



**Carolina Rodríguez-López, José M. Faraldo.** *Reconsidering a Lost Intellectual Project: Exiles' Reflections on Cultural Differences.* Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012. 135 S. ISBN 978-1-4438-3701-9.

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Max Aub said once that he belonged to the place where he took his secondary school. In other words, what Max Aub noticed, with such apparently naive assertion, is that our identity is rather configured by the things we do than we decide to be. Max Aub, among the different myriad of nationalities and languages he could potentially have affiliated himself with, he chose to write in Spanish. In his exile in Mexico, he managed to continue with the activities of the theatre company El Búho that actually he helped to create in Spain during the previous years to the Civil War. Again the key verb to do, instead of to be, emerged as one of the pillars of the exile condition. Regardless to mention that his pupil, José Ricardo Morales from his exile in Chile, took Aub's ideas further to the extent of assuring that human beings architectonically construct their lives throughout what they do rather to what they think they are or others assume them to be. Max Aub and José Ricardo Morales are just two examples of bright intellectuals whose intellectual project has being recovered during the last decade. They have become singularities, their works have become rare and uncomfortable for nationalisms of all sign and nature, just as rare, precious and necessary for the re-assessment of the European cultural history have become academic meditations like the ones present in *Reconsidering a Lost Intellectual Project. Exiles Reflec-*

*tions on Cultural Differences* edited by Carolina Rodríguez López and José M. Faraldo.

The volume hosts a threefold structure: a) an accurate introduction by Rodríguez López and Faraldo that manages to engage both the non-specialized reader and the academic scholar familiarized with issues related to the Hispanic exile after 1939 and the European Post World War II period; b) a first part entitled as 'German and Spanish projects in America' with a contribution by Merel Leeman who studies the legacy of Weimar historians in the US: 'Discovering a lost intellectual's project: George Mosse and Peter Gay on Myth and Mind in History'; a chapter written by Carolina Rodríguez-López whose title, 'Hopes to reach an academic project: Spanish exiled professors in the US universities', introduces the reader in the still almost known territory of the scientists who were forced to leave Spain and a final meditation, by Natacha Bolufer-Laurentie, on the exiles who created the newspaper *Liberación* in New York: 'The three phases of *Liberación*, a weekly newspaper: tracing the identity shift of *La colonia española* in New York, 1946-1949'; c) a second part 'Spanish and Easter-European connections' which comprises José M. Faraldo's chapter 'Dreams of a better past: central European exiles in Franco's Spain and the projects of the interwar period' and Mihaela Albu's 'Romanian intellectual elites in exile: painful experiences and multifaceted actions'.

A volume of such characteristics, could potentially have presented the risk of being dispersed or unbalanced. However, it constitutes a good example on how to avoid such dangers. The introduction plays an essential role as it provides a cohesive corpus of concepts related to the transnational dimension of the Hispanic and other exiles, while it successfully frames the uniqueness of each contribution in this book and sets a map of the shared spaces where different modalities of exiles get into dialogue.

In this regard, when Mihaela Albu's asserts that to the Romanian exiles 'in all this "parenthesis" of exile, the verb *to do* will keep on surpassing the verb to be' (p. 122), actually is describing a common feature that, in a way or another, was incarnated in every attempt made by the different exiles studied in this book to keep alive their intellectual projects. Albu's 'Exile as an Action' could also work as good summary to the experiences of other exiles such as George Mosse and Peter Gay (see Merel Leeman's remarkable contribution p. 13-36); Rafael Lorente de No, Rosendo Carrasco Formiguera and Jaume Pi-Suñer (see Rodríguez López's p. 37-61); the individuals who made possible a newspaper such *Liberación* in New York (see Bolufer-Laurentie's p. 63-85); George Uscatestcu and Jozef Lobodowski (see Faraldo's p. 89-113); and, indeed, the Romanian intellectual elites forced to an errant life (see Albu's p. 115-135).

National sided historiographies have failed to produce a comprehensive narrative of the complexities embedded in historical processes. Exiles have systematically been excluded from the official governmental representation of the past in many countries of Europe. In this regard, Spain is one of the most significant cases as most exiles they are still in a no man's land because to recover their intellectual projects inevitably pushes us to rethink and to reassess our naturalized understanding (still pretty much heir of the Francoist academia) of Western history over the 20th Century. Thus we can conclude that *Reconsidering a*

*Lost Intellectual Project* contributes to fill an important gap. Its success is on its diversity of approaches. Therefore Rodríguez López and Faraldo have edited a beautiful volume that sheds new light on a field where transnational historians still have a major task ahead. Nationalistic power interests are quite reluctant to accept any approach to History that displaces the construction of a national mythology. This volume challenges the attractiveness of reducing exiles testimonies into a plea for the mere recovery of their legacy or their appropriation for political interests.

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