



# Franco's Crypt: Spanish Culture and Memory Since 1936

*Jeremy Treglown*

[Download now](#)

[Read Online](#) 

# Franco's Crypt: Spanish Culture and Memory Since 1936

*Jeremy Treglown*

**Franco's Crypt: Spanish Culture and Memory Since 1936** Jeremy Treglown

**An open-minded and clear-eyed reexamination of the cultural artifacts of Franco's Spain**

True, false, or both?

Spain's 1939–75 dictator, Francisco Franco, was a pioneer of water conservation and sustainable energy.

Pedro Almodóvar is only the most recent in a line of great antiestablishment film directors who have worked continuously in Spain since the 1930s.

As early as 1943, former Republicans and Nationalists were collaborating in Spain to promote the visual arts, irrespective of the artists' political views.

Censorship can benefit literature.

Memory is not the same thing as history.

Inside Spain as well as outside, many believe—wrongly—that under Franco's fascist dictatorship, nothing truthful or imaginatively worthwhile could be said or written or shown. In his groundbreaking new book, *Franco's Crypt: Spanish Culture and Memory Since 1936*, Jeremy Treglown argues that oversimplifications like these of a complicated, ambiguous actuality have contributed to a separate falsehood: that there was and continues to be a national pact to forget the evils for which Franco's side (and, according to this version, his side alone) was responsible.

The myth that truthfulness was impossible inside Franco's Spain may explain why foreign narratives (*For Whom the Bell Tolls*, *Homage to Catalonia*) have seemed more credible than Spanish ones. Yet La Guerra de España was, as its Spanish name asserts, Spain's own war, and in recent years the country has begun to make a more public attempt to "reclaim" its modern history of fascism. How it is doing so, and the role played in the process by notions of historical memory, are among the subjects of this wide-ranging and challenging book.

*Franco's Crypt* reveals that despite state censorship, events of the time were vividly recorded. Treglown looks at what's actually there—monuments, paintings, public works, novels, movies, video games—and considers, in a captivating narrative, the totality of what it shows. The result is a much-needed reexamination of a history we only thought we knew.

## **Franco's Crypt: Spanish Culture and Memory Since 1936 Details**

Date : Published August 12th 2014 by Farrar, Straus and Giroux (first published August 13th 2013)

ISBN : 9780374534653

Author : Jeremy Treglown

Format : Paperback 336 pages

Genre : History, Nonfiction, Cultural, Spain, European History, Civil War, Spanish Civil War

 [Download Franco's Crypt: Spanish Culture and Memory Since 1 ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online Franco's Crypt: Spanish Culture and Memory Since ...pdf](#)

**Download and Read Free Online Franco's Crypt: Spanish Culture and Memory Since 1936 Jeremy Treglown**

---

## From Reader Review Franco's Crypt: Spanish Culture and Memory Since 1936 for online ebook

### Bruce Reiter says

I bought this book after reading a review in Foreign Affairs. The author is British and spends a lot of his time in Spain. I had hoped to get an idea of Spanish culture as it evolved after the Civil War and during the transition to democracy. I got way more than I bargained for and it will take some time for me to really understand the implications contained within the book. I went to Spain my college Junior-Senior summer. Franco was still in power, the universities were on strike and I travelled by Rápido train through most of Spain but the Basque country. Life, particularly in old age is bound up in history, memory and myth.

The book discusses the fine arts of Spain during the Franco and immediate transition periods. Many Spanish artists of various persuasions were in exile. Many artists had been supporters of Franco and the Nationalist Cause and continued to produce works. Some were censored. Some slipped by. The upshot is that the period can not be considered a cultural wasteland. The author provides several works of different forms for the reader's perusal.

Is it better to remember the past or move on? I don't know. History blends with memory and eventually becomes myth. Should we continue to look for the "desaparecidos" of the Spanish Civil War or let it go. I remember parts of my life and realize that my memory has embellished them over the years and the misinformation will become myth if anyone bothers to remember it.

---

### Tuck says

not quite as apologist as the goodreads/publisher summary sounds, a fairly even handed look at art, letters, "culture" in Spain after Franco took over. a rather simple view recognizes Franco and his fascist henchman and church dogs as ultimately cruel and chillingly backward in their idea to put Spain back to "the good old days" of 1%ers calling the shots and workers just need to shut the fuck up and work, not go to plays or read novels. but in reality much art and thought and even free thinking was accomplished from 1936-1976, and sure sure, there was a "pact" of sorts to have a general amnesia, a great forgetting, that did not, would not, bring up who was on whose side, who shot who in the head and buried them in a ditch (10,000s it turns out) but now, a decade into the 21st century people are starting to talk about what happened during and after the civil war, and who actually IS BURIED out there in that wheat field and along with that, how did folks fight back against this for 40 years (and not get thrown in prison, lots did get prison, for looong stretches, for things like speaking your own language, or direct action against govt and cops etc) how did writers, movie makers, artists, scholars, progressives, teachers, survive for over a generation under the doomy miserable Franco cloud. Treglown tries to list some of the people and actions taken to lift those storms, and reports a bit on the forensic archeology ongoing now trying to identify all the corpses left by the fascists, and the progressives too. the great forgetting is being forgotten, slowly. but I'd still hesitate to bring it up in a bar if I was visiting. much of the conversation is still for your tertulia only. but the book is a good new step in Spanish history writing and thought.

---

### Veronica says

The flyleaf blurb for this book makes it seem like modern social history -- "a compelling investigation of collective memory ... Jeremy Treglown talks to the descendants of men and women killed during the civil war and ensuing dictatorship and stands on a hillside with them as remains are excavated ...". In fact these scenes comprise only a tiny part of the book. The majority of it is a fairly academic overview of art, films, and literature during the civil war and Franco's dictatorship. I found it hard going, and don't even think of reading it if you don't have a good grounding in modern Spanish history. Not what it says on the tin.

Mini-rant: in the first couple of pages, the word "cemetery" is misspelt half a dozen times, as "cemetry". Careless copy-editing I thought. Then later on I came across "collabourative" and "cemetreies" and realised that there actually was no copy-editor -- the once respectable UK publishers Chatto & Windus use a barely competent robot to convert US spellings to English, and don't bother to pay a proof reader to check the unfortunate results. Not impressed.

---

### **Reza Amiri Praramadhan says**

It is true that history was written by the victor, and despite all the efforts to put the Republican Spain on a more favourable light, the Francoist's memories still linger well into the 21st century. It still reside in the ubiquitous (now mostly removed) equestrian statues of General Franco, in its architectural projects like the number of dams, and even in encyclopaedia. This would be the thing that captivate my interest the most. The book is filled with informations of how spanish arts and literatures flourish despite (or perhaps because) Franco's authoritarian grip.

---

### **David Bisset says**

It is a curious book which is concerned with the Spanish Civil War in memorials, literature, films and culture in general. It is not an apology for either side in the conflict. The literary critique is well written, but it refers to literature which is little known outside Spain. The section on art would have benefited with the addition of many more illustrations. Can the Civil War really be relegated to past history? I think not, but although I know Spain (and Catalonia) well I come from a country which provided Republican volunteers. I am glad, however, that I have read the book.

---

### **Diane says**

This book looks at the cultural influence of the Franco regime on Spain. The first half of the book looks at the regime's legacy in the physical environment in terms of cemeteries and memorials, but also the physical infrastructure (particularly for water) that the regime built. The second half of the book looks at fiction, both written during the Franco regime and afterwards, as well as film covering the Spanish Civil War and its aftermath.

The book is very readable, and although it contains a lot of information, it is easy for a layman to read. Many of the review of this book claimed that the author was overly sympathetic to Franco, but I did not get that impression. Rather, I thought he tried to present a fair representation of people in contemporary Spain who were somewhat sympathetic to the regime, but I didn't get the impression that he himself felt that way.

---

## Angel Serpentine says

I received this through Goodreads First Reads.

I will say that I quite enjoyed this book. It had very detailed histories regarding the literature and art pieces that arose in Spain despite Franco's rule. I will acknowledge that I have a basic foundation of knowledge regarding Spanish art and a degree of fluency in the language, so I understood Treglown's analyses quite well, but do acknowledge that someone without the interest in Spanish fine arts could easily have gotten lost, or more simply, bored. While not uninteresting, this book is not for everyone. It is definitely targeted toward a more specific audience of people who want to know **more**. As the blurb suggests, this is really a reexamination of how the arts have grown in Spain since Franco's rule. It's not really an introductory guide to Spanish art in general. (That being said, if you're interested in this book even without much art background, give it a try anyway! It's not particularly complex, just requires the interest to work through it.) So it discusses unique, lesser-known pieces in light of the historical and cultural backdrop of twentieth century Spain. It provides an interesting perspective on looking at the pieces, which I believe could have been developed further. In any case, this is a well-done look into the development of Spanish art and literature in a time we generally believe to have been filled with repression.

---

## Rose says

For me, the beginning part of the book with its coverage of the mass grave at Malaga (and the haunting photo with a skeleton looking like it was begging for mercy) was by far the best part of the book. The lit/film crit part lacked the intensity of the parts where the author visited sites. Other illustrations are good, but a map would have been nice.

---

## Margaret Ristagno says

Watch out for the film and book spoilers!

---

## Jennifer says

Received through first reads...

The entire time that I was reading this, I was trying to figure out how to describe/review it. It's a history book, but it's not. After the first couple chapters about mass graves and dam building, it feels a lot like reading an anthology. It's basically a catalogue of Spanish art, literature and film, with a good description of each selected piece, as well as some background on the author/artist. It has made me aware of some books I wouldn't have otherwise known of, and sparked my interest in the history of Spain in that time period.

---

## Josh Muhlenkamp says

Are you deeply intimate with Spanish culture? If not, don't bother with this book, because you'll be lost. This is not a book for beginners.

## **Kenneth says**

Did you think the lights went out in Spain for 40 years? Apparently not according to Treglown and the subjects and personalities he presents in this intellectual survey of life in Spain during the Franco years.

---

## **Ed Terrell says**

Good introduction and review of the political and artistic life in Spain since the civil war. While not as gut wrenching as Hemingway's "For whom the Bell tolls", it never-the-less provides a keen insight into Spain's Civil War and the brutal right-wing dictatorship, under Franco.

---

## **Geoff says**

Overall it's a worthwhile read, especially the chapters on the politics and culture of water (specifically dams), the movement to recover the graves of the civil war and dictatorship, and museums and monusments. And the book does us all a great service by translating and reproducing the priceless (in the mind-boggling sense) interview with the director of Spain's Royal Academy of History about the much-criticized Diccionario biográfico español. There are other gems too.

Ironically, though, Treglown's astute linking of the Royal Academy's failures to its lack of institutionalized methods and review processes draws attention to a basic weakness of the book. Far too many mistakes made it into print in spite of all the luminaries the author names in his acknowledgments. At his best moments Treglown is highly insightful, and he has clearly learned a lot during the annual periods we're told he spends each year in Spain. But some of his observations and interpretations are glaringly superficial if not downright wrong. Critical comments by a handful of knowledgeable Hispanists before publication would have helped the text a lot. I guess when you're the former editor of the TLS you can get away with skipping that step and still attract prominent publishers and reviewers.

---

## **Michael Flick says**

Are you deeply intimate with Spanish culture? If not, this a place to start, to get an overview of the arts, especially novels and film, but also broadly culture, during and after the Spanish Civil War and the consequent long fascist dictatorship. This is a book about memory, good and bad, and forgetting, the vagaries of history, the uncontrollability of meaning, the quandary of the malleable past. The detailed discussions of novels is particularly strong--I've added 10 to my "must read" list and probably should have added more. But I can always go back and add even more. This isn't a history book per se, but I came out of it with an appreciation of the complexities of Spain in the 20th and 21st centuries. And an even deeper distaste for fascism, which is a threat even now. And not just in Spain.

It's easy to find fault with this book as a general culture history or more. That's not the point: this is a start.

---