

cortina de humo para evitar un necesario análisis de bases, gran ausente de este texto. Una lástima.

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Hurtado, Amparo, ed. *Memorias del pueblo: la guerra civil española contada por testigos de ambos bandos: Anna Pibernat, Francesca Sallés, Josep Torras*. Madrid: La esfera de los libros, 2004. 272 pp.

The deceptively simple foreword of Josep Torras' memoir, one of three autobiographical texts by «personas comunes y corrientes» that constitute *Memorias del pueblo*, in fact reveals the essential significance of the volume. Torras commences with an assertion whose conclusion matter-of-factly confirms Pierre Nora's statement that «the anonymous biographies of ordinary people [evidence] the understanding that the masses do not allow themselves to be measured as a mass» —in «Between Memory and History: *Les Lieux de Mémoire*.» *Representations* 26 (Spring 1989): 17—: «Empiezo hoy,» Torras writes, «domingo 9 de septiembre de 1990, la redacción de unas notas autobiográficas [...] de una novela real de la que yo soy el principal protagonista» (197). In describing himself as a central character rather than a passive witness of the war, Torras signals the unique value of the works contained in *Memorias del pueblo*: more than mere personal records, they are the products of the authors' attempts to inscribe their individual identities into a history that — if it is remembered at all — is frequently marked by an overemphasis on prominent public figures or reduced to a representation of the faceless «dos Españas.»

*Memorias del pueblo*, as Amparo Hurtado writes in the Introduction, presents part of a small corpus of autobiographical texts that came into her hands after she gave a series of lectures on Spanish literature of memory in university classrooms for senior citizens. Some 30 attendees felt moved to send her their autobiographical manuscripts, from which she has made the selection that constitutes *Memorias del pueblo*. Her lucid introductory essay stands alone as a primer on key historical and formal aspects of the autobiographical genre. She provides therein ample support for the literary value of autobiographical texts penned by «escritores profanos» (17).

The collection's power lies in its juxtaposition of what Hurtado aptly describes as «testimonios [...] antagónicos» (16). Anna Pibernat, the daughter of a working-class shoemaker, retrospectively recounts the traumatic odyssey she undertook as a teenaged Republican nurse in «Mis memorias.» A native speaker of Catalan, she wrote her contribution in Castilian for her grandchildren, who grew up in Madrid. Francesca Sallés, daughter of a bourgeois family with Nationalist ties, kept a diary during

the war, recording the minutiae of her preadolescent life along with her impressions of the war in «Mi diario.» Torras, the son of a clerk sympathetic to the Republic, recalls a paradisiacal childhood cut short by the intrusion of war in «Notas autobiográficas.» This distinctive combination of texts forces the reader to recognize the individuality of all participants.

The heterogeneous composition of *Memorias del pueblo* has another virtue, resolving the aesthetic dilemma humorously described by Carmen Martín Gaité in her own fictionalized memoir, *El cuarto de atrás*:

Desde la muerte de Franco habrá notado cómo proliferan los libros de memorias, ya es una peste, en el fondo, eso es lo que me ha venido desanimando, pensar que, si a mí me aburren las memorias de los demás, por qué no le van a aburrir a los demás las mías. (Barcelona: Ediciones Destino, 2001. p. 111)

Martín Gaité's solution is to seek «una forma divertida de enhebrar» her own memories; *Memorias del pueblo* achieves the same end by assembling the memories of several dissimilar individuals.

Part of the pleasure provided by the volume results from untangling the network of disparities and commonalities among the authors. Pibernat, Sallés, and Torras were respectively sixteen, twelve, and eight years old in 1936; they differ not only in political orientation but also in gender and the type of autobiographical writing each employs. Yet their most compelling difference lies in their motive for writing: Pibernat's memoirs «no tienen otra intención que dar a conocer [...] las enfermeras de guerra [...] de las que nadie se acuerda»; Sallés' diary serves as a refuge from the fear, confusion, and isolation that surrounded her during the war; and Torras' memoir, as Hurtado points out, is most clearly an attempt to «poner orden en el desorden» created by the war (33, 37). The authors' similarities are of equal consequence. All were raised by parents who deeply valued education: Pibernat's father built a library in his home and provided his eight children with a political education; Sallés' and Torras' parents arranged for private tutors even amidst the bombings of Barcelona. The three prize their Catalan identity: each text includes at least one anecdote regarding the author's refusal to abandon their native language. Sallés and Torras presented their texts in Catalan, fluidly translated by Hurtado.

*Memorias del pueblo* will appeal to both casual and serious scholars of the Spanish Civil War. The accessible language and clear pedagogical focus of the Introduction, as well as the fascinating stories of the three protagonists, make the book an apt choice for graduate and advanced undergraduate students, as well. Even in the midst of the current boom in publications related to the war, Hurtado's text deserves a place of honor.

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