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Literature and Censorship during Francisco Franco's Dictatorship of Spain

Adriana Cuca, SPA 4121 Modern Spanish Drama: Ages & Stages



Image of Francisco Franco from [The Times](#).

THESIS

Francisco Franco's dictatorship of Spain (1939-1975) undermined the value of freedom of speech and silenced hundreds of writers throughout the duration of his leadership by manipulating media and punishing those who spoke up against him.

FRANQUISMO

Franquismo refers to the four decades of a totalitarian regime in Spain led by Francisco Franco. Franco came into power after winning the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) through his role as a military leader of the Spanish Army. Franco's leadership replaced the Second Republic and established a government with support from some sectors of Catholicism, Falange, monarchists, and Carlists. These groups perpetuated fascist ideas of an isolated and uniform Spain that suppressed the individual rights of the population.

FRANCOIST CENSORSHIP

The Franco regime composed a fascist narrative through the strict regulation of Spain's media. The Press Law of 1938 was created before Franco's leadership was officially solidified to establish a standard for restrictions all public and private publications from issuing any form of media that challenged the legitimacy of the government. Franco's forces combined the facilities and resources of formerly republic-supporting publishing businesses during Civil War to establish total state control of media and communications. The sub-groups (Falange, certain sectors of Catholics, etc.) of the Francoist regime were the only figures permitted to maintain private ownership of their publishing businesses to allow for the idea that Franco rescued Spain from its downfall to flourish.

SILENCING AUTHORS

The regulations were not always consistent; both Francoist and anti-Franco authors were subjected to the Press Law of 1938, but they often faced censorship on a case-by-case basis which left many authors unaware of what they could or couldn't write. To avoid the punishment that resulted from writing against the Franco regime, writers fled to France, Mexico, or Argentina to seek refuge. Those who stayed in Spain resorted to publishing their work in Central and South America. The dictatorship targeted writers that remained in Spain because they had the most connections with the local population which risked the popularization of anti-Franco sentiment. For example, Miguel Hernández was a poet born to a large family of farmers and received no formal education. He pursued poetry to rebel against the dictatorship and uplift the voices of the poor. Hernández was imprisoned for his writing several times and died in jail in 1942. He was one of many authors punished for challenging Franco's dictatorship.

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"Aun los más crueles y desenfrenados, los que derramaron la sangre para llegar al sitio del poder, serán fantasmas, serán muertos abominables oscurecidos por el horror. Pero los poetas son de tal manera materiales, más que el aluminio y la uva, más que la propia tierra, que atraviesan los años del pavor y son para su pueblo fuente escondida de esperanza y ternura." - Pablo Neruda