

## Anales Galdosianos

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Ana Rueda. *La Guerra de África (1859–1860) en la imaginación literaria: Moldes para escribir la guerra*, Iberoamericana Editorial Vervuert, 2025, 592 pp.

In *La Guerra de África (1859–1860) en la imaginación literaria: Moldes para escribir la guerra* Ana Rueda offers a comprehensive analysis of Spanish authors' literary production in response to the Hispano-Moroccan War. Rueda's monograph redresses a notable gap in critical attention to this historical event archived in nineteenth-century Spanish literature. Assiduously researched, Rueda's 592-page monograph provides hitherto unexplored historical, cultural, and political facets that converged in the literary imagination and will undoubtedly constitute a canonical reference for readers interested in Spanish cultural history.

The volume begins with an analysis of the causes and circumstances of the Hispano-Moroccan War, which Rueda delineates as an escalation of tensions caused by the lack of border agreement in Ceuta. Further exacerbating international hostilities were the clearly established border policies for Melilla, Alhucemas, and Vélez de la Gomera and the presence of the French in northwest Africa. Rueda characterizes this war as the *antesala* or prelude to the Wars of Rif (1909–1927) and the Spanish Civil War (1936–39) noting that it rekindled a spirit of defending Christian identity against a perceived long-standing ideological enemy. Moreover, the conflict stimulated a collective impulse to recover Spain's lost imperial power initiating a prolonged colonial presence in Africa despite the misguided belief that Spanish colonization ended in 1898.

Explanations of the history of the war in Africa from a contextual, artistic, and ideological standpoint, focusing on alterity and gender, comprise the three chapters of the first part of the book. In the much longer second part, Rueda explores the abundant and varied literary output on the Hispano-Moroccan War, which includes poetry, chronicles, magazine articles, novels, costumbrista works (*cuadros de costumbres*), episodic narratives (*episodios*), memoirs, travelogues, lyrical theatre, and heroic dramas. Students and scholars alike will assuredly refer to the meticulous and in-depth presentation **[End Page 194]** of these collective works encompassed within a remarkable contribution to not only the Spanish war in Africa, but also to nineteenth-century cultural history.

The nine chapters of the second part of the study present detailed summaries and analyses of the varied genres of literature from the war in Africa, drawing attention to numerous lesser-known authors who wrote about this influential mid-century military conflict. Copious images that depict book covers of the works studied, author photographs and portraits, and artistic renditions of the war in Africa complement the examination of texts. Rueda also includes canonical authors' works such as Benito Pérez Galdós's *Aita Tettau*, Pedro Antonio de Alarcón's *Diario de un testigo de la guerra de África*, and Fernán Caballero's *Deudas pagadas* and *Promesa de un soldado a la Virgen del Carmen*, which underscores the diverse range of interest the Hispano-Moroccan War garnered in the literary imagination.

Theory about war, pain, trauma, and othering such as Chris Hedges's *War is a Force that Gives Us Meaning* (2014), Carl von Clausewitz's *Vom Kriege* (On War) (1832), Francisco Villamartín's *Nociones del Arte Militar* (1862), Susan Sontag's *Regarding the Pain of Others* (2003), Elaine Scarry's *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (1985), and Michel de Certeau's *Heterologies: Discourse on the Other* (1986) effectively contributes to Rueda's goal of identifying the unique qualities that characterize writings about war. Epigraphs by authors as varied as the Chinese military strategist and author of *The Art of War*, Sun Tzu (circa 544–496 BC), and the internationally renowned French medievalist Jacques Le Goff illustrate the depth and breadth of Rueda's research. Allusions to theory from wide-ranging sources strengthen the book's literary analysis through their ability to pinpoint more closely what sets narratives of war apart from other genres. Testimonials from prisoners of war are considered through the critical lens of various theorists such as Homi Bhabha and Foucault, which invites new...

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