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Abstract

Review of Iker González-Allende. *Hombres en movimiento: Masculinidades españolas en los exilios y emigraciones, 1939-1999*. Purdue UP, 2018.

Keywords

exile, migration, men, masculinity, twentieth-century Spain

Iker González-Allende. *Hombres en movimiento: Masculinidades españolas en los exilios y emigraciones, 1939-1999*. Purdue UP, 2018. 309 pp.

Hombres en movimiento ('Men in Movement') makes a compelling case for studying exile and migration as gendered experiences of displacement for men who left Spain in three historical periods: during and after the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), during the period of economic upheaval in the 1960s, and in a wave of migration by Spanish intellectuals to the United States starting in the 1990s. Building on his previous work on gender and nation in narratives of the Spanish Civil War and on Basque writers in exile, González-Allende examines male-authored works in several literary genres to lay bare the intersections of masculinity and mobility as categories of lived experience and representation. In so doing, the author brings together two fields of inquiry that have not often met. Whereas prior work at the juncture of Masculinity Studies and Mobility Studies tends to overlook Spain, studies in Hispanism rarely consider Spanish exiles and migrants from a gendered perspective, especially when it comes to men. *Hombres en movimiento* bridges this gap to explore itinerant masculinities in Spanish literature of the twentieth century.

Drawing amply on theoretical texts from a variety of geographical contexts, González-Allende argues that exile and migration, whatever their various causes, have an ambivalent impact on men's sense of masculinity in Spanish literary works. Most often, the difficulty of life abroad and exposure to unfamiliar gender norms lead male exiles and migrants to experience feelings of emasculation and impotence, a crisis of masculinity that can sometimes prompt transformative growth, but more often is countered by compensatory measures and a reaffirmation of traditional Spanish notions of manhood. Other times, opportunities for economic and intellectual advancement in the host country aid men in shoring up their masculinity. For gay men in particular, exile and migration can hold out the promise of increased anonymity and the loosening of social constraints. What remains constant is that the experience of leaving Spain—and sometimes of returning—interacts with the performance of gender in a range of ways for the authors and characters under consideration.

These dynamics come into sharp relief in a series of case studies organized around distinct masculine identities inflected by differences of age, class, politics, sexuality, and regional and national identity. González-Allende brings conceptual categories delineated by Anglophone masculinity theorists into dialogue with models of manhood elaborated by Spanish authors who lived outside of Spain as exiles or migrants for at least a year and a half. Hence hegemonic, complicit, protest, and marginalized masculinities appear alongside the *ex-hombre* 'ex-man,' the *hombre ocioso* 'idle man,' the *hombre onanista* 'male onanist,' and other Spanish-language designations from the selected literary works. Each chapter

foregrounds a particular masculine type while acknowledging that performances of masculinity may vary throughout an individual's lifespan and in shifting social and geographical contexts.

Following a substantial introduction detailing its theoretical and historical contexts, the book is divided into two sections comprised of four chapters on exiles from the Spanish Civil War and three chapters on migrants in subsequent decades. Although the chapters read well as self-contained units, the book as a whole benefits from a cohesive architecture of patterns, comparisons, and contrasts across chapters, as detailed in the conclusion.

The first part traces an arc from boyhood to old age in exile, progressing from Luis de Castresana's novel about Basque children in Belgium, *El otro árbol de Guernica* ('The Other Tree of Guernica'), through anxieties about aging in Mexico in the poetry of Juan José Domenchina, to flustered returns to Spain in both a story by Francisco Ayala and a play by Max Aub. A chapter on homosexuality and artistic creation in the poetry and autobiographical prose of Juan Gil-Albert's exile in Latin America offers an alternative to the besieged masculinities of the other chapters. Without overlooking the difficulties of displacement and his increasing nostalgia for Spain, Gil-Albert reflects on exile as an opportunity to explore same-sex love and a masculine subjectivity centered on art and nature.

The second part contrasts narratives of migrants who left Spain for various reasons, whether to provide for their families as workers in Germany in the 1960s, to access sexual and cultural opportunities scarce under Franco, or to pursue university teaching in the United States in the late 1980s and 90s. The primary texts include little-studied novels of migration by Patricio Chamizo and Víctor Canicio, Terenci Moix's memoir *Extraño en el paraíso* ('Stranger in Paradise'), and campus novels set at North American universities by Antonio Muñoz Molina and Javier Cercas. As in the first part of the book, these readings intertwine sociological analysis of gender and sexuality with keen observations on literary form and language. With respect to this last point, González-Allende draws attention to recurrent allusions to Don Juan, El Cid, the bullfighter, the Castilian peasant, and other typically Spanish masculine archetypes.

Throughout the study, the selection of authors and texts offers diverse points of comparison for future research. Two areas that would benefit from additional investigation include queer and female masculinities in movement. *Hombres en movimiento* tends to sustain a dichotomy between hetero- and homosexuality, aptly reflecting the fact that most of the writers and characters under study require this sharp polarization to achieve heteronormative masculinity. Further research into authors like Moix, who does not fall neatly into the binary, might draw more extensively on Spanish queer theorists such as Alfredo Martínez-Expósito or Beatriz Preciado.

Likewise, Judith Halberstam's classic book *Female Masculinity* (1998) may inform future approaches to integrating women into this area of study. González-Allende discusses women primarily in relation to men's experiences of masculinity, as victims of male violence, castrating victimizers, wives and mothers, and even allegories of the Spanish nation. Yet Halberstam's work on "masculinity without men" demonstrates that masculinity as a gendered performance is not the exclusive domain of any single biological sex. An exploration of female masculinity in exile could take into account Victoria Kent, Victorina Durán, and other Spanish women who embodied or wrote about masculinity abroad. As scholarship advances, *Hombres en movimiento* promises to offer numerous points of departure for continued research at the crossroads of literature, gender, mobility, and twentieth-century Spain.

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