

Review:

VICENTE BLANCO, JAVIER DÁMASO, PEDRO TOMÉ MARTÍN, IGNACIO FERNÁNDEZ MATA AND SUSANA ASENSIO LLAMAS (COORD.), “*Salvajes*” de *Acá y de Allá: Memoria y Relato de Nos-otros*. Liber amicorum Luis Díaz Viana, Ediciones Universidad de Valladolid, 2022

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It would be naïve to think that ethnography and writing are merely the continuation of a lineage of country people, big and small land-owners, and bourgeois and aristocrat people. This book, a tribute to Luis Díaz Viana, shows that, despite the attempts to forget decades of culture, in the end the characters and the common and subjective place full of hope that encourages individuals and usually helps compensate failures and successes emerge. This anthology of stories is also a clarifying and simple ethnographic contribution by all those involved, because the current and global world, exhausted by accurate or inaccurate information and the dazzling substitution of images, leads to a certain degree of indifference. The temptation is everywhere or, as Díaz Viana puts it, “*acá y allá*” (here and there), to focus on our own art and on the art of our people, because the value of human beings is the same “here and there”, yesterday, today and always, just like their identity.

With tenderness and realism, “*Salvajes*” de *Acá y de Allá* has taken on the duty of watching over the life of our futures. Everyone’s. Moreover, as an anthropologist, I admit that the act of transmitting is a virtue characteristic of the

people of any researched land, free of thought, as if it were an individual victory, although, to some extent, it is a collective one. I share the pride with which the freedom and dignity of human beings, regardless of origin or culture, has been portrayed in this book, in one way or another. Future generations should safeguard the culture and traditions of a land so that it is habitable, a land where our ancestors left their voice; the voice that accompanies this book, with its multiple voices and authors that enable us to reach the past, the here and the now.

Divided into three parts, “*Salvajes*” de *Acá y de Allá* brings together the work of several authors who in their texts superimpose ancestral and more contemporary voices. The first section, “De *Acá*”, features some studies by Jean-François Botrel, such as “Las lecturas de los iletrados”, on literacy in a Spain that tried, in the early 20th century, to avoid being excluded from that literacy process. It also includes the story of Stanley Brandes when he settled, with his recently formed family, in a village in Ávila and, for eighteen months, observed and studied its residents, eager for exotic knowledge befitting a real American, and later delved into the social structures of the rural Andalusia of the

time, travelling through the areas of Monteros and Cazorla. Óscar Fernández Álvarez's contribution, "Imágenes de ruralidad y vida en el campo de Castilla y León", seeks to remind us how it is possible to rediscover the notion of sustainability in exhausted and empty rural contexts, where return is a deed of transformation that is difficult to face. Antonio Leonardo Platón, in his turn, contributes a story, halfway between the real and the imaginary, which recreates the figure of Luisito de Pozáldez as if he were a late minstrel, a cunning globetrotter or a character worthy of portrayal by Goya. We can also read "Moros y Cristianos. Rituales de identidad", by María-Ángels Roque, a text of reconstruction based on looking at the evolution and participation of the festival of Moros y Cristianos in Andratx (Mallorca), to provide an ethnographic model that can be extended to other towns and villages, as a reflection of appropriation and in search of a legitimacy.

Carmen Morán Rodríguez recalls Luis Díaz Viana when she uses the forest and the wolf to show how global citizens of over-modernity attempt to orient themselves in a space that is no longer urban but rather virtual and experienced, like their own historical moment. Thus emerge the *mythos* and the *logos*, the wolf and the pack, savagely coined as a recent event in the history of this country which should be removed as it is harmful and atrocious. Díaz Viana's text, with its classic and simple prose, emerges from the inside and, in its turn, distances itself, as if seen from outside. This anthology is an ethnology of "itself" where everything starts from a whole, is collected and there is no room for fiction.

On the pages of the section "De Allá", Edwin Seroussi deals with the modern reunion between Spaniards and Sephardim, as a contribution to the rooted millenary tradition between Spain and Sepharad, from the popular lyricism that exemplifies that embedded issue. In his essay, Ángel Díaz de Rada revisits the

veiled forms of discrimination of the ethnic minorities in the European Arctic, particularly in Norway, and details a case of inclusion of the ethnopolitical demands and motives of those who identify themselves, or are identified, as "Samis" in state policies. Díaz de Rada thus manages a type of "true and collective" writing, and with his words he proclaims realities that can be extrapolated to the rest of humanity, because the real power of "*Salvajes*" de *Acá y de Allá* is intervening in life and endowing it with a meaning of its own.

From anthropology, Susana Asensio Llamas highlights and reveals the experiences of the musicologist Eduardo Martínez Torner during his exile in France and later in London, where he managed to overcome the temporality of the political situation of his land and remained loyal to research on Spanish literature and music, always as an outcast, with a life full of truncated promises. It is an account full of experiences in which ethnology, anthropology, sociology and history merge to tell stories.

In "Sobre la identidad", Ignacio Fernández de Mata recalls the construction of collective identity as both an administrative and sentimental political articulation, because in the 19th century there was an attempt to reach an inconclusive achievement in constant evolution, as has been seen in Spain with the development of the autonomies or Catalan nationalism. De Mata recalls that the construction of the nation, region or provinces is more problematic than their mere institutional establishment, because the link of human groups with a space is more complex and emerges from emotional identification, which means belonging and recognition. The regions, the province and the state have participated in constructions and tensions that, in many cases, have not drawn to a conclusion, such as the case of the recent management of identity in Castilla y León. Because, for regional institutions, "identity" is a prohibited and problematic concept. Ascensión Barañano, in her turn, speaks of the

developmental myth in the conceptual language of intangible cultural policies and reflects on the representations and practices that public policies concerning cultural heritage, particularly intangible, relate to development, both in conceptual terms and as a desirable and achievable objective in the sociocultural, political and economic fields. Intangible cultural heritage uses public policies to deal with the processes of affinity established by its agents and refers to individuals and groups embodied by global elites who exercise pressure in the state and transnational space and are responsible for the private policies that tackle development as a key element of intangible cultural heritage.

In "*Salvajes*" *de Acá y de Allá*, all the participants write with clarity and perform a human act that helps us open our eyes to the

social reality. This book shows the liberating strength that writing provides through a clean and precise language, combining a classical and simple style and read as a plural ethnology.

Finally, it is worth noting that this anthology can bear the gaze of others. Its writing is subordinated to the passage of time and explores the figure of Luis Díaz de Viana, for whom writing is not a choice or an easy activity, as some people might think. Writing means collecting, restoring in order to intervene in the world and give it meaning. It is naïve to think that ethnography and writing are just the continuation of country people, large and small landowners, and bourgeois people and aristocrats. Intellectuals, outcasts and freethinkers also respond to the ethnographic framework of our culture. Of that I am certain.