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Rethinking the Historiography of the Spanish Civil War: Multifarious approaches to a contested past*

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Abstract

This paper aims to delve into the underlying trends of the contemporary historiography of the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939). Under the guidance of historical accounts developed outside Spain before the end of the Francoist dictatorship (1939-1977), and during the transition to democracy (1977-1983), some Spanish historians strove to write a bias-free and fact-based depiction of the war and its aftermath. By relying on close readings of historical documents, those historians assumed their methodology to be the most accurate when dealing with historical events that are so contested. However, recent shifts

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in the way this past has been remembered in Spain have produced a historiography endorsing new perspectives, which has also given rise to controversies among historians regarding the scope of and the assumptions underlying their work. To understand the currents of these debates, this paper echoes these groundbreaking approaches and attempts to illuminate how the influence of the social movement of «historical memory» has led Spanish historians to question their assumptions and endorse a more heterodox and interdisciplinary approach to engaging with the history of the Spanish Civil War.

Keywords: Historiography, memory, the Spanish Civil War, witness, interdisciplinarity.

Repensar la historiografía de la Guerra Civil Española: múltiples aproximaciones a un pasado disputado

Resumen

El objetivo de este artículo es el de profundizar sobre las tendencias de la historiografía contemporánea dedicada a la guerra civil española (1936-1939). Durante la transición a la democracia (1939-1977) y bajo la influencia de algunos trabajos historiográficos extranjeros, varios historiadores españoles aspiraron a elaborar una representación objetiva y fiel a los hechos respecto a la guerra civil y a sus secuelas. Basándose en la cuidadosa lectura de documentos históricos, estos historiadores asumieron que su metodología era la más precisa a la hora de lidiar con eventos históricos tan polémicos. No obstante, cambios recientes en las formas de rememoración de este pasado en España han motivado que la historiografía abordara nuevas perspectivas, lo que a su vez ha dado lugar a diferentes discusiones entre los historiadores en torno a los presupuestos epistémicos de su trabajo. Con el objetivo de interpretar estos debates contemporáneos, este artículo refleja en qué medida el actual movimiento social por la recuperación de la «memoria histórica» ha motivado que algunos historiadores cuestionaran los presupuestos de su trabajo para adoptar una

perspectiva más interdisciplinar al abordar la historia de la guerra civil española.

Palabras clave: Historiografía, memoria, guerra civil española, testigo, interdisciplinariedad.

Repenser l'historiographie de la Guerre Civile Espagnole: des approximations multiples à un passé en dispute

Résumé

Cet article a pour but d'analyser et d'approfondir sur les tendances de l'historiographie contemporaine consacré à la guerre civile espagnole (1936-1939). Pendant la transition à la démocratie, et sous l'influence de quelques travaux historiographiques étrangers, plusieurs historiens espagnols ont tenté d'élaborer une représentation objective et fidèle aux faits de la guerre civile et ses conséquences. Au travers d'une lecture attentive des documents historiques, ces historiens ont assumé que leur méthode était la plus efficace pour traiter des évènements historiques si polémiques. Nonobstant, quelques changements récents sur les formes de remémoration de ce passé en Espagne ont motivé que l'historiographie adopte des nouvelles perspectives, ce qui a donné lieu à des discussions entre les historiens autour des présupposés épistémiques de leur travail. Dans le dessein d'interpréter ces débats contemporains, cet article questionne à quel point l'actuel mouvement social pour la récupération de la «mémoire historique» a motivé ou pas une remise en question des historiens vis-à-vis leur travail, et ce en vue d'adopter une perspective plus interdisciplinaire dans l'étude de l'histoire de la guerre civile espagnole.

Mots-clés: historiographie, mémoire, guerre civile espagnole, témoin, interdisciplinaire.

1. Introduction: The Spanish Civil War as a historical problem

On July 18, 1936, a failed coup d'état against the government of the Spanish Second Republic brought about the most devastating event in the history of twentieth-century Spain. The unfolding of the Spanish Civil War wrought havoc and destruction on buildings and infrastructure, resulted in an extremely high number of casualties, and left a legacy of polarization in Spanish society that would have consequences even up to the present. While discussion as to the true casualty figures remains open, quantitative analysis tends to find that around 47,000 lives were lost on the front lines from the war's outbreak in 1936, to its bloody conclusion in 1939[2]. Furthermore, the repression carried out on both sides further increased the number of victims. Many studies have found that among Republican ranks, 50,000 supporters of the rebellion were shot, whereas, among the Nationalists, the death toll reached as high as 120,000 to 150, 000[3]. In addition, after winning the war, the Francoist authorities strongly repressed the supporters of the Spanish Second Republic, producing a further 150,000 to 400,000 victims[4], and around 440,000 refugees went into exile to escape the war and the oppression that followed[5]. These figures intimate why this historical event has left such deep scars within the Spanish collective memory and has become a contested topic within historiography. Whereas during the transition to democracy (1977–1983) those memories remained outside the public sphere, from the beginning of the twenty-first century, heterogeneous memories of the conflict have been recovered en masse, across disciplines and perspectives, including in cinema, literature and journalism. These fields have provided various mnemonic devices through which this traumatic past has been

2 Paul Preston, *The Spanish Holocaust: Inquisition and Extermination in Twentieth-Century Spain* (New York: Harper Press, 2013); Francisco Espinosa Maestre, *Violencia roja y azul. España 1936-1939* (Barcelona: Crítica, 2010).

3 Juliá Santos, coord., *Las víctimas de la Guerra Civil* (Barcelona: Agostini, 1999), 26.

4 Javier Rodrigo, *Hasta la raíz. Violencia durante la Guerra Civil y la dictadura franquista* (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 2008), 185. Julián Casanova, ed., *Morir, matar, sobrevivir. La violencia en la dictadura de Franco* (Madrid: Bolsillo, 2004), 46.

5 Alicia Alted, *La voz de los vencidos* (Madrid: Aguilar, 2005),7.

recalled in contemporary Spain[6]. However, decades before this process began– which has been labeled the «memory boom» or «obsession with memory»[7] – historiography evidenced a similar interest in the violence that unfolded in the Spanish Civil War, while most information on the topic was previously unavailable as a consequence of Francoist policies. Undoubtedly, the new historiographical approach to the Spanish Civil War, which emerged from the critique of Francoist myths, differed deeply from the portrayal of this contested past that would be advanced in cinema, literature or cultural portraits decades later. The purpose of this paper is to delve further into the controversies and tensions among depictions of the past by historians and among different memories of the Spanish Civil War. More specifically, this paper addresses how contemporary historians have dealt with non-academic depictions, witness reports, and stories of the war and how their methodologies and criteria of truthfulness differ greatly from those of historiography. After all, the differences and relations of these sources are far more complex and ambivalent than suggested by the depictions of some historians. To delve further into this problem, I will briefly outline the trends that underlie the emergence of the Spanish historiography of the Civil War, which occurred in the seventies, a period in which historians could begin to investigate without the pressure of Francoist policies relating to the past.

Autonomy in Spanish historiography was impossible during the Francoist dictatorship (1939–1977), as has been asserted in the studies of Alberto Reig Tapia[8], David Herzerberg[9], and Marín Gelabert[10]. After the end of the conflict in 1939, the administrative authorities began to purge professional

6 Sebastiaan Faber, *Memory Battles of the Spanish Civil War. History, Fiction, Photography* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2018), 95, doi: https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv16759c1.

7 Javier Cercas, *El impostor* (Madrid: Random House, 2014), 114.

8 Alberto Reig Tapia*, Ideología e Historia sobre la represión franquista* (Madrid: Akal, 1984), 109.

9 David K. Herzberger, *Narrating the past. Fiction and historiography in Postwar Spain* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1995), 19, doi: https://doi.org/10.1515/9780822382416.

10 Miguel Ángel Marín Gelabert, *Los historiadores españoles en el franquismo, 1948-1975* (Zaragoza: Fernando el Católico, 2005), 27.

historians from schools and universities whose political and ideological profiles did not fit in with that supported by the regime. The political, social, and moral behavior of public workers and university teachers was thus under constant surveillance. This political and ideological interference in academia reframed both the content and the narrative of historical works. Regarding the latter, some historical narratives were based on the representation of a Spanish society united around the values of Catholicism and tradition as the telos of the story. For this reason, these historical accounts indisputably suffer from extreme bias. As David Herzberger summarized:

> Francoist historiography is resolutely shaped by a conception of truth and temporality in which history is viewed less as a complex web of diachronic and synchronic relationships, both formed and revealed through narration, than as an unfolding of time that is repetitive, deterministic, and radically unchangeable. Hence time (history) is perceived not as a progression or a becoming, but rather as a static entity anchored in all that is permanent and eternal. The kind of historiography that affirms these truths about the past, and the structures of narration embedded in its discourse, are rooted in the formative strategies of myth[11].

Regarding the contents of such historical works, similar conclusions must be drawn. The Francoist regime denied some of the most dreadful crimes committed by rebel soldiers during the war and afterwards. For example, concerning the famous bombardment of the Basque city of Gernika, Republican forces were blamed for destroying their own city[12]. This political process of denial and scapegoating is thus embedded within historical work from this period as well. During the Francoist dictatorship, historiography turned the most unsettling past of the dictatorship into a blank page. This is also evidenced by the censorship of critical historical studies that began outside Spain, such as

11 Herzberger, *Narrating the past…*, 17.

12 Herbert Southworth, *Guernica ¡Guernica¡ A Study of Journalism, Diplomacy, Propaganda, and History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), 9, doi: https://doi.org/10.1525/9780520336377.

in the works of Hugh Thomas[13], Herbert R. Southworth[14], Gabriel Jackson[15], Stanley Payne[16], Pierre Broué and Émile Temime[17]. The situation within Spanish historiography radically changed after the end of the dictatorship, and according to the perspective of numerous later historians[18], the Spanish transition to democracy brought about the production of a bias-free historiography, which undermines the foundations of the Francoist politics of the past. As a consequence of the structure of the dictatorship being dismantled, the process of creating historical accounts was liberated from previous restrains. The Spanish historian Santos Juliá reframes this interpretation by conceiving generational transition as the most important factor. To Juliá[19], whereas those who had lived through the war and in the postwar environment continued to be caught up in the ideological and political struggles, the succeeding generation broke with this partial interpretation of the past, delegitimizing Francoist myths and establishing the grounds upon which an objective account of the civil war and the dictatorship might be shared by all society. According to this interpretation, from the seventies to the present, historiography has undergone a flowering, in which emerging accounts delved further into all the underlying violence and repression before, during, and after the Spanish Civil War. As a result of the expansion of historical investigation, this historical work offered insight into a past that deeply differed from what had been provided by other non-academic sources.

13 Hugh Thomas, *La guerra civil española*, 2 vols (México: Grijaldo, 1976), 12.

14 Herbert Southworth, *El mito de la cruzada de Franco* (Madrid: Debolsillo, 2008), 51.

15 Gabriel Jackson, *Spanish Republic and the Civil War, 1931-1939* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1987), 12.

16 Standley G. Payne, *The Origins of Spanish Civil War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006).

17 Pierre Broué and Emile Témime, *La révolution et la guerra D`Espagne* (Paris: Les editions de minuit, 1961), 8.

18 Santos Juliá, «De nuestras memorias y nuestras miserias», *Hispania Nova,* nº 7 (2007): 1-20. Pablo Fusi, *Espacios de libertad. La cultura española en el franquismo y la reivención de la democracia (1960-1990)* (Madrid: Galaxia Gutenberg, 2017), 17.

19 Santos Juliá, «Echar al olvido: Memoria y amnistía en la Transición», *Claves de Razón Práctica*, nº 129 (2003): 14-25.

Nevertheless, some of these historians and scholars have pointed out that, as from the nineties, the perspective and autonomy of historiography started to be endangered by new approaches to the past which were spread across society. Even though the transition to democracy was mainly represented by historians[20] and newspapers as a smooth process of social reconciliation and mutual forgiveness, by the end of the twentieth century, new critical voices were shining a spotlight on the lack of restitution granted to the victims of Francoism, some of whom remained unidentified in mass graves. From such critical voices stemmed the so-called recovery of historical memory, a multidisciplinary approach which aimed to address the flaws of the Spanish transition and recognize the rights of historical victims. This endeavor involved social activism, forensic practices and exhuming the bodies of the victims of Francoism, as well as engendering new cultural and literary depictions of the events of the war and the postwar era. The movement for historical memory focused more specifically on the stories and suffering of the victims of Francoism, whose voices had been muffled by the official narratives of the transition as a successful process of reconciliation. Undoubtedly, this emergence of memory was also brought about by the historical distance from the events in question. Whereas the Spanish transition to democracy was carried out by the second generation of those who lived through the war and its aftermath, from 2000 onwards, the movement for the recovery of historical memory was conducted by the grandsons of the victims of Francoism. Owing to the historical distance from the traumatic events, they were more critical both towards the dictatorship and the flaws of the transition to democracy while at the same time not being threatened by the possibility of new waves of violence, as the previous generation had been during the seventies and the eighties.

These new approaches to the recovery of historical memory, proposing as they did a revision of the narratives propagated during the transition and bringing forward different accounts

20 Juliá, «De nuestras memorias y nuestras miserias…», 7. Fusi, *Espacios de libertad*…, 17.

of the recent past, gave rise to a hermeneutic that struggled with the accounts provided by the official historiography produced during the transition to democracy. Whereas the historical representation of the war, in the work of Santos Juliá and Pablo Fusi for example, focuses on objectivity and historical accuracy, these new approaches have led to a renewed interest in giving voice to the victims and focusing on their perspective, which in previous decades had been consistently ignored. The social influence of these new depictions of the war and historical memory finally challenged the assumption underlying previous historiographical approaches: that when depicting and discussing contested versions of the past, the professional historian has the last word. In other terms, this approach challenges the assumption that when it comes to dealing with the history and memory of the Spanish Civil War in contemporary society, the result of professional historiography offers the standard in comparison to which other depictions should be corrected or nuanced. Those historiographical presumptions were no longer accepted by some activists and scholars, as from the nineties, who took part in the social movement of historical memory.

Taking into consideration the above, this paper aims to discuss the debate and struggles between these different approaches to the Civil War within Spanish contemporary society, paying special attention to how some current trends in Spanish historiography have dealt with the social influence of alternative depictions of the past stemming from historical memory. In this regard, this paper begins by focusing on the historiographical approaches that, in attempting to preserve the specificity of historiography, have undermined the assumptions of non-academic depictions of the past. This analysis not only provides an outlook on the historiography of the Spanish Civil War, but also reveals why Spanish contemporary history is caught between the push and the pull of endorsing a multidisciplinary approach and relying on a document-based methodology when depicting the past.

2. Objectivity within the historiography of the Spanish Civil War

To introduce the topic, it should not be ignored that, throughout the historiography of the Spanish Civil War, references to objectivity have been the ground upon which historians have justified their superior ability to depict these contested events. In this regard, the early historiography of the Spanish Civil War and also Spanish historical works during the transition to democracy demonstrated the features of professional twentieth-century historiography in a broader sense. As disclosed by Peter Novick's *That Noble Dream*[21], the foundations of professional twentieth-century history-writing rely on appealing to objectivity. To Novick, this is no more than an inheritance of the assumptions of nineteenth-century history, in which references to objectivity are derived from the attempt to stress the epistemological superiority of history in comparison to theology, philosophy, and similar disciplines. In the context of Spanish contemporary historiography, this mainly justifies a contrast with memory.

In this sense, our approach echoes Pablo Sánchez León's[22] idea that resorting to «objectivity» has been the epistemological touchstone by means of which some historiographical trends presented their work to the academic community within a Spanish context. This is evidenced in the first serious works on the Spanish Civil War. Beginning with the publication of *The Spanish Civil War*, by Hugh Thomas, in 1961 and *La revolution et la Guerre D`Espagne*[23], by Emile Temine and Pierre Bourré in the same year, a set of investigations carried out by Anglo-

21 Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream. The objectivity question and the American Historical Profession* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 171.

22 Pablo Sánchez León, «La objetividad como ortodoxia: los historiadores y el conocimiento de la guerra civil española», en *Guerra Civil: Mito y leyenda,* ed. Julio Aróstegui y François Godicheau, 95-136 (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2006), 103.

23 Emile Temine y Pierre Broué, *La révolution et la guerre D`Espagne* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1961), 12.

Saxon historians such as Gerald Brennan[24] and Stanley Payne[25] has resulted in the first historical volumes on the Spanish Civil War. None of these were Spanish –they were French, British or North American–, which imbued their work with a higher degree of impartiality and objectivity. At the beginning of the Spanish translation of his work, Hugh Thomas asserted, «I wrote that book with the willing intention of being impartial… Regarding Spanish society, the civil war seemed to be dead both historically and politically»[26]. As the years passed, those investigations were considered by later Spanish historians to be examples of historiographical works that represented an unbiased perspective on a set of yet-to-be-explored events. As a consequence, those works were considered to have paved the way toward a historiography of the war beyond the constraints of the Francoist policies of the past. Their focus on historical documents, their critical methodology towards Francoist myths, and the temporal and spatial distance between the accounts and the events that they describe led their approach to be considered the best at depicting those historical events. The social, political, and institutional effects of the historical works that began to reveal the crimes committed by Francoism worsened the image of the dictatorship internationally during the sixties. As a result, the Spanish Ministry of Information, led by Fraga Iribarne, created a special section in which historians sympathetic to the regime strove to counteract the effects of the works on forthcoming generations. Ricardo de la Cierva[27] (1986) and Ramón Salas Larrazabal[28] (1980) strongly opposed these Anglo-Saxon works by reframing the death toll in the war and the postwar context in such a way that the figures on civilians

24 Geradl Brenan, *The Spanish Labyrinth. An Account of the Social and Political Background of the Spanish Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 21, doi: https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139923453.

25 Payne, *The Origins of Spanish Civil War*…, 197.

26 The translation of the quoted texts that were originally in Spanish is mine. With the exception of the ones who belong to Ricard Vynies and Günter Schwaiger, from which I used the versions in English that could be found in (FABER 2018). Thomas, *La guerra civil española*…, 7.

27 Ricardo de la Cierva, *Nueva y definitiva Historia de la Guerra civil española* (Madrid: Época, 1986), 84.

28 Ramón Salas Larranzábal, *Los datos exactos de la guerra civil* (Madrid: Rioduero, 1980), 51.

killed by the Nationalists decreased as the number of victims of the «red terror» increased. Despite their huge differences from Hugh Thomas's approach, these historians claimed to apply a quantitative method of analysis and claimed that their work was objective and unbiased. On balance, this outlook on the premises and the conclusions which gave rise to an early historiographical debate on the Spanish Civil War brought about two mutually contradictory conclusions. These historians –both Spanish and Anglo-Saxon– employed a methodology based on a critical analysis of documents and quantitative studies on their subjects so as to claim that their results were objective. However, the antagonistic conclusions drawn from their studies deeply undermined these presumptions. Had they applied the rules and disciplinary criteria within historiography, their results would be expected to converge at some point. Javier Tusell's reflections on Spanish historiography are key to addressing this incoherence. To understand the underlying trends within Spanish historiography in the sixties and seventies, he asserted that there was not enough historical distance from the events and their aftermath to apply such an objective approach. «The Spanish Civil War is much closer… it is still living within us. We, even those who did not participate in it, never felt attached to any of the sides, especially those who were not born before its outbreak, the inheritors of its barbarism and the sons of the spilled blood»[29]. Nonetheless, in the following decades, Tusell foresaw that this situation would begin to differ radically. As the strong bonds with this trauma would fade for future generations, historical perspectives would tend to converge and increase in objectivity in subsequent decades. This forecast was shared by some Spanish historians during the eighties and nineties. Indeed, owing to a document-based methodology and historical distance, some historians at the end of the twentieth century claimed that their work was unbiased and objective. As a consequence, when the cultural, social, and political movement for the recovery of historical memory emerged, focusing on the singular experiences of victims of Francoism, the reactions of historians were those of suspicion and rejection. To historians

29 Javier Tusell, *Los hijos de la sangre. La España de 1936 desde 1986* (Madrid: Calpe, 1986), 11.

such as Santos Juliá, Stanley Payne, and Fernando del Rey, the perspective endorsed by the movement for the recovery of historical memory simply uncritically echoed the voices of select victims, meaning that such approaches are necessarily biased. As a consequence, the social movement for historical memory could finally bring about a blurring of statements derived from the work of historians, whose perspective is laden with a higher degree of accuracy and objectivity. To these historians, whereas cultural and literary depictions stemming from historical memory are intertwined with emotions and political necessities, the writing of history, given the methodology used to do so, is free of such biases. However, in recent years, contemporary scholars have suggested that those assumptions regarding the superiority of historical accounts are actually naïve. According to this current, groundbreaking approach, the borders between the historiography and the depiction of the war stemming from the recovery of historical memory have become blurred. As Sebastiaan Faber suggested:

> Do the evolution, structure, and politics of the Spanish university warrant the claim that the work of academic historians is unmarked by the political, emotional, and commercial needs of the present? The professional historians of post-Franco Spain have been anything but holed up in their ivory towers. (…) can academic historians continue to claim a privileged position as producers of pure knowledge if part of their work is presented in the same media space as that of journalists and non-academic intellectuals?[30].

Intending to delve further into such debate, the following section outlines the ideas of historians and scholars who have claimed historiography to have the last say within debates on these contested events. Historians such as Santos Juliá[31], Fernando del Rey[32], Álvarez Tardío[33], and Stanley Payne[34];

30 Faber, *Memory Battles of the Spanish Civil War…,* 64.

31 Juliá, «De nuestras memorias y nuestras miserias…», 1-20.

32 Fernando del Rey, ed., *Palabras como puños. La intransigencia política en la Segunda República española* (Madrid: Tecnos, 2011), 14.

33 Manuel Álvarez Tardío y Fernando del Rey, eds., *El laberinto republicano: la democracia española y sus enemigos (1931-1936)* (Madrid: RBA., 2012), 26.

34 Standley G. Payne*, La revolución española (1936-1939). Un estudio sobre la singularidad de la guerra civil* (Madrid: Espasa Calpe, 2019), 372.

literary scholars such as Angel Loureiro[35]; and writers such as Javier Cercas[36] have reframed the discussion of the past as an iteration of the classical debate on the relations between history and memory. By focusing on the gaps and discontinuities between the two, these scholars have considered this relation to be hierarchical, with history being assumed to provide reliable knowledge, whereas memory can only endorse singular and biased perspectives. This is how Bartolomé Clavero described the way such academic scholars re-framed the relations between history and memory, and the subsequent relations between historical narratives and other depictions of the past: «opposing history and memory only makes sense to the professional historiography that has identified with the latter in a way that claims to have the monopoly on depicting the past»[37].

3. Writing the civil war beyond memory: Historians as «guardians» of the past

From the perspective to be outlined, the relation between the history and the memory of the Spanish Civil War is that of reciprocal contradiction. Following this view, history and memory shared an object but approached it in opposite ways. History tends to be objective, whereas memory is utterly subjective; history is based on documents, whereas memory is embedded in communicative relations, which fade as years pass; historical interpretations tend to converge, whereas memories are undoubtedly plural. These are precisely the differences that account for the autonomy of the historical record, regarding the interest and emotions stemming from collective memory. In this regard, I outline how relations between history and memory are reframed by such authors in order to later delve further into how the features of Spanish contemporary historiography undermined this approach. Those flaws compel us not only to rethink the relations between the history and memory of the Spanish Civil War, but also to reconsider why part of Spanish

35 Ángel Loureiro, «Pathetic Arguments», *Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies* vol. 8, Issue 2 (2009): 225-237, 238, doi: https://doi.org/10.1080/14636200802283746.

36 Cercas, *El impostor…,* 114.

37 Bartolomé Clavero, *El árbol y la raíz: Memoria histórica familiar* (Barcelona: Editorial Crítica, 2013), 9.

historiography over recent decades has been open to different methodologies and perspectives stemming from collective memory.

Echoing Tony Judt's idea of memory as a «poor guide into the past»[38] Spanish historians such as Santos Juliá, Fernando del Rey, Álvarez Tardío, and Standley Payne highlight the gap between the results of their investigation and depictions of the war emerging from the collective memory. To Santos Juliá, during the Francoist dictatorship, Spanish historiography could not provide a critical depiction of the past, owing to the influence of Francoist policies of memory within this field of knowledge. The myths stemming from this collective and political memory produced purposive and biased accounts of history. Drawing on this historical example, Santos Juliá reframed the relations between history and memory in such a way that only their discontinuities are highlighted. The historian's endeavor is driven by the search for historical truth, aiming at understanding why and how events happened. By contrast, regarding the oral and textual representation that emerges from collective memory, the focus on depicting the past is intertwined with the biased interest of social agents, which interferes with how the past is remembered. Memory always focuses on some features of the past while disguising or overlooking others so as to legitimate political positions in the present. By contrast, history neither hides nor favors any aspect of the past: «History…has to deal with the victors and the vanquished, regardless of the fact that some of them have already been restituted, whereas the others are still waiting»[39]. The question around which the historical work revolves is as simple as «why did what happened happen as it did?». «From such questioning stems history as critical knowledge, by means of asking questions which, to memory, have been answered before even being asked. This is the point at which memory ends and history begins»[40]. As a consequence, the

38 Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945* (London: Penguin LLC US, 2006), 828.

39 Juliá, «De nuestras memorias y nuestras miserias…»,8.

40 Juliá, «De nuestras memorias y nuestras miserias…», 10.

only influence that the movement for historical memory might have within historiography is not to provide new historical knowledge, but rather to forward ethical-political claims regarding the rights of victims, which is incompatible with the methodological assumptions of historians. Engaging with historical memory could lead to historians being caught up within «memory battles of the Spanish Civil War», which prevents historians from adopting an appropriate distance from the historical events under study. In this regard, Álvarez Tardío and Fernando del Rey argued that «it is worth questioning whether there has been an intellectual regression in recent years. The so-called event of historical memory has paved the way toward the return of partisan history… Partisan history offers… a version of the past pledged to political interest»[41].To Del Rey, such downgrading of the collective memory runs parallel to asserting that historical depiction of the past, providing that a critical methodology is applied and it is scientific and objective: «We are convinced that a cold, distant and academic approach to the Spanish thirties, without taking part in ideological controversies, is possible»[42]. Despite the fact that Del Rey and Tardio's approaches to the Spanish Civil War have been labeled as right-wing or conservative, it is possible to outline other historical analyses provided by historians considered as left-wing which also undermined the role of testimony and memory within the production of historical knowledge. In this sense, it is worth quoting Angel Viña's trilogy on the Spanish Republic. Viñas considers that, by relying on rigorous critique and the analysis of documents, his work could be labeled as unbiased and autonomous from social and political controversies regarding memory. Nonetheless, this assumption overestimates the presence of documental critique in writing about the past. Analyzing documents is not enough for framing a historical depiction. According to the classic analysis provided by Paul Ricoeur, the production of historical knowledge depends on three different phases: documental, interpretative, and narrative. As Sánchez León and Jesús

41 Álvarez Tardío y del Rey, eds., *El laberinto republicano*…,14.

42 del Rey, ed., *Palabras como puños*…, 36.

Izquierdo assert, by focusing only on documents to build an accurate historical depiction of the past, Viñas assumes a vertical hierarchy between history and memory. Such critical voices towards the interference of memory within history have come not only from historians, but also from other scholars in Spanish culture and literature. This is evidenced by Javier Cercas's position on history, testimony, and memory. From his perspective, the role of singular memories should be limited in the public sphere and the historiographical, field so as to rely on the most accurate possible depiction of the past:

> Memory is fragile and, often, biased: it is not always possible to remember accurately; is not always possible to differentiate between memory and invention; is not always possible to remember what happened. Memory is accountable only to one's recalling, whereas historians are accountable to truth… In times of memory, history should be owned by historians[43].

In this regard, from the perspective of those scholars, the interference of historical memory within Spanish contemporary historiography has led to the irrational assumption that the historian's endeavor should be pledged to the recognition and restitution of the rights of the victims of Francoism. The purpose of history is thus assumed to be to give voice to the voiceless. No matter how compelling those assumptions might be, to historians such as Juliá or Payne, they pervert the epistemological grounds upon which the past is written about. History would stop providing accurate and objective knowledge and instead be subordinate to a process of grieving for the victims. As Ángel Loureiro has critically pointed out, the debate stemming from memory's involvement in the production of historical knowledge «is not about new ways of viewing history itself, but about a new sense of history as grievance»[44]. Historiography would, thus, be constrained by the affects and emotions embedded in a social process of mourning for the victims of Francoism. In one of his most recent works, Stanley Payne reframed

43 Javier Cercas, «El chantaje del testigo», *El País Semanal*, Madrid, 26 de diciembre de 2010, 8. https://elpais.com/diario/2010/12/26/eps/1293348408_850215.html.

44 Loureiro, «Pathetic Arguments…», 227.

this trend as a consequence of left-wing political influence within historiography.

> With the decay of left-wing classical ideologies, such as socialism, communism, and anarchism, left-wing ideas have come to focus not on socio-economic issues, but on political and socio-moral ones. The most important of these at the end of the twentieth century was of victimization…History is considered to be important as long as is defined as a chronicle of victimization… History is a story of oppression and the absence of new rules from which to rule society. The main characters of history had been perpetrators by definition and worthy of condemnation. As in the Soviet Union, the role of history is to disclose and decry such oppression… The "historical memory" movement is a product of such an ideology[45].

The notion of historical memory points to the close relation between historical work and historical justice. Nonetheless, to this body of scholars, the two are considered incompatible. Therefore, according to Santos Juliá, echoing the moral imperatives stemming from historical memory in historians' work itself will result in the greatest possible corruption of historiography: casting the historian as a judge.

This focus on victimhood –specifically on victims of Francoism– calls for the historical record to be biased and to deal exclusively with the wrongdoings committed against Republican soldiers, preventing balanced inquiry into the stories of all the victims, regardless of what they fought for. According to Payne, due to the influence of historical memory within historiography, the voices of victims of Francoism are considered to be deserving of much more attention than other sources of information that are more reliable, derived as they are from historical documentation. As a result, grievances, affects, and emotions towards some victims take precedence over the application of a rigorous research methodology. As Loureiro concludes, «their pathetic rhetoric precludes thinking by replacing knowledge and reflection with easy sentimentality and moral admonition»[46].

45 Payne, *La revolución española*..., 373.

46 Loureiro, «Pathetic Arguments...», 233.

On balance, these scholars who belong to a heterogeneous set of disciplines –historiography, culture, and literature– came to an agreement regarding the discontinuities between history and memory and, most importantly, concerning the assumption that any influence of historical memory within the investigation of the past should be avoided in order to preserve the autonomy and accuracy of historiography. Indeed, the sharp dichotomy between history and memory, and the subsequent downgrading of the notion of «collective memory» within historiography accounts for the necessity of establishing a border between fact judgments and value judgments. Such a distinction, embedded in Max Weber's and Marc Bloc's work from the beginning of the twentieth century, was the product of a conception of knowledge according to which scientific knowledge should be autonomous from the interference of subjective propositions such as desires and ideologies. Therefore, these historians of the Spanish Civil War also considered methodologies of historiography to be absolutely different from those of the disciplines embedded within the social movement for the recovery of historical memory that echo the voices of victims. Academic knowledge is thus considered of higher epistemological value than non-academic sources of information. As Sebastiaan Faber asserts:

> In the many debates in Spain about the historical memory of the Second Republic, the Civil War, Francoism, and the Transition […] these questions have tended to pit witnesses (primarily victims and their family members) against academic historians. They have also pitted academic historians against non-academic sources of representation of the past, including journalists, politicians, and activists[47].

After describing the theoretical framework of the aforementioned approach, I disclose its weaknesses. By focusing on the features and underlying trends behind the history and memory of the Spanish Civil War, the next chapter discusses how interactions between them influenced the ways in which those events were depicted within academia and in the public sphere – not in a negative and uncritical manner, as the abovementioned scholars assumed, but by endorsing

47 Faber, *Memory Battles of the Spanish Civil War...*, 59.

within historiography a more complex and interdisciplinary approach to this contested past that addresses historical problems underlying how the Spanish Civil War has been both remembered and written about.

4. Rethinking the history and memory of the Spanish Civil War

Few would dispute that Santos Juliá, Fernando del Rey, and Standley Payne's suspicion of the encroachment of memory into history is spurred by their commitment to scholarly objectivity, that is, by their defense of the superiority of critical, fact-based, and peer-reviewed academic historical knowledge in a context in which the so-called rise of historical memory has advanced a multifarious set of depictions which differ from the academic knowledge. When doing so, the value of analyzing a historical document in building an objective depiction of the past cannot be emphasized enough. Therefore, a historical document works as a touchstone for justifying the gap between history and memory. Nonetheless, in recent decades, other Spanish historians have deeply questioned Santos Julia's assumptions regarding the superiority of objective history over subjective memory. Proof of this is that some of them have adopted a more open attitude regarding the advantages of endorsing different voices and methodologies from outside academia. I will quote some examples in order to reframe their ideas for undermining the theoretical framework developed by Santos Juliá, Fernando del Rey, and Stanley Payne. According to Sebastiaan Faber, in *Memory Battles of the Spanish Civil War*, Juliá's position on history and memory is naïve and anachronistic[48]. According to Pablo Sánchez and Jesús Izquierdo's *La Guerra que nos contaron*, appealing to objectivity should be understood only in terms of rhetorical force for supporting a particular interpretation of the past[49]. Ricard Vynies utterly rejects any hierarchical conceptualization of history and memory, even to the extent of asserting that «to consider that history is a

48 Faber, *Memory Battles of the Spanish Civil War…,* 61.

49 Pablo Sánchez León y Jesús Izquierdo, *La guerra que nos han contado y la que no. Memoria e historia de 1936 para el siglo XXI* (Madrid: Postmetrópolis, 2017), 400.

universal construction of verified truth is as naïve and barbaric as any other superstition»[50].Pedro Ruiz Torres criticizes Juliá's definition of collective memory as clear-cut and outdated[51]. Finally, Espinoza Maestre questioned Juliá's depiction of the transition to democracy as a historical period in which history became autonomous from memory[52]. From his perspective, such a conclusion undoubtedly conceals flaws of Spanish contemporary historiography. Echoing this discussion, in this section, I defend how the features of Spanish historiography compel us to rethink both the relation between history and memory and the methodological assumption underlying the historiography of the Spanish Civil War.

In an essay appealing for the defense of the autonomy of historians by downgrading the value of memory, Julia expresses a deep opposition to the theses on history and memory held by the scholars Dominick LaCapra and Enzo Traverso[53]. Proof of how this paper rejects Julia´s assumptions is the fact that our argument stems from the following idea defended by the latter: «History is much more than a place in which knowledge is produced; it is also a mirror of black areas, silences, and inhibitions within our society»[54]. Admittedly, Julia reframed historical documents as a warrant for the objective and bias-free production of historical knowledge. Documents to be inquired into further would thus be the touchtone from which to achieve fact-based knowledge, autonomous from interferences stemming from collective memories within the depiction of the past. Nonetheless, the features of sources of information during the dictatorship, the transition to democracy and afterwards, do not justify such conclusions. Spanish historians such as Alberto

50 Ricard Vinyes, «La memoria del Estado», en *El Estado y la memoria* (Madrid: RBA, 2009), 23-66, 17.

51 Pedro Ruiz Torres, «De perplejidades y confusiones acerca de nuestras memorias», en *Generaciones y memoria de la represión franquista,* eds. Julio Aróstegui y Sergio Gálvez (Valencia: PUV, 2010), 323-354.

52 Francisco Espinosa Maestre, «De saturaciones y olvidos. En torno a un pasado que no puede pasar», en *Generaciones y memoria de la represión franquista*, eds. Julio Aróstegui y Sergio Gálvez (Valencia: PUV, 2010), 323-354.

53 Juliá, «De nuestras memorias y nuestras miserias…,» 14.

54 Enzo Traverso, *La historia como campo de batalla: Interpretar las violencias del siglo XX* (Madrid: FCE, 2013), 253.

Reig Tapia (1984)[55] and Francisco Maestre[56] have disclosed how difficult it was to do research on the repression carried, out during the war and postwar period due to difficulties gaining access to the Registration of Deeds in small provinces and villages. Regarding the beginning of the conflict, when the repression was more spontaneous and difficult to control and quantify, documents were not available or, worse, the information they provided was clearly manipulated and difficult to trust. If we take the historiographical analysis of Francisco Moreno as a reference, the figures speak for themselves[57]. According to him, above the thousands of victims killed in the rebels' rearguard, only a third were recorded in official documents. Moreover, when inscribing information on the cause of death, rebel authorities resorted to euphemisms such as «internal hemorrhage» or «clash with the authorities». Taking into consideration the above, the features of Spanish historiography prevent the use of documents as the bedrock for a bias-free account of the past. In this regard, it is worth quoting Dominick LaCapra's idea in *Understanding others*, according to which:

> Archives themselves, rather than being seen as the bedrock of certainty in history or even as the invariably more reliable source of documentary evidence, might arguably be understood more critically as an inscription system whose contents and processes may, to a greater or lesser extent, be worked over by forces, including affective and ideological forces, comparable to those at play in memory with its suppressions, repressions, and selective inclusions, exclusions, and distortions[58].

As a consequence of the likelihood that historical documents provide biased information, in order to fill that gap and obtain information on the repression carried out at the beginning of the Spanish Civil War, academic history must rely on a source from collective memory: witnessing. Resorting to witnessing within contemporary historiography blurs the

55 Reig Tapia*, Ideología e Historia…*», 53.

56 Espinosa Maestre, «De saturaciones y olvidos…», 351.

57 Francisco Moreno Gómez, *Los desaparecidos de Franco* (Málaga: Editorial Alpuerta, 2016), 49.

58 Dominick LaCapra, *Undertanding Others. Peoples, Animals, Pasts* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2018), 94, doi: https://doi.org/10.1515/9781501724909.

borders between history and memory. As Pedro Ruiz Torres argues, reframing history and memory as binary and opposite elements –as Julia, del Rey, and Payne do– overlooks the role of witnessing as a source of historical knowledge[59]. This argument clearly echoes Paul Ricoeur's position, according to which testimony is the meeting point between history and memory[60]. Within the Spanish Civil War historiography, the oral history written by Ronald Fraser mobilized the potentiality of testimony as a historiographical source. By recovering thousands of direct testimonies from the conflict, Fraser strived to reveal the intangible atmosphere of events[61]. Nonetheless, testimony from the war has not only played an epistemological role, but a political and ethical role as well. In contemporary Spanish society, this is evidenced by the fact that the emergence of the witness «as a prominent figure in the public sphere has perhaps been the most remarkable feature of Spain's changing relationship with its past since the late 1990s»[62]. Nonetheless, the features of testimony and the process of witnessing deeply undermined previous assumptions regarding the fact-based and critical nature of historical accounts. After all, witnesses who testify to violence cannot detach the events they witnessed from their own suffering sufficiently to provide an accurate depiction of the past. On the contrary, not only are information and knowledge gained from witnessing, but also emotional transferences and silences, challenging the overall process of investigation and compelling historians to negotiate their subjective positions regarding those influences. As Jo Labanji defends, testimony is closer to the «politics of affects» than to the «politics of truth»[63]. Listening to the accounts of witnesses who suffered serious – and recent –wrongdoings could lead historians to empathy, hindering the production of fact-based

59 Ruiz Torres, «De perplejidades y confusiones…», 406

60 Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2006), 221.

61 Ronald Fraser, *Blood of Spain. An Oral History of the Spanish Civil War* (London: Random House, 1986), 29.

62 Faber, *Memory Battles of the Spanish Civil War…,* 62.

63 Jo Labanyi, «Testimonies of Repression: Methodological and Political Issues», en *Unearthing Franco´s Legacy. Mass Graves and the Recovery of Historical Memory in Spain*, eds. Carlos Jerez-Farrán y Samuel Amago (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2010), 192-206.

accounts of the past. For this reason, some historians of the Spanish Civil War have been reluctant to make use of such sources. To scholars such as Juliá, Loureiro, and Cercas, those testimonies should be considered to be deprived of historical value, or else should be purged of the emotional and subjective elements to provide an objective depiction of the past. The value of victim testimonies and representations of the past can only be estimated based on the historian's judgment regarding the accuracy of the testimony based on other sources. Nonetheless, those other sources of information, as argued earlier, might be as unreliable as witnessing. As a consequence, such attitudes and reluctance to make use of victims' voices have been rejected within the professional academy and the public sphere. Proof of that is the following extract by the filmmaker Günter Schwaiger, according to whom:

> What is going on with some Spanish historians? Why are they so afraid of the memory of the people? Since when doesn´t memory serve to bear witness to the truth? Or do trials no longer need witnesses to convict someone? Is the testimony of a son who saw how his father was executed no longer valid to testify to the horror of fascism? Have we arrived at such a level of academic arrogance that the victims must ask the historian´s permission to know if their suffering was real or simply a mirage?[64].

After all, to consider that testimonies only provide historical knowledge when they are analyzed by the same lens the historians use to criticize documents disguises the intensity of the subjective experiences they faced. Undoubtedly, scholars such as Schwaiger or Jo Labanyi are seeking a different way to deal with testimonies within academic historiography, which echoes how testimonies of trauma reshaped the relations between history and memory, and also forced historians to negotiate their subjective positions regarding the events at stake. Witnesses to the Spanish Civil War are not just «living documents»[65] from

64 Günter Schwaiger, «¿Historia sin testigos?», *El País*, Madrid, 19 de octubre de 2006, 64. https://elpais.com/diario/2006/10/19/opinion/1161208810_850215.html.

65 Rafael Pérez Baquero, «El historiador frente al "documento viviente"», *Bollettino Filosofico* vol. 31, (2016): 302-322, doi: https://doi.org/10.6093/1593-7178/4055.

which one can maintain epistemological distance. On the contrary, from their witnessing of a traumatic experience stems affective *transferences* that, as Saul Friedländer[66] conceptualized, deeply undermined historians' assumptions on writing history from a distant and aloof position. The turn to memory and witnessing within Spanish historiography in the last decade also evidenced this[67]. After all, owing to the closeness of the historian to the events to be plotted, the historian's approach to such a recent and traumatic past reflects the influence of moral values and political positions on historiography. This is how Pedro Ruiz Torres accounts for such influence within the historiography of the Spanish Civil War.

> This is evidenced in historians' controversies over historical memory. The different outlooks are between the push and pull between present and past, and in this struggle, different ideologies and moral values are projected. Some historians have endorsed the values of liberal democracy… and as a consequence estimated positively the Spanish transition to democracy… By contrast, other historians value the ideas of social democracy in which they considered the Spanish Second Republic to be embedded[68].

On balance, by addressing the reliability of historical documents, the role played by witnessing within the production of knowledge, and the debate between historians which reveals the interference of moral values, this inquiry into the underlying trends of Spanish contemporary historiography accounts for the redefinition of the relation between the history and memory of the Spanish Civil War. By doing so, it offers a framework for understanding new historical work on the Spanish Civil War, whose methodology

66 Saul Friedlander, «Trauma, Transference, and "Working Through" in Writing the history of the Shoah», *History and Memory* vol 4, n° 11 (1992): 39-59.

67 José Ignacio Álvarez Fernández, *Memoria y trauma en los testimonios de la represión franquista* (Barcelona: Anthropos, 2007), 207.

68 Pedro Ruiz Torres, «La controversia de los historiadores sobre la memoria histórica en España», en *El pasado en construcción. Revisionismos históricos en la historiografía contemporánea,* eds. Carlos Forcadell, Ignacio Peiró y Mercedes Yusta (Zaragoza: Instituto Fernando el Católico, 2015), 67-106, 94.

relies purely neither on documents nor the appeal to objectivity. On the contrary, by reframing how history and memory interact, this approach endorses an interdisciplinary methodology inheriting some of its principles from historical memory. For this reason, it established some bridges between historiography and other sources of representation such as literature or witnessing. In the final section, below, I mention some instances of this approach and address how the methodology it endorses has advanced new ways of dealing with the Spanish Civil War.

Conclusions: Revisionism and the disregard for historical memory

Owing to the historiographical trends that have been outlined, there are currently some historians of the Spanish Civil War who have actually abandoned the firm distinction between history and memory, and embraced interdisciplinary methods. To name two, both Bartolome Clavero's *El* Árbol *y la Raíz*[69] and Helen Graham's *The War and its Shadow*[70] represent approaches in which, to some extent, history and memory appear to be intertwined and, even, on the verge of merging. For instance, Graham's account of Francoist repression does not rely as much on documents or seeking accurate statistics or fact-based statements as it does on giving voice to the family story of Amparo Barayón, who was a victim of the early repression carried out in Zamora by rebel soldiers. With regards to *El* Árbol *y la* R*aíz*, this account of the repression carried out by Francoist soldiers in Cazorla de Sierra (Sevilla) intersperses historical accounts with family memories, giving rise to a multifaceted depiction of the past in which echoing the voices of the witnesses is as important as providing a bias-free account of those facts. A proof of his interdisciplinary approach is that in outlining the sources of his work, Clavero cited both historical texts –such as Paul Reston's *The Spanish*

69 Clavero, *El árbol y la raíz…*», 12.

70 Helen Graham, *The War and its Shadow. Spain's Civil War in Europe's Long Twentieth Century* (Eastbourne: Sussex Academic Press, 1014), 241.

Holocaust[71]– and literary ones –such as Almudena Grande's *El lector de Julio Verne*[72]. Nonetheless, despite these approaches intersecting history and memory within the narration of the past, recent controversies and trends within the interpretation of the Spanish Civil War which brought into question the differences between history and memory and reframed how those events which have been understood, have given rise to new discussions which should be explored further at the end of this paper.

In 2003, Pio Moa, who is not a scholar specializing in the Spanish Civil War, published a book entitled *The Myths of the Spanish Civil War*[73] which rapidly became a *bestseller,* selling thousands of copies. This work and other books published by Moa and other authors such as César Vidal gave rise to what has been labeled as a new historical revisionism on the Spanish Civil War. By scapegoating and attributing most of the responsibility for the conflict to the supporters of the Second Spanish Republic, the legacies of Francoism were brought into a more positive light. Despite the fact that these authors do not belong to historiographical academia, the social impact of their books and their own assumptions regarding their work provide new challenges for thinking about the history and memory of the Spanish Civil War. Due to the distortions of the historical interpretations their work brought about, the reaction from academic historians was not long in coming, for instance with the critical studies offered by Francisco Maestre[74], Reig Tapia[75] and Ángel Viñas[76]. According to the latter, there are three features underlying this neo-Francoist historical revisionism. First,

71 Paul Preston, *The Spanish Holocaust: Inquisition and Extermination in Twentieth-Century Spain* (New York: Harper Press, 2013), 521.

72 Almudena Grandes, *El lector de Julio Verne. Episodios de una guerra interminable* (Barcelona: Tusquets, 2014), 5.

73 Pío Moa, *Los mitos de la guerra civil española* (Madrid: La esfera de los libros, 2003), 25.

74 Francisco Espinosa Maestre, *El fenómeno revisionista o los fantasmas de la derecha española* (Badajoz: Los libros del Oeste, 2005), 124.

75 Alberto Reig Tapia, *Anti-Moa* (Barcelona: S.A. Ediciones, 2006), 23.

76 Ángel Viñas, «Franco o la subversión de la memoria», en *España en la memoria de tres generaciones*, ed. Julio Aróstegui (Madrid: Universidad Complutense, 2007), 43.

these works legitimated the Francoist dictatorship by means of reshaping its historical origins, secondly, they dichotomized again contemporary Spanish society, and finally, these works only focus on the «alleged achievements» of Francoism. In this regard, the argumentative strategy of Moa`s narrative could be described as follows; from his perspective, all the responsibility for the conflict revolves around the questions «who struck first», and «who started escalating violence». Moreover, in his *1934: The Civil War Begins*[77], Moa asserts that the outbreak of the conflict should not be situated in the coup d'état in 1936, but rather in the rebellion in Asturias that was organized by some anarchist groups and trade unions. Therefore, Moa places all the responsibility for the conflict on the shoulders of the communist and anarchist supporters of the Second Spanish Republic. In this regard, this historical revisionism could be labeled as the Spanish version of a right-wing European historiographical process of revising the past of the 20th century which encompasses different countries. This is how Enzo Traverso describes such transnational entanglements and convergences:

> In Spain, "revisionist" scholars tried to disqualify antifascism as a "red" narrative to which they purported to oppose an objective, neutral history, a scientifically grounded rather than a "committed" one. Curiously, such a "non-partisan" scholarship resulted in an apologetic interpretation of the Spanish Civil War in which Franco's violence and authoritarianism became marginal features with respect to his meritorious work of preserving his country from the tentacles of Bolshevik totalitarianism. According to Pio Moa, author of several bestsellers, Franco's putsch was a Republican "myth" because it justified military *levantamiento* had been provoked by the Popular Front's attempt to push the Republic into the hands of communism. Moa embodies a kind of Spanish "Noltism": he thinks similarly to his German homologue, that Franco's violence was the collateral damage of a healthy, legitimate reaction against a Bolshevik threat[78].

77 Pío Moa,*1934: Comienza la guerra civil* (Madrid: Altera, 2004), 25.

78 Enzo Traverso, *The New Faces of Fascism. Populism and the Far Right* (New York: Verso Books, 2019), 98.

Besides, what is most striking about these historical trends and what allows us to connect them with the discussions developed in the previous sections, is the objectivity and accuracy these revisions of the past claimed for themselves. Despite his lack of academic background in Spanish contemporary history and how controversial his statements are, Moa insists that his books provide a transparent prism from which to look at the past without bias. By assuming an anachronistic objectivist's position, he claims to be only transmitting truths stemming unambiguously from historical documents. These new waves of historical revisionism, which emerge during the same period as the movement for the recovery of historical memory, assume a vertical hierarchy between history and memory in which the latter –including testimonies by the victims of Francoism– has no say in the discussion of the past. Undoubtedly, the current historiographical trends which embrace the sources stemming from collective memory even as to consider the blurring between history and memory, have labeled this new revisionism as neo-Francoist propaganda, which strives to legitimize a particular type of politics of the past. Therefore, Moa and other authors like him are criticized for being motivated by a particular ideology and politics of the past. In this regard, despite defending a firm distinction between history and memory and between their accurate accounts and «partisan history» which other historians are supposed to endorse, this new revisionism has been labeled as the product of a particular ideology and politics of the past, which reinforced the convenience of assuming the relations between history and memory as an essential part of the production of knowledge concerning the contested past.

Drawing mostly on discussions between Spanish contemporary historians, this paper has delved into the complexities of writing about and remembering the Spanish Civil War in contemporary society, leading to the following conclusion: public discourse on those events is no longer under the exclusive guidance of the academic institution[79]. On the contrary, academic

79 Sebastián Faber, Pablo Sánchez León y Jesús Izquierdo, «El poder de contar y el paraíso perdido. Polémicas públicas y construcción colectiva de la memoria en España», *Política y sociedad,* vol. 48, n° 3 (2001): 463-480, doi: https://doi.org/10.5209/rev_POSO.2011.v48.n3.36423.

research is pervaded by diverse values and emotions stemming from memories of the war in a way that cannot be accounted for by an approach to history and memory framing the two as antinomian.

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