

Ruiz Silva, Carlos, Miguel Ángel Lozano Marco, Gregorio Torres Nebrera and Edmund L. King. *La novelística de Gabriel Miró. Nuevas perspectivas*. Alicante, Instituto de Cultura Juan Gil-Albert, 1993, 125 pp.

Originally given as presentations at a symposium on Miró that took place at the University of Alicante, the four articles comprising this book are of varying lengths and value. The analyses offered are not always as new as the title promises, and there is some overlapping. That said, I would hasten to point out that the essays have the ring of authority as the four contributors are well established Miró scholars, who know his work as well as anyone. Carlos Ruiz Silva's «Los comienzos novelísticos de Gabriel Miró» finds all the major Mironian themes—lack of love, adultery, provincial backwardness, death—and stylistic practices—especially the rich lexicon—in Miró's first two novels *La mujer de Ojeda* (1901) and *Hilván de escenas* (1903), which were repudiated by their author and not included in his complete works. On this evidence, the article argues that these early efforts are indeed an integral part of Miró's novelistic production.

Gregorio Torres Nebrera completes a similar exercise in the first half of his essay, «Badaleste, Boraida, Serosca, Oleza... Espacios interrelacionados en Gabriel Miró», but goes on in the second half to analyze the spatial dimensión of *Hilván de escenas*, *El abuelo del rey*, *Nuestro Padre San Daniel* and *Los pies y los zapatos de Enriqueta*. He reveals (unsurprisingly enough) that Miró's novelistic spaces are not realistic representations of Alicante landscapes but creations that take on moral, social and psychological meanings. The observations made toward the end of the article—that «[e]n efecto, hay dos Boraidas, dos Seroscas y dos Olezas, la preexistente al comienzo del relato, la de las sombras, la inmovilista, anclada en un sistema de valores caducos, egoístas, y la que se va perfilando según avanza la novela respectiva» (94)—is the most interesting idea tendered, but unfortunately, it is not developed. It is also irritating that the author does not mention other critics who have studied Miró's use of space—for example, Marian G. R. Coope's «El *hortus conclusus* y el Paraíso terrenal en los jardines literarios de Gabriel Miró», *Revista del Instituto de Estudios Alicantinos*, 27 (1979): 9-26.

No one who is familiar with the work of Miguel Ángel Lozano or Edmund L. King will be surprised that their essays do offer

fresh perspectives on and increase our understanding of Miró's novelistic craft. Lozano Marco focuses his attention on *Niño y grande*, one of Miró's most enigmatic novelettes. He first traces the novel's unusual publication history, beginning with its first version *Amores de Antón Hernando* (1909), which was eventually incorporated into the longer novelette in 1922. Without making the usual facile comparisons to the Generation of '98, Lozano's interpretation of *Niño y grande* draws on Schopenhauer's opposition of the will and the intellect and carefully reveals the novel to belong to «la línea novelística mironiana de relatos centrados en un personaje cuya subjetividad tiñe la realidad que lo envuelve» (35). *Niño y grande*, as Lozano convincingly demonstrates is a confessional novel that unveils a theory of biography in which the person as child and as adult are inseparable, an idea also developed by Schopenhauer. Lozano's suggestive essay highlights Miró as a writer of novellas, a genre that has a long and honored tradition in Spanish literature from Cervantes to Unamuno, Carmen de Burgos, Pérez de Ayala, Carmen Laforet and most recently Carmé Riera. One hopes that more scholars will be inspired to follow Lozano's example and pay similar attention to others of Miro's short novels.

The collection ends with «*Oleza: Novela como iconostasio*», Edmund King's masterful challenge to Ortega's review of *El obispo leproso*, in which the philosopher-cum-literary critic opined that Miró's novel «no queda avecindada entre las buenas novelas» (qtd. 106). Rebuttals to Ortega's essay on Miró have been attempted in the past, but King brings some new ammunition to the task, namely first-hand knowledge of Ortega's personal library. There, King has discovered that Ortega most probably had not read *Nuestro Padre San Daniel*, the first half of what Miró intended (as King demonstrates here beyond a reasonable doubt) to be a single work with *El obispo leproso*. Many of Ortega's objections to the novel's details and characterization would have dissolved had he read the two-volume set. King also reveals a rather crude method of note-taking by Ortega; at least in this particular instance, he simply cut out (perhaps with a razor blade) passages of *El obispo leproso* which he apparently then used as reminders (out of context) when he wrote his damaging review. King's article concludes with his own definition of Miró's novelistic technique as an «iconostasio» or stringing together of intensely expressive scenes.

All four essays (mercifully free of jargon and oblivious to current trends that focus on power, marginality, modernism versus postmodernism, etc.) remind us that there is still much basic archival work to be done in Spanish literary criticism, much that we need to know before we can understand why Miró and Spanish literature in general have assumed its undeserved position on the margins.

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Juan Valera. *Una anatomía electoral: Correspondencia familiar (1855-1864)*. Barcelona, Sirmio-Quaderns Crema, 1992, 280 pp.

Los epistolarios de escritores famosos, caso de Juan Valera (1824-1905), debemos, en mi opinión, apreciarlos hoy de distinta manera a cómo lo hacíamos treinta años atrás. Entonces su valor dependía exclusivamente de la cantidad de información nueva que aportaban, aquello que permitía redondear, perfilar, la imagen del autor y, sobre todo, sus ideas estéticas o las expresiones que se tenían por tales y su posible reflejo en la obra. Se practicaba con ellos una suerte de biografismo de aficionado, que casi nunca salía de esa vía estrecha de la búsqueda del mimetismo de lo dicho en las cartas y el texto literario. La presente edición, a cargo de Leonardo Romero, juzgada desde tal perspectiva, carecería de interés. Estas cartas dicen de un Valera escasamente idealista, la etiqueta con que viene agraciada su obra; presentan, en cambio, a un buscón de prebendas para sí y para los amigos y parientes. En otras palabras, la correspondencia confirma lo sabido y siempre olvidado, la autoría literaria no concede un estatus humano superior, ni siquiera a las mejores plumas.

Las cartas van dirigidas por el futuro autor de *Pepita Jiménez* a su hermanastro, José Freuler Alcalá Galiano, hijo del primer matrimonio de la madre, Dolores Alcalá Galiano, marquesa de la Paniega, con un general suizo que luchó en la península durante las guerras napoleónicas. Juan y sus hermanas fueron fruto de un segundo matrimonio. Aunque las cartas apenas dejen entrever disensiones fraternales, sabemos que las hubo; José heredó el título cuando su madre murió, y la repartición de bienes causó numerosas fricciones, según consta en las cartas publicadas por dos