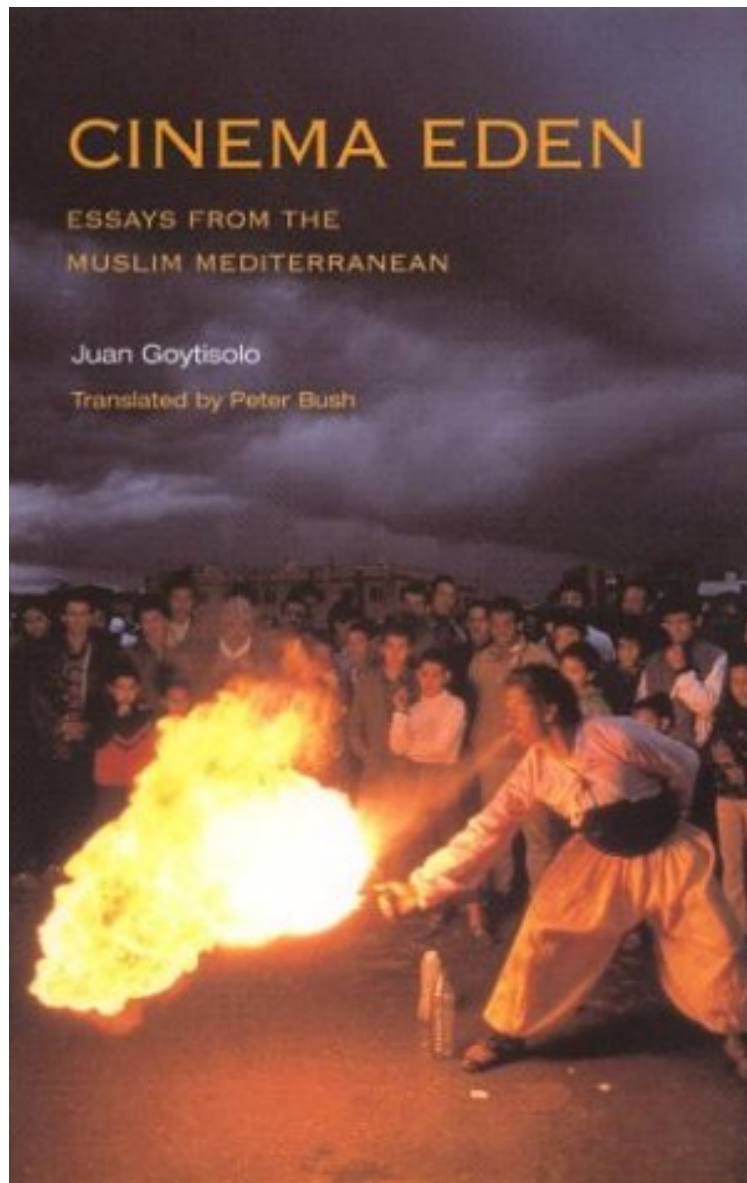


## Cinema Eden: Essays from the Muslim Mediterranean

*Juan Goytisolo*

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**Juan Goytisolo : Cinema Eden: Essays from the Muslim Mediterranean** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Cinema Eden: Essays from the Muslim Mediterranean:

To many, Juan Goytisolo is Spain's greatest living novelist and her sternest critic. An exile from his native land for

over forty years (he left Madrid in 1957 to escape Franco's regime), he has mercilessly sought to overturn Spain's Catholic homogeneity by remembering the cultural influence of her medieval and Jewish populations. Few European writers know the Islamic shores of the Mediterranean as intimately as he does. In these essays about Morocco, Turkey, and Egypt, Goytisolo celebrates a world where ritual matters and tradition is alive, where saints live, story-tellers weave their enchantments nightly, and where honor and dignity preserve the importance of the individual. Goytisolo is to Spanish writing what Almodovar is to Spanish cinema. These essays are a fine reading of the vast, heterogeneous mosaic of Islam against the everyday truculent images of the mass media. ""A deliciously pretentious aesthete, Goytisolo unashamedly romanticizes popular Islamic life in beguiling, immensely readable, poetic prose.""-Publishers Weekly

From Publishers Weekly Spain's great expatriate writer Goytisolo conveys his passion for Islamic popular culture in sensuous, bustling prose. He tours the thronging citadels of Arab cosmopolitanism and celebrates the clowns, bike artistes and gnaua musicians of Marrakech, his adoptive city. He recounts delighting in the scintillating karate and Bollywood repertoire of his local flea-pit cinemateasing his reader with hints of genre theory. Goytisolo writes like a self-conscious modernist. Istanbul he praises for its "polyglot discourse," its panoramas, bazaars, baths and oiled Turkish wrestlers. Cairo he appreciates for mingling weddings and funerals, bringing feelings of regeneration to his spirit. Scholarly in his explications of popular Islam's complex hagiography and system of brotherhoods, Goytisolo clearly values the sheer spectacle of Islamic pilgrimage and festival. His biography of the 13th-century dervish poet Mawlana is racy and appears to echo aspects of his own unusual literary career. Personal literary influence looms large when Goytisolo contemplates the provocative oeuvre of Jean Genet at the poet's cliff-side grave in Larache, Morocco. In the most fictionalized and playful of all these essays, Goytisolo recalls his first visit to Turkey in 1979, after a military coup. Wandering among the cave towns and rock formations of Cappadocia, he encountered an enigmatic elderly man who had claimed that Gaudi (long dead) was living as a recluse nearby and was busy carving out creations in the surrounding valley. A deliciously pretentious aesthete, Goytisolo unashamedly romanticizes popular Islamic life in beguiling, immensely readable, poetic prose. Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.