

If one were to offer a critique, it is that a closer reading of the aesthetics of the novels studied might have provided greater insights into the literary shifts in these years, alongside the discussions of political and ideological engagement, and there are gaps in the English-language bibliography on the period. Nevertheless, this volume constitutes essential reading for scholars interested in Spanish fiction, and contemporary Spanish politics and society.

ALISON RIBEIRO DE MENEZES

University of Warwick.



Con el franquismo en el retrovisor: las representaciones culturales de la dictadura en la democracia (1975–2018). Editado por Elizabeth Amann, Diana Arbaiza, María Teresa Navarrete Navarrete y Nettah Yoeli-Rimmer. Madrid: Iberoamericana/Frankfurt am Main: Vervuert. 2020. 266 pp.

Since the late 1990s, Spanish culture has produced a variety of representations of the Civil War, its authoritarian aftermath, and how those events have been forgotten or remembered. The number of works produced on the topic has increased, on average, by a factor of three: between 2001 and 2018, 1,248 novels were published on the Spanish Civil War, which amounts to an average of seventy per year. Fascination with history and memory has been similarly evident in comics and motion picture production. *Con el franquismo en el retrovisor: las representaciones culturales de la dictadura en la democracia (1975–2018)* is the latest collection of essays to look at the memory boom in contemporary Spanish culture, broadening its scope to integrate some of the early works (pre-2000) by pioneering authors, such as Carmen Martín Gaité, who during the Transition and early democratic years were already training a literary eye on the country's repressive and violent recent history.

An informative Introduction authored by Elizabeth Amann, Diana Arbaiza, María Teresa Navarrete Navarrete and Nettah Yoeli-Rimmer lays out the well-trod contextual ground, noting how memory discourse has been a dominant theme in Spanish culture and criticism over the last twenty years. Excepting brief references to foundational essays by Jo Labanyi and books by Janet Pérez and Peter Monteath, the editors' Introduction focuses mainly on Spanish-language scholarship. This is a curious choice, since there is so much worthwhile material written by scholars working outside of Europe, a good portion of which has been published by Iberoamericana/Vervuert (which published this volume). Chapter 7, by Irene Donate Laffitte, is an example of how an otherwise ambitious and wide-ranging survey of modern Spanish literature is ultimately hampered by an extremely limited engagement with the secondary literature. In the authors' defence, the bibliography is immense and growing.

The Introduction makes few claims to theoretical novelty of its own, but the commendably diverse collection of essays that follow it are devoted to the analysis of an array of cultural products, including literary fiction, theatre, autobiography, poetry, comics, documentary film and television series. In Chapter 1, María Teresa Navarrete Navarrete outlines the ways in which the so-called Generación del 50 rendered traumatic memory through poetic form, focusing principally on Francisca Aguirre's *Los trescientos escalones* (1977) and Julia Uceda's *Viejas voces secretas de la noche* (1981) in terms of how those books of poetry reflect a generation's engagement with traumatic memory. Chapter 2, by José Jurado Morales, recapitulates some of the key themes running through Carmen Martín Gaité's most important narrative works. Nettah Yoeli-Rimmer offers a compelling analysis of urban space as *lieu de memoire* in Juan Marsé's *Un día volveré* (1982) in Chapter 3, outlining

some of the spatial dynamics by which Barcelona functions in the novel as a heterotopic space where the symbolic limits of Spain's culture of amnesia are revealed. Elizabeth Amann's Chapter 4 takes a critical look back at how Miguel Murillo's and Ignacio Amestoy Egiguren's 1990s' theatrical works represent and recover—from the perspective of the democratic years—the traumas and tribulations of gay experience during Francoism. Francisco Umbral's *Madrid 1940* (1993) is the focus of Mónica Carbajosa Pérez's Chapter 5. It traces the evolving contours of Umbral's 'memory novels'. In Chapter 6, Hans Lauge Hansen offers some hypotheses about how post-2000 novels represent different eras in different ways. He proposes that historical novels about the Civil War period tend to be focused more on past injustices, while memory-oriented texts written about the 1960s and 1970s centre on how historical traumas might be avoided in the future. Chapter 7, by Irene Donate Laffitte, offers a comparative thematic overview of how five novels published in the 2000s treat the relation between past and present, yet makes scant reference to the ample bibliography on history, memory and metafiction in Spain.

An excellent essay by Sebastiaan Faber distills how the cultural politics of revisionism and reactionary forms of nostalgia have inflected televisual and online debates on Spanish history and memory. He devotes special attention to the documentary programmes produced by Montse Armengou and Ricard Belis, which were some of the first works of investigative journalism to uncover some of the most unsavoury practices deployed by Franco's regime against its perceived enemies. Chapter 9, by María Isabel Menéndez Menéndez, analyses the formal features of the 2016 TVE/Plano a Plano police procedural series *El caso. Crónica de sucesos, vis-à-vis* its representation of Franco-era society and culture. A well-documented and thoughtfully-written Chapter 10, authored by Lieve Behiels, analyses the gendered dynamics of the Kim and Antonio Altarriba book, *El ala rota* (2016), which is a comic-form biography of Altarriba's mother. The volume concludes with Diana Arbaiza's essay on postcolonial memories of Equatorial Guinea as represented in Luis Leante's *Annobón* (2017). This wide-ranging chapter explores the historical and ideological underpinnings of Leante's narrative representation of colonial experience against the backdrop of postwar Madrid, between colony and metropolis.

If I were to offer a provisional critical appraisal, it might be that a number of the collected essays rely somewhat heavily on a generational approach to cultural critique that had its heyday in the Spanish academy during the twentieth century. Chapter 1 is a case in point. To its editors' credit, the book expands the archive to encompass other art forms beyond the literary, but one wishes that the authors had been given perhaps more leeway to read their primary texts against the grain, and to analyse the formal underpinnings and aesthetic innovations of these representations of the past. María Isabel Menéndez Menéndez's essay, for example, notes that *El caso. Crónica de sucesos* 'se construye más como una propuesta nostálgica [...] que como una memoria de lo real' (193). The essays by Hans Lauge Hansen (132) and Diana Arbaiza (239, 255) make similar statements about 'nostalgia' as something that ought to be avoided or criticized, yet do not engage at all with important scholarship (for instance, the work done by scholars such as Scott Scanlan, Stuart Tannock, Rikki Morgan-Tamosunas, Pam Cook, Jo Labanyi and Josep Català) that has rescued nostalgia from its historical co-option by reactionary politics. Nostalgia, after all, is a structure of feeling with multifarious functions serving a broad array of ideological positions. In his analysis of the broad appeal of melodramatic realism, Josep Català remarks that nostalgia has the power to transform perceptions of reality into emotional structures of feeling: 'la realidad, no sólo se ve, sino que además se *siente* a través de la representación' (203). Affect theory and postmemory have a lot to say about how past experience is understood in the present time. Cultural archaeology similarly seeks to outline how the material traces of the past continue to exist and operate in the present. As William Faulkner noted, 'the past is never dead. It's not even past'. Franco's legacy can be viewed in the rearview mirror, but it can also be perceived all around us. As Faber's essay makes clear, the Franco brand of

reactionary politics is by no means distant. Future work will have to focus not just on the reflections appearing in the mirror, but also on how the mirror itself was formed in the furnace of Francoism.

SAMUEL AMAGO

University of Virginia.



BENJAMIN FRASER, *Cognitive Disability Aesthetics: Visual Culture, Disability Representations, and the (In)Visibility of Cognitive Difference*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. 2018. xvii + 267 pp.

Continuing the work of his important earlier monograph *Disability Studies and Spanish Culture: Films, Novels, the Comic and the Public Exhibition* (Liverpool: Liverpool U. P., 2013), Benjamin Fraser's *Cognitive Disability Aesthetics* is a vital contribution to ongoing dialogues in disability theory and the analysis of contemporary Hispanic culture.

This monograph comprises two distinct parts with three chapters each. The first part examines the recent development of Disability Studies, especially the lack of differentiation between physical and cognitive disabilities, while the second presents close analysis of a range of Spanish contemporary visual cultural products, in effect modelling the application of the theoretical position expounded earlier. That the book's title makes no reference to Hispanic culture signals clearly Fraser's intent to discuss the representation of cognitive disability first and foremost.

Fraser's examination of theory is clearly important. Engaging with key disability theorists such as Lennard J. Davis, Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, David T. Mitchell and Sharon L. Snyder, amongst others, as well as broader sources such as the work of Michel Foucault and cinema theory, Fraser painstakingly seeks answers to different understandings and concomitant representations of cognitive disabilities, when opposed to the physical. Emphasizing that Disability Studies is located 'at the seam' (75) of culture and biology, *Cognitive Disability Aesthetics* shows us initially how the cognitive has been secondary to physical forms of disability in the cultural consciousness, before drawing on the power of the visual to reconfigure varied experiences of disability. Drawing on Garland-Thomson's generative potential through staring, Fraser argues convincingly that the visual's appeal to materiality allows for greater contextualization of disability, with the power to sustain reflection, criticism or disruption (when not a normalizing force). More subtly, Fraser's work is a defence of the visual—in particular, the graphic novel—in the face of normative textual culture.

That Part 1 could stand alone as an intervention in disability theory is recognized by Fraser himself in his Introduction and Conclusion. Whilst largely true, it is through the analyses presented in Part 2 that the theory comes alive. Non-Hispanists have translations of Spanish quotations, although unfortunately not of all the text included in images reproduced from the graphic novels. Chapter 4 discusses two representations of cognitive disability with a focus on collaboration. The first is the exhibition *Trazos singulares*, in which cognitively disabled artists produced and presented their works in a Madrid Metro station in May 2011. Fraser argues that whilst re-affirming some ableist preconceptions of disabilities, the exhibition returned to the artists their right to the city and opened up dialogues on disability, transportation and the urban experience. After this, the focus turns to the collaborative graphic novel *María cumple 20 años* (2015) by María and Miguel Gallardo; here Fraser builds on his previous publication on their earlier work *María y yo*