



HOZVEN, ROBERTO. *OCTAVIO PAZ. VIAJERO DEL PRESENTE*. MEXICO: EL COLEGIO NACIONAL, 1994. 323 pp

Roberto Hozven's book is a solid and significant milestone in the study of Octavio Paz's writings. It is divided into four parts. The first part, three chapters (nearly half of the book), is a detailed synopsis and initial analysis of the key aspects of what he calls "la enseñanza paciana hoy en día" (19), followed by a discussion of modernity and "modernismo" and an examination of some steps taken by Paz in his quest for the "present." The second part (two shorter chapters), both deepens and shifts the analysis of implications of Paz's writing; in addition to comparison of the evolution of some aspects of Pacian thought to the French Structuralists, Hozven uncovers "two ways proposed by Paz's writing to interpret signs" (20): "leer" and "ver." To "read" the world is to "decodify" meaning whereas to "see" the world concerns itself more with the process by which meaning is generated. The third part (one brief chapter), details similarities and differences among poetry, speech and prose in Paz and discusses the occupation of the poet as opposed to and linked with that of the politician. And, finally, the fourth part (one brief chapter) draws on some of insights of the previous chapters in the analysis of two of Paz's poems. Stylistically, Hozven's sometimes eccentric diction and indulgent syntax are justified and/or mediated by his consistent schematic clarity of presentation and rigorously logical analysis. It is clear, as well, that the organization of this study reflects the complex and interrelated progression of thought that permeates it.

In the Prologue, Hozven proposes to analyze and present both Octavio Paz's essays and poetry "from within" (17). Instead of applying a rigid theoretical model to the works, Hozven tends to derive his methodology for the evaluation and organization of Paz's work from the concepts and processes found within the writing itself. In one sense, Hozven's book seeks more to "see" Paz's writing than to "read" it. As a result, Hozven's own discourse and the structure of his book, can sometimes be seen as an illustration or reflection of some elements of Pacian thought. To study Paz's work in any other way, Hozven argues would be to condemn one's self "a entender sin comprender" (17).

A fitting example of this critical posture is the title itself, and Hozven's justification of it in the Prologue. The book begins with a question, "¿Por qué viajero y por qué del presente?" (9). Both of these terms and several related concepts (e.g. "trasplante," "modernidad," "traducción") are inextricably tied to Pacian thought. One "traveler's tactic" (9) used by Paz, Hozven writes, is the adoption of the "present" - a point of view in constant change- as a means of

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