

VIOLETA ROS FERRER, *La memoria de los otros: relatos y resignificaciones de la Transición española en la novela actual*. Madrid: Iberoamericana/Frankfurt am Main: Vervuert. 2020. 283 pp.

This excellent study by Violeta Ros Ferrer, arising out of her doctoral thesis, proposes that we view the transition to democracy as a foundational narrative in contemporary Spanish discourse. The Transition is a liminal moment, separating the Franco dictatorship from the democratic period. As the author notes, a purely political-institutional focus would date the Transition as beginning in 1973 (which saw the assassination of Carrero Blanco) and extending to at least 1978 (with the approval of the democratic constitution), or more persuasively to the PSOE electoral victory of 1982. However, Ros Ferrer proposes a longer socio-cultural vision of the Transition, beginning with the late-1960s *apertura* and extending into the early 1990s. She thus builds on José Carlos Mainer and Santos Juliá's notion of an 'aprendizaje de la libertad', in their book of that name (Madrid: Alianza, 2000), a perspective which allows her to compare and contrast the changing narratives of the Transition according to particular politico-social and literary generations. Ros Ferrer hence elucidates the extent to which the predominant transitional narrative has been that of the 1968 generation whose vision, she argues, is tinged by a patina of nostalgia that impedes them from imagining a different future to the one that has panned out since 2000. This is the generation of the protagonists of the Transition understood in the narrower sense. However, the hegemonic status of their 'filtro afectivo sobre el pasado' (19) has been challenged over the past decade, and most especially since 2011, as the fall-out from memory campaigns and the wider dissatisfaction with the economic and social order that emerged from the Transition have brought to an end what Luisa María Delgado has termed the fantasy of democratic normality in Spain (quoted p. 22).

Drawing on Raymond Williams' notion of 'structures of feeling' as well as Svetlana Boym's contrast between restorative and reflective nostalgia, Ros Ferrer examines the extent to which literary narratives of the Transition published between the turn of the millennium and 2019 have re-articulated, and then both questioned and attempted to break with, the prevailing discourse of a successful and conciliatory consensus underpinning a peaceful transition to democracy. Her monograph is divided into five chapters, of which the first and second set out the theoretical framework and the ensuing three analyse shifting generational perspectives on the Transition. These include what she terms the 'relato fundacional' (Chapter 3) of the '68ers, exemplified by Rafael Chirbes' *Los viejos amigos* (2000) and Juan Luis Cebrián's *Francomoribundia* (2003); the ensuing 'relatos postfundacionales' (Chapter 4) evident in Isaac Rosa's *El vano ayer* (2004) and Javier Cercas' *Anatomía de un instante* (2009); and the more recent 'relatos emergentes' (Chapter 5), as illustrated by Francisco Casavella's *El día del Watusi* (2004) and Marta Sanz's *Daniela Astor y la caja negra* (2013). The monograph thus establishes a largely chronological interpretative framework, but, within this, highlights the complexity of the literary responses studied. This is evident, for example, in Chirbes' articulation of a radical left disenchantment with the Transition by means of a Benjaminian-inspired poetics of ruins, in contrast to Cebrián's epic and celebratory narrative which, in Ros Ferrer's view, sets out to defend the consensual Transition from the critiques of future generations. The author similarly contrasts Rosa's self-conscious and highly ironic narrative, which undermines the hegemonic '68ers' vision of the Transition and anticipates the discursive rupture that the generation of the 15-M movement will represent, with Cercas' use of pathos to articulate a restorative nostalgia that ultimately recalls Cebrián's perspective. Finally, both Casavella and Sanz represent a post-millennial rupture with the hegemonic view, Casavella through his ludic treatment and Sanz through her examination of the feminist struggles of the 1970s.

Overall, Ros Ferrer's study is a significant contribution to the upsurge in debate about the socio-political and cultural settlement to which the Transition and 1978 constitution gave rise.

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.

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***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