RESÉÑAS

Vida, the writer's self likewise plays a critical role in the shaping of modern concepts of time, nature, ontological slipperiness, and the utter contingency of narrative meaning.

Navajas is a first-rate critic, and he demonstrates it in this fine book of essays. The quibble that I have with the volume, however, falls largely outside of its content per se and centers on its form. The book consists of ten essays written over a period of ten years and prefaced with a short introductory piece. It thus lacks the structural coherence and overarching critical thesis that otherwise would give it greater resonance in the field. The essays also occasionally seem out of phase with current realities that post-date their original publication but pre-date their re-publication here. A passing reference in the book to electronic communication, for example, could easily have been elaborated on to draw out what Navajas refers to in the prologue as «la irrupción de otros lenguajes más ágiles y atractivos que han surgido de manera acelerada en los últimos años» (15). The rapid transaction of narratives, the instant communication that creates ephemeral discourses capable of changing the course of history, and the broad access to culture by millions of more consumers—these issues are highly pertinent to interactions with readers today, but do not appear prominently as thematic components of Navajas's critical discourse that could have provided his book with a firmer sense of unity. For this reason, the individual parts of the volume can generally be perceived as more valuable than the whole. In each case, these parts are foundationally solid, coherently structured, and creatively argued—valued traits of literary criticism that make Navajas's work usable as well as useful.

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British Hispanist David Henn's recent study of Cela's six books of prose which deal with Spain's variegated geography and cultures fills a significant void. Concisely framed within a discourse of pertinent theory on travel writing (Butor, Fussell, Cocker, Kowalewski, Adams, etc.), Henn's scholarship is grounded in first-hand knowledge of nineteenth as well as twentieth-century Spain and Spanish (and European) letters, and Cela's published essays (and pronouncements) on the subject. The close reading of the various editions and formats of Cela's travel pieces is well synchronized with corresponding critical commentary (Kirsner, McPheeters, Martínez Cachero, Pozuelo Yvancos, Butt, etc.). By also making use of the findings of important historians of twentieth-century Spain's post-Civil War recovery (Tamames, Carr, Preston, Fusi Aizpurua, etc.), Henn confers upon his work an unfailing sense of balance. In addition, valid empirical evidence is offered by way of well-chosen (line-by-line) comparisons with

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some of the seminal works (newspaper essays) which served as springboards for Cela's book-length travel narratives. The conclusions that Henn sets forth are convincing while also piquing interest in Cela's hitherto eclipsed texts (and those lesser-known topic-related works by Emilia Pardo Bazán, the Spanish Generation of 1898 writers, as well as those by José Ortega y Gasset, Arturo Barea, Juan Goytisolo, and Julio Llamazares).

The study exudes the objectivity which is necessary for an intelligent assessment of the works of a controversial figure such as that of Camilo José Cela. For example, strong evidence is given to prove that Judíos, moros y cristianos is not the end-product of a single travel adventure, but rather «a conflation of a number of trips made in Old Castile during the late 1940s and early 1950s» (127). Fact also wins out over Arturo Barea's «sentimental speculation» (in his «Introduction to the 1953 English translation of La colmena») in which the vagabond-narrator is depicted as a «'shabby traveler on foot with a rucksack'» instead of the «well turned-out traveler» that is shown in a «photograph used for the frontispiece of the first edition of Viaje a la Alcarria» (213). Many other similar assertions are made concerning numerous truths and myths that have become associated with Cela's travel-related narrations, one of the more prominent being that «[s]ubsequently, Cela was to acknowledge that Wlasak and also Conchita Stichaner accompanied him on his trip [...] This admission clearly raises questions concerning both the presentation and content of Viaje a la Alcarria [...] a reminder that Cela's account reveals only what the author wanted to transmit to the reader» (213). And there are statements such as the reference to the Pueblo (newspaper) articles from which Del Miño al Bidasoa is compiled which further attest to Henn's objectivity: «it is clear that the Pueblo passage has been quite extensively reworked [...] this [...] reveals an artistic revision of the original passage —from the already attention-catching Pueblo version to the more colorful, more informative, and more literary, travel-book account of the scene» (104). Two other good examples of Henn's independence of thought deal with Cela's last two travel books, which have largely been cast aside by critics. With regards Viaje al Pirineo de Lérida, Henn gives merit to the transparency of Cela's social consciousness, or to be specific, «the way in which contemporary man is also imposing himself on the landscape» through tourism, construction, development, etc. (212). On a similarly unexpected positive note, he uncovers in Nuevo viaje a la Alcarria «the most personal and most moving of Cela's travel narratives [...] which] rounds off the author's travel writing with a certain sense of both continuity and completion» (238).

Separate chapters square both the genesis and evolution of the six travel books with timely reminders of textual variations originating in different editions (that is, whether read as separate publications or as a part of Cela's complete works [Obra completa]). Also taken into account are editorial signposts for dates of publication and hallmark prologues of
Celian (literary) thought. Henn’s careful chronological study of Viaje a la Alcarria (1946), Del Miño al Bidasoa (1952), Judios, moros y cristianos (1956), Primer viaje andaluz (1959), Viaje al Pirineo de Lérida (1965), and Nuevo viaje a la Alcarria (1986) renders an enticing invitation to travel the country first-hand and experience the same feeling of discovery and awe as that of nineteenth-century European visitors whose letters and travel diaries sparked great interest in a country that had been for so long closed off from the rest of Europe. Of significance too for the enthusiast of Cela’s novels and short stories, Old Spain and New Spain sets forth a wealth of valuable information which easily provides a grid from which to broaden one’s understanding of the genesis of Cela’s prose fiction. Also included among the signatory features of these travel accounts are the pronounced literary coordinates of his last four (travel) books in which references abound to Spanish writers as they are associated with the places being seen/visited. Even though Henn does not claim to carry out an exhaustive study of the stylistic (or exclusively literary aspects) of Cela’s travel narratives, he addresses the parallels between fiction and reality in such a manner as to foster on-going critical dialogue about the hybrid nature and resulting elusiveness of a facile generic classification of Cela’s works.

This being said, Henn’s study brings to mind (to this reviewer) that, once again, Camilo José Cela’s creativity lies with the sketch, whether of characters or of history itself, which sometimes can be construed as name-dropping; such is the case with Judios, moros y cristianos, whose provocative title has more to do with paying homage to Américo Castro’s thesis than with providing the reader with an in-depth post-Civil War perspective on «Spanishness» (130). By showing us that the defining characteristics of Cela’s travel books seem to fly in the face of historians and literary theorists, and in pointing out the difficulties of ascertaining the real motives for Cela’s travel writings (self-discovery, pilgrimage, etc.), Henn subtly summons up the rebelliousness of an author who delighted in fashioning for himself the masque of the outspoken iconoclast that—we now know— he so predictably wore throughout his public life. Henn’s recent study allows us, then, to view Cela’s travel books with the same intellectual inquisitiveness that continues to spark debate about the man (Cela) who lies at the heart of it all.

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Al pretender aproximarse al pensamiento de María Zambrano, tal vez se saque, con frecuencia, la impresión de que lo escrito por dicha disci-