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Luis Goytisolo Beyond Antagonía: His Search for Agency in Democratic Spain

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Since his monumentally successful tetralogy, *Antagonía*, Luis Goytisolo has adapted his literary style to survive the changes in both the publishing world and the greater cultural context of post-Franco Spain. Indeed, his post-*Antagonía* novels can be divided into two phases: the structurally complex novels of the 1980s, and the more readable novels of the 1990s. Although these two groups of novels differ stylistically, they both form part of Goytisolo's ongoing critique of Western man's investment in subjectivity as either a controlling, self-governed force or a controlled subject, both of which occlude a viable notion of human agency. My study of his novelistic trajectory of the last two decades uncovers two guiding factors: 1) his desire to carve out a space for human agency in the wake of an oppressive dictatorship and 2) his recognition of the postmodernist lesson of complicitous critique, which asserts that we must appropriate the dominant methods of power in order to oppose them.¹

The possibility of human agency is a particularly compelling question for post-Franco Spain of the 1980s. Emerging from nearly four decades of oppressive dictatorship, Spanish citizens must rethink their identities (personal, professional, political) as they adapt to a newly established democracy and renegotiate their roles as active citizens. Neither the subjected subject of the dictatorship (powerless and at the mercy of a centralized power base), nor its binary opposite (the autonomous individual, dictator-like and impervious to others), will serve as role models for these citizens. Indeed, much recent thinking on theories of agency has struggled to overcome the chasm between the two opposing models with an eye towards a more politically viable definition of agency.²

At first glance, post-structuralist, postmodern versions of the self as decentered and fragmented seem to preclude the possibility of a theory of agency. However, the paradoxical nature of the fluid human subject depicted by these discourses becomes the basis for a human agent that emerges from the contradictions, as Susan Hekman explains in her study, "Subjects and Agents: the Question for Feminism:"

...for the discursive subject, however, agency and construction are not antithetical. Rather,

agency is a product of discourse, a capacity that flows from discursive formations.

... It does not entail reference to a prediscursive "I" but, instead, entails that subjects find agency within the discursive spaces open to them in their particular historical period. (202)

In his book *Discerning the Subject*, Paul Smith argues that human agency is not to be conflated with the model of subjectivity he calls the "individual:" a version of the Western, male "I" who is master of his own destiny. Agency, for Smith and for Hekman, is paradoxical because it is actually a product of determining forces.³ In other words, human agency is only possible from within a power system. In a similar fashion, Theresa de Lauretis envisions the human agent as requiring a contradictory, paradoxical account of the human subject as the site of heterogeneous influences and compromises and not as a stable, centered, autonomous being. In this study I will explore how Goytisolo's novels engage readers in questions about the validity of inherited models of subjectivity and explore alternative notions of selfhood that are more sensitive to other selves and their shared social environment, not as separate/opposite of the self, but as continuously connected with the self in a mutual process of exchange.

Goytisolo's first two post-*Antagonía* novels allegorize a struggle for agency in fictional worlds of controlling outside forces. Both novels, *Estela del fuego que se aleja* (1984) and *La paradoja del ave migratoria* (1987), resist rapid consumption by the general public because of their convoluted structures and minimal story lines, and both exploit self-referential strategies to examine how discursive manipulations influence notions of power, subjects, and truth.⁴ These allegories about how the human subject strives to be a responsible, active agent in his/her world suggest that human agency is not merely the negation of the powers that be, but rather a bargaining with said powers.⁵

Goytisolo published *Estela del fuego que se aleja*, nine years after Franco's death, in Spain's young democracy. The novel presents readers with nameless, shadowy character-narrators, designated only by capital letters: A, B, V, and W. All four are writers who move about in a recognizable contemporary Spanish environment. Each is a creation of the other in this metafictional text that foregrounds the issue of subjectivity with its opening line, "Adivina quién soy." The structure of the novel and the "names" of the four main characters undermine the autonomy and individuality normally as-

cribed to the self: The lack of proper names symbolizes the lack of a central and centered locus of identity that the traditional humanist subject might enjoy. By giving his characters letters for names, Goytisolo symbolically emphasizes the determined, constructed facet of subjectivity and underplays the self-determining side.

A and B, the two main characters, struggle with the controlling capacity of ideological systems, one discovering agency and the other only constant frustration. No longer centralized under a dictatorial regime, these systems manifest their influence in all spheres of the human subject's life, from movies to formal education.⁶ While the novel clearly positions A as subjected to forces that determine who he is, he makes known his desire to maneuver from within these forces and assert his agency. However, instead of struggling to adhere to an idealized image of independence and plenitude, he flirts with a dizzying number of subject-positions and accentuates the contradictions between them, thereby marking his own personal history and "consciousness of complicity" (de Lauretis 1987, 11).

A's clandestine political past illustrates how the agent emerges from within oppressive forces whose ideological tasks are not always fulfilled. His recollections of his anti-Franco political affiliations provide readers with a bitter critique of political ideologies and of the subjects they would interpellate.⁷ A demythologizes his allegiance to abstract political ideals by remembering the actual conditions that led to his involvement in politics. In doing so, he demonstrates how the human agent always exceeds any single subject-position.

Cosas de la vida: veinte años después de aquello, uno de los militantes comunistas detenidos a raíz de su participación en el congreso de Praga y uno de los artífices de la posterior caída de la mayor parte de los asistentes a ese congreso, podían evocarlos sin rencores y hasta con buen humor, como si de un disputado encuentro deportivo se tratase. Lo más curioso, explicó A, era que él nunca se había sentido lo que se llama un comunista. Si había militado era más bien porque sus mejores amigos se habían hecho del partido, por no abandonarlos. (31 - 32)

A's political past debunks notions of absolute ideologies and subjectivities. It reveals a world of compromise within which oppositionality prevails. Political and national "subjects" find room

for maneuver within oppressive conditions. Political enemies within one regime can be friends in another, because there are no absolutes. "Revolutionaries" like A do not really break with the regime in power; they are eventually reabsorbed into the system, which already accounts for opposition and even depends upon it.⁸

Ironically, B's quest for imaginary plenitude takes place within a structure that denies his separateness: he is one of four nameless narrators whose lives comically reflect one another in shared interests and habits. They are also bound together by the circularity of the metafictional layers, which do not lead to any definitive answers about authorship or personhood. B is disgusted with the restrictions that society imposes upon subjects, often in the form of common beliefs or morals.

Pues bien: no estoy dispuesto a que mi pensamiento tenga que seguir viéndose filtrado en su exteriorización por todos los tópicos y lugares comunes que la imbecilidad del hombre ha ido sedimentando a lo largo de los años, imponiéndose a nuestro comportamiento como uno de esos corsés y refajos inventados para comprimir indiscriminadamente, junto a los más amorfos despliegues de celulitis, las más genuinas exuberancias del cuerpo femenino. (124)

Like a corset, habits and customs contain both the best and the worst elements of human thought, neutralizing their distinctions to an extent, and limiting while at the same time enabling their exteriorization. According to B, they squelch any originality. B seems disgusted that the best and the worst are massed together in the same grouping. This reaction points to his extreme vision of subjectivity that precludes a compromise with the powers that be. B imagines himself as the illusory "individual," overlooking his own implication in the systems he critiques.

Goytisolo foregrounds textual self-consciousness in *Estela del fuego que se aleja*, while diminishing the importance of more conventional concerns, like plot and characterization, both of which promote a view of subjectivity as fixed and integral. Instead of presenting the promise of a stable and centered human subject that can stand up to oppressive forces or be definitively crushed by them, the novel challenges us to recognize that, paradoxically, agency is a function of these forces.

Estela del fuego que se aleja provides a model of human agency

and oppositionality that functions well in a world that has abandoned the promise of absolute truth. His next novel, *La paradoja del ave migratoria*, reflects, and even recreates, the experience of such a postmodern world, which demands a corresponding model of human identity to support it:

We live, to put it baldly, in a humanist culture which is 'holocentric,' and whose discourses variously and to varying degrees betray not only the hegemony of the desire for holistic explanations, but also the faith (albeit a sometimes shaken or shaky one) in the correlative 'whole' human 'subject,' the model for and purveyor of whichever particular epistemological formation it is obliged to, or which concerns it. (Smith 89)

By juxtaposing various epistemological formations and foregrounding their contradictory and exclusionary claims, Goytisolo creates a textual world in which the characters cannot derive a whole subjectivity as Smith describes as the "individual." In *La paradoja del ave migratoria*, the characters need to develop a way to "make sense" of their world and themselves; they must find a means for reconciling the discourses to which they have been subjected with the choices they have to make.

The work is an allegory about the novel and the film as symbolic of two ways of knowing the self and the world. The tension between the two media recalls high-tech society's reliance on the visual and our preference for movies over books. The two main characters represent the film and the novel: Gaspar is in the process of making a movie, and his wife Virginia writes in an intimate diary that unfolds like a novel. The metafictional mode created in this novel invites a behind-the-scenes peek at each medium and how it offers specific subject-positions. By calling attention to the process of creating representations, Goytisolo invites readers to examine how these representations influence human beings.

The preliminary scene of the novel establishes Gaspar as the quintessential "Renaissance man:" "un ingeniero, arquitecto, pintor y escultor conocido en todo el mundo." Even Virginia refers to him as a "nuevo Leonardo." Gaspar is a parody of what Martin Jay calls the "ocularcentric" individual; Jay connects the dominance of vision over the other senses with a parallel rise of the individual as the accepted model of subjectivity.⁹

By fashioning a narrator that represents through a complex layer-

ing of visual and linguistic codes, Luis Goytisolo foregrounds the role of readers/spectators, alerting them to their participatory role in "knowing" these two main characters. Readers discern a fundamental difference between the way Gaspar and Virginia define themselves with respect to an outside perspective, represented here by the mediating presence of the narrator. Gaspar is a voyeur unseen and undetected by the observed yet, in a parallel fashion, is posited as unaware object of the camera-narrator's gaze. The camera-narrator also frequently positions the reader as spectator vis-à-vis Virginia. However, she performs as an actress on stage. Virginia's awareness of an outside viewpoint and her incorporation of this viewpoint into her self-construction contrast with Gaspar's investment in a superior position that precludes the presence of an outside observer watching him.

Somehow Virginia seems able consciously to direct her life while simultaneously living it. She seems to be aware of the camera-narrator's lens, posing for it yet maintaining the logic of the scene in question. Her posturing bespeaks a director-like consciousness in charge of manipulating the roles she will play, granting herself dual characteristics throughout the novel. Gaspar, on the other hand, is unknowing of the script he is following. The camera-narrator refers to Gaspar's actions and thoughts predominantly in the preterite tense, tagging his speech with "dijo Gaspar." The use of external focalization with reported dialogue maximizes the distance between the time of narrating and the time of narration and therefore minimizes the presence of a narrating agency. This maintained distance between the camera-narrator and Gaspar contrasts strikingly with the relationship fostered with Virginia. The intimate quality of the latter is dramatized by the fusion of the two in a culminating metafictional moment of her narration, when she refers to the act of writing in her diary in the present tense with the self-conscious phrase: "mientras yo escribo estas líneas" (130). This phrase rhetorically represents the closing of the gap between the narrating self and the narrated self, and symbolizes Virginia's ability to take herself as her own linguistic object, to perform as both director and actor in her own life.

The characters in *La paradoja del ave migratoria* maneuver in a postmodern fictional world of competing discursive realms that affects their subjective constructions. For example, Gaspar derives security from static idealizations of himself and the world, and he consequently experiences difficulty within the hybrid textual environment. Virginia, on the other hand, demonstrates more flexibility in her interpretations of herself and her surroundings and is therefore more comfortable with fragmentation and relativity. Without falling prey to the seductive promises of absolute truth and identity,

Virginia is able to choose among these discourses and become an active agent.

La paradoja del ave migratoria closes the 1980s cycle, which proposes that we accept the reality of oppressive forces that shape our lives, not as absolute, but as contradictory and therefore empowering. Also, that we learn to identify ideological power as diffuse and not centralized or embodied in one human figure or regime.¹⁰

How do these two novels fit into a broader context of the Spanish novel? The decade of the 1980s saw a boom in Spanish fiction, characterized by a proliferation of new writers, such as Cristina Fernández Cubas, Javier Marías, Lourdes Ortiz, and Rosa Montero. The experimentalism associated with the novels of the 1970s gradually retreated to allow room for novels that were more attractive to the reading public. There is no longer talk of a unified generation of Spanish novelists the way there was under the Franco regime. Writers are no longer writing to an enemy or rebelling against a fortress of power; now they must pursue individuality since there is no longer a locatable, institutionalized source for violence, inhumanity, and corruption. The binary-based "revolutionary" project must give way to new thinking about alternative models of agency and subjectivity.¹¹ In this period we see a great variety of young writers, as well as those from the mid-century generation, publishing fiction that falls under many sub-generic categories: detective/mystery, historical, autobiographical, adventure, travel/exotic, and memoirs.

The publishing houses certainly play an important role in the development of the post-Franco Spanish novel, promoting new writers and popular genres according to their marketability.¹² Attracting the wider reading public becomes a primary concern, and this situation creates a new kind of censorship that disfavors the difficult, elitist novel. As a result of this process, many have complained that Spanish fiction has "sold out," and critics like Sanz Villanueva even refer to these works as "literature lite."¹³ Regardless of the debate over quality, there is no doubt that Spanish fiction flourishes in the 1980s and 1990s.¹⁴

It is not until the 1990s that Goytisolo produces a more accessible fiction, which responds to the commercial pressures of the contemporary publishing market. These 90s novels, which include *Estatua con palomas* (1992), *Mzungo* (1996), and *Placer licuante* (1997), carefully adapt to the parameters of traditional literary sub-genres in order to challenge these genres' presuppositions about human subjectivity and agency. Goytisolo's foray into genre fiction mounts a concerted attack on the Western notion of the "sovereign subject:" the autonomous, self-determining, Cartesian, separate, centered model of the human being, and proposes a view of human

agency as a function of our interactions with others within a social structure.¹⁵ If his 80s novels allegorized the Spanish condition of the ill-equipped citizen facing a myriad of cultural discourses and a diffused model of power, the 90s novels critique Spaniards' hunger for formulaic fiction and the rigid models of subjectivity such narratives traditionally offer. Goytisolo appropriates sub-genres that depend on the self-constituting, self-determining "I," and he systematically undermines the security of this transcendental personage by frustrating generic expectations and staging troublesome confrontations between this self-contained "I" and others.

Estatua con palomas incorporates elements of both the autobiographical and the historical novel, yet undermines the viability of either by exposing the boundaries between them as arbitrary and artificial. Their juxtaposition dramatizes the fundamental question of whether or not the human being can achieve pure individual expression from within the confines of the social; autobiography defends the uniqueness of the individual life, while history folds people into larger social narratives. These questions speak to larger issues at the level of democracies and dictatorships: is the human being free to construct an identity and to what extent do these systems permit individual expression?

Narrated in the first person by Goytisolo-narrator, the novel begins as an autobiographical memoir. However, about midway through the novel, a second story line, created by the Roman historian Tacitus, interrupts the autobiographical project already set in motion, thereby staging a symbolic confrontation between the two genres, autobiography and history. The maintained tension between the two speaks to a view of human agency as a dynamic interface between the individual and the social, between the self and the other, as opposed to the view under the Franco dictatorship that the social squelched the individuality of its citizens and represented a force to be directly opposed. Here there is a shift from a view of agency as an inversion/negation of an oppressive power base to agency as a complex negotiation effected within a social system.

Despite the temporal distance separating the two narrative situations, (Goytisolo-narrator in 1990s vs. Tacitus-narrator in first-century Rome), *Estatua con palomas* invites a comparison of the two historical figures by establishing clear parallels between their fictional counterparts. In fact, Goytisolo and Tacitus both creatively adapt their genres to accommodate their personal projects. Tacitus, considered to be the greatest historian of the Roman Empire, mixed elements of history and biography in his works to produce a hybrid text that anticipated the modern novel with its psychological insights

into the motivations of historical figures. Goytisolo extends the comparison from the authors to their historical contexts (the height of the Roman Empire and contemporary society), highlighting their shared uncertainty about the future.¹⁶ He hints that the novel must exercise its flexibility in periods of change and instability in order to survive. *Estatua con palomas* celebrates the novel's built-in capacity to accommodate changing social paradigms by borrowing from other generic forms and styles without losing its critical stance. In this sense, we are encouraged to see the novelistic genre as a register for these historical moments of crisis or change in political systems and in corresponding models of human subjectivity and agency.

Estatua con palomas confronts the autobiographical "I" with the reality of social systems (here represented by the historical genre) that would limit or control it. In *Mzungo* we find a comparable encounter: the self-assured, imperialist "I" of the travel genre meets the uncontrolled, uncivilized, cultural "other."¹⁷ As opposed to the classic travel novel, which boasts a narrator who explains another society in terms of his own, Goytisolo's travel novel has three narrators whose cultural repertoires fail to make sense of the foreign customs they experience, and each narrator eventually succumbs to the host culture's system of meaning.¹⁸

Mzungo portrays the hypocrisy and cultural ignorance that plague Western society and threaten its particular value system by exposing it to its quintessential "other": the exotic cultures of Africa. The prototypical European white tourists and the native Africans are brought together by a vacation cruise ship that connects the two continents. With biting sarcasm and tongue-in-cheek humor, Goytisolo weaves together three thematically linked stories whose respective protagonists are the Frenchman, Phillippe; the Englishman, Philip; and the Spaniard, Felipe. This onomastic game serves as a metaphor for the dynamic between sameness and difference that can fuel tension among cultures, while at the same time emphasizing the lack of real differences among the manufactured "subjects" of the West, leaving readers to wonder if democracy fulfills its promise of "individuality" and freedom of expression.

Each of the "Phils" has an encounter with the cultural "other" that ends in tragedy due to a misunderstanding. One kills a native girl over a miscommunication about a pair of boots, one becomes trapped on a remote island that is closed off for political reasons, and one is burned alive when his driver kills a village boy in a car accident. The extreme situations and naked depravity depicted in these events attest to the violence implicit in cultural ignorance. The cruise ship full of civilized Europeans, floating along the eastern

coast of Africa, hints at the vulnerability of our self-enclosed society when faced with another reality, another way of understanding life and death. Indeed, in this novel, Western culture is revealed to be self-absorbed, paranoid, racist, and as violent as the stereotypical "savage," thereby undoing comfortable binary oppositions that allow Westerners to occupy the preferred position ("civilized" or "superior") of the hierarchized dichotomy that divides the two worlds. *Mzungo* broaches two burning issues in contemporary, democratic Spain: immigration and xenophobia.¹⁹

In *Mzungo*, Goytisolo exploits the travel genre in order to subvert the secure positions of knowledge that it traditionally espouses. In *Placer licuante* he uses the erotic genre and mystery genre to explore our society's increasingly dehumanized lifestyle and the concomitant violence we visit upon each other, whether as enemies or lovers. As in *Mzungo*, the "I" of the mystery must negotiate with the other, this time in an erotic exchange. The novel focuses on the most intimate human relationship and how it is mediated by the fragmentation and alienation characteristic of our high-tech western world, which demands a complex model of subjectivity and interpersonal relationships. In perhaps a self-conscious gesture, Goytisolo also critiques the figure of the Spanish mystery writer who produces uninteresting, formulaic novels yet continues to appear on the best-seller list.

In *Placer licuante*, sex and the experiential pleasures of the human body become a tonic for the bombardment of informational "knowledge," in a world that threatens to transform unique human beings into substitutable products of consumption. The protagonist is Maica, a young professional woman who coordinates art shows and exhibitions. Although she is married to a popular novelist, she begins a passionate love affair with Máximo, an architect she meets on a business trip. The intimacy between the two stands in stark contrast to the ordinary routine of everyday life around them. Their love letters are written in a code that uses numbers to designate the various sexual parts of the body and are sent by fax machines. The translation of their sexual relationship into faxed codes makes manifest the extent of dehumanization we must endure in a technological world, yet at the same time suggests the possibility for human intimacy in spite of these conditions.

The romantic storyline soon becomes tangled with a mystery plot involving Maica's ex-husband and a murder. *Placer licuante* juxtaposes two ways of knowing: one leading perhaps to intimacy or shared experience, the other to murder/violence. Soon after Maica begins her affair with Máximo, Pablo becomes suspicious and hires

a detective to photograph her and her lover. In the meantime, he works on a novel titled "Argumento 38," converting material from his real-life conversations with Maica into the fictional text. The title of his novel-in-progress and its exaggerated dependency on empirical observation attest to its systematic nature. When Pablo reveals the scandalous photos to Maica, she becomes obsessed with finding out her now ex-husband's plan. She accesses his computer files from her office on a regular basis, reading "Argumento 38" and other files that may hold information pertinent to her search for knowledge. She soon learns of Pablo's plan to kill both her and Máximo with a 38-caliber revolver, and, when Pablo shows up at her apartment, she shoots him in the temple with his own gun, making it look like a suicide. The murder of the author-figure and the triumph of a careful reader blatantly sabotage the standard mystery novel's secure positions of knowledge for both author and reader. The seams between sub-genres and the upheaval of expected positions of knowledge urge readers to recognize how authoritative discourses work to manipulate them in their own non-fictional worlds.

Goytisolo's post-*Antagonía* novels move beyond the particular experience of Francoist absolutism and the binary model of human subjectivity that mistook agency for a return to a transcendental, modernist "I." His 80s novels question the Western paragon of the plenary subject (who has much in common with the despot) and its counterpart: the helpless model of the subjected subject, hopelessly determined and oppressed. Goytisolo urges readers to rethink the notion of agency within the new Spanish socio-political context, which is a complex web of discursive opportunities, and which demands negotiations instead of revolutions.

The more accessible 90s novels test the flexibility of the novelistic genre by appropriating popular, formulaic sub-genres as a means to expose their complicity with Western notions of the "individual." Goytisolo clearly links such a model with violence towards others, and readers are left to consider alternatives of selfhood that might engage with others in mutually beneficial ways.

Since Franco's death, Goytisolo the writer has endured new, perhaps more insidious forms of censorship, yet he continues to engage critically with contemporary issues by skillfully appropriating the features of the dominant literary discourse. By engaging in such complicitous critique, Goytisolo cunningly attracts a larger audience and continues to oppose the powerful systems of meaning that inform every aspect of human life, under the same model of agency that he proposes in his fiction.²⁰

Notes

- ¹ In her book *The Politics of Postmodernism*, Linda Hutcheon contends that critical complicity is the hallmark of postmodern fiction: "the postmodern involves a paradoxical installing as well as subverting of conventions—including conventions of the representation of the subject. The complicitous inscribing is as evident as the subverting challenge" (13-14). Ross Chambers' account of the oppositional text also requires complicity with the powers that be: "in oppositional narrative, a 'narrative function' that respects the power structure serves as a form of disguise for a 'textual function' whose operation is more covert, but ultimately more significant, and serves to appeal to the 'readerly' activity of interpretation, thereby subverting notions such as those of the autonomous subject or the discursive 'transmission' of information that the 'narrative function' enacts" (*Room for Maneuver*, 13).
- ² Hekman asserts that the feminist model of agency must be concerned with "overcoming the dichotomy between the constituted and the constituting subject" (197). She explains that "the dichotomy that has structured the philosophy of the subject at least since the time of Descartes is that of subject/object, that is, the opposition between the transcendental, constituting subject and the object of this subject's knowledge" (198).
- ³ Though Hekman distinguishes between "dialectical" and "discursive" models of agency, my point here is that agency must avoid conflation with the Western "I."
- ⁴ See Antonio Sobejano-Morán for insightful readings of these two novels.
- ⁵ Gonzalo Navajas confirms that the post-Franco "new" novel of Spain is concerned with subjectivity and agency: ". . . la afirmación de la individualidad del yo frente a las superestructuras ideológicas y otros imperativos culturales de los que el sujeto español se ha visto obligado a defenderse" (166) "dentro del contexto general de disgregación y fragmentación de la subjetividad, empiezan a manifestarse formas de reconsideración que permiten discernir una recomposición del yo." (83).
- ⁶ Althusser's notion of "interpellation" serves to describe the emphasis on social forces shaping the person's life in an oppressive way (*Lenin and Philosophy*).
- ⁷ I borrow the term "interpellate" from Althusser's (*Lenin and Philosophy*) account of how the subject is subjected or hailed by ideologies to assume a position.
- ⁸ "What this means, however, is that oppositional practices do not really work against prevailing systems but, to the contrary, strengthen them by making them livable. They are in one sense what Michel Serres would call the 'noise' that seems to disturb the system but without which it would not work; they are in this sense needed by the system, and an integral part of it (Chambers 7).
- ⁹ In *Downcast Eyes*, Martin Jay explores Western society's reliance on the visual paradigm ("ocularcentrism") as the foundation for its epistemological practices.

⁹ Spires discerns a change of attitude in post-Franco Spanish fiction, a change he explores in his essay "A Play of Difference: Fiction After Franco":

Perhaps the key to the new attitude is a change in the concept of power. For some thirty-nine years, power in Spanish society was synonymous with the Franco regime; in the minds of many people, power in Spain was absolute and centralized. When that power finally disappeared, it did not take long for Spaniards to realize that power relationships were not limited to the dictatorship. Among its many effects, the democracy soon revealed the fallacy of believing that power is ever centralized (286).

¹¹ Navajas points out: "La oposición absoluta a una fuerza inexorable dio la justificación inicial a la obra de esos autores y una posición diferente dentro de las dimensiones culturales más benévolas y ambivalentes propias del periodo posterior a la Dictadura aparece como deslealtad hacia una causa pasada percibida como éticamente superior" (165).

¹² Santos Sanz Villanueva notes that the Spanish novel of the late 1980s is under pressure to conform to the codes of the most popular sub-genres, the detective and historical novels, pointing out the works of Eduardo Mendoza and Manuel Vázquez Montalbán as exemplary of this tendency. According to Sanz Villanueva, the popularity of these genres is partially due to publishers' politics. See "Subjetividad o géneros" by Sanz Villanueva.

¹³ In his 1988 essay "Dulces pero poco útiles. La actualidad de la narrativa actual," Sanz Villanueva uses this term to describe contemporary Spanish fiction, although he predicts this trend will run its course and eventually be replaced with novels of more substance.

¹⁴ See Conte's "Sobre un excepcional discurso narrativo," and his 1989 essay "Toda riqueza es caos."

¹⁵ My use of "sovereign subject" here parallels Smith's version of the "individual," which defines itself as a static and plenary image or "I" that corresponds to the Cartesian subject of Western epistemological practices. The term "individual" refers to "one that cannot be divided and, by extension, one that is plenipotent. . . a fiction of cohesion that bears as its symptom a belief in a fully enabled and self-conscious power. It could even be said that the urge to become such an 'individual,' and the common consciousness of either being one or having the obligation to be one, is itself only a limited and ideological subject-position within a given experience of subjectivity and is itself produced by particular social formations" (*Discerning the Subject* xxxiv).

¹⁶ See de León-Sotelo's interview with Luis Goytisolo about *Estatua con palomas*.

¹⁷ *Mzungo* also indicates Goytisolo's continued commitment to generic innovation, since it is the first novel to be marketed with an interactive CD-ROM based on its plot.

¹⁸ For more discussion on the novel, see Valls ("¿Blanco o rojo?").

¹⁹ See Rosa Montero's "Inmoral."

²⁰ If Goytisolo's turn to more popular fiction in the 1990s raises questions about his commitment to "serious" literary endeavors, his involvement with the TV documentary series "Indico" might intensify such questioning. Certainly it would seem that his television project might compromise his thoughts on the decline of the novel, a topic he discusses in a series of university lectures and an article published in 1991 (See "La novela del siglo XX y el porvenir del género" and "El declive de la novela"). In these talks he clearly expresses his concern for the impending death of the novel in our contemporary video age, because of a fundamental shift from a society of readers to one of spectators. It seems ironic, therefore, that Goytisolo would turn to television as a creative medium. However, I would argue that the model of complicitous critique that I apply to his novelistic trajectory could also be applied here.

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