

2008

## Review of *Teaching Representations of the Spanish Civil War*, ed. Noël Valis

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González-Allende, Iker, "Review of *Teaching Representations of the Spanish Civil War*, ed. Noël Valis" (2008). *Spanish Language and Literature*. 38.

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*Teaching Representations of the Spanish Civil War*. Edited by Noël Valis. New York: MLA, 2007. 601 pp.

There is no doubt that the publication of *Teaching Representations of the Spanish Civil War* is clearly justified by the increasing number of university courses—both in English and in Spanish—dedicated to the study of the Spanish Civil War (1936-39). As the editor, Noël Valis, points out, the intention of the book is to guide instructors in the diverse ways in which the wide variety of materials pertaining to the Spanish Civil War may be presented in the classroom (9). Nevertheless, the volume also raises interesting questions for researchers who work on this topic, such as the importance that race played during the war, the many cultural artifacts that both sides used as propaganda, the international participation and response, the treatment of the war during Francoism, Republicans' experience of exile, and especially the way that this conflict is portrayed in—or ignored by—contemporary Spanish society. The book deploys an interdisciplinary approach to analyze different fields: history, rhetoric, ideology, iconography, arts, literature, and memory. Many well-known scholars of twentieth-century Spanish cultures collaborate in the thirty-six essays of the volume, including highly regarded Spanish Civil War specialists such as Cary Nelson, Jordana Mendelson, George Esenwein, and Gina Hermann.

Unlike monographs that focus exclusively on one participating side in the war, this collection contains studies dealing with both Republicans and rebels. With the exception of the section dedicated to memory, the majority of the essays investigate the rebel position, which has long been considered to be of less scholarly interest than the Republican position. Essays by Mary Vincent, Cristina Moreiras-Menor, Janet Pérez, and Kathleen M. Vernon, among others, propose original approaches to the rebels' ideology and culture. Nevertheless, none of the essays analyzes Carlism, the traditional political movement that supported Franco's military coup d'état.

Examining representations of the Spanish Civil War, the collection ranges in historical focus from 1936 to the present. The introductory essays also offer a panoramic view of Spanish history from the end of the nineteenth century to the 1930s. This extended timeline highlights the ways in which the Spanish Civil War is a conflict that still haunts contem-

porary Spanish society, both within and outside of Spain's borders, as evidenced by recent movies such as *Pan's Labyrinth* (2006), directed by Guillermo del Toro. Certainly, it is important for students to be aware of the lasting presence of this war in Spain, yet instructors must also take care not to suggest inadvertently that Spain is a country where fratricide still occurs. In the introduction, for example, Valis compares the situation of Spain in March 2004 with "the civil war's bitter divisions between right and left" (12), while downplaying the importance of the Muslim terrorist attacks. Divisions between right and left exist in most countries; hence, to establish a connection between the political conditions in Spain in 2004 and at the time of the war in 1936 is problematic. Since the collection analyzes the presence of the Spanish Civil War since its outbreak, a more logical organization of the essays may be imagined, one in which the essays that study the production during the Spanish Civil War, which tends to be Manichean and propagandistic, are separated from the essays that examine the conflict in works during Francoism and democracy, where clear divisions between good and evil are less common due to the distance from the historical events.

As it is, the book is divided into seven parts: "Representations of Historical Contexts," "Rhetoric, Ideology, and the War," "Writing the War," "The Arts and the War," "Memory, Displacement, and the War," "Resources," and "Course Syllabi," followed by the Glossary. Although the selection of these parts is very relevant to the study of the Spanish Civil War, the organization of the essays in the volume is not always pertinent as some of them do not fit neatly into the category in which they are included. For instance, the essay on post-civil war Spanish narrative by Adelaida López de Martínez might be better suited for inclusion under the heading "Writing the War" than "Rhetoric, Ideology, and the War." However, due to the interdisciplinary nature of the essays, several of them are relevant for more than one topic in the collection.

The first section of the book situates the war in its historical context. Of special interest is the essay by David K. Herzberger, who analyzes the different ways in which Francoist and Republican historians presented the war. Antonio Cazorla-López's essay also stands out for its attention to the so-called "peripheral" nationalisms, that is, Basque, Catalan, and Galician participation during the war. Two other essays in the collection investigate the "peripheral" nations of Spain: Joan Ramon Resina's study of the presence of the Spanish Civil War on contemporary Catalan television and Marvin D'Lugo's examination of the war in the films of Basque director Julio Medem.

The second section, "Rhetoric, Ideology, and the War," includes an interesting essay by Michael Ugarte that investigates the question of race during the war. "Writing the War," the third section, consists of six essays

addressing the ways in which foreign volunteers or authors experienced the Spanish Civil War, only three essays looking at how Spanish writers captured the conflict in their works, and one essay considering the teaching of a novel by Mercè Rodoreda in English translation. Although it is important to include both insider and outsider views of the war, this unbalanced proportion of outsider perspectives demonstrates that the collection is directed towards a readership interested in the international impact of the war, yet unfamiliar with Spanish literature.

The fourth section, "The Arts and the War," contains essays on films, documentaries, photography, iconography, and painting, but lacks pieces on songs, which were very popular at that time, and on Republican posters, which stand as one of the most famous symbols of the war. The fifth section, "Memory, Displacement, and the War," is the most complete, collecting essays on exile, autobiographies, memory texts, as well as an essay on Valley of the Fallen, the monument erected to commemorate the people who died for Franco's cause. Finally, the "Resources" section divides recommended materials into cinematography, music, photography, posters, poetry, prose, and secondary sources, including some excellent web pages. The book ends with a section of course syllabi on the Spanish Civil War. Although the syllabi are undoubtedly of interest for those instructors who are considering teaching a course on the subject, they are most appropriate for undergraduate level courses, and many of the films and readings overlap between the syllabi.

In summary, the collection contains a wide enough array of essays to prove that the Spanish Civil War still plays an important role in contemporary Spanish society. Furthermore, the volume demonstrates that instructors can use the Spanish Civil War as a course topic and an organizational theme from which students can comprehend the connections among rhetoric, ideology, memory, literature, and the arts.

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