

CHAPTER 23

GERMANIC AND ROMANCE STUDIES

Doctoral Theses

01. BANERJEE (Durba)
The Spanish Civil War in the Contemporary Historical Novel
Supervisor: Prof. VijayaVenkataraman
Th 23361

Abstract
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The aim of this doctoral dissertation has been to analyse the representation of the Spanish Civil War (1936-39) in contemporary historical novels based on an analysis of four literary works written in Spanish – *Soldados de Salamina* (2001) and *El impostor* (2014) by Javier Cercas, *Los girasoles ciegos* (2004) by Alberto Méndez and *Riña de Gatos. Madrid 1936* (2010) by Eduardo Mendoza. The objective is to examine the interactions between history and literature in the 21st Century, associated with three interrelated phenomena: a. The celebration of various commemorations in Spain as part of the 30th anniversary of the restoration of democracy in 2005 and 80 years since the war itself in 2016. b. The need felt by historians and intellectuals to revisit the history of the Civil War to meet the social aspirations of present day Spanish society in the context of the enactment of the “Historical Memory Law” in 2007. c. The emergence of a new wave of literature (especially in the form of novels) published since the end of the 20th century that addresses the issue of the Civil War and which is influenced by the debates surrounding the movement of the recovery of the memory of the war and post-war. We demonstrate that most of the novels written on the Civil War in the first decade and a half of this century could be studied under the umbrella term of contemporary historical novel. Our hypothesis is two-fold. We argue that the novels not only demonstrate a literary treatment of history but also use historical and literary narrative strategies, which in turn re-define the historical novel itself as a genre. Further, we contend that the novelists are united together by the idea of breaking the myth of “the two Spains”, thus revealing characteristics akin to a literary generation.

Contents

1. Introduction 2. The past and the present—renegotiation with the memory in the 21st century 3. Literature in the time of crisis 4. The history for a historical readers the contemporary historical novel 5. The historical novel of 21st century – way to recover lost identity. Conclusion. Appendices. Bibliography.
02. KAUSHAL (Sachita)
World Construction in Contemporary Science Fiction: A Comparative Study of German and Indian Science Fiction.
Supervisor: Dr. Shaswati Mazumdar
Th 23360

Abstract
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This thesis is a comparative study between German and Indian-English Science Fiction novels written after 2000, focusing more precisely on near-future-fictions by authors writing outside of the mainstream tradition of science fiction. The works under focus are Julizeh's *Corpus Delicti – Ein Prozess* (2009) and Benjamin Stein's *Replay* (2012) from German context along with Manjula Padmanabhan's *Escape* (2008) and Anil Menon's *The Beast with Nine Billion Feet* (2009) from Indian-English context. By analyzing the way in which the near-future worlds of these narratives are reconstructed and extrapolated from their current respective realities, the study examines how these texts use the genre of science fiction in differing ways in thematization, representation and operation of the common concerns in order to reveal the underlying mechanisms of this world. It simultaneously analyses the way the generic form is transformed in the process. By bringing in this angle of comparison of texts from two different contexts, the idea of a single world as the point of departure for future visions is problematized, as the different fictional points of departure of a single problem hints at the multiplicity in which this world actually exists, and in the way in which it can be viewed and apprehended. At the same time, by putting the focus on texts emerging from outside the general tradition of science fiction, in which – owing to the lack of genre expectations – the adherence to the genre dynamics (or specificities) becomes dispensable, this study simultaneously also tries to see, to what extent and in what way this difference in socio-political and historical as well as literary background of the two contexts affect the way in which the formal structure of this genre has to be changed to deal with the various concerns.

Contents

1. Introduction foundations of the thesis 2. Conceptualisation of world construction: Theoretical approaches and methodology 3. Julizeh's corpus delicti 4. Manjula Padmanabhan's escape 5. Benjamin Stein's replay 6. Anil Menon's the beast with nine billion feet 7. Comparative conclusion. Bibliography