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Review of Sara Brenneis, Spaniards in Mauthausen: Representations of a Nazi Concentration Camp, 1940-2015

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demonstrates that there are historians today on both sides of the Atlantic seeking to answer such essential questions.

Foster Chamberlin
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Brenneis, Sarah J. *Spaniards in Mauthausen: Representations of a Nazi Concentration Camp, 1940-2015*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2018. xii + 365 pp. + 10 ill.

Following the liberation of German concentration camps by Allied forces, accounts and testimonies emerged from Jewish Holocaust survivors and led the discourse surrounding the experiences of the victims of Nazi policies. Since then, representations of the Shoah have included these testimonies, but have also extended to include novels, documentaries, Hollywood films, and the creation of Holocaust Studies programs and research centers in academe. The importance of documenting, studying, and continuing the discussion of the tragedy of the Holocaust cannot be understated. In *Spaniards in Mauthausen: Representation of a Nazi Concentration Camp, 1940-2015*, Sara Brenneis contributes significant scholarship to Holocaust Studies at large, and Spanish cultural studies, specifically. Despite the many texts about the Holocaust, both historical and fictional, the experiences of Spaniards who survived and witnessed the atrocities have been largely overlooked. Through the introduction and subsequent five chapters of *Spaniards in Mauthausen*, Brenneis argues for the recognition of the experience of the Spanish deportees who lived and died in concentration camps in order to provide a more inclusive depiction of the Holocaust. Brenneis considers a wide variety of texts spanning seven decades—from high cultural productions to popular cultural materials—that range from survivors’ first-hand memoirs to postmemory works from the second and third generations.

As the title suggests, Brenneis’ study centers on representations of the Spanish experience in the Mauthausen labor camp and its subcamps where a majority of Spanish victims (most of whom were Catalan) were transported (5). The introduction situates Spain’s position within the larger context of World War II and the Holocaust, including Franco and his government’s complicity in the detainment of the more than 7,000 men who fought for the Republic in the Spanish Civil War. Importantly, the introduction differentiates the Spanish prisoners from the Jewish victims of the Holocaust. Because of their positions as non-Jews, Spanish survivors “agreed that they held an often-privileged position in the camp, one that was radically different from the treatment of the Jewish prisoners there” (17).

Brenneis begins Chapter One with an exploration of the materials the prisoners from within Mauthausen rescued or created. “A View from Inside: Clandestine Representation and Testimony of Mauthausen, 1940-1946” focuses on the years when the concentration camp operated and the year following the liberation. Brenneis describes the clandestine network of Spanish and Catalan prisoners that rescued the Nazi documentation that ultimately helped expose the innerworkings of the camp during the Nuremberg trials, while also creating a detailed record of the Spaniards who entered the camp. Brenneis focuses on photographic evidence rescued by Francesc Boix and documents saved by Casimir Climent i Sarrión and Joan de Diego—all at great personal risk—in addition to artwork by their fellow prisoners.

Chapter Two, “Postwar Impressions: The First Published Representations of the Camp, 1945-1963,” examines the first four accounts of the Spanish experience in Mauthausen through testimonial and fictional writings by Catalan authors, penned and published both inside and outside of Spain. In the third chapter, Brenneis describes the upsurge of survivor retellings that took hold towards the end of the dictatorship. “Transitions: Early Accounts of Mauthausen, 1970s” highlights the diversity of texts that circulated to a wider audience in Spain just prior to and following the death of Franco. From Mariano Constante’s self-aggrandizing memoirs, to the first documentary about the camp by Llorenç Soler (*Sobrevivir en Mauthausen*), to Montserrat Roig’s pioneering historical account of Catalans in Nazi concentration camps, Brenneis elucidates the differences amongst the quality of materials as well as the intended audiences of the authors.

Chapter Four describes the diverse methods used to represent Mauthausen at the *fin de siècle* and into the twenty-first century. In addition to a second wave of memoirs that emerged circa 1995, a growing body of documentary films were produced at the turn of the century. Brenneis focuses on new media elements, such as a fictional Twitter account and a graphic novel. Apart from the memoirs discussed, the play and historical novels analyzed in the fourth chapter are often authored by non-survivors and constitute works of postmemory. While continuously warning of the subjectivity of not just fictional sources, but of firsthand testimony and even primary source documentation, Brenneis situates the material she analyzes within its historical and cultural milieu to combat the subjective nature of the works. The combination of genres and modes of representation ultimately help build a clear picture of the Spanish experience in Mauthausen and its extension into contemporary Spain.

In addition to positioning the Holocaust texts within their historical context, Brenneis draws astute parallels between her source material and the Spanish literary cannon. Examples of the connections she forges begin with the first account from a Mauthausen survivor available in Spain. Published in the Falangist newspaper *Arriba*, Carlos Rodríguez del Risco’s propagandistic, serialized memoir “Yo he

estado en Mauthausen” (1946) follows both the Spanish literary traditions of the serialized novel and conversion narrative. (90) Despite the title and form of Amadeo Sinca Vendrell’s personalized historiography, *Lo que Dante no pudo imaginar*, making explicit reference to Dante’s *Inferno*, Brenneis brings his writings closer to the peninsula. Published in exile the same year as Rodríguez del Risco’s memoir, Sinca Vendrell’s narrative mimics Francisco de Quevedos’ seventeenth-century narrative “El sueño de la muerte” (108). When examining twenty-first-century new media texts, Brenneis aligns Carlos Hernández’s “@deportado4443” Twitter account with the serialized narration Rodríguez del Risco relied on seventy years prior (245). In addition to weaving a rich tapestry of the interrelatedness of experiences and techniques used by survivors and subsequent generations, Brenneis’ alignment of the texts with Spanish literary traditions demonstrates how these works reflect the Spanish experience in Mauthausen.

Today, the location of the camp serves as a memorial, monument, and museum to the memory of the victims of the Nazis. In the final chapter, Brenneis grapples with the role of the site as a space of memory-making, but also questions its place in “appropriating sites of genocide as tourist attractions ultimately interested in financial gain over a nuanced exploration of history” (257). The debate raised as a closing to the book exemplifies perhaps the most pressing reason for amplifying the experiences of Spanish survivors at this precise moment. *Spaniards in Mauthausen* advances historical memory discourse by contributing new voices to the conversation as it brings forth representations of Spaniards from concentration camps to form a part of the historiography of the Spanish Civil War and Franco dictatorship.

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Valencia-Garcia, Louie Dean. *Antiauthoritarian Youth Culture in Francoist Spain: Clashing with Fascism*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018. 248 pp.

Antiauthoritarian Youth Culture in Francoist Spain makes a lively and innovative contribution to the body of scholarship that explores the origins of the democratic transition in Spain in the emerging civil society of the Franco dictatorship. Like other works in this genre, the book analyzes how the growing pluralism and autonomy in the public sphere of the 1960s and 1970s undermined the regime’s authority “from below”, preparing the ground for the formal institutional transition of the late 1970s. But where most works have focused on political movements and ideologies, this book turns the attention to cultural