Exhibit Credits

Curated by

Jesús Alonso-Regalado, Hispanic Studies Bibliographer and Outreach Librarian, University at Albany, SUNY

Sponsored and supported by

University Libraries, University at Albany, SUNY
Office of International Education, University at Albany, SUNY
Fundación Gonzalo Torrente Ballester, Santiago de Compostela (Spain)

Acknowledgements

University Libraries
Jodi Boyle, Kathleen Broeder, Karen Brown, Mary Casserly, Ann Kearney
Brian Keough, Roger Lipera, John Pardavila, Betsaida Reyes, Mary Van Ullen, and Geoffrey Williams

University at Albany
Ray Bromley, Ilka Kressner, Joana Sabadell-Nieto, and April Schmidt

Fundación Gonzalo Torrente Ballester
Carmen Becerra Suárez, Miguel Fernández-Cid, Marián Portela, Marina Martínez Mattanó and Álvaro Torrente Sánchez-Guisande

Additional contributors
Daniel Joudrey, Sally Lawrence, Drosoula Lytra, Stephen Miller, Francisca Ojeda-Suárez Miller, and José Miguel Torrente Sánchez-Guisande

http://libguides.library.albany.edu/gtb


October 14, 2011 - January 12, 2012

M.E. Grenander Dept. of Special Collections and Archives
University Libraries, University at Albany
Science Library, 3rd Floor
Gonzalo Torrente Ballester (1910-1999) is a major literary figure in 20th century Spain. Well known as a novelist, Gonzalo Torrente Ballester (GTB) also published plays, film and broadcasting scripts, critical works, and journalistic writings. From 1966 to 1972, he was a professor at the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures at the University at Albany, where he became its first distinguished professor. In 1975, GTB was elected as a member of the Spanish Royal Academy. In 1985, he was the first Spanish novelist to receive the Miguel de Cervantes Prize, which is the highest literary prize for Spanish-language writers.

This exhibit explores—for the first time—his connections to Albany where he lived, taught, and wrote some of his finest works.

Facing growing censorship from the Spanish government under Francisco Franco and disillusioned by the indifferent reception of his novel *Don Juan* (1963), GTB decided to leave his country and accepted a distinguished professorship of Spanish literature at the University at Albany in 1966. This escape to North America marked the beginning of the most fruitful, creative period of his life.

While in Albany he began to write what would become his “fantastic trilogy” of novels, which are widely viewed as his greatest works: *La saga/fuga de J.B.* (1972), *Fragmentos de apocalipsis* (1977), and *La isla de los jacintos cortados* (1980). *La saga/fuga de J.B.*, which is considered by many critics as his masterpiece, was conceived and created in Albany. With respect to this novel, Nobel Prize winner José Saramago stated: "Until now, there was a vacant place next to Miguel de Cervantes, a place that has just been filled by Gonzalo Torrente Ballester." The beginning of the novel *La Isla* follows the steps of its main characters to places located in the city of Albany and other areas in New York State. While in Albany, he also finished another novel, *Off-Side* (1969). Portions of his non-fiction book, *Cuadernos de un vate vago* (1982), also include narratives on New York State. In this exhibit, the first editions of all these works are showcased along with many of his other books.

The exhibit also features a selection of photographs (many never seen before in public) documenting Torrente Ballester’s time in Albany and his unique way of using photography as a tool for his creative process. As part of the exhibit, visitors will be able to listen to GTB teaching classes at what was then called the State University of New York at Albany.

The Gonzalo Torrente Ballester Collection at the University at Albany Libraries is the most comprehensive in the U.S. It contains both works by and about GTB, including first editions of the vast majority of his books, many of which are signed by the author.

Of special importance are three manuscripts written before his appointment at the University at Albany. *Mi Fuero Interno* ("My Innermost Conscience") is a three-volume journal kept from December 26, 1954 to June 7, 1964, which was written in Francoist Spain. Torrente Ballester generously donated it to the University, so as to keep his political thoughts away from the dictatorship’s scrutiny, and to keep his personal reflections on his children confidential. The *Don Juan* material consists of two typescripts with manuscript changes and corrections, one of which was reviewed and edited by official Spanish censors, but was nevertheless published without modifications in 1963. Access to all of the materials in this collection is unrestricted except for *Mi Fuero Interno*.