



**Luis Martín-Estudillo, *The Rise of Euroskepticism: Europe and its Critics in Spanish Culture*, Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2018. 243 pp.**

A decade on from the financial crisis, in the midst of continued struggles to respond to the needs of refugees, and with Brexit looming on the horizon like the sea monsters of Medieval cartography, Europe can be said to have been rudely awakened from a dream of its own self-image. Responding precisely to this unique culturo-political context and the resurgence of Euroskeptic discourse that it has provoked, Luis

Martín-Estudillo's work makes an important proposition: to reinsert artists and writers into the narrative on Europe and its discontents. Addressing a stark lacuna in existing analyses of the topic, *The Rise of Euroskepticism* rightly positions cultural practitioners as integral agents in the construction of, and responses to, Euroskeptic thought. It is via careful analysis of cultural responses to the EU and the idea of Europe, Martín-Estudillo states, that we can gain a unique perspective on the 'affects the Union's policies and symbols produce' (p.5) - a perspective that is evermore urgent within the current climate. For this is, above all, a story of affects - of passions and conflicts, dreams and nightmares, affiliations and exclusions - and if we are to understand it we must turn to those forms and figures that inscribe the cultural poetics of a Europe in crisis.

In situating his analysis in the Spanish context, Martín-Estudillo draws our attention from the outset to the spatial politics that define the project of European integration, signaling the problematics inherent to the construction of centers and peripheries and interrogating what it means to voice dissent from these so-called peripheries. Three key themes are identified as central to his analysis of Spanish Euroskepticism: modernity, gender, and location. However, the text is structured chronologically rather than thematically, allowing the interplay between these concepts to reveal itself. This chronological structure, likewise, offers us an invaluable insight into the evolution of Spain's relationship to Europe, charting intellectual and artistic responses to a series of specific national, continental and global historical circumstances.

The introduction offers an illuminating survey of the development of Euroskeptic discourse, at the same time as rooting us within the specificity of the Spanish context. The history of Euroskepticism is shown, importantly, to precede the formation of the EU and, thus, extend well beyond a simple resistance to Brussels. The late-19<sup>th</sup> Century, with the loss of the last American colonies and the Philippines in 1898, is signaled as the initiation of the most concerted idealization of Europe in Spain; Martín-Estudillo points us to a lesser examined

thread of dissent amongst intellectuals of this same period, proposing that we consider Miguel de Unamuno as ‘the founder of Spain’s own modern tradition of Euroskepticism’ (p.10). The shadows of Unamuno and his young challenger José Ortega y Gasset loom large over the chapters of this study, with their varied proclamations on Spain’s “Europeanness” shown to have undeniably influenced proceeding generations of intellectuals preoccupied with the problem of Europe. However, the standard narrative regarding Unamuno and Ortega’s diametrically opposing visions of Spain’s relationship to the continent has, according to Martín-Estudillo, been largely over-simplified; *The Rise of Euroskepticism* offers a merited and nuanced re-reading of the contributions these two Spanish thinkers made to the conceptualization of European integration.

The slipperiness of the term *Euroskepticism* is highlighted from the beginning of this work, revealed by Martín-Estudillo to be a designation that has historically masked a plurality of perspectives and praxis under the guise of a cohesive project. Comprised of engaging, historically-grounded close readings of media ranging from philosophy and travel narratives to mockumentaries and video art, *The Rise of Euroskepticism* exposes an urge amongst Spanish artists to question the ruthless economic orientation of unified Europe and to problematize the ‘self-perception of the EU as the moral compass of the world’ (p.2). A crucial distinction is thus drawn throughout between the desire to destroy the EU and the desire for reform.

Through an analysis of the works of exiled writers María Zambrano, José Ferrater Mora, and Max Aub, the book’s first chapter reveals the extent to which the events that rocked the continent between 1914 and 1945 called into question the viability (or desirability) of the European project. Unamuno is here held up as a reference point for questioning the limits of the European ideal, offering this later generation of writers a vocabulary with which to problematize the relationship between European values and the emergence of totalitarianism. What is shown to be common across these works is a critique of modernity and rationalism, a sus-

picion towards ideological (mis)uses of the concept of Europe, and a privileging of marginal perspectives that advocate plurality and fluidity. These writers turned their gaze towards Europe with the clarity of distance achieved in exile and sought to understand what led to the collapse of the liberal project. Whether in the resistance to European rationalism found in Zambrano’s hybrid texts or Aub’s dramas which critique ‘a democracy that has forsaken its liberal ideals and looks away when civil rights are sacrificed in the name of “security”’ (p.55), the reinsertion of *feelings* into philosophical and political discourse is shown within *The Rise of Euroskepticism* to be crucial to understanding the European crisis, now as much as it was during the mid-twentieth century.

In order to examine the manifestations of Euroskepticism under Franco’s dictatorship, the second chapter turns to a diverse corpus ranging from Fascist thinkers to popular novelists. The writings of Falangist Ernesto Giménez Caballero (Gecé) bring to light a unique vision of Spain’s potential contribution to European unification. Gecé proposes two routes towards a united Europe: the first, totalitarian Caesarism, which had been advanced by fascism but had up to this point failed due to its sidelining of Spain (whose superior morality should be its guiding force), and secondly, federalism, which was the prevailing approach being proffered at the time, but in Gecé’s estimations was equally limited due to its failure to recognize the integral importance of the Iberian Peninsula. Within the bellicose rhetoric, Martín-Estudillo notes in Gecé’s work a certain nostalgia and longing – a lamentation for the

faded glory of Spain and fascism more broadly. Disillusionment is likewise shown to be characteristic of the work of Ortega during the post-war period, though is of a markedly different tenor to Gecé’s. Ortega saw potential in Europe’s crisis of identity post-war, believing that a supranational European state could still be possible. In the wake of war, nations were turning inward, but Ortega proposed that the solution to regeneration lay, rather, in the abandonment of this ‘lingering faith in the old idea of the nation’ (p.68); European na-

tions' problems were continental in scope and must be tackled as such. In the latter years of the Francoist period writers continued to interrogate Spain's position in relation to Europe, with the relationship coming to be framed in specifically gendered terms. Martín-Estudillo shows how these gendered renderings of Europe are deeply intertwined with the theme of travel, bringing our attention to a number of works from this period that can be classified as rewritings of the "Grand Tour" narrative. Amongst the writings of Antonio Colinas and others the trope of the journey towards or throughout Europe is conceived in plainly erotic terms, with European locations imbued with an explicitly sensual/sexual appeal that is contrasted with a barren Spanish reality. On the one hand, tourism brought desired contact with permissive ideas and attitudes that challenged the oppressive dogma of the Franco regime, on the other, it generated a particular breed of anxiety provoked by the troubling presence of female tourists within Spain itself. The late years of the Franco period saw the production of various literary and filmic representations of Spanish men's relationships with women of other European countries. In these cases, we see Spain's primal virility emphasized, with the sexual act reframed as a resistance to civilizing European rationalism. In his examination of this unique set of gendered tensions, Martín-Estudillo highlights a stark ambivalence towards Europe in the 1960s and 70s. Conceived of as a 'female other' to Spain, Europe becomes both a desired potential conquest and a feared emasculator.

This broad ambivalence continued into the postauthoritarian era and coloured Spain's formal inclusion in the European Community in 1985. Chapter Three takes up this topic, exposing the manner in which the drive to confirm Spain's position as a "normal European nation" in fact overlooked many voices within the cultural sphere that contested the European ideal. The return to democracy saw the state become increasingly involved in the cultural arena, which, as a result, stopped being a space of contestation and rather became one that sought consensus and coherence. Acceptance of Europeanization was during this time presented as going

hand-in-hand with the foundation of the new democratic Spain – any questioning of which was a threat to this process. Martín-Estudillo highlights voices of dissent who 'problematized what appeared to be a neutral matter within the public debate' (p.101). Within these works Europeanization was seen to signal a loss of identity, proposing that the individuality of the nations of Europe were diluted in the process of unification. For figures such as Julián Marías, for example, European integration had brought with it financial gains but cultural losses: 'the sacrifice of autochthonous forms of life' (p.102). Albert Boadella's 1989 mockumentary series *Ya semos europeos* (sic.) is astutely analysed for the way it satirized the feared loss of Spanish essence posed by Europeanization. This satirical representation of both Spain and its Northern neighbours aimed to problematize the process of Europeanization and the limits of what European identity signified. The irreverent approach showcased in *Ya semos europeos* served to demystify the European ideal, revealing the darker side of an EC that did not always live up to its assumed position as the pinnacle of civilization and progressive thought. Works of this period attempted to expose the ways in which Spain's accession to the EC had not been as democratic as it appeared, characterizing the post-Franco age as one in which 'important political decisions were made without in-depth, open discussion' (p.108).

Chapters Four and Five examine a newer generation of writers and artists who, through a variety of experimental forms, seek to critique productively the failings of the European project. These practitioners are responding concurrently to the context of austerity following the 2008 financial crisis and the mass-migration prompted in large part by the Arab Spring of 2011 and the Syrian war of 2015. This set of socio-political circumstances has thrown into sharp relief a contradiction between the humanitarian values expounded by the EU and the policies enacted in response to crisis. This internal contradiction is clearly evidenced in the issue of borders within the region; alongside upholding freedom of movement within the Union, in recent decades there have been greater efforts to hinder entrance

from those outside. Martín-Estudillo proposes that cultural responses to migration within Spain offer key insight into these contradictions. The work of video artist Valeriano López and poet Mercedes Cebrián are held up as exemplary of practitioners who expose the hypocrisy inherent to the freedom of movement discourse, revealing it to be a source of individualism and exclusions more than exchange and empathy. Alongside López and Cebrián, figures such as photographer Carlos Spottorno and artist Santiago Sierra confront audiences with the uncomfortable disparities that exist within Europe, exposing, often via ludic and satirical means, the dehumanizing impact of the EU's market mentality. For these artists, the memory of suffering and the ideals of humanitarianism that unified post-war Europe have been betrayed in recent years in the EU's austerity measures and response to the plight of refugees. What is called for in these works is a Europe based on cultural, rather than simply economic, unification.

One of this book's key contributions is the unique attention placed on gender throughout; this is firstly achieved through spotlighting key women intellectuals and artists –such as María Zambrano and Mercedes Cebrián– whose voices are often absent in considerations of the topic. Secondly, Martín-Estudillo crucially highlights the gendered discourses at the heart of the European project; anxieties regarding Europeanization are framed in terms of a perceived fear of emasculation, revealing at the same time the extent to which national identity –in this case specifically within the Spanish context– is deeply entrenched in ideals of mas-

culinity. The analyses presented are likewise joined by a distinct set of spatial themes, interrogating as they do the workings of and interconnections between political and cartographic imaginaries within the project of European unification. Displacement in its various forms is revealed to be of central importance, producing powerful and potentially productive tensions. The writers and artists that Martín-Estudillo brings into dialogue more often than not reveal a disillusionment with a Europe that has abandoned (or simply never realized) the humane values upon which it founded its collective identity. *The Rise of Euroskepticism*, likewise, maintains a sensitive attention to the humane dimension of the conceptual issues being interrogated, revealing the story of violence, exclusion, desires and hopes that is often trampled by the singularly bureaucratic and economic character of Europe's union.

In its ambitious scope and unique analytical framework, *The Rise of Euroskepticism* is a timely and thought-provoking contribution to the field. Through this study Martín-Estudillo calls upon us to question our conceptions (and preconceptions) of Euroskepticism, reframing it as not simply the domain of reactionary conservative nationalism, but rather as a manifold, and potentially deeply productive, dialogic praxis. With Europe facing a unique and ever-growing set of challenges, Martín-Estudillo's call for 'creative Euroskepticism' has never been more vital.

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