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Critical Readings of Baudilio Montoya's Poetic Work*

Leituras críticas da obra poética de Baudilio Montoya

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ABSTRACT

This article answers the question: What are the readings that critics have made of the poetic work of the Calarqueño writer Baudilio Montoya? To answer it, we formed a corpus of 250 texts, from which we selected 48. The criteria of choice fixed the lens in writings disseminated in different media in physical or digital support (magazines, books, newspapers) or product of investigations and in texts in which an interpretative reading of the Baudilian aesthetic was evidenced. In this way we achieve the purpose of recognizing, from critical voices, the literary diversity of the work of Baudilio Montoya. The most outstanding results are translated, on the one hand, in a complete critical radiography of his work and, on the other, in a published title (book) that compiles the chosen corpus and integrates the blue collection ("Essay") of the Library of Quindian Authors: Critical readings of the work of Baudilio Montoya (Zambrano and Sarmiento, 2011b).

Keywords: Baudilio Montoya, literary criticism, Baudilian aesthetics, critical reading, poetic work.

RESUMO

Este artigo responde à pergunta: Quais são as leituras que os críticos fizeram da obra poética do escritor calarqueano Baudilio Montoya? Para respondê-la, formamos um corpus de 250 textos, dos quais selecionamos 48. Os critérios de seleção fixaram a lente em escritos publicados em diferentes mídias físicas ou digitais (revistas, livros, jornais) ou produto de pesquisas e em textos em que se evidenciou uma leitura interpretativa da estética baudiliana. Desta forma, alcançamos o propósito de reconhecer, a partir de vozes críticas, a diversidade literária da obra de Baudilio Montoya. Os resultados mais marcantes são traduzidos, por um lado, em uma radiografia crítica completa de sua obra e, por outro, em um título publicado (livro) que compila o corpus escolhido e integra a coleção azul ("Ensayo") da Biblioteca de Autores Quindianos: Leituras críticas da obra de Baudilio Montoya (Zambrano e Sarmiento, 2011b).

Palavras-chave: Baudilio Montoya, crítica literária, estética baudiliana, leitura crítica, obra poética.

Introduction

Ignorance of the literary manifestations that surround us is usually the result of a general ignorance of our cultural values. After several years of attentive attention to the literature of the Gran Caldas region, the Marginalia research group concludes that this is a field conducive to research. In the department of Quindío, as in all culture, the literary field suffers shocks and progressive modifications that lead to the loss of specificity of literary phenomena, to the dissolution of crystallized languages and to the permanent questioning of the very concept of literature. In this context and in the face of such a challenge, we consider it necessary to examine the critical readings of the work of the Calarican poet Baudilio Montoya, since this will constitute certain possibilities to define the cultural horizons that overlap in more than a century of regional culture.

It is therefore important to ask: What are the readings that critics have made of the poetic work of the Calarqueño writer Baudilio Montoya? Answering these questions involves a serious approach to the poet's set of books and the texts that critics and academics have produced about his work. The main purpose of this research, then, is to collect, in the title *Critical readings of the work of Baudilio Montoya* (Library of Quindian Authors¹), writings that propose multithematic interpretations of the lyrical tradition of the poet, in a kind of anthology that aims to honor his memory and literary journey and contribute to the consolidation of the cultural memory of Quindío.

The study, developed over a year, compiles texts that bet on different readings of the Baudilian work. Some generate a state of controversial tension, others correspond to a certain harmonic tone, but all dialogue with each other. Likewise, an investigation on Baudilio Montoya that includes unpublished documents and an annotated bibliography of the work and on the work of the poet, is included at the end of the book "The poetic corpus of Baudilio Montoya" (2011): A complete description of the six books published by the author and the four compilations of his work in verse, with special attention to the variants of each poem. This text, at the same time, precedes and lays the foundations of the title *Baudilio Montoya. Poetic work (1938-1963)* (Castrillón, Cardona and Castaño, 2012) of the Alma Mater Publishing House.

This research is, at first, a contribution to the historical and cultural memory of Quindío and the region; and second, a contribution to academic life, to the literary world (especially the poetic one), and to the critical studies on the writers of the department.

1. "The Quindian Authors Library is one of the most ambitious publishing efforts in the history of the Department of Quindío. It was born on the initiative of the Government of Quindío [...] with the editorial support of the University of Quindío. The collection represents the tradition and actuality of the literature and culture of Quindío. Of the 32 books published so far, 14 are products of the research work on literature and culture of the region that is developed in the Bachelor in Literature and Spanish Language of the Universidad del Quindío, work in which professors, students and graduates of the program participate" (Bachelor in Literature and Spanish Language, 2018: 3).

Research Methodology and Editing Operations

Every anthology involves a review of the state of the art at some point in history. It means risking a possibility related to the estrangement of one or more authors, and finding the surprise of those who believe they have all the material at hand and discover, with the passage of time, that it is a meticulous work that does not take long to extend their horizons. Thus, the methodological route followed for the materialization of this research is as follows:

1. Out of 250 texts found, 48 were selected. The primary objective was to collect writings that would account for the thematic and aesthetic plurality of the work of Baudilio Montoya. The selection criteria focused on published writings or research results and on texts in which, beyond the discursive variety, interpretations of Baudilian aesthetics flourished. The focus was on the representativeness of the authors in the academic and literary scene, and on the thematic diversity of the writings. Texts with a dominant biographical and referential character, or whose themes and stories were subsumed in others, were omitted; for example: "Don Baudilio de La Bella" by Alejandro Vallejo B., for his exclusive biographical profile; "¡Baudilio Montoya o la bohemia creadora!" by Alirio Sabogal Valencia and "Vivencia del último rapsoda, Baudilio Montoya Botero" by Ignacio A. Torres Puerta, because they narrate episodes of Baudilio's life repeated in other writings; "Baudilio, poeta de la tierra y de la raza" by Alonso de la Guardia, for his eminent referential character.

Despite the title of the book, it is worth noting that it does not only include criticism per se, but also texts of a different nature in which the interpretative character predominates, and also that the selection criteria allowed to delimit the chosen corpus.

2. The texts were distributed in five chapters, plus a biography of Baudilio Montoya by Humberto Senegal: I. Memories (7), II. Reviews (6), III. Critical Notes (9), IV. Essays (21) and V. Studies (4). Chapter I contains writings recalling the life of Baudilio; chapter II, reviews of some of the poet's books; chapter III, critical notes that develop brief and specific judgments regarding Baudilian aesthetics; chapter IV, essays that expose widely developed judgments, and chapter V, academic studies on Montoya's work. Because of the diversity, the classification was forced to stretch the possibilities offered by the title of this edition.

3. The texts underwent various editing operations: Spelling adjustments and correction of errata, crossing of quotations between the writings so that they matched the sources, control of data, dates and names of authors, comparison of the verses cited with the original books, addition of a footnote for the data of origin and marks in the parts where, due to the deficiencies of the copy, words were inserted or signs of omission were annexed. In none of these cases was the authors' particularity of style affected².

2. Some writings do not have complete bibliographic information because

Readings on the Baudilian Poetic Tradition

José Ramírez Trujillo expresses in the documentary *Baudilio Montoya, el Rapsoda del Quindío*, of the Lumière Cine Club (2003), that one night in the café *La Bolsa*, a place frequented by prestigious personalities of Armenia, Baudilio Montoya, after drinking a drink, gave him the poem "Vida rota" (2003), which would allow the musician to compose the bambuco "En la playa" (2006). Hugo Montoya, son of the poet, narrates that his father liked the "traguito" (alcoholic drinks), something common in his bohemian writer. The taste for alcohol made it difficult for the wife's family to accept him, but the romance of his verses and the constant letters that Baudilio wrote to her, played in his favor and managed to unite him to her. Montoya was also a sensitive man who was concerned about crime and social injustice. For example, it is said that during the crude violence of the 60s in Quindío, the peasant José Dolores Naranjo was murdered near the corregimiento of Pueblo Tapao, a fact that led him to write a poem that he titled with the name of the victim, because according to Evelio Gamba, a student of the writer, Montoya was always where the dejected was.

As diverse as his daily conduct was the Baudilian poetic activity. There are many readings made of Montoya's work. There are those who choose to call him the poet of solitude, whose deeply taciturn lyrics express a permanent dialogue with desolation. Some prefer to appeal to its popular character and call it *Rapsoda*, since its verses, a reflection of the violence and social inequality of that time, welcome the voice of their country people and radiate a flame of protest and indignation. Others refer to him as a romantic poet embraced by the mantle of love and the seductive kindness of the girls of Quindío. Some claim that Montoya saw death in everything and therefore his singing evokes it. A few more read in his work laughter and sarcasm. Others noticed images of the Quindian panorama and recognize him as an engraver of the landscape and a sculptor of words that allude to the near.

There are those who accuse him - in the best sense of the word - of adhering to the current of the cursed writers of nineteenth-century France (Baudelaire, Mallarmé, Rimbaud; remember, for example, "Oración a Verlaine", 1938); the poet guessed in the Symbolists a pitcher from which to cut art and from which to create luctuous literary curses. From his lyrics spring airs of pessimism and generalized disenchantment that supply a growing feeling of boredom towards a tremendously materialistic and conservative society. Adherence to the Symbolists provided him with the label of transgressive poet.

Rodolfo Jaramillo Ángel, with a fluid style and without excess of ornaments, narrates how he met Baudilio.

they were taken from the Baudilio Montoya Museum, which lacks a record of sources. A part of the material comes from the support archive of the documentary *Baudilio Montoya, el Rapsoda del Quindío* (2003), from the Cine Club Lumière (Daniel Vejarano, Juan Carlos Puerta, José Álvaro Saineda, Juan Carlos Ángel Jaramillo, Beatriz Lorena Buitrago, Mauricio Tejada). All the texts considered in this project rest in the archives of the Bachelor in Literature and Spanish Language of the Universidad del Quindío.

First, by his verses and a letter that the poet wrote to him, and later, in the rural house of the author with whom the chronicler would meet, not by chance, "polishing a verse with devoted affection" (1952: 15). Jaramillo Ángel recalls the transparency, vitality and pantheistic sense of the Baudilian lyric; he remembers Montoya as a writer of poetic exquisiteness immersed in art and beauty.

Juan de J. Herrera, in "Me niego a llamarlo Rapsoda", shows Baudilio as a "bard", points out that he was "guest of honor" to parties in which, in the heat of guitars and boleros, Montoya

intervened with a sonnet [...] his regional pen was in every teenage romance, in the reconciling serenade, in the cultured gathering and in the mid-priced bar. It was of all of us, as the bread of every morning and as the evening prayer (2003: §3).

From a different point of view, the journalist Luis Eduardo Nieto Caballero (1983) assumes a critical-descriptive reading of *Lotos*, in two directions. The first widens the explicit metaphor of the book and praises the nascent composition:

Poet of the high flight, Baudilio Montoya has just published in Cali, with the name of *Lotos*, a book of poems, announced in the prologue with a download of adjectives [...] For sonnets, even those shaken by passion, could be, like the leaves of the aquatic plant, a marvelous tapestry on the still waters (21).

The second course risks a less glorifying and more objective reading of the book, nuanced by Nieto Caballero's modesty and the conviction that his hands protect a publication of respectable magnitude written by a character of very high perspective in Quindian geography (22).

Humberto Jaramillo Ángel, in "Baudilio Montoya. Otro año" (2008), regrets the oblivion of the poet, controverts the neglect before his grave, claims a new laurel for those who were crowned in life, and raises a call that if not attended would be strange for the region: "How can we forget, for a moment even, the brother, the sad brother, the big brother, the brother whom we accompanied, in murky bohemian nights, in his august solitude?" (45).

Carlos Alberto Villegas, in "Texto provocador en la conmemoración del centenario del nacimiento de Baudilio Montoya" (2004), in dialogue with Humberto Jaramillo Ángel, asserts that a kind of "shame" and a strange mistrust that prevents Baudilio from being taken outside the walls still lingers in the people of Quindío, beyond the regional scenography, "due to the ambivalence and incapacity to value and promote our most authentic expressions, due to the lack of synergy and individualism of the cultural institutions with convening power, due to our negligence as cultural managers" (151). Villegas puts his finger on the wound (the poet's oblivion), questions the endogenous behavior of the people from Quindío and stokes the indefectible debt that they have with Baudilio, which brings to mind a famous verse of *Suenan Timbres* (Vidales, 1986: 79): "Watches waste time", which in this case draws the

dismemory of the people (Quindianos) and portrays women and men devoid of memories (Baudilian poetics).

The newspaper *El Siglo* would publish in 1950 the essay "Baudilio Montoya, poeta de la soledad" (1950), by Gonzalo Ríos Ocampo, in whose initial lines the author recounts a failed expedition to Peñas Blancas and puts the lens on the enigma that surrounds it, in order to weave the magical and mysterious atmosphere in which our poet would move. Ríos Ocampo dwells on the sorrows that warmed Baudilio's lyrics and looks at some topics that gravitate in his poetry: desolation, nostalgia, melancholy, sadness, death, hopelessness. That is why he resolves to call him *poet of solitude*.

The poem "El hijo imposible" is the subject of analysis in "Croquis al fondo de un poema de Baudilio Montoya", by Alfonso Rodríguez (1938). It is an essay in which Rodríguez demonstrates that the Baudilian aesthetic uses discomfort, runs in grief, identifies with the fear of a father who suffers for his son - one who is not yet born - and intervenes in life like a filigree tape of absolute anguish (4). Consequently, Montoya's poetry enters into symbiosis with worldly sadness.

In this context we emphasize Lino Gil Jaramillo, to whom Baudilio owes the qualifier of *last rhapsody of Quindío*, and who writes in the prologue of the poetic anthology *Baudilio Montoya: Rapsoda del Quindío* (1973), that the poet:

Transubstantiated in his songs the sentimental concerns of the people of agriculture and the village, of the fields and the roads, through which he walked from town to town and from inn to inn pouring cups and saying verses, singing and dreaming, living and dying, like the ancient rhapsodies or the medieval troubadours (8).

For this reason Montoya was in life the most beloved and the most honored poet of Calarcá. He and his verses are admired and reviewed not so much for his bohemian life as for the verve of a writing that places him at the height of a singer who made his poems the busiest stage. However, some authors, such as Humberto Senegal (1988), Carlos A. Castrillón (1993) and Antonio Cardona Jaramillo (1934), contravene Montoya's common name: *rapsoda*, because it materializes his folkloric mood, blurs his poetic value and is considered a simplistic appellation that conflicts with the definition, the origin of the term and the peculiar quality of the author.

Belisario Betancur, in "El habla lírica del pueblo" (nd), prologue of the anthology *Baudilio Montoya, 100 años*, estimates that Montoya, beyond erecting a row of grievances against the realities he lived, appropriated them and enabled them poetic circulation. Baudilio drank from the poverty of his neighbors, from everyday life, although, in addition:

he was a collector of sorrows - death, night, anguish - who sang self-absorbed in his inermity, in the certainty of the ineffectiveness of his denunciation [...] In Montoya they were the trill and the train to sing in the gloom of the peasant inns or in the cadence of the parish tipples (15).

This reading highlights a gloomier Montoya, invaded by the melancholy of his context, afflicted by alien and intimate experiences and with a trembling heart and overwhelmed by the crying of the countryside, by the anxiety of the moment and by the virulence of his time. Clearly, a Montoya immersed in uncertainty.

In a similar sense, but at last distant, Bernardo Pareja in the essay "Poeta de cadencias entrañables" of *Argonauts of the spirit*, indicates, in a Luciferian reading of the Baudilian aesthetic with its well-known Greco-Latin style, that:

Almost five decades ago, the author of *Lotos* revealed to us, in a letter underlined by lancinating glimpses, his tormenting vision of 'a world that agonizes without blood between the veins', according to the derelict conception of a poet of ours of accentuated Parnassian influences and endowed with lively and vast Greco-Latin culture. Let us recall here parts of the aforementioned letter: '[...] I understand that for the reasons I give you, you can know my life and the value of my work. In its defense you will have to commit yourself tomorrow, when the delights of the critics try to get up looking for the height of my stilts. You will then be filled with voices, saying the satanic fire that inspired my word and commanded the dark meaning of my poems' (2010: 42. Translation).

A demonic reading of Montoya's work, supported by the letter he wrote in his time. Pareja understands him as a poet of the night and the fog - a look less rhapsodic and minstrel than others -, proof that his aesthetic is combined with the symbolist curses, with the desacralization of the ecumenical and with the circumstantial mystery. Bernardo Pareja reads in Baudilio an aesthete of satanic threads.

This optic feeds the hypothesis that Montoya was considered a cursed poet since the 40s. It should be noted, therefore, that other voices that in the investigation show evidence in this regard are those of Antonio Cardona Jaramillo (1934), Noel Estrada Roldán (1990), Fernando Mejía Mejía (1983), Juan David Zambrano (2011a), J. Ramírez Rojas (1965) and Humberto Jaramillo Ángel (1990).

For his part, in "Vigencia de Baudilio Montoya", Carlos A. Castrillón points out that in the poet's work there is a frequent contact with the environment and an abstraction of the immediate landscape oriented by the "lightness in the image" and the "metaphysical intuition", which are "the foundation of his verses". In the same essay, Castrillón develops the idea:

The collective conscience recognizes in him a poet who interpreted the plural voice, at the same time that he sought in romanticism the universality that would sustain his craft as a poet within a broader tradition. A proof of this is the ichasticity of his images, constructed apart from rhetoric and *retruécano*, and the metaphysical intuition that is expressed with depth, especially in his sonnets (1993: 5).

The poet Julio Alfonso Cáceres, in "Discurso en el acto de coronación de Baudilio Montoya" (1952), a rigorous essay both for the sharpness of his meditations and

by the sonority of the language, describes Montoya's human virtues, insists on the value of his poetry and highlights the cultural maturity that the glorification of a poet shines through:

A city that aspires to climb a rung in history, can not be the New York of finance without also being the Athens of the spirit [...] The poet wrote from the municipality of Córdoba a slender and luminous poetry, crossed in stretches by the insinuating fog of sadness. His verses took the path of the soul and there installed their melodious hegemony. From them we begin to intuit the poet in his distant plot, dialoguing at night with the bitter sirens of old Verlaine or praying under the fatal stars the satanic prayer of father Baudelaire" (5).

On the other hand, Jaime Mejía Duque, in "Semblanza mínima de Baudilio Montoya", a text in which he studies the lyrical complexity of the author (the landscape, the popular, love, women, identity ...) maintains that Montoya:

Struck all the strings of popular sentiment and he also did so within the value scale of his countrymen and contemporaries: his common places of judgment and emotion, so alive in that daily life in a permanent trance of idealization; its myths and superstitions; in short, the *uncritical* spirit of its entire culture: that eternally romantic and fetishistic spirit from which our folklore of love affairs, funeral premonitions and nostalgia continues to flow (1992: 6).

Mejía Duque affirms not inconsiderable categories from which it is convenient to delve into the studies of Montoya's work, and introduces an assessment that deserves academic attention: "I have hinted that Baudilio, in his sentimental spontaneity, is the bearer of a metaphysics in action, which in itself implies a cosmogony."

There is another aspect that matters. The poems that are repeated the most in critical readings are: "Poema negro", "Muchacha del Quindío", "Oración a Verlaine", "Nada", "A ti", "Árbol", "José Dolores Naranjo" and "Querrela de Navidad". These predilections allow us to infer analytical tendencies, aesthetic approaches of the readers, interpretative, social, political, ethical and academic inclinations, and some forgetfulness in the readings, since a large segment of Baudilian creation has been ignored and installed at the time. margin of criticism; This is, in the words of Derrida (1989), a selective exercise of Baudilio's work, a censorship, an exclusion, an activity strongly marked by what is not said, by silence.

Baudilio Montoya, then, concatenated in his aesthetics loneliness, romance, death, the people, evil, the everyday, identity, bitterness, etc. The previous tour represents a review of the collection of readings of the Baudilian poetic tradition and, of course, does not exhaust all eyes or the analytical and interpretive nature of such readings.

Conclusions

The previous pages collect a plurality of readings on the work of Baudilio Montoya. In them, it is clear that many of the author's avatars shine in his poetry. Verses loaded with a deep social value. Bohemian freehand songs in which each anecdote was a pretext for creation, each vision was reason enough to project oneself in time through literature; each cup, each friend, each torment were reasons to create and create himself.

The majority of texts that make up the corpus of this essay coincide in recognizing the versatility and style, sometimes romantic and sometimes transgressive, of an author who traveled, as a good connoisseur of the region, paths marked by nostalgia, melancholy, death, loneliness and even evil. They highlight the lyrics of an author who drank from French symbolism to sing the anguish of others and denounce his own regrets and regrets. Perhaps for this reason, Juan Aurelio García assured in the documentary of the Cine Club Lumière that Baudilio "is all, he is all".

However, the readings of Baudilio Montoya's poetic tradition also testify to the immense debt that we as cultural managers have with the Calarqueño. The oblivion of the poet suggests the apathy with which some institutions have assumed the circulation of his work and the ignorance with which we as readers contribute to this condemnation. It is worth noting that the purpose of this essay goes beyond the critical x-ray of the work of such an important author and also contributes to the payment of that debt in which it is necessary to rewrite our literary history through the identification, study and evaluation of works in those that represent the other and the other with an ethical and aesthetic function, and in which Baudilio Montoya has a lot to say.

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