



MUTRAN, Munira M. *Representações da Guerra Civil na literatura irlandesa*. São Paulo: FFLCH/USP, 2023, 130pp.

Munira H. Mutran's *Representações da Guerra Civil na literatura irlandesa* [*Representations of the Civil War in Irish Literature*] (2023) presents the culmination of a research endeavor conducted by the author in Trinity College Dublin's Long Room Hub on "Violence in Irish literature through myth" in 2016. Focused specifically on the period of the Civil War, Mutran scrutinizes how a group of writers perceived, comprehended, and narrated the conflict in their literary works. Across the three chapters comprising the book, Mutran delves into the oeuvres of prominent writers such as Frank O'Connor, Sean O'Faolain, Liam O'Flaherty, Sean O'Casey, and Elizabeth Bowen, examining how they utilized realism as a narrative tool to portray the complexities of the era. Mutran contends that despite their disparate backgrounds, these authors collectively employ realism as a means to critique the fanaticism and social schism engendered by extreme allegiance to nationalism ideals.

In the introduction, titled "Os conflitos de 1916-1923 no conto irlandês: idealismo e violência" ["The 1916-1923 conflict in the Irish short story: Idealism and violence"], Mutran dissects the portrayal of the period between the War of Independence and the Civil War in select short stories by Frank O'Connor, Liam O'Flaherty, and Sean O'Faolain. Skillfully navigating through the texts, Mutran unveils a common thread wherein these writers, despite their distinct vantage points, offer scathing critiques of the idealism and zealous fervor that precipitated the Civil War, resulting in the fracturing of friendships and families. For instance, in "Guests of the Nation" (1931), O'Connor employs realist techniques, including vernacular

speech, to depict characters disaffected by the nationalist fervor driving the conflict. Similarly, O’Flaherty’s works such as “The Sniper” (1922), “Civil War” (1924), and “The Mountain Tavern” (1929), adopt a naturalistic lens that aims to expose how nationalism blinds individuals, reducing them to “behave like animals” (Mutran 36, my translation). Additionally, Mutran elucidates how O’Faolain, in stories from his 1932 collection such as “A Midsummer Night Madness,” “Lilliput,” “The Death of Stevey Long”, “The Bombshop,” “Fugue,” and “The Patriot,” condemns both the Anti-Treaty and Pro-Treaty factions, likening their fervor to madness and underscoring the futility of patriotism.

The second chapter, “O fanatismo divide” [“Fanaticism divides”], centers on the novels *The Informer* by Liam O’Flaherty (1925) and *The Last September* (1929) by Elizabeth Bowen, which explore the social divisions caused by the Civil War. Beginning with an examination of James Joyce’s engagement with the Irish question, Mutran delineates how Irish writers, particularly Bowen and O’Flaherty, critique the societal schisms exacerbated by the Civil War. Mutran delves into O’Flaherty’s choice of setting in *The Informer*, arguing that, in O’Flaherty’s view, the paranoia over power obfuscates the underlying socioeconomic disparities faced by the working class. Conversely, Bowen’s narrative, from the perspective of the Anglo-Irish, elucidates their waning influence amidst the turmoil, symbolized by the demise of the properties they had inherited. Despite their insulation, the Anglo-Irish find themselves involved in the broader social upheaval, with the conflict encroaching upon their doorstep.

The final chapter is devoted to Sean O’Casey’s “Dublin Trilogy”, where Mutran highlights the “unity of space, characterization, theme, and an anti-heroic view of life” (Mutran 83, my translation) present in O’Casey’s plays. The playwright offers a poignant commentary on the revolutionary years, informed by his personal experiences and ideological leanings. Mutran elucidates how O’Casey, disillusioned with nationalism, espouses socialist ideals, evident in his Dublin plays – *The Shadow of a Gunman* (1923), *The Plough and the Stars* (1926), and *Juno and the Paycock* (1929). Mutran contends that, through scathing satire and irony, O’Casey dismantles the romanticized notions of heroism and patriotism, portraying male characters as ineffectual and women as the pillars of resistance.

In the Epilogue, Mutran extends the discourse to contemporary representations of the Civil War, laying ground for further research. Referencing works such as Brendan Behan’s play *An Giall – The Hostage* (1957), Tom Murphy’s stage adaptation of O’Flaherty’s *The*

Informer (1981), Christine Reid's play *Joyriders* (1986), Tom MacIntyre's play *Good Evening, Mr. Collins* (1996), and Martin McDonagh's movie *The Banshees of Inisherin* (2022), Mutran underscores the enduring relevance of the conflict in contemporary literature and arts. Through intertextual references and thematic continuities, these works serve as poignant reminders of the enduring legacy of the Civil War, echoing its reverberations in modern Irish society.

In sum, Munira H. Mutran's meticulous analysis in *Representações da Guerra Civil na literatura irlandesa* sheds light on the multifaceted portrayal of the Irish Civil War in literary works. Through her examination of various authors and their texts, Mutran skillfully demonstrates how themes of idealism, fanaticism, social division, and disillusionment permeate Irish literature of the period. By delving into the intricacies of realism, naturalism, and satire employed by writers such as Frank O'Connor, Liam O'Flaherty, Sean O'Faolain, Elizabeth Bowen, and Sean O'Casey, Mutran unveils the underlying critiques of nationalism and the human cost of conflict. Furthermore, her exploration of contemporary representations of the Civil War underscores its enduring relevance and the ongoing dialogue between past and present. *Representações da Guerra Civil na literatura irlandesa* not only enriches our understanding of Irish literary heritage but also invites further inquiry into the intersection of history and literature.

Camila Franco Batista