

FRANCISCO FUSTER, *Aire de familia: Historia íntima de los Baroja*. Madrid: Cátedra. 2018. 181 pp.

Francisco Fuster's *Aire de familia: Historia íntima de los Baroja* is a welcome recent addition to biographical scholarship and cultural histories of the Baroja family and its legacy in Spain, not least because existing surveys have tended to vary in quality and accuracy. This problem has been compounded by the transposition from fiction inspired by personal experience back to autobiography in Pío Baroja's own memoirs *Desde la última vuelta del camino*, which the author began writing in 1941 when he was in his late sixties.

Fuster's *Aire de familia* presents an evocative portrait of a well-known family of individualists, descendants of the mining engineer Serafín Baroja y Zornoza and his wife Carmen Nessi y Goñi. The volume eschews a dry, chronological account in favour of a thematic and anecdotal exploration of the family's peripatetic movements between San Sebastián, Madrid, Pamplona and Valencia, where they lost their eldest son Darío to tuberculosis in 1894. This episode was transposed to semi-autobiographical fiction in Pío Baroja's *El árbol de la ciencia* through the death of the protagonist Andrés' youngest brother Luisito, thereby changing the name and age of the sibling. Subsequent chapters of Fuster's book trace the experiences of the couple's offspring: 'El naufrago Ricardo Baroja', 'Las inquietudes de Pío Baroja' and 'Las vidas (im)posibles de Carmen Baroja'. The final chapters summarize the role of Julio Caro Baroja and Pío Caro Baroja, the children of Carmen Baroja and her husband Rafael Caro Raggio, in preserving the family legacy.

The book offers fascinating descriptions of the different homes shared by the different generations: in particular, more than three decades of history in Calle Álvarez de Mendizábal in the Argüelles district of Madrid. The ground floor was dedicated to the bakery (inherited from maternal aunt Juana Nessi and originally situated near the Monasterio de las Descalzas Reales) and later Rafael Caro Raggio's publishing house. The house was bombed in the Civil War, destroying many possessions and leading to the theft of Pío's manuscripts and Ricardo's art. Fuster also evokes the emotional significance of 'Itzea' in Vera de Bidasoa (Navarra), the house bought in 1912 and renovated by Pío Baroja as a refuge from the summer heat of Madrid. 'Itzea' held unique appeal due to the family's Basque roots. The contrasting personalities of parents Serafín Baroja and Carmen Nessi are drawn out, with recourse to impressions and some self-evident statements, such as the observation of 'el simple hecho de que, sin ellos, no hubiese existido el resto; con ellos, la memoria de los Baroja es más completa y, en honor a la verdad, más justa' (71). The generational approach to the portrait of the Barojas, one assumes, thereby seeks to redress certain gaps and inconsistencies of previous studies.

The insider history of the book's title is written in almost entirely sympathetic terms. Fuster's account draws widely on memoirs penned by Carmen Baroja (in addition to some of her poems) and by her sons, as well as *Familia, infancia y juventud* by Pío Baroja. Other source materials include occasional citations from prominent writers and cultural figures of the period, including Pío's contemporary Azorín, the *falangista* Giménez Caballero, and the postwar novelist Camilo José Cela. Autobiographical works by members of the family are the basis for exploring a shared sense of being outsiders to public life in Spain, with which they had 'una relación de amor / odio' (171). Julio Caro Baroja's memoirs are also referenced to challenge Pío Baroja's long-standing reputation as a loner and misanthrope. The book is necessarily selective in its coverage, focusing a good deal of detail on the later years of disillusion of Ricardo Baroja, following the devastating car accident in which he lost an eye, and the deterioration of Pío Baroja's health as an elderly man. The chapter on Carmen Baroja

narrates her frustrated ambitions for independence and self-realization due to her domestic role and failed marriage.

The volume offers an absorbing insight into the legacy of the famous artists and offspring of the Baroja family, illustrated by well-chosen photographs. It successfully evokes in poignant terms the successes and disappointments of siblings Pío, Ricardo and Carmen Baroja, and those closest to them. Francisco Fuster presents a careful and respectful, often deferential, memoir of the contributions of three generations and beyond. The book, however, could have contextualized further its own academic approach, an opportunity that would have guided the reader in how to situate this volume more clearly in relation to previous scholarship and cultural histories. These include existing biographies of the Baroja line, as well as the growing body of material on gendered approaches to early twentieth-century Spain and the lost women of the Generation of 1898.

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