

object per se, but the most accurate possible symbol of it within the human capacity to understand the world» (103). Benet's characters, like those of the novels of memory, frequently ponder the past, searching for illumination about the present. Yet his characters are never successful: «there are no epiphanies in Benet's narrative» (105).

Chapter 5 and 6 focus on postmodern novels by Torrente Ballester, Juan Goytisolo, and Camilo José Cela. If practitioners of the previous narrative modes believed in the possibility of history and that of «writing about history,» the fiction of postmodernists «makes no such claim to the real» (117). Language itself is understood to be unstable and wholly constructed, so history and fiction constitute similarly futile attempts at representation. In the context of Francoist Spain, such nihilism was dissident, because it stood in direct opposition to postwar historiographic discourse, whose truth claims were unambiguous. The final chapter considers postmodern novels which verge into the apocalyptic, suggesting not only the destruction of the world as it has existed but also revelation and eventually transformation. It is «the end of the postapocalyptic Francoist order and its paradigm of truthmaking» (149) which is asserted, clearing the way for profound change in the future.

In a Postscript, Herzberger comments briefly on the role of history in the Spanish novels since Franco's death. No longer written in opposition, these texts are free to manipulate history to their own imaginative ends.

*Narrating the Past* significantly advances our knowledge about the fiction written in Spain between the early 1950s and the early 1980s. It is particularly to be commended for blending respectful citation of the standard works in the field, insights drawn from theoretical critics, and apt comparison with fiction in English. The book's unwavering focus on history in postwar fiction might once have resulted in a very narrow monograph, but in the wake of deconstruction and poststructuralism, history is no longer seen as a monolith, a solid objective correlative. History, as *Narrating the Past* reiterates, is now understood to be a process, involving slippery words and the construction of meaning. It is a stimulating fellow traveller to works of fiction.

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Carlos Javier García. *Metanovela: Luis Goytisolo, Azorín y Unamuno*. Madrid, Júcar, 1994, 159 pp.

«...la metanovela es la novela de la novela: la novela misma, su construcción, es objeto de novelización» (13). With these words, Carlos Javier García begins a short volume on metafiction that mostly covers well worn territory, but does offer a clear and accessible overview that

is competent and reliable from within the formalist assumptions that govern it. García does not try to offer a history of metafictional writing nor to analyze the most important examples of the genre in Spanish literature. His goal is a formal account based on narratological concepts that are used in opposition to realism. Where the realistic text seeks to represent truth by developing individuated characters who move in concrete time and space while conforming to a world of cause and effect, metafiction disrupts the illusion of reality, forces the reader to question assumptions about the real and the fictitious, and thereby points to issues of creativity or invention. Formally, García sees two kinds of metafictional text: «discursive,» where the metafictional element occurs primarily within the *discourse* of the text (following the terminology of Seymour Chatman), and «specular,» where it occurs at the level of *story*. He also believes that metafiction is typical of the postmodern era, with its loss of totalization and emphasis on autobiography. However, a similar argument could be made for modernism, which also explored metafictional writing as it sought to disrupt traditional literary codes and affirm the priority of the contingent. In any case, García understands that no single explanation accounts for the many goals of metafictional writing although some tendency to violate habitual communication does seem always to lurk just beneath its surface.

After an initial chapter outlining basic metafictional concepts, a much briefer second chapter provides a straightforward overview of narrators. Drawing on Genette, Friedman, and others, García offers a competent introduction to the problem of dramatized vs. non-dramatized narrators.

Then comes the main analytical section of the book, a long third chapter that constitutes almost two-thirds of the whole and discusses several examples of metafictional writing in Spanish. These include Azorín's *El escritor* (1942) and *Doña Inés* (1925), as well as Unamuno's *Cómo se hace una novela* (1927). All three are then followed by a long analysis of Luis Goytisolo's *Antagonía*, especially the three metafictional volumes *Los verdes de mayo hasta el mar* (1976), *La cólera de Aquiles* (1979), and *Teoría del conocimiento* (1981). As with other aspects of the volume, the analyses say little that is new or striking, but they do provide a reasonable overview. Because the texts are exemplary, works by any of several authors could have been chosen, but of course these ones are among of the most widely recognized.

Over the last generation, many books and articles have been published on metafiction, including some very important work on Spanish texts. A few titles that come to mind are Robert Alter's *Partial Magic* (1975), Lucien Dallenbach's *Le récit spéculaire* (1977), Linda Hutcheon's *Narcissistic Narrative* (1984), Patricia Waugh's *Metafiction: The Theory and Practice of Self-Conscious Fiction* (1984), and on Spanish literature, *Beyond the Metafictional Mode* of Robert Spire (1984), Jonathan Mayhew's *The Poetics of Self-Consciousness* (1994) —dealing with poetry, of

course— and classical articles by Leon Livingstone, John Kronik, David Herzberger, Gonzalo Sobejano, Randolph Pope, and many others. In that light, one can legitimately ask if there is a real need for still another book on the same topic, especially one that mostly summarizes the work of others. The answer to this question lies in the fact that most work on metafiction has come from outside Spain even when some of the most significant examples of the mode are in Spanish. Indeed, it is curious that a literary tradition so seemingly realistic as that of Spain is also so deeply metafictional; but after all, the founding novel of realism, *Don Quixote*, is also the origin of most metafiction. In this sense, it remains important that Spanish critics, many of whom still cling to older concepts of realism, come to a firmer grasp of metafictional writing. In such a context, Carlos Javier García does provide a useful and helpful book.

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STEPHEN J. SUMMERHILL

José Romera Castillo. *Con Antonio Gala (Estudios sobre su vida)*. Madrid, Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia, 1996, 335 pp.

El profesor José Romera Castillo ha recogido en esta última obra una extensa colección de trabajos realizados por él mismo sobre el escritor Antonio Gala, quien, además, es el autor del pórtico del libro.

*Con Antonio Gala* consta esencialmente de cinco capítulos. El primero esboza la trayectoria literaria de Antonio Gala desde su infancia hasta el presente, y hace un repaso rápido del repertorio de sus obras de teatro, así como de las obras de otros géneros cultivados por el escritor. El segundo capítulo está dedicado por entero al teatro de Gala y contiene varios estudios sobre sus características, las influencias y el desarrollo de su teoría dramática. En realidad, estos dos capítulos están esencialmente basados en la introducción que José Romera Castillo hizo a su edición de *Los verdes campos del Edén* y *El cementerio de los pájaros* publicada por Plaza & Janes en 1986.

El capítulo tercero contiene mayor variedad de asuntos. En primer lugar hay un estudio sistemático de *Los verdes campos del Edén* y *El cementerio de los pájaros*, donde José Romera se preocupa tanto de las cuestiones textuales, estilísticas y estructurales, como de las noticias y críticas sobre la representación de las obras. El siguiente apartado está dedicado a *Samarkanda* y, además de explicar su significado e importancia en el conjunto de la obra dramática de Gala, sintetiza las opiniones más relevantes de la crítica periodística tras el estreno de la obra. Para cerrar el capítulo, José Romera incluye dos estudios bien diferentes. El primero es un extenso y detallado trabajo sobre los elementos específicos y genéricos del lenguaje coloquial en «El hotelito», el segundo dedi-