his narrativized self is wedded to. Although the readers of *Understanding Goytisolo* are provided with sufficient material for reconstructing this point, they would benefit from a more systematic presentation of it. They would

thereby come to understand the extent to which Goytisolo, a self-proclaimed apostate, adopts a *new* style largely for articulating more incisively *old* concerns.

The same clarification should be made with regard to the ideological underpinnings that one might identify in Goytisolo's representation of women and Arabs. Again, Pope alludes to this matter in passing when he relates Lewis Carroll's "immoderate attraction to young girls" (the portrait of Carroll's real "Alice" is featured on the cover of *Paisajes*) to a similar ambiguity implicit in Goytisolo's writing: "There is a resemblance in this portrait to Goytisolo's descriptions of fishermen and immigrant Arabs as sexual objects for a refined intellectual, the distance in social class making perhaps less intolerable the breach in the moral code" (136). Clearly no one can underestimate Goytisolo's extraordinary dedication to the Arabic culture and language, his continual role as a prime spokesperson for Muslim causes in the Spanish press and his probable impact on popular attitudes toward Islam in post-Franco Spain, not just through journalism but in editorial work of extraordinary importance. These noble intentions and achievements notwithstanding, it is important to note that the Arab first appears in Goytisolo's writing in *Señas de identidad* as the *anonymous* pick-up on the streets of Paris, a descendant of the various counter-culture individuals appearing in Goytisolo's fiction of the 1950s. The Arab is made to embody all that is antithetical to bourgeois, orthodox, heterosexual Spain in works that disregard the ideological tensions and complexities, the interplay of orthodoxy and heterodoxy, inherent in Arabic culture—or any other, for that matter. As such, the Arab falls into dangerous association with the type of bipolar dichotomies as developed in *Don Julián*, for example, where women are subsumed by the piety-prostitution duality (Isabel la Católica or the lusty "mulata" [sic] dancer during Carnival), or in *Juan sin Tierra*, where "white" stands for sexual repression and "black" for licentiousness. It might be possible to relativize such Manichean paradigms in the light of the author's satiric-parodic aims, but not to do so fully and directly could tend to thwart the goal of generating interest in Goytisolo among an audience for whom such issues are pressing.

In short, these comments are not intended to detract from the overall high quality of the study. The clear and cogent presentation and commentary, the copious references offered in the footnotes, and a valuable bibliography make *Understanding Goytisolo* an indispensable pedagogical tool, one that offers the literature professor a ready-made syllabus and the basic text for a course on this Spanish novelist.

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