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Reviews of Books

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inglés de algunos de los ‘abstracts’. El que encabeza el ensayo de Rike Bolte no solo está plagado de errores y de frases macarrónicas, sino que parece casi una parodia del inglés. Si una editorial de la envergadura de Peter Lang insiste en ‘abstracts’ en lengua inglesa, bien se podría tomar la molestia de emplear a un editor angloparlante para revisar y corregirlos. Y algo parecido puede decirse de las citas en alemán de Kant, Dilthey, Hegel y varios otros (incluido un Kierkegaard germanizado). ¿Cuántos hispanohablantes, a quienes se supone va dirigido un libro escrito en español, sabrán suficiente alemán para comprender las citas? Finalmente me ha chocado la casi total ausencia en las bibliografías de la nutrida familia de unamunistas anglo-sajones (británicos, canadienses, norteamericanos). Ni una referencia al pionero libro de Mario Valdés, *Death in the Literature of Unamuno* (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1964), cuando se habla del tema de la muerte; y lo mismo del profundo y brillante estudio de Alison Sinclair, *Uncovering the Mind: Unamuno, the Unknown and the Vicissitudes of Self* (Manchester: Manchester U. P., 2001) cuando se habla del desdoblamiento del yo. ¿Dificultad con el inglés tal vez? Por si acaso, aquí va esta reseña en el idioma de los dos Migueles.

London.

C. A. LONGHURST

ANDRÉS MARTÍNEZ DE LEÓN, *‘Las crónicas de Oselito’ en ‘Frente Sur’, ‘Frente Extremeño’ y ‘Frente Rojo’*. Edición crítica de Rafael Alarcón Sierra. Madrid: Guillermo Escolar. 2018. 238 pp.

In the past two decades of scholarship on Spain, attention has increased both to first-person testimonies of the early twentieth century and to Spanish graphic narratives, and both are taken up in Rafael Alarcón Sierra’s 2018 critical Introduction, as well as his explanatory footnotes, to the collected wartime ‘Oselito Chronicles’ by Andrés Martínez de León (1895–1978). Despite advances in research on these topics, early Spanish comics and illustrations (from 1875–1939) remain woefully understudied, which is unfortunate because they are rich with possibilities. Similarly, mixed media and ephemeral/disposable publications are notoriously overlooked by scholars. Alarcón Sierra’s critical edition is one attempt to correct this oversight: it collects and offers extensive critical commentary on the newspaper chronicles of the cartoon character Oselito, and the columns narrated by his character, during the years of the Civil War in Spain, thereby offering both (fictional and comical) first-person testimony and scholarly commentary.

Rafael Alarcón Sierra of the Universidad de Jaén has a scholarly background in Spanish literature from the eighteenth through to the twentieth century. This book-length critical edition has two main parts. In the first, extensive, introductory study, Alarcón Sierra presents an overview on Andrés Martínez de León and why he matters, and on his character Oselito and why he matters. Oselito’s trademark look, wide-brimmed hat, bow-tie, shoes and hand in his pocket, speak to his origin and his regional identity, as do Martínez de León’s long-standing fascination with bullfighting and soccer, traditions about which he created artwork both before and after inventing Oselito. Overall, the study makes it clear that Martínez de León was an influential illustrator in his own right and a member of one of the most important groups of intellectuals and artists of his time (Blas Infante, Manuel Chaves Nogales, Pedro Garfias and Miguel Hernández). Furthermore, and while the character’s manner of speech is memorable, the introductory study quotes Martínez de León explaining that Oselito is not ‘una creación literaria más que plástica’ (36), important to keep in mind as we consider the text-heavy examples from both the *Frente* publications and Alarcón Sierra’s book, as well as the professor’s literary background.

The study introduces major cultural considerations unearthed in the *crónicas*, including the aforementioned connections to other intellectuals and artists, regionalism and popular culture. As Oselito travels to different parts of Spain, his observations offer a consideration of regional differences. Some of the most fascinating sections in the Introduction are the reflection on the uses and forms of humour in Oselito and the linguistic phonetic features of the character's Sevillian accent, which is faithfully reproduced in the second section

The Introduction is over 100 pages long and full of references, a deep dive into the era and importance of this collection and the work of its creator. In what might more accurately be called a study than an introduction, readers gain an appreciation for the need to preserve 'disposable' print artifacts such as periodicals, the richness of which cannot be overstated, nor their power in disseminating political ideas through means such as humour. Further, the publications in which *Oselito* appeared have never been fully collected before, and while this constitutes a complete collection in 2018, Alarcón Sierra admits the real possibility that other examples may later be discovered.

The newspapers in which the *Oselito* column appeared are *Frente Rojo*, *Frente Extremeño* and *Frente Sur*, three communist wartime newspapers from Valencia, Castuera and Jaén, respectively. The announcement of the first big exhibition in 2019 of Martínez de León's work describes Oselito as being as well known in his time as Mickey Mouse, and while this may be true, his illustrator's periodical work has not been remembered nearly as well. Attempts at preserving these publications are ongoing, and the full collection of the *Oselito* columns across the three papers is an important step. Similarly, and in line with the recent large-scale efforts around Spain to recover and conserve historical memory, in 2013 Madrid recognized with a plaque the house where Martínez de León lived for twenty-seven years, noting his work as an illustrator, cartoonist, painter and writer; *Las crónicas de Oselito* might be described as comics journalism, but this collection reproduces much more text than illustration.

The critical Introduction describes in detail Martínez de León's illustrations and the collected columns include a detailed description of the format and visual elements of each original chronicle. Due to the crucial formatting and visual components, the study might ideally be served with the integration of images and visual examples throughout, rather than in a separate appendix. The detailed biography of Martínez de León might also drink from the creator's vibrant style and offer a narratively exciting tale, but instead offers deep factual research and an archive of primary sources. Similarly, the multi-dimensional explanatory notes and references throughout the collected chronicles are exhaustively documented and satisfying. Therefore, as a research project and as an archival conservation, the faithful transcription of Oselito's accented narration of important historical events, replete with regional expressions, this is a valuable resource for scholars of the Civil War, regional studies, humour or wartime periodicals.

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SARAH D. HARRIS

ZOLTÁN BIEDERMANN, *(Dis)connected Empires: Imperial Portugal, Sri Lankan Diplomacy, and the Making of a Habsburg Conquest in Asia*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2018. xii + 255 pp.

Zoltán Biedermann, historian of the Portuguese Empire in Early Modern Asia at University College London, presents a lucidly written and convincingly argued monograph about the sixteenth-century Iberian conquest of the Buddhist and Hindu kingdoms of Sri Lanka, especially the Kingdom of Kotte. The study is grounded in a dense reading of rich primary