

Accuracy and Authenticity in Dermot Bolger's Depiction of the Spanish Civil War

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In recent years, the Spanish Civil War has become a popular backdrop in Irish historical novels and short stories, with authors like Colm Tóibín, Neil Jordan, Christopher Bland, Maurice Leitch, and Dermot Bolger drawing inspiration from this tumultuous period to shape their plots and characters. These narratives aim for a realistic portrayal and a commitment to historical accuracy. Particularly, Bolger's *The Family on Paradise Pier* (2005) is framed as a novel rooted in the real-life experiences of an Anglo-Irish family during the first half of the 20th century. One of its members becomes entangled in the Spanish Civil War, narrating the compelling story of Brian Goold-Verschoyle, an Irish communist who volunteered at 26 as a radio specialist with the Republican side. He navigated political intrigues in Catalonia and eventually found himself in the Soviet Union, where he met his demise in a gulag prison camp. This novel raises profound questions about the ethical interplay between fact, fiction, and truth. Drawing upon Kate McLoughlin's war representation perspective, as outlined in *Authoring War* (2011), and Laura Saxton's understanding of "accuracy" and "authenticity" in historical fiction (2020), this paper explores how the Spanish Civil War is depicted in Bolger's work. The analysis assesses the extent to which the novel provides an accurate and truthful portrayal of the Spanish conflict, examining narrative and rhetorical devices, thematic content, and the author's ideological motivations.

Works cited

- Bolger, Dermot (2005) *Family on Paradise Pier*. London. Fourth Estate/Harper Collins.
- McLoughlin, Kate (2021) *Authoring War: The Literary Representation of War from the Iliad to Iraq*. Cambridge: CUP.
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