

tados, como el trabajo de Juan Marsal, *Pensar bajo el franquismo* o las memorias de Juan Goytisolo, por citar dos referencias básicas. En todo caso, observaciones que sólo muy tangencialmente afectan a los análisis de las novelas citadas, que recoge en el último capítulo, y donde sobresale una excelente interpretación de *Los bravos*.

JORDI GRACIA

Luis T. González del Valle. *La ficción breve de Valle Inclán*. Barcelona, Anthropos, 1990, 376 pp.

In his analysis of 53 of Ramón María del Valle-Inclán's (1866-1936) short stories, Luis T. González del Valle fearlessly confronts the disconcerting, if not altogether frustrating, problem of these texts' varied editions and publications. By undertaking this monumental task, he provides the reader with a wealth of critical and theoretical bibliographical information, knowledge, personal interpretation, and insight into what constitutes the first phase of the writer in question's literary production. While González del Valle's point of departure is narratological in scope —relying almost exclusively on Shlomith Rimmon-Kennan's 1983 book entitled *Narrative Fiction. Contemporary Poetics*—, his study is the obvious result of meticulous research and conscientious investigation over a long period of time, for works such as this one do not come about over night.

From the outset, the reader gets the distinct impression that (s)he is reading a multifaceted text due in large measure to the copious notes which accompany each segment of the book. Not only do these allow González del Valle to document his sources and to further speculate on topics that are tangential to his primary analysis, but they also sensitize the reader with respect to the level of difficulty —beginning most practically with simply locating the editions themselves— that is involved in dealing with this subject matter. Divided into three major parts —*Corte de amor*, *Jardín umbrío*, and «Diversos textos»—, each one of the short stories contained therein is systematically broken down in terms of a brief plot summary, an identification of the type of

narrator(s) and other narrative techniques used, and in stories such as «Mi hermana Antonia» and «Rosarito», an exploration of the hermeneutics of these enigmatic texts.

For the newcomer to Valle-Inclán studies, González del Valle's abiding references to well-known scholars, such as Elaine Lavaud, Emma Speratti-Piñero, and Juan Antonio Hormigón, among others, give further assurance that his is a fresh and new interpretation, while still very solidly ground. Although he pulls no punches in venturing his own opinions, which at times contradict those of the aforementioned authorities, a sense of profound respect prevails for those with whom he differs. Contrary to the limited approach of many critical studies, González del Valle's knowledge of Valle-Inclán's entire repertoire, with particular emphasis on the writer's plays, serves to contextualize not only his study of these early short stories but also to strengthen his own findings. Cast within the boundaries of Valle-Inclán's key theoretical work, *La lámpara maravillosa*, and two examples of his more sophisticated work —the *esperpento* and *El ruedo ibérico*—, these short stories take on new meaning as they assume their place at the starting point of this much misunderstood, and oftentimes wholly ignored, body of works. González del Valle's tireless references to Valle-Inclán's more mature writings serve as a constant reminder that these stories, rather than examples of those puerile exercises that are part and parcel of most writers' careers, constitute the embryonic building blocks upon which the recently-discovered Valle-Inclán edifice stands.

All of the stories are, in turn, framed in a narratological analysis wherein the diegetic nature of the narrator(s) in each short story become(s) somewhat of a focal point which then permits easy access to the subsequent consideration of such narrative devices as prolepsis and analepsis, narrator reliability, the use of ambiguity, and character portrayal, to mention only a few. While ample thought is given to the plausibility of a Todorovian reading of those tales in which ambiguity rises more noticeably to the surface, González del Valle almost unilaterally opts for the Galician tradition of legends and superstitions in explaining any fantastic, genre-related classification.

With the realization that 53 short stories have been studied in light of the major tenets of narratology come the noteworthiness, significance, and soundness of González del Valle's contribution

to Valle-Inclán studies and twentieth-century Hispanism. In all of its 376 pages, *La ficción breve de Valle Inclán* serves as a model for seasoned literary critics and students of literature as well. Perhaps one of its most timely and engaging features is, however, its author's entreaty to his readers as he makes one final statement: «Al final, el lector decidirá sobre la validez de mis percepciones teniendo como tiene la última palabra» (329).

The University of South Carolina

LUCILE C. CHARLEBOIS

Miguel Delibes, *Pegar la hebra*, Barcelona, Destino, 1990, 222 pp.

*Pegar la hebra*, tal y como reza su título, es un libro con que Delibes pretende entablar un curioso diálogo a larga distancia y esforzadamente unilateral con sus lectores. Convirtiendo sus cuartillas en un imaginario bar o café, el literato da rienda suelta a su *idearium* y su pluma con el fin de exponer coloquialmente: «algunos de los temas que me inquietan, me interesan o me divierten» (p. 7). El resultado es un *popurrí* de viñetas ensayísticas y remembranzas con que Delibes intenta poner al día sus temas de siempre: el progreso y la ecología, la España (especialmente Castilla) de la posguerra y de la democracia, la crítica literaria y cinematográfica y los deportes. Dado este enfoque, habría que hablar ya de un Delibes evocador, que cava o excava cada vez más en su pasado para poder seguir escribiendo, pero que va apartándose de la prosa de ficción. *Pegar la hebra* se entronca con *Castilla habla* y *Mi vida al aire libre*, obras en que el ensayista también departe recordatoria y meditativamente con sus destinatarios.

Delibes imprime *Pegar la hebra* con un tono polivalente que fluctúa según el tópico y el estado de ánimo que el tema a tratar despierte en el articulista. Así, cambia del desenfadado y nostálgico goce vital del apartado titulado «Yo trabajé a las órdenes de Orson Welles», en que relata su experiencia de extra en una película que el gran cineasta intentó rodar en Valladolid tiempo ha, a la irascibilidad chocante que caracteriza sus ideas sobre «aborto y progresismo». Escribe: «Pero lo más curioso del caso es que el abortismo ha venido a incluirse entre los postulados de la moderna 'progresía'. En nuestro tiempo es casi inconcebible un pro-