

The Spanish Civil War and its (Welsh) Afterlives: Memorialisation as a Political Act

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Abstract

In this paper, I examine the discourse surrounding the establishment and reception of Spanish Civil War memorials in Wales, and show how they not only attempt to recuperate the memory of the war, but also constitute interventions in the politics, not only of 1930s Spain, but also, and equally importantly, of late-twentieth-century Wales. By examining the *mythology* constructed by these memorials, I question the binary of 'history' and 'mythology', arguing that it is at best misguided to merely attack *mythology* as *faking history*. It is, rather, necessary to analyse the socio-political context within which such *mythology* is constructed. As such, I argue that whatever the historical 'truths' or otherwise in the role played by the people of Wales in the Spanish Civil War, the narrative that has been constructed of the Welsh involvement in Spain plays a definite political role in creating a distinctively Welsh nationhood. Borrowing from the theories of Marianne Hirsch, Pierre Nora, Kristin Ross and James E. Young, I go on to examine the particular role played by history and mythology in the way nations tell stories about themselves.

Keywords: *Spanish Civil War, Wales, memorials, nationalism, history, mythology*