

Exploring Marginalized Voices in Victoria Hislop's Depiction of the Spanish Civil War

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In recent years, the Spanish Civil War has served as a compelling backdrop for a plethora of British and Irish historical novels. Esteemed authors, including Patrick McGrath, Colm Tóibín, Lindsay Ashford, Jack Ludlow, and C. J. Sansom, have drawn inspiration from Spain's tumultuous 1930s civil war to craft narratives that aspire to realistic portrayals, delving into the political struggles and social conflicts of the era with a commitment to authenticity. Victoria Hislop's novel, *The Return* (2008), stands out within this literary landscape by offering a meticulous account of the tragedies endured by the Ramirez family, a lower-class Granada family, during Spain's devastating civil war. Hislop, as revealed on her website, conducted extensive research, reading over 60 books in both English and Spanish that delve into the Spanish conflict. Unlike narratives focusing on grand battles and warfare, *The Return* provides readers with an intricate depiction of crucial social aspects woven into the fabric of the conflict. In fact, the Ramirez family's internal division by political affiliations forces each member to align themselves with a particular side, presenting readers with a nuanced exploration of the socio-political landscape. Therefore, the novel prompts thought-provoking questions about the intricate interplay between fact, fiction, and truth. Employing Kate McLoughlin's war representation perspective, as outlined in *Authoring War* (2011), this paper aims to examine Hislop's portrayal of the Spanish Civil War, scrutinizing its faithfulness to the social context of the time. The analysis encompasses narrative and rhetorical devices, thematic content, and the author's underlying ideological motivations.