

The Ends of Spanish Space in Juan Goytisolo's *Reivindicación del Conde don Julián*

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“sin saber dónde está la verdad: en la impresión sensorial o en la memoria del verso”
—Goytisolo *Reivindicación* 114

Juan Goytisolo's “trilogy of treason,” comprised of his novels *Señas de identidad* (1966), *Reivindicación del Conde don Julián* (1970) and *Juan sin tierra* (1975), if read as a whole would be the most examined Spanish narrative enterprise of the twentieth-century.¹ Of the three novels, *Reivindicación del Conde don Julián* (today retitled and re-released in a definitive edition as *Don Julián*) has received the most significant scholarly attention, inspiring dozens of monographs and articles numbering into the hundreds.

Among the many insights into Spanish society available in Goytisolo's work, *Don Julián* proves a key work in appreciating the changes to Spanish place and the nature of space during the Franco years. In its traversal of the breadth and depth of national history and contemporary social reality, Goytisolo's novel signals a transformation of the spatial imagination of Spain as nation from the traditional Francoist state that has sent the novel's protagonist into exile to the increasingly mass-media dominated capitalist society that this protagonist actually confronts within the novel's present-tense. To be sure, published at the high point of intellectual interest in structuralist and poststructuralist theories of culture, *Don Julián* has most often been studied in light of linguistic questions, scholars exploring the role of language in its complex, revolutionary treatments of historiography, national ideology, cultural discourse, and intertextuality.² Henri Lefebvre, with so much similar analysis of other cultural works in mind, has written, “to underestimate, ignore and diminish space amounts to the overestimation of texts, written matter, and writing systems, along with the readable and the visible, to the point of assigning to these a monopoly on intelligibility” (Soja, *Thirdspace* 48). Indeed, while written in the heyday of linguistic approaches (and perhaps written with such theories in mind), *Don Julián* provides insight into the spatial realities of Spanish life in the late Franco years. From the more abstract division of the state into winners and losers and the sealing off of post-war Spain from the modern world to the more concrete selective reconstruction of cities and edification of monuments and ministries; from the later ideological opening up to Western influence to the literal remaking of coastlines and *campos* for the delight of foreign tourists, the ideological pressures of Francoist rule were accompanied by a material, spatial transformation of Spain. *Don Julián* offers an important vision of how utterly complete and indeed exhausting this spatial transformation of Spain was.

Returning to the question of previous scholarly focus on other matters, the presentation of such spatial change in the novel is neither explicit nor in most cases concrete. *Don Julián* instead expands upon what Lefebvre has referred to as a more

crucial “imaginary” or lived mode of spatial change. Lefebvre’s writings emphasize that space is something that is at once perceived, conceived, and lived. Too often, he warns, we consider the three modes separately, or even worse, understand space in purely physical terms—that is, as something already there, to be merely perceived. *Don Julián*, through its deployment and combination of multiple modes of invasion, reveals the powerful intertwining of cultural historiographic discourse with Spanish place and space. It reveals the extent to which late-francoist consciousness was urbanized, to use the parlance of social geographer David Harvey; that is, the degree to which Spanish citizens had been not only physically, but psychologically displaced, their spatial imaginations transformed so as to convert them into the ideal subject of the forthcoming neoliberalist state. *Don Julián* captures how the new Spaniard of Franco’s “different Spain,” was not only bereft of village, nation, and state, but of what poet Adrienne Rich has called the “space closest in,” that is, the body itself. The most important spatial work of *Don Julián* is precisely the linking of architectural and broadly geographic change with the most intimate spaces of our lives, including the space of the body.

Maldita sea la saña del traidor Julián

Don Julián tells the story of a nameless protagonist living in bitter exile who, as he goes about his daily business in the coastal town of Tangiers, Morocco, imagines a massive modern-day reconquest of Spain by Muslim hordes. The imagined attack morphs in form depending on the protagonist’s moment-by-moment activities. Sometimes his attack is predominantly literary; at times it is more broadly cultural. It almost always includes a psychological dimension, scavenging through intimate childhood memories in search of weaponry as it were. As the attack progresses, the nameless protagonist acquires traits, qualities, and even the personal histories of the people he encounters, whether real or imagined. Principle among these is the boy Alvarito, an apparent alter ego for Goytisolo himself, represented in *Señas de identidad* and *Juan sin tierra* as Álvaro Mendiola. (For this reason I will refer to the protagonist as Álvaro, though at times I may use other appellations to clarify the protean nature of this not-quite-Álvaro). Álvaro’s attack, though explicitly imagined and therefore, seemingly imaginary, on occasion reads as physical. The methods of imagination include dreams, hallucinations, and conscious thoughts. Recounted principally in a present-tense, second-person voice, the combined forms culminate in a massive annihilation of all Spanish life forms—flora, fauna, self, other, not to forget architecture and geography, place and space. The attack is, finally, circular, even endless; as the narrative finishes, the protagonist, just arrived at his apartment and still enjoying the rush of his successful obliteration of sacred Spain, hears a final, sobering message from his narrative inner voice: “el sueño agobia tus párpados y cierras los ojos: lo sabes, lo sabes: mañana será otro día, la invasión recomenzará” (304).

Tierra ingrata

“...entre todas espuria y mezquina, jamás volveré a tí” (83).

From these first words, the narrator/protagonist of *Don Julián* focuses squarely on both a problematic place and his consequent spatial dilemma. The apostrophe, “Tierra ingrata,” charges the hated land with life hailing it into a dynamic relationship with its addressor/aggressor. The latter will not touch the land he hates, and yet it faces him daily, accosting him as an equal that can never be entirely objectified, ignored, or forgotten. In

one short sentence, the land takes possession of the very center of narrator psychology and narrative logic.

This opening passage proves to be the only place in the novel in which the land itself, rather than the protagonist, is addressed in the second-person singular: “*jamás volveré a tí.*” Before the human protagonist assumes the “*tú*” role, that role corresponds to a place, “*la tierra.*” If the constant use of the second person in the rest of the novel creates a palpable psychological gap within the protagonist, foregrounding his shifting, always-under-construction subjectivity, and his very alienation, this gap leaves space for the land itself to occupy. In short, in the brief opening line of the novel, earth, and geography—place—seep into the heart of both story and narrative; subjectivity, on multiple levels, becomes inseparable from spatiality. In the words of Gaston Bachelard, “for a knowledge of intimacy, localization in the spaces of our intimacy is . . . urgent” (9). The bitter protagonist-narrator, the despiser of land, the would-be invader of enemy territory, already carries the spaces of intimacy within him.

The employment of apostrophe to commence the novel moreover mobilizes the hated land to insert itself not just within the narrating/narrated subjectivity but to do so as something more than the hated land itself. That is, while the land is evidently the nation-state known as “Spain,” the apostrophe addresses this site with the arbitrary symbolic term “*tierra*” and then with the even more arbitrary indexical, “*tí.*” In fact, the land readers associate with Spain is never once referred to as such within the pages of the novel. “*Tierra*” may appear as Castilian plains, as the Gredos mountain range, as the Escorial and the Alcázar, as the land celebrated by Lope and Unamuno, yet it is never explicitly identified as “*España.*” Certainly, the conspicuous absence of the name of the nation underscores the depth of rage felt by the narrator/protagonist who refuses even to name his former homeland. But the absence also casts “Spain” as a mere construct, a product of the violence-producing myths of generations of writers and politicians, a piece of space that the narrator imagines more than once as a “*maqueta de cartón, a escala reducida, de un paisaje familiar*” (83). The land that the protagonist-narrator attacks, though brought to his attention through its “Spanishness,” is much more than “Spain.” Both possibilities get at a deeper understanding of spatiality that charges the novel with its enduring significance. The attack on Spain is an attack on land itself, on “*tierra.*” The narrator/protagonist comprehends that until earth as he knows it—that is space and the places that comprise it—is undone, he can never be free. Space and place have been thoroughly colonized by a hegemonic urbanization of consciousness, far beyond the mere linguistic mystifications of Francoist ideology. Hence, the narrator/protagonist finds himself without firm ground to stand on and in fact rebelling against the very notion of such ground. Space as imagined and as practiced for this protagonist-narrator of contemporary Spanish society has become essential, impossible, and loathed.

In the face of such dilemma, the protagonist-narrator Álvaro, wages his campaign of destruction. His attack begins in medias res, set down without paragraph or sentence markers (“*tierra ingrata, entre todas espuria y mezquina*”) (83). The first section of the novel recounts repeated incursions into enemy territory from a hazy dreamlike state as the protagonist attempts to rouse himself from sleep. From within his delirium, he

envisions Spain as no more than a construct: first a model (“una simple maqueta de cartón, a escala reducida, de un paisaje familiar” [83]), then the product of a weather report (“corrientes, depresiones, temporales, calmas súbitas...subiendo bruscamente de latitud y orientando su eje en el sentido N-S, empuja hacia la zona del Estrecho los frentes fríos que discurren más al norte” [83-84]), and finally a theater stage or cinema screen (“silencio, caballeros, se alza el telón: la representación empieza” [85-86]). In each case, Álvaro imagines space by reference to places that are themselves already imaginary. This doubling of the representation of space as conceived, combined with the fact that such space is the first type presented within the narrative, foregrounds the powerful grip of conception upon any spatial maneuver. The discourses of a post-modernizing culture rob Álvaro of an understanding sufficient to address spatial conception and practice. Álvaro is further hampered by his fixation on the modernist nature of the content of this discourse. Álvaro never seems able to understand that a pro-Capitalist conceptualization of space has silently engulfed Spain while its citizens enjoyed the dream-like delirium of a pseudo-struggle against the bugaboo called El Caudillo. This fact is captured, once more, in scenes grounded in a geography perceived, conceived, and lived through an urbanized consciousness. The narrator/protagonist’s final observation prior to moving from apartment into city, or from pure imagination of space to a state in which space will be experienced as imagined, lived, and practiced, reads:

la ciudad es el crisol de todos los exilios y sus habitantes parecen acampar en un presente incierto, risueño y manirroto para algunos, austero y peliagudo para los más: . . . :burgueses precavidos, nobles elegiacos, dudosos comerciantes, especuladores fraudulentos, ejemplares de las infinitas escalas y matices de la compleja, portentosa, variopinta flora sexual: los ingredientes se yuxtaponen sin mezclarse jamás, como estratos geológicos superpuestos por el peso de los siglos o líquidos de densidad diferente que sobrenada en la vasija experimental del científico o el estudioso: juntos sí, pero no revueltos. (93)

Mixed, but not meshed, citizens are products of home and history. Yet they experience life as exiles of both. Their only reality seems to be the inescapable weight of speculative, creative, acquisitive destruction.

...pisando la dudosa luz del día...

After his initial, unproductive forays into conceptual space, Álvaro heads out into the streets of Tangiers. Like Michel de Certeau “walking in the city” in hopes of reappropriating the space of everyday life, Álvaro goes out “cautelosamente a la calle” (93), where his conceptualizations of space must engage the more material spatial practices and habits of others. In the street the material reality of beggars, tourists, and peasant women interrupt his conceptualizations (98). Walking around, à la Certeau and Lefebvre, seems promising in helping Álvaro overcome the stagnant, violent practices of capitalist spatial practice and the conceptions that sustain it. This brief period of almost constant physical movement in the second part of the novel’s first chapter informs the remainder of the novel. Álvaro’s initial encounters with beggars and child guides, his view of advertisements and other street bills, and his visit to a public restroom insinuate themselves into nearly every detail of the destructions of Spain he will carry out over the

course of the day. As Lefebvre argues, the material practice of space and the everyday occupation of physical locales provide the most significant available disruption to spatial practice and conception.

Despite the promise held out by the morning walk, Álvaro confronts therein a new form of spatial practice for which he remains unprepared. Though beggars, tourists, and merchants accost him at every corner, Álvaro's reappropriation-by-meandering is most powerfully disrupted by the calls of a nascent postmodern culture characterized by mass media events folding themselves into the workings of capital. First hailed by an ad for the latest James Bond flick, Álvaro's subsequent encounters with Red Cross billboards and even with the classic texts of a Spanish library are immersed in postmodern culture: IBM supercomputers, Rolling Stones soundtracks, and international press are ubiquitous. Every cultural moment, every moment of meaning-by-signage, is experienced a mixture of Hollywood mixed with Bretton Woods.

Probably the most famous of the conceptualizing episodes that interrupt Álvaro's spatial practice involves his visit to a local Spanish library. After considering the cartel for the Bond film, passing a blood donation center, and receiving his daily syphilis treatment, Álvaro enters a Spanish library. His purpose within is not to read but to desecrate. He does so with the aid of a bag of poisoned insects destined to leave their entrails across the most famous passages of Iberian letters. Linda Gould Levine notes that Álvaro's behavior within the library acquires the qualities of a Spanish 007 ("nada a la derecha, nada a la izquierda libre totalmente en tus movimientos") (Goytisoló 112). While Álvaro as protagonist/narrator never directly addresses his homeland as "Spain," the texts he desecrates leave no doubt as to what they would have this land be: "*ah, me duele España,*" "*atormentada España a solas con Dios!*," and "*Castilla!*" (108-11). References to Golden Age authors Lope, Alarcón, Calderón, and Tirso mix with Generation of 1898 texts, offering a vision of Iberian space as the exclusive location of honorable deeds executed against the dramatic backdrop of windswept Castilian plains. Representations of Spanish culture become inseparable from representations of Spanish space. Indeed, without an appreciation of the importance of geography in Álvaro's attack, his actions in the library are merely symbolic and ultimately comedic. Smearing insect guts across famous passages hardly makes for convincing foul play when the history and cultural geography of an entire peninsula oppresses from across the straight. Seen through the prism of spatial trilectics, however, Álvaro's attack is creative and intuitively convincing. As Álvaro attacks Lope's *El castigo sin venganza*, we read:

Esto disponen las leyes del honor, y que no haya publicidad en mi afrenta con que se doble mi infamia: cerrando de golpe, zas!, y aplastándolas: ojo avizor, cuidando que el guardián no te descubra: mientras abres el libro y compruebas morosamente el resultado: con el prurito aperitivo del viejo catador: espachurradas, la masa abdominal por de fuera!: indelebles manchones que salpican la peripecia dramática y la contaminan con su difluente viscosidad: cabos, ensenadas, bahías: caprichosas formas geográficas: islas, verdaderos archipiélagos: (112-13).

Though the attack focuses explicitly on cultural codes such as the Spanish cult of honor, its material consequences are, in the final analysis, spatial. Honor occurs in space. But now a new space impedes any continuing iteration of that honor. Spatial disruption exposes the constructed nature of Spain's hegemonic cultural codes, themselves a product and producer of a certain spatial conception and perception. Certainly, the new space is merely the guts of a crushed insect. But Álvaro's reading of those guts is geographic. A comic episode, set up by the protagonist's earlier spatial experiences, and foreshadowing ever more imaginative engagements with the space-times of Spain, becomes a key sign, even a moment of deconstructive aporia, from which the traditional notions of space-time readers bring to Goytisolo's novel begin to unravel.

Operación Trueno

Following a final textual desecration/spatial creation, Álvaro head back out into the street. Constantly accumulating from experience, Álvaro now carries the library texts within him: "sin saber dónde está la verdad: en la impresión sensorial o la memoria del verso: oscilando de una a otra mientras caminas dibujando jeroglíficos: inmerso en la multitud, pero sin integrarte a ella" (114-15). The protagonist experiences Tangiers corporally as place, but psychologically as space, as product of the "memory of verse." Tangiers will never be his entirely to live with unadulterated creative energy. Spatial conception is already too much with him.

Despite new encounters with guides, snake charmers, tourists, and merchants, Álvaro's most telling experiences continue to be with Western conceptual machines. Entering into the womb-like space of the cinema, he sinks conceptually into the waters of Bond's *Thunderball*. In a dreamlike state, he becomes the British agent Bond, an always-pursued and ever-pursuing foreign hero. If Álvaro once conceived space as a movie set, now Álvaro/Bond lives space within the conceptualized set. On the one hand then, Álvaro increasingly perceives space as materially thin. On the other, as Álvaro/Bond, and later as Álvaro/Julián, he will live this thin space from within, thus enjoying a certain experience of thickness.

As in the case of the library, the restless protagonist's ultimate emergence from the movie theater will remain incomplete. Each experience with spatial conception folds into the imaginative practices of space he physically executes. The new Álvaro-Bond is immediately accosted by a Spanish gentleman, the significantly named don Álvaro. While the name proves confusing for purposes of our analysis, such confusion is appropriate to capturing the feel of the novel itself, wherein every experience ultimately finds its way into the complex space of the body/mind of Álvaro-narrator. The Spanish gentleman embodies the most noxious combination of sacred Castilian values and Western capitalist bravado. He insists on sharing a Franco-inspired morning monologue with the helpless protagonist. Interrupting his neighbor's monologue, Álvaro flees the café table dashing full speed into the innermost recesses of the Casbah. As with Bond and the library texts, Álvaro internalizes his encounter with don Álvaro. He will be don Álvaro for the remainder of the day.

hacia dentro, hacia dentro

At this point, though, Álvaro seems to believe escape is still possible, as might the readers of the novel. If walking around, while temporarily productive, has led in the end to frustrating encounters with the unwanted, Álvaro opts for a quite different tactic, entering into an Arab bath and succumbing to sleep. The protagonist's drug-induced hallucinations that begin at this point occupy at least an entire section of the four that comprise the novel. Here, Álvaro seems to give up on any straightforward spatial practice. Instead, from here on out he will overcome his hated country by out-conceiving its conceivers. I want to argue here that his approach, though never clearly articulated, ought to be read as a response to the experience of postmodernity that has surprised him to this point in the novel. Intuiting his inability to transcend mass-mediated conceptions of the spatiality in which he maneuvers, his retreat into hallucination is a rearguard action, an outflanking of the flanks. In this strategy we see a progressive move into the conceptual world proceeding from library attacks, to dream reveries, to hallucinations. As he inhales from the pipe of kif, he pleads for still greater removal from materiality: "altivo, gerifalte Poeta, ayúdame: a luz más cierta, súbeme: la patria no es la tierra, el hombre no es el árbol: ayúdame a vivir sin suelo y sin raíces: móvil, móvil: sin otro alimento y sustancia que tu rica palabra" (195).

Álvaro's attempts to outflank the enemy, nevertheless display a fundamental underappreciation of the power of the material ground he leaves behind. While recognizing that "suelo" and "raíces" have imprisoned him, he fails to see that retreating wholly from the material world is precisely where this prison has led him. The world alone cannot save him. In this emotional reverie he ignores his own earlier discovery, "la patria no es la tierra." It is the nation that oppresses, not the material land. It will indeed prove impossible merely to outconceive the nation. This nation is more than the land. It is the very language to which he hopes to retreat, a language that is increasingly global, capitalist, and mass mediated—in short, postmodern. Capitalism is of all extant socioeconomic systems, perhaps the most suited to conceptualizations, having ultimately no loyalties, no principles or identity of its own, fixed only on accumulation and growth. Mistakenly, then, he dreams the cosmopolitan, postmodern dream of rootless nomadism, of an existence contained entirely in language. As Terry Eagleton has suggested concerning the critical retreat from Marxist theories in the face of a global postmodernism, Álvaro flees from a materialist commitment at precisely the moment when such may be most necessary³. The deeper he moves "hacia dentro," the farther he will need to travel. His journey has no end.

os ofrezco mi país

Of all of Álvaro's engagements with his homeland, the Kif dream within the Arab baths is the most metaphysical, populated by childhood memories set in Franco's post-war Spain. In the concluding pages of Álvaro's kif dreams, as if recognizing the need for a return to some form of materiality if his attack is ever to really get off the ground, the narrator encourages patience, promising a more potent invasion in the near future: "pero detente: no galopes: la traición se realizará" (197). The power of this promised treason will derive precisely from the mixing of spiritual and physical matter; in this new attack, "inteligencia y sexo florecerán" (198).

To make this combination a reality, Álvaro moves from the baths to a Red Cross clinic where he drains his syphilis-infected blood into the supplies of needy Spanish blood banks. The hatred he carries within—informed by street life, movies, memories, and dreams—now flows literally into the bodies of Spain. Despite Álvaro's retreat from a lived practice of space, his emotions here recouple with a literal physical invasion; materiality pours back into the spiritual pain captured in the memory-focused adagio of the second section. The third section, in comparison, becomes a kind of "allegro con bronca," its virtuoso acting not merely in anger but in sickness. Illness will work its way insidiously into the literal bloodstream of the Spanish people. If Álvaro's invasion is ultimately figurative then, within the logic of the novel it is not merely metaphysical. In a novelistic world whose geography to begin with is so heavily conceptual, so embedded in layers of cultural discourse, such an invasion feels more real than readers might expect.

galopa macho, galopa

With the transfusion, Álvaro finally becomes a new Count Julián leading North African Muslim hordes into his former homeland in wave after wave of invasion. Each new attack at this point comprises a spatial practice. Álvaro urges his warriors on from the dry steppes of Castille to the streets of Madrid, and to more specific locales like the Caves of Hercules and the Sierra de Gredos. The narrator takes none of these places as given. The Meseta that Álvaro occupies is as much literature as land: "esa Castilla árida y seca, requemada por el sol en verano, azotada en invierno por las ventiscas: acechas el campo recogido y absorto, los chopos del río, la primavera tarda: cerros pelados, olmos sonoros, álamos altos, lentas encinas" (210). The Sierra de Gredos, as Gould Levine points out, is a product of the writings of the Generation of 1898 (Goytisolo 210 [footnote 180]). The Caves of Hercules become the sexual organs of Spain personified in Isabel the Catholic. In one memorable episode, Álvaro takes a hiatus from his journeys through Spain to explore the bushy mustaches of his fellow conqueror, Tariq. Rather than merely contrast the thin mustache of the Francoist Spaniard with the bristly facial hair of Muslim mercenaries, Álvaro-narrator goes for the lived, spatial experience. The only valid response to the loss of one's space of belonging is a radically spatial one. Culture is always lived in place—even when that culture is a mustache.

The tension between materiality and discourse, between the physical and metaphysical continues in a back-and-forth struggle. If Álvaro's attack travels through physical means, and assaults physical spaces, it assumes at a certain point that the specifically physical, spatial work is done. In the final pages of this third movement Álvaro turns to language, pure and simple. The invading forces challenge Castilian linguistic purity with the un-castizo Spanish of Mexicans, Porteños, and Cubans, then march through the history of Arab, Jewish, American, French, and English contributions to the supposedly pure Castilian Spanish of the Academy. This historiographic journey rids the language of so many impurities and imperfections that it becomes unusable, dissolving finally into silence. The attack concludes with a final reappropriation of the sacred Spanish "Olé," a derivative of the Arabic "Wallah." The erstwhile Spanish speaker is left with nothing; the Empire has no clothes: "baldío solar, ombligo desollado y sin voz abandonado a la erosión de siglos" (268).

No/no es así

It would seem at this point that Álvaro's vengeance is complete. This would necessarily be the case if the heart of Álvaro's attack and the focus of his furor really were linguistic. But Álvaro intuitively, I would argue, that conceptual obliteration is not enough. The frustration that builds from an assaulting force that, to this point, has understood this principal and yet has not always proceeded accordingly, inevitably leads to self-frustration, so strong that it can be quelled only through self-annihilation. He must yet move to the extreme of physical mischief, an all-out assault on the body, the space closest in. Álvaro's attack, despite his celebration of obliteration through language, culminates then not at a linguistic zero point but at a spatial one, the body.

The final assault unfolds in two stages. In the first, Álvaro, in the guise of don Julián as the "Lobo feroz" or Big Bad Wolf of Alvarito's childhood memories, devours the protagonist embodied as a combination Christ-child/religious icon/Little Red Riding Hood. Immediately, however, Álvaro-narrator recognizes that quick elimination is not the same as annihilation: "no/no es así/la muerte no basta/su destrucción debe ir acompañada de las más sutiles torturas" (275). What will suffice, Álvaro goes on to explain, must involve slow, unspeakable pain: bloodletting, flesh-tearing, strangulation, prolonged desiccation-by-poisoning, all of which culminates in a final ritualistic suicide. Álvaro-narrator withholds nothing in his narration/instruction of Álvaro/Julián/Tariq's sadistic torture of the body and soul of Alvarito-child.

After three sections focused on Spanish geography, three movements working to skirt hegemonic perceptions and conceptions of space, the final section goes to the heart of spatial trilectics. The body is the alpha and omega, the sine qua non, of all spatial conception, perception, and practice. Perhaps only at ground zero of spatiality can the urbanization of consciousness be addressed. Geographer Yi-Fu Tuan argues that the human body must be at the heart of all comprehension of space. The body provides the self with its initial sense of three-dimensionality: a front and back, an up and down, left side, right side. Explains Tuan: "The human being, by his mere presence, imposes a schema on space. Most of the time, he is not aware of it. He notes its absence when he is lost. He marks its presence on those ritual occasions that lift life above the ordinary and so force him to an awareness of life's values, including those manifest in space" (36). He adds, "every person is at the center of the world and circumambient space is differentiated in accordance with the schema of his body" (41). Merleau-Ponty defines space in similar terms calling it: "a certain possession of the world by my body, a certain gearing of my body to the world" (Dovey 39). For him the two concepts are inseparable: "Far from my body's being for me no more than a fragment of space, there would be no space at all for me if I had no body" (Casey 202). Posthumanists go further, theorizing the body as the mere original container, the earliest site for the deposit of the information patterns that constitute human subjectivity. All human spatial perception, conception, and practice are shaped by this primordial space.

Over the course of Goytisolo's novel an understanding of the body as geography is implicit. Álvaro's macropolitics—the destruction of his homeland—have, from the earliest pages of the novel, folded into a micropolitics turning on childhood traumas

experienced in civil war-era Barcelona. In the early views of Spanish geography called up from his waking dreams, for example, Álvaro's narrative moves smoothly from the macro to the micro, as metaphors become reality: "la niebla parece abolir la distancia: el mar convertido en lago, unido tú a la otra orilla como el feto al útero sangriento de la madre, el cordón umbilical entre los dos como una larga y ondulante serpentín: la angustia te invade: sudor frío, aleteos del corazón, palpitaciones" (85). The shift endows the metaphorical with physical properties equal to the original trope. Consequently, Álvaro's relationship to Spain is never merely metaphysically exhausting; he is, rather, tied to his nation as to a lifeline. The two are physically interdependent. In another passage, Álvaro-narrator describing Álvaro-protagonist's wanderings through the Casbah, reaffirms the body/space link: "conciente de que el laberinto está en tí: que tú eres el laberinto: minotauro voraz, mártir comestible: juntamente verdugo y víctima: bordeando el cafetín y el baño moruno, embocándote y volviendo pies atrás por Sus y M'Rini: tomando Cristianos y desviando por Comercio" (126). Again, the seamless shift from metaphor to materiality ensures an intuitive understanding that Álvaro's relationship to space is not just tropic but physically creative. Any blueprint for remaking the physical labyrinth in which he wanders would establish, at its foundation, a remaking of Álvaro himself.

In order to effect the slow dismantling of the body, Álvaro/Julián/Tariq, in the guise of a snake charmer whom Álvaro had encountered during his morning stroll through the Casbah, uses his hypnotic powers to entice the cherubic model-Spanish-subject-in-training, Alvarito, into his home. David Morley calls the home the next most intimate space beyond the body, a sacred space where human beings experience their first sense of social belonging (4, 19). Within this formative space, the snake charmer begins a slow torture and corruption of the precious child, dismantling the construction of social and psychological subjectivity that, according to Morley, would typically take place within the domestic sphere (19-31). During the process of this torture, the *niño* becomes a palimpsest of a plethora of historical, literary, and legendary figures featured earlier in the novel. Alvarito is both Bond and don Álvaro, who is in turn Franco, himself a compendium of the bullfighter Manolete, Seneca, Isabel the Catholic, and so on. All social subjectivity ultimately enfolds into the body of the child, the original place, the space closest in. To remake the space closest in would be to refashion the world.

And yet, as much as the body is our most intimate of spaces, it is, in addition, a prison house that is never completely one's own. Vivian Sobchack explains that in the worst instance, "our bodies seem not to belong to us at all, seem neither home nor hearth of our being, but the property of another . . . This is the body experienced as a prison house of semiotically marked flesh" (47). Indeed, Álvaro/Julián does not merely invite Alvarito into any home. Alvarito has, in fact, returned home. As their names make plain, Álvaro-narrator, Álvaro-protagonist, Alvarito-niño, and don Álvaro, *castizo* gentleman, ultimately enfold into one single, intimate spatiality, a body formed by the walls of the snake charmer's shack. The terrible physical torture—an indulgence of blood, sweat, and semen—is, at once, radically metaphysical. Within the prison house all chains of signification collapse upon the pitiful body of the tormented, and finally annihilated, child. The body is, as David Harvey has argued, "the irreducible basis for understanding"

(97). Immediately following the child's death the alarmed Spanish Christian community is mercilessly attacked within the holy refuge of their local Cathedral. Álvaro/Julián/Tariq leads the final desecration and destruction of that officially sacred space. As the pillars give way and the church physically implodes, the Muslim hordes pour into the street for one final orgiastic procession, lifting above them the icon of a new Antichrist- child.

Lo sabes, lo sabes

Within the context of the third and fourth movements of Álvaro-narrator's symphony, the annihilation of space would seem complete. Nation, body, home, and church have been obliterated. Certainly, such would seem to be the case as the orgiastic religious procession flows down Tangiers' "Avenida de España," the child Alvarito, now resurrected as Muslim messiah, invoking the name of Alá. Yet, for all its energy, the procession eventually winds down with a final Chopin-inspired adagio. The last of the musicians turn for home as Álvaro reaches his front door, enters his flat, and prepares for bed. As Álvaro-protagonist lies down to sleep, Álvaro-narrator offers one final disciplining direction, words that figure as the last line of the novel: "el sueño agobia tus párpados y cierras los ojos: lo sabes, lo sabes: mañana sera otro día, la invasión recomenzará" (304). Briefly, we have believed that Álvaro/Julián's attack has obliterated the space that comprised the Spanish nation. The last line, however, like a deceptive cadence at the end of a stirring final movement, proves a crushing, unresolved finale to the narrative seduction of those two movements. It jars readers back toward the context of the first movement that gave birth to the themes and motifs that followed. We recall that the final annihilation of the body, though a terrific wedding of the material and ideological, was ultimately the culmination of personal conceptualizations of space. Álvaro/Julián's cruel invasion in fact only occurred within the imaginative realm, after conceding his inability to overcome the spatial conceptions that interrupted his attempts at remaking space through lived, material activity. Hence, while offering a fascinating model for an assault on the urbanization of consciousness, it is in itself not that assault.

This final failure makes *Don Julián* perhaps the cruelest novel to come out of Franco-era Spain. It assaults its readers with its angry, frustrated tone; with its pathetic tales of an abusive, extremist wartime and postwar childhood in Spain; with viciously misogynistic images that confront the corrosive gender and sexual discourses of triumphalist Catholic Spain. It desecrates possibly everything and anything sacred to a Spanish reader. Furthermore, it conjoins this iconoclasm of content, with its disregard for linguistic decorum: its language—repeatedly leaping from register to register—and its form—without beginning or end, or hardly a pause—deny readers solace. And after all that, Count Julián's vindication is not really a vindication at all; forever incomplete, its key function is finally to demand an endless repetition of such horror.

The attack must go on because ultimately, the protagonist-narrator has misunderstood his enemy. After taking on the violence of crusaders, inquisitors, poets, and dictators, the protagonist-narrator Álvaro/Julián finds himself at an utter loss in the face of a culture consumed and subsumed by postmodern global capital. Álvaro is figuratively and literally lost in the labyrinth of a changing civilization that always seems

to spit him out into the marketplace, ever teeming with tourists, merchants, and hucksters. Exile is permanent because exile as he would have once understood it is no longer possible. He cannot overcome Spain because Spain is no longer available to him. Tangiers has become as Spanish as Spain, and Spain has become something else. In the end both are being engulfed within the space of global capital. Invasion from a position outside the enemy system has become impossible. Any attempt to practice a reworking of space is frustrated by increasingly pervasive and powerful spatial conceptualizations that reiterate the status quo. Unable even to “walk around,” Álvaro/Julián fails to reach the third spatiality in Lefebvre’s spatial trilectics, spatial practice.

Álvaro/Julián’s failure, nevertheless, is the novel’s good fortune. The necessary repetition of invasion, as revealed in the final line of the novel, the deceptive cadence to conclude the symphony, actually offers, within its own logic, a perfect harmony. The narrator-protagonist is the first to intuit the presence of a new, more complex, more deeply rooted enemy than he had supposed. We might see this intuition as that of Juan Goytisolo the former social realist confronting the failure of old-fashioned approaches of speaking truth to power (Mainer xxiv-xxix). Indeed, by the end of Spain’s economic miracle, both identity and the land that had grounded it appeared to be dissolving into pure discourse. Languages—in terms of signifying systems—were beginning to saturate the intellect’s capacity to imagine beyond them. For Álvaro-narrator, as for many a Spanish citizen basking in the bounties of Western-style consumption, the physicality of Spain had been washed away by a tidal wave of media-driven text. Franco had betrayed Spanish identity. Mass-media driven consumer capitalism had blocked any possibility of recovering an objective version of that identity. Identity and the type of geography that grounded it were henceforth off limits. There would be no simple truth-speaking to “the city” when consciousness everywhere was being urbanized.

Álvaro/Julián’s solution is itself thoroughly postmodern: repeated performance in order to eventually produce agency. The invasion must recommence and must repeat itself over and over, must spread its counter-discourse as quickly as the postmodern culture of global capital diffuses its discourse, until ultimately one day it cuts through to the realm of spatial practice, to the actual behaviors, maneuvers, transfers, acquisitions, mergers, and obliterations that exert the most immediate effect upon space. Is this at least a starting point for an effective response to the urbanization of consciousness? Harvey argues that indeed the problem with past revolutionary programs is that they have sought to avoid the urban. Theoreticians and politicians alike have supposed it was possible to launch an attack from outside the system, from the rural so to speak, or from Tangiers. Harvey proposes instead the “urbanization of revolution” (*Urban Experience* 254). Space and the city will be avoided only at our peril.

The proposal of constantly repeated attack plus the master stroke in the third movement of combining ideological attack with physical, spatial processes, followed by the final annihilation of the body offer keys for future counter-hegemonic action. *Don Julián* in itself will never accomplish its final analytic task. As if surprised by the sudden proliferation of the spaces of capital, it finds itself without the weapons or know-how necessary to bring readers to an experience of radically new ways of conceiving,

practicing, and living space, of taking back the earth, the community, the home, the body, and indeed, the soul from the cold grip of a soul-less, place-less global capitalism. *Don Julián* does manage, however, to stir up mental and physical faculties to the need for revolutionary practice, and moreover, for a practice of a different quality. Ultimately, Álvaro-narrator, like his author, Juan Goytisolo, may be too much of a modernist, an artist interpellated all too powerfully by the straightforward system that, according to José Carlos Mainer, ultimately silenced the neorealist generation within which Goytisolo first began writing (xxiv-xxix).

In his anger, Álvaro-narrator leaves Álvaro-protagonist and Álvaro-reader—himself representative of perhaps a younger, more media-savvy generation—with the task of working through hegemonic spatial conceptions and practices toward a liberating practice of space. New ways of thinking, writing about, and filming our experience of reality in space would have to be found by these younger generations.

Notes

¹ According to data from MLA International Bibliography (July 2007).

² Carlos Fuentes studies the novel's move towards "lenguaje como sintaxis profunda," to show how the entirety of Spanish society, its economy, its political traditions, its social organization build upon a certain "castizo" rhetoric (146). José María Castellet declares Goytisolo's intention as "la búsqueda metódica y formal . . . para violar las viejas estructuras lingüísticas que no sólo son reflejo de un mundo acabado, sino también obstáculo primero para la imposición de una verdadera semántica revolucionaria" (191). Kessel Schwartz claims that the entirety of the novel exists between dream and a reality comprised exclusively through the construction of symbols and structures (151). Manuel Durán explores Goytisolo's use of seven classes of language to "fustigar verbalmente" his loathed homeland (54, 64). Linda Gould Levine dedicates a significant part of her introduction to the 1984 Cátedra edition of the novel to a consideration of its intertextuality. Likewise, Michael Ugarte's book-length study of *Don Julián* within the broader "trilogy of treason" focuses almost entirely on structuralist literary theory and intertextuality, on Goytisolo's "verbal contamination" of sacred Spain wherein "all reality . . . is literary" (2, 79). Goytisolo himself, speaking of his novel, has chosen to focus on its "búsqueda del lenguaje," its intent to "poner la atención" not on external reality, but on "el sistema lingüístico" (137). In addition to language, other significant studies have explored the relations between myth and history in the novel (Labanyi, Ledford-Miller, Schwartz), the role popular culture plays therein (Sieburth), and its connections to postcolonial dynamics (González). Still, over thirty years later scholarship continues to focus often on the role of language in the novel (Ribeiro de Menezes).

³ See Eagleton, *After Theory*, chapter 1 (pp. 1-22).

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