
*La cuestión odiosa* is a most engaging translation by Marion Coderch Barrios of Archer’s book *The Problem of Woman in Late-Medieval Hispanic Literature* (Woodbridge: Tamesis, 2005). This translation, apart from having a better title than the original, taken from Rodríguez del Padrón’s *Triunfo de donas*, also presents a new and very short preface and some other additions to the original work. For example, what had been the last chapter has been divided into two and expanded. Translations always have a life of their own. Archer suggests that this Spanish version could be used as a sort of theoretical companion to his collection of texts, *Misoginia y defensa de las mujeres: antología de textos medievales* (Madrid: Cátedra, 2001).

In any case, original and translation alike are a most welcome contribution to the field of medieval Iberian studies. Archer wants to understand what he calls, in his original title, “the problem of woman/mujer” (in singular), which is to say, the difficulty of defining women, and why and how so many authors in the Late Middle Ages explored what it meant to be a woman. He goes against the idea that there was an Iberian debate on women in that period, with misogynous texts and defenses against them, like the one generated in France by the *Roman de la rose*. In any case, as he puts it, works of misogyny and defense “acaban siendo una reflexión sobre la naturaleza de los hombres” (25). He argues that the discourse on women was diverse and related to the need that those anxious male authors had to understand the notion of women, and more in particular to answer the question “¿Qué es la mujer?” (15) while dealing with the contradictions they encountered in the writings of authorities, such as Aristotle. (Surprisingly and unfortunately, he doesn’t include female authors in his study). He also links the texts to the specific agendas and goals of particular authors. For example, he reads Rodríguez del Padrón’s *Triunfo de donas*, Diego de Valera’s *Tratado de defensa de las virtuosas mujeres*, and Alvaro de Luna’s *Libro de las virtuosas mujeres*, as probably written with the intention of acquiring status in the royal court. The first two were dedicated to Queen María, Juan II’s wife, while the third was finished in 1446, only a year after the queen’s death. In this sense, and in general, it would have been interesting to have more historical data, a more complex and detailed exploration of the connection between authors, readers and patrons, and concrete suggestions as to how their interaction affected literary creation.

Chapter One explores didactic literature reading Eiximenis’ *Llibre de les dones* alongside Martín de Córdoba, *Jardín de nobles doncellas*, while acknowledging the latter’s debt to Egidio Romano and the translation and glosses of Romano by García de Castrojeriz. He compares those works to Luis Vives’ *The Institutione Feminae Christianae* (1522-23) as seen by Juan Justianino (Vives’ translator), who established a genealogy of texts running from Eixi-
menis to Vives (from Catalan to Latin, and then translated to Spanish). The second half of this chapter analyzes a series of texts aimed at preparing women for marriage and Vicent Ferrer’s sermons. The second chapter examines the most popular and canonical of all the pieces that he treats, Martínez de Toledo’s *Arcipreste de Talavera*, while the third explores the connection between humor and misogyny in two Catalan works, Metge’s *Lo somni* and Roig’s *Spill*. Chapter Four explores books and authors traditionally situated among those who defended women (Rodríguez del Padrón, Alvaro de Luna, Joan Roís de Corella and Diego de San Pedro), while the next chapter investigates Pere de Torroelles’ *Maldezir de mujeres*—establishing a literary genealogy that connects the Occitan-Catalan tradition of the *maldits* with the Castilian *cancioneros* (Torroelles wrote in Catalan and in Castilian). This text was so popular and so controversial that Torroelles felt obliged to compose a sort of poetic apology. The final chapter examines the important impact and the legacy that Torroelles’ text had on many works, but particularly in the *cancioneros*, the *Triste deleitación*, Juan de Flores’ *Grisel y Mirabella*, and Luis de Lucena’s *Repetición de amores*.

All together, over the course of these six chapters (plus an introduction and conclusion), Archer presents a broad and credible overview of Hispanic verse and prose literature relating to the subject of women, from the fourteenth to the sixteenth century, including genres as diverse as didactic literature, conduct books, catalogues of illustrious women, sentimental novels, dialogues, satire and humor. He goes beyond Castilian literature, and this is, in my opinion, one of the achievements of the book. Following a most welcome trend, instead of compartmentalizing literature by language, he analyzes works that were written in different languages together, because their writers were in contact, those works were in dialogue—there is often evidence of intertextuality—and because sometimes the same author wrote in more than one language. Archer thus focuses on Iberian texts written in three languages: Castilian, Catalan and Latin, both canonical and non-canonical, and both original works and translations. Provençal and Galician-Portuguese literary traditions are also brought into the analysis.

In conclusion, Archer’s book reviews much of the major literature on women from Late Medieval Iberia showing great erudition and attention to detail. At the very least, it will help to familiarize English and Spanish readerships (the latter by virtue of this translation) with medieval Catalan literature. It will be of great appeal to those scholars interested in Peninsular Literature in general, and in particular to those who focus on gender and discourse. As scholarly studies inevitably do, *La cuestión odiosa* addresses many questions and leaves others unresolved, opening exciting and suggestive possibilities for further inquiry.

NÚRIA SILLERAS-FERNÁNDEZ

University of Colorado at Boulder

*Literature as a Response to Cultural and Political Repression in Franco’s Catalonia* offers a new critical lens to the study of cultural production in 1950s and 1960s Catalonia. The volume sets out to explore the underlying motives that, in the course of these two decades, led some Catalan authors to revisit insistently and rewrite their narrative fiction. Jordi Cornellà-Detrell minutely examines the linguistic, stylistic, structural and generic changes made to the various versions of four post-Civil War novels: Salvador Espriu’s *Laia*, Xavier Benguerel’s *El testament*, Sebastià Juan Arbó’s *Tino Costa*, and Joan Sales’ *Incerta glòria*. The analysis is located in the midst of the debate over the role of language and literature in the assertion and safeguarding of national identity during a time when the integrity of the Catalan nation was being severely eroded by the policies of the Franco regime. Drawing on postmodernist notions of language and the Bakthinian concepts of heteroglossia, dialogism and the chronotope, Cornellà-Detrell shows the nuanced critical attitudes adopted by these authors towards literary creation. Rather than dwelling, as has habitually been the case, on the socio-political conditions that hindered cultural production, the rewriting process of these texts is considered in relation to and as a response to cultural and political forces, heightening the idea that historical circumstances partake in the (re)shaping of literary production.

The introductory chapter outlines with impeccable clarity the purpose of the book whilst chapter two maps out the cultural and political landscape of the 1950s and 1960s and discusses cultural production and readership in relation to existing controversies over linguistic purism or spoken language and debates over the socio-political function of literature. Here, Espriu, Benguerel, Arbó and Sales are situated in respect to extant linguistic and cultural ideologies and presented as four writers profoundly concerned with their historical time and interested in developing forms of expression that captured their own socio-political reality. Each of the following chapters focuses on one of the authors.

Chapter three explores the rewriting of the four versions of Espriu’s *Laia*. Its focus of attention is on the gradual cleansing of the female (national) body, achieved by means of suppressing explicit references to sexual desire, excision of offences against Catholicism and the removal of pagan elements. The construction of female corporeality in the novel’s many variants is seen to emphasize notions of body fluidity and boundlessness. Time and space in these texts are shown to undergo a similar transformation as geo-cultural specificity is progressively eroded in favor of a transhistorical, or mythical, space. This progression towards historical transcendence hinges on notions of national identity and is thus indicative of a need to assert a sense of continuity whilst still evoking the uncertainties of the time.

Chapter four challenges the labeling of Benguerel’s *El testament* a Catholic
novel, arguing instead that its reconfiguration underplays historical context allowing for an allegorical reading of the post-war period. The choices made over language are shown to assert both gendered and social power relations, silence or lack of communication in the domestic space are evocative of the oppressive conditions during Franco’s dictatorship. Language, studied through a postmodernist lens, is rendered a rhetorical device, its artificial quality demanding an intellectual effort from the reader, requiring him/her to interpret both dialogue and the lack thereof.

The rewriting of Arbó’s popular *Tino Costa* entailed the redrafting of temporal and spatial parameters, it is argued in chapter five. In this case, the second version of the novel is shown to gain in geo-cultural specificity in order to facilitate readership engagement. However, its reliance on standard language is seen to be at odds with the novel’s increased sense of the local. Despite Arbó’s interventions the new version appears to have failed to subdue its initial ideological stance, which proved to be out of touch with the social reality of the late 1960s.

Chapter six is, by and large, the most extensive and it unveils both compositional and linguistic developments in Sales’ *Incerta glòria*. Linguistic and generic changes are discussed at length and the novel’s variants are shown to present a more complex, and certainly fractured, socio-political environment. It is noted that the introduction of a feminine perspective in addition to the absence of violence are indicative of Sales’ concern with downplaying the more masculine aspects characteristic of the war genre. *Incerta glòria* is seen as a text that actively engages in a critique of Francoism but also deconstructs the myth of a unanimously united Republican front. Cornellà-Detrell argues that textual mediation of film and popular culture adds to the blurring of the boundaries between fact and fiction, problematizing traditional notions of historical accounts and adding several layers of meanings to the narrative. He thus uncovers the sophisticated and flexible stylistic techniques of an author who was deeply interested in both expression and readability. The author’s use of loan words, clichés, oral speech and multilingualism in *Incerta glòria* enriches the narrative creating a clash of discourses wherein lies Sales’ denunciation of the cultural policies of the regime. The rewriting process of the novel allows for a comprehensive study of the mechanisms at play in the cultural production in post-war Catalonia.

Undoubtedly, *Literature as a Response to Cultural and Political Repression in Franco’s Catalonia* is an extremely well-researched study and innovative insight into the cultural landscape of post-war Catalonia, which will hopefully encourage further interdisciplinary study into the period.

EVA BRU
University of Birmingham

The city of Tortosa, halfway between Barcelona and Valencia, is only slowly recovering from the ravages of the civil war, from the loss of tourists due to new bridges over the Ebro which let cars and trains bypass it, and from the malevolent reassignment of sixty of her parishes to adjacent, mostly Spanish-speaking, dioceses to the west or south, extinguishing the old sense of cultural and linguistic unity maintained by priests trained in the seminary of Tortosa.

Given this background, reading in Despuig’s *Col·loquis* from 1557 about the regional center’s good old days gives pleasure and pride to modern inhabitants, now even more so thanks to this new edition, to be recommended to everyone.

The author presents his *laus urbis* in the form of elegant conversations between three men walking about town: the citizens Livio and Fabio, plus Pedro from Valencia. Despuig—who does not write in Latin or Castilian “per no mostrar tenir en poc la llengua catalana” (29)—groups their observations, comments and questions of a historical, political, social or ecclesiastic nature, in six “col·loquis,” called ‘macrodialogues’ by the editors (“Introduction,” 5-26).

The first one flows from the unexpected encounter with their friend Pedro. Coming from the south, he states that he feels like he has arrived in the land of his forefathers, the “antiga pàtria” from where Valencians have received their language (40). Fabio and Livio complement this statement with comments on the resettlement of all regions reconquered from the infidels by speakers of Catalan. Livio condemns the “escàndol” that the upper social classes are abandoning the ancestral tongue. Little by little, he fears, the native language will disappear, and Catalonia will look like it has been conquered by Castilians (42).

As the three men approach the cathedral, their conversation turns to ecclesiastical matters. At first Livio talks about the ongoing armed conflict between Pope Paul IV, allied with the king of France (maybe even with “lo gran Turc”), against Philip II, viceroy of Naples (46-51). Changing to a less divisive topic, Fabio gives information about the number of clergymen in Tortosa and their income, criticizing the bishop for not using his to help the “infinitat de pobres mendicants que avui ha en Tortosa” or to contribute to the completion of the cathedral (54-57).

After lunch the three continue their walk about town, beginning the second *col·loqui* quoting proverbial sayings which show how the “nació catalana” is “gentil i sàvia” (65). Pedro says that Livio has treated them to a “taula de Barcelona,” but Fabio points out that this old expression has taken on negative connotations “i par que es diga en perjudici de tota Catalunya” (64). Livio recalls the legend of the Empress of Germany’s arrival in Barcelona along roads bordered with “taules” full of food and drink. He thinks that the meaning of
“taula de Barcelona” has changed because “d’aqueix refran abús han fet los maliciosos.” That he refers to “estos castellans que s’ho beuen tot” can be deduced from the many examples he offers to show that those Spaniards never acknowledge that they own many of their military glories to help from Catalonia. “In their arrogance, per fer gloriosa la sua pròpia nació, no dubten d’escriure mentides” (73). The colloqui continues with references to memorable deeds that honor Catalans and their nation.

In the third colloqui (87-103) the conversation turns to the city of Tortosa and the privileges granted her by Berenger IV after the reconquest. Discussions about the origin and name of the city fill the fourth colloqui (105-129). The fourth deals with Catalonia’s war against John II, enemy of Prince Charles of Viana, preferred by Catalans but assassinated (131-145).

Finally the three arrive at the Ebro, at the place where it can be crossed on wooden planks put across the tops of ten barges tied together side by side. The men get into a boat and colloqui six begins (153) recalling first the legend of “Otger cataló from Gotolània” (from where ‘Catalónia’) which Livio had retold over lunch). But Pedro wants to know more about fishing in the Ebro and the two ‘locals’ answer with a “illetania llarga” of names of valued fish, adding details about the gear used to catch them. Information follows about hunting, especially birds, then about horticulture, agriculture, forestry, useful wild plants, and minerals. Pedro has to concede that Tortosa is blessed with just as many “excel·lències” as is Valencia.

At this place (171) there should be, I think, a footnote asking if Despuig was inspired here by the description of “les especials belleses de la ciutat de Valencia” found in the letter which precedes —but only in the edition of 1499!— Francesc Eiximenis’ Regiment de la cosa pública).

But most of the editors’ footnotes are just right. They quote variant readings of all manuscripts, explain rare words, and provide information about quotations in the text, or historical or historical events, persons and places alluded to by Despuig.

In this reviewer’s opinion, the Col·loquis should be required reading in all schools of Tortosa and the Terres de l’Ebre (and be recommended to all the others in the Països Catalans). The regularized spelling makes the text easily accessible. A few additional footnotes could animate students from Tortosa to do some ‘fieldwork,’ comparing what is described in the text from 1557 with what they can see for themselves. For example, they could search for buildings or tombs which show, next to the owner’s family crest, “una marca entrel·lada en pedra,” explained in page 44, footnote 37, as “emblema o segell comercial,” without an example. What can they find out about Santa Càndia, former patron saint of Tortosa who, in Despuig’s time, attracted pilgrims from all over Spain asking for a ribbon of the length of Càndia’s statue (53, fn.117)? My question here is: When did pilgrims start coming, even from Germany, asking for a ribbon with the exact length of the sash or belt the Virgin Mary had worn during her pregnancy, and then, one night in March 1178, appearing among
angels in Tortosa’s cathedral, had placed, as a present, on the main altar, the still much revered Cinta, mentioned in page 58?

Such questions —and many more the attentive reader of the Colloquis will be inspired to ask— show the enduring interest of Despuig’s book, now admirably edited by the trustworthy team of Enric Querol and Josep Solervicens, and nicely printed and presented by the Abadia de Montserrat.

CURT WITTLIN
emeritus, University of Saskatchewan


A quest volum, que representa una remarcable aportació als estudis de la “literatura del jo”, és el resultat del VI Simposi Internacional de Literatura Autobiogràfica celebrat el novembre de 2010 i que cal entendre en la continuïtat dels congressos organitzats des del 1999 pel Grup de Recerca de Literatura Contemporània de la Universitat d’Alacant. En aquest sentit, s’ha de subratllar el magnífic treball que aquest equip està duent a terme per oferir a aquest camp d’investigació un espai rellevant dins la literatura catalana.

Un dels motors d’aquest treball, que reuneix un bon grapat d’especialistes en la matèria, és la recerca d’un cànnon literari en el gènere memorialístic català, d’aquí que la literatura catalana estigui amplament representada. Ara bé, els diferents articles ens apropen a múltiples territoris lingüístics, fent d’aquesta extensió geogràfica i cultural un dels seus atractius. El mateix podem dir de l’abast cronològic: si bé predominen els estudis d’obres i autors contemporanis, el període comprès és molt més ample i remunta als inicis de l’Edat Moderna. També la transversalitat professional dels autors estudiats (escriptors, lingüistes, músics, periodistes, pintors...) és remarcable, i el vincle entre vida i ofici s’imposa amb fermeza. Sigui com sigui, la diversitat territorial, temporal i professional que caracteritza el volum, ònum de fer-li perdre en precisió i coherència, el dota d’un valor afegit.

El llibre es divideix en dues parts, una dedicada a les memòries i autobiografies i l’altra, lleugerament més curta, a les autoficcions. Un estudi de Vicent Alonso sobre Michel de Montaigne, un dels principals representants de la literatura del jo, obre el primer bloc, seguit d’un acurat article d’Enric Balaguer que reflexiona entorn de l’escriptor català de memòries a la recerca d’una síntesi de les seves característiques. La perspectiva de l’editor també és present en el volum: Josep Massot i Muntaner recorre la producció memorialística de Montserrat des del segle XV fins a l’actualitat.

Més enllà del fet que la resta d’articles s’organitzin seguint un ordre crono-
lògic, de les obres i autors tractats es distingeixen alguns trets generals: d’una banda, s’ha de ressaltar la influència exercida pel context polític i social en els diferents testimonis. També és interessant subratllar que l’element autobiogràfic es troba sovint en l’obra no memorialística dels autors, sigui aquesta novel·lística, poètica, periodística o altra, cosa que dificulta la tasca de l’especialista. Per últim, també és de destacar, en la literatura catalana, l’explosió d’obres de caràcter autobiogràfic provocada per la guerra, la postguerra i l’exili.

Pel que fa als treballs sobre obres i autors de fora de l’àmbit català, Rocío Peña Catalán examina l’autobiografia musical d’Igor Stravinsky; Maria Victoria Navas Sánchez-Élez ens parla de l’escriptora portuguesa Virginia Victorino; Eduard Cairo analitza l’obra de l’alemany Walter Benjamin; i Pilar Arnau i Segarra la de l’escriptora porto-riquenya d’origen mallorquí Esperanza Mayol.

Els altres articles se centren en obres i autors catalans: Llorenç Soldevila estudia l’empremta autobiogràfica en l’obra de Jacint Verdaguer i Llorenç Murgades l’autobiografisme—induit—de Pompeu Fabra. Els especialistes s’atansen preferentment a la literatura memorialística i autobiogràfica dels anys de guerra i postguerra des de la perspectiva de la voluntat testimonial, del compromís polític o de la justificació ideològica dels autors: Roser Calvo Mayor compara quatre experiències femenines (Teresa Pàmies, Otilia Castellví, Montserrat Julió i Núria Pi i Sunyer); Aurora Bertrana és objecte d’estudi en dos articles, el de Catalina Bonnin i el d’Isabel Marcillas Piquer. Entretant, els articles de Xavier Ferré i Trill (sobre el poeta catòlic Antoni Correig Massó) i de Faust Ripoll Domènech (sobre diverses personalitats polítiques), se centren en el procés d’exoneració present en determinades memòries. D’altra banda, Francesc Montero i Aulet busca l’empremta autobiogràfica en el discurs periodístic de Manuel Brunet, i Anna Esteve en l’obra de Josep Maria Espinàs. L’exili interior també ha estat generador d’autobiografies i memòries: de la veu autobiogràfica en Maria Aurelia Capmany se n’ocupa Maria Angels Francès Díez; Ramon Salvo escriu sobre el testimoniatge d’Antoni Tàpies, escrit en el context de la Caputxinada; i Joaquim Espinòs detalla la influència que exercí el cinema en Terenci Moix. Tanca aquesta primera part Antoni Maestre, amb les memòries californianes de Lluís Racionero.

La segona part del volum aborda el tema de l’autoficció com a forma d’autobiografia, o de l’autobiografia com a forma de ficció. L’article preliminar de Manuel Alberca ens introduceix en l’ús de l’element autobiogràfic com a material novel·lístic, distingint-ne tres tipus: l’autobioficció (Vargas Llosa); l’autoficció imaginària (César Aira) i l’autoficció biogràfica (Giralt Torrente). De tot plegat semblaria desprendre’s la proposta de considerar l’autoficció com a forma renovada de l’autobiografia.

Els textos que hi segueixen es consagren a literatures d’àmbits territorials diversos. José Angel López, fa dialogar en dos articles ficció i autobiografia, primer a través de l’escriptor gallec Celso Emilio Ferreiro i després del poeta xilè Raúl Zurita. Noemí Acedo Alonso es decanta per l’estudi d’una obra d’Assia Djebar, escriptora algériana d’expressió francesa.
La resta d’articles s’ocupen d’autors catalans. M. Jesús Francés Mira se centra en l’ús que Josep Lozano fa de la forma autobiogràfica com a tècnica narrativa per donar verssemblança al contingut; Antònia Cabanilles estudia amb gran cura el llibre d’Ignasi Mora Viure amb la Sra. Parkinson, un llibre difícilment catalogable; Montserrat Corretger treballa sobre l’obra de Magí Sunyer, Jim; Gonçal López-Pampló tracta l’autoficción irònica en els articles de l’escriptora Empar Moliner; Dolors Madrenas Tiroco i Joan M. Ribera Llopis analitzen el pas de l’element biogràfic a la ficció en Biel Mesquida i David Vilaseca; Jaume Silvestre opta per establir la relació amb el discurs autobiogràfic en l’obra de Ferran Torrent. Eloi Grasset tanca el volum amb un article sobre la figura de Pere Gimferrer.

En definitiva, si per la qualitat dels articles la publicació d’aquest llibre és tot un encert i una aportació interessant als estudis sobre la matèria, encara ho és més en un moment com l’actual, en què tot allò referent a la memòria i al testimoniatge, a Catalunya com a Espanya, ja fa temps que desperta un especial interès.

MARIA LLOMBART HUESCA
Université Paris 8


Diary writing has had a life of its own in Catalan literature. Renowned authors such as Baró de Maldà, Jacint Verdaguer, Josep Pla, Joaquim Renart, Marià Manent, or Joan Fuster, to name just a few, are authors who have made significant contributions to world literature with this intimate literary form. The forthcoming translation of Pla’s El quadern gris in The New York Review of Books publishing house promises to become a captivating event. The genre is being resurrected thanks to the booming popularity of blogs, which share a few characteristics with the original diary. Historically, diaries are built upon a disparity between intimacy and the world. It is in this void where the subject (the I) questions the awareness of ephemerality and the writer’s own awareness that it is not possible to capture reality. This doubt both indicates the genre’s deficiencies and at the same time concedes its specific strengths. Halfway between a private chronicle, which accepts only one reader, and the awareness of not being able to capture all history completely, a diary walks simultaneously in two suits, each one crafted by a different tailor. As a result we notice the characteristic wavering: a diary emphasizes experiences written in the pressing now, without paying any attention to explaining a whole life in its completeness, as is the case of memory writing. This is why a diary belongs to the pres-
Anna Esteve sets herself an ambitious goal: to fill a gap in Catalan literary studies examining a rich moment in diary writing, roughly the last twenty-five years. The book is divided in two sections. In the first one she briefly reviews diaries at the turn of the century and discusses a(n) (im)possible categorization of the diary form; the second part consists of the analysis of seven examples.

Although her theoretical contributions might be passed over, the reader will be undoubtedly thankful to Esteve’s careful examination of the major features in diaries: time, the self, writing, and the fact that the diary acts as a sort of workshop. Esteve discusses major topics in diaries at the end of the Millennium: reflecting on the writer’s job; attention to cultural activities such as literature, cinema, art, music; interpretation and opinion on contemporary events. She also pays attention to a version of intertextuality: “respon en gran mesura a la condició de lectors apassionats i obsessius dels dietaristes: homenatges, deutes, influències, afectes i desafectes” (92). Esteve is well read on the current theories on diaries and comes up with a neatly organized survey.

In the second section Esteve classifies diaries according to four categories: “professionals o intel·lectuals” (Pere Gimferrer and Miquel Pairolí), “dietaris confessionals” (Feliu Formosa and Guillem Simó), “dietari iniciàtic” (Valentí Puig, Enric Sòria and Rafa Gomar), and “dietari taller d’escriptura” (Josep Piera). These pages are detailed readings of some of the essential examples of diaries from the period. Valentí Puig’s *Bosc endins* (1982) and *Matèria obscura* (1991) are filled with “[l]ucidesa, ironia, acidesa” (152), whereas Gimferrer’s *Dietari* (1980-81) encapsulates all of the author’s voices: “el poeta, les temptatives del narrador i l’assagista, amb una prosa elaborada i preciosista—sensitiva, de vegades; erudita, d’altres, barroca, densa, rica i alambinada, sempre” (133). Regarding Feliu Formosa’s *El present vulnerable*, Esteve points out the balance she observes in the diary between the inner and the outer world of the writer, and his triple capacity as man, artist and intellectual. Enric Sòria’s *Mentre parlem, fragments d’un dietari iniciàtic* (1991 is a masterpiece and Esteve deftly delineates the author’s philosophical interests: “La densitat de les idees, l’argumentació dels judicis literaris ... l’agudesa i la sensibilitat per a traslladar les experiències i la percepció, íntima i personal, d’una ciutat com València, sense oblidar la claretat expositiva i el rigor d’una prosa sensual, de vegades, i en harmonia amb la claretat de pensament” (224). While reading each one of these diaries, Esteve articulates the many debts each author owes to a rich Catalán tradition.

Esteve rightly acknowledges the success of the diary form in Catalan literature during the period she studies, and she contributes enormously to a better knowledge of this literary genre. In one of her original conclusions, Anna Esteve discusses the intrinsic presence of literature in all the texts she analyzes: “són i volen ser literatura” (244). Her genuine literary predisposition allows for a good reading, a well-organized classification, and a comprehensive
With the advent of the blogging cottage industry the form has, if not dramatically changed, evolved towards new directions. If anybody has to explore this new venue, Anna Esteve with her preparation and acquaintance with the subject is an excellent candidate.

ENRIC BOU
Università Ca’ Foscari Venezia

EL día 12 de juny del 2012, les Corts Valencianes portaren al Congrés de Diputats la proposta de castigar les esbroncades a l’himne espanyol, una moció occasionada per les xiulades que havien fet sentir estrepitosament, tres setmanes abans, a la final de la Copa del Rey, els aficionats de l’Athletic Club i del Barça. Quants catalans, em pregunto, saben que l’Himne Regional—creat per a l’Exposició Regional de l’any 1909, i adoptat per la Comunitat Valenciana amb l’estatut del 1982—comença amb el crit: “Per a ofrenar noves glòries a Espanya, / tots a una veu, germans, vingau”? Doncs Noves glòries a Espanya, el títol del llibre de Vicent Flor, encapaçala admirablement el seu estudi del fet diferencial del valencianisme oficial que ha predominat des de la transició postfranquista, o sigui el seu espanyolisme, i més particularment el seu espanyolisme anticatalà.

Si bé el mot no apareix en el subtítol del llibre, allò que aquest professor de sociologia de la Universitat de València i de la UNED tracta i sotmet a una anàlisi profunda i detallada és el blaverisme, aquella força política que convertí la seínya amb franja blava en símbol de l’anticatalanisme valencià. El principal mérit de Noves glòries consisteix en el fet que tracta molt seriosament, però no sense tocs ben apropiats d’ironia, un moviment que ha estat reduït a vegades a “un simple aplec d’indocumentats i d’analfabets”, o bé un “búnquer-barraqueta” (29).

Vicent Flor data l’origen del moviment anticatalanista valencià a principis del segle XX, coetani amb el lerrouxisme a Catalunya, i veu en el blasquisme, conservador i catòlic, una font influent en la ideologia blava. L’unitarisme espanyolista de la dictadura de Primo de Rivera hauria accentuat l’anticatalanisme; durant la República hauria continuat “una catalanofòbia dirigida des de dalt” (66); després, “com que no havia quallat un valencianisme que [...] pogués considerar perillós, el franquisme pogué presentar-se tranquillament com a regionalista” (68); i, d’aquest regionalisme folkloric i despolititzat, amb la transició democràtica es generà el blaverisme. En primer lloc, aparegué com a resposta als dos llibres de Joan Fuster publicats el 1962—Nosaltres, els valencians i El País Valenciano—els quals feren (entre altres coses desagradables) que, l’any següent, Fuster fos cremat en efígie en dues falles, una premonició dels atemptats que sofriria en persona el 1978 i el 1981.
Noves glòries analitza molt detalladament el complex procés que va fer que València no aconseguís fins el 1982 el seu estatut d’autonomia—una autonomia que Flor descriu com de segona divisió i com una victòria simbòlica blavera—i que l’estatut no rebés legitimació directa democràtica, fruit en part de l’estratègia anticalatanista. Al llarg dels últims trenta anys, l’oposició a València al catalanisme, a Catalunya i als catalans no només no ha estat marginal, sinó que, segons afirma Flor, “ha esdevingut hegemònic, si més no parcialment” (21), i “ha condicionat la política i la identitat valencianes” (332). (Segons l’autor, dos terços dels valencians afirmen que creuen que el català i el valencià son dues llengües diferents.) Si bé el partit blaver Unió Valenciana (UV), fundat el 1982, fa poc que ha desaparegut del mapa, no ha estat perquè el blaverisme hagués perdut pes, sinó perquè va ser absorbit per altres forces polítiques ben potents, incloent-hi partits d’esquerra, però molt notablement pel PPCV. Només cal pensar en el tancament, dictat el 2011 per la Generalitat Valenciana, dels repetidors de TV3, i en el fet que, el 2012, El Temps hagués començat a publicar-se només en format digital...

Ja que considera el blaverisme com específicament el contendent del nacionalisme valencià representat pel fusterianisme, Vicent Flor examina de prop el que considera els tres bàsics de l’ideari d’aquest últim moviment—racionalisme, catalanisme, progressisme, antiregionalisme, indefinició política i partidisma, i essencialisme—, com també els tres bàsics del blaverisme, que ell identifica com populisme, anticalatanisme, conservadorisme, regionalisme i espanyolisme: “El blaverisme, en general, no serà feixista però sí que esdevindrà un moviment aclapadorament populista i conservador” (254) i, a més, un moviment victimista i sovint violent. (Per cert, aquella violència es manifestà escandalosament el dia de la presentació del llibre a la FNAC de València.) Un dels plats forts que aporta aquest estudi molt ben documentat són, precisament, les seves moltíssimes cites, sovint ben sucoses, de declaracions i escrits de dirigents blavers. Un altre són les petites biografies polítiques i ideològiques que ofereix dels “cabadills carismàtics” Vicente González Lizondo, Rita Barberà i Juan García Sentandreu.

L’autor, que explica com ell mateix entrà amb quinze anys a les Joventuts d’UV el 1986 i s’hi quedà fins que en fou expulsat el 1993, sap, des de dintre, d’allò que parla. Ell mateix declara que ha escrit Noves glòries “pensant tant en el lector profà en sociologia com en l’especialitzat, tant en el lector familiaritzat amb el blaverisme com en el que no ho està”, i reconeix el risc que corre “que no acabe de satisfer ningú” (34). Com a lector no especialitzat, ni tampoc familiaritzat, puc assegurar que, mercès a Noves glòries, ara no tan sols em sento informat, sinó que moltes coses que havia copsat a mitges ja tenen sentit. Entenc, per exemple, per què l’autor de la música de l’Himne Regional declarà: “siempre que he compuesto un himno he pedido a mis colaboradores que en el primer verso aparezca la palabra “España” [...]. Eso no es obstáculo porque mis hijos hablan perfectamente el valenciano. Así entiendo yo el regionalismo.”

És ben trist que segueixin sent tan vigents les actituds concentrades des de
fa molt de temps en les dites populars que cita Flor: “Valencià i home de bé no pot ser” i “Català, si no te l’ha feta, te la farà”. Però sens dubte encara és més trista la pervivència de l’enorme abisme que segueix dividint els mateixos valencians: un abisme exemplificat, el juny del 2012, pel rebug, pels fills de Josep Lluís Bausset, del telegrama de condol que els envià, en castellà, la Generalitat Valenciana.

Un dels factors no mencionats per Vicent Flor que han contribuït a fer que la societat valenciana estigui dividida en dos camps tan enfrontats (i irreconciliables?) és, sens dubte, la repressió franquista de la postguerra. Mentre, a la fi de la guerra, a Catalunya moltíssims dels vençuts que se sentien amenaçats van poder exiliar-se massivament, no va ser així a València. De fet, les fosses comunes del cementiri de València amaguen més de 25.000 víctimes, individualment identificades, del primer franquisme. Els valencians espanyolistes que han exercit durant anys un mandat absolut, tant a la Generalitat com a l’Ajuntament, han fet els possibles per mantenir aquelles víctimes amagades i ignorades, puix que les han anat enterrant doblement, bastint nínxols sobre les fosses comunes. Per sota de les raons sociològiques que expliquen la societat valenciana, doncs, n’hi ha també d’històriques. Un dels aspectes més impactants i reveladors de Noves glòries a Espanya són les entrevistes amb gent blavera; però les víctimes del franquisme apilonades a les fosses criden en silenci al cel.

HENRY ETTINGHAUSEN
University of Southampton


D’uns quants anys ençà paraules com multiculturalitat o plurilingüisme es repeteixen constantment a l’hora de legislar, regular i organitzar l’ensenyament-aprenentatge de llengües a les aules. Resulta evident que els moviments migratori, producte a causa de la globalització planetària, han fomentat el mestissatge cultural, de tal manera que l’arc mediterrani s’ha vist àmpliament sacsijat per l’arribada de població procedent de cultures i llengües en moltes ocasións ben allunyades de la nostra.

Diversitat podria ser el mot definitori de la societat de la qual formem part. En aquest sentit, la integració s’erigeix com a tasca prioritària especialment en matèria lingüística, atès que la llengua actua com a eina bàsica per aconseguir-la. Obviament, en aquells territoris que posseeixen més d’una llengua oficial, es manifesta una sensibilitat especial envers aquells parlants que tenen com a llengua materna una de diferent a la dominant. És en aquest context de diversitat lingüística que cal emmarcar l’obra que ens ocupa.

Catalan Review XXVI (2012), 247-249 - ISSN 0213-5949
El curs 2000-2001, Lluïsa Gràcia—professora a la Universitat de Girona—va ser l’encarregada de coordinar el projecte Llengua, Immigració i Ensenyament del Català sorgit de resultes d’un conveni de col·laboració entre la Universitat de Girona i el Departament de Benestar Social de la Generalitat de Catalunya. L’objectiu del projecte s’inscrivía clarament dins del panorama multicultural i plurilingüístic esmentat adéss, en un intent d’ajudar el personal docent a conèixer les llengües del seu alumnat al temps que a comprendre’n les dificultats en enfrontar-se a l’aprenentatge del català com a llengua d’integració en la societat que l’acull.

Com a fruit d’aquest projecte, al llarg d’aquests anys s’han publicat deu monografies que miren de donar resposta a les necessitats educatives sorgides arran de la convivència de cultures i llengües en territoris catalanoparlants. La publicació a la qual dediquem aquestes línies tracta d’arreplegar i resumir els aspectes més rellevants dels estudis precedents, consagrats, en bona mesura, a la didàctica de segones llengües enfocada a parlants d’àrab, xinès mandarí, soninké i mandinga, amazic, fula, wòlof, panjabi, romanès, ucraïnès i tagal.

Així doncs, es tracta d’una publicació destinada específicament a la formació de professorat de llengua catalana que disposarà, amb la seva lectura, d’uns coneixements bàsics sobre la llengua primera dels alumnes, cosa que el permetrà dispensar-ne la rebuda i l’atenció educativa pertinent. Per tal d’aconseguir una visió panoràmica de la problemàtica generada arran de l’ensenyament-aprenentatge dins d’un context plurilingüe, el llibre es divideix en tres blocs principals.

L’aportació de Pere Mayans encapçala la primera part, amb una aproximació sociolingüística a les llengües esmentades adéss, il·lustrada amb mapes lingüístics de cadascuna d’elles. Aquesta primera part, introductòria, consta, a més, d’algunes consideracions generals sobre els sistemes d’escriptura, particularment d’aquelles llengües parlades a Catalunya. El segon bloc incideix en els factors lingüístics que intervenen en l’adquisició d’una segona llengua, remarcant-ne, d’una banda, els externs—com la motivació per aprendre la llengua, l’edat de l’aprenent o l’entorn en què s’apren—i, de l’altra, factors interns, que miren d’esbrinar com pot influir el bagatge lingüístic de l’alumne/a en l’aprenentatge de la nova llengua. És per aquest motiu que els autors alludeixen als mecanismes universals que regeixen l’aprenentatge de llengües i esmenten el fet que, com a norma general, els nous parlants de català reprodueixen amb major facilitat aquells mots que tenen un contingut semàntic elevat, mentre que manifesten més dificultat a l’hora de fer servir elements bàsicament gramaticals. Cal remarcar, però, que es tracta de consideracions que queden bàsicament apuntades, sense pretindre, en cap cas, aprofundir-hi.

La tercera part del volum en conforma el nucli del contingut, tot referint-se a algunes de les principals dificultats lingüístiques dels aprenents de català com a segona llengua. En primer lloc, Lluïsa Gràcia pren en consideració aquells entrebancs que són comuns a tots els aprenents de català en els primers estadis de l’aprenentatge i diferencia entre dificultats fonològiques i fonètiques, per un
costat, i qüestions morfosintàctiques, per l’altre. Pel que fa a la fonologia i la fonètica, Gràcia al·ludeix a la marcada diversitat d’estructures sil·làbiques que presenta el català, caracteritzat, a més, per distincions fòniques poc freqüents a les llengües del món. En referència a la morfosintaxi, les reflexions giren a l’entorn de la flexió nominal i verbal, els articles, els pronoms àtoms, les preposicions, els verbs *ser*, *estar*, *haver-hi* i *tenir* i els elements de relació en les frases compostes.

A continuació, el volum detalla les dificultats no comunes a tots els aprenents de català, relacionades amb la influència de la primera llengua. De la mateixa manera que en l’apartat anterior, aquest fa esment dels elements fonològics i fonètics, així com dels trets morfosintàctics de les llengües estudiades, comparant-los amb els trets definitoris del català. Unes reflexions finals, un apèndix que reproduceix l’Alfabet Fonètic Internacional i un altre on s’hi pot trobar un quadre de sons del català, clouen aquest llibre que, com ja hem comentat, pretén sintetitzar el treball començat per la Universitat de Girona, en col·laboració amb el Departament de Benestar Social de la Generalitat, i continuat, posteriorment, pel Departament d’Educació d’aquesta mateixa universitat.

A tall de clonenda, incidirem només en la primera de les reflexions finals que proposa l’autora, Lluïsa Gràcia: com és d’important que mestres i professors d’una segona llengua tinguin consciència de les dificultats amb què es trobaran els alumnes com a conseqüència de les característiques específiques de la seva L1. Si bé el volum ressenyat, *Llengua i immigració*, es distingeix més per l’apunt, per la síntesi, que no pas per l’exhaustivitat, també és cert que neix amb l’objectiu de respondre a la necessitat del professorat de conèixer les llengües de la nostra immigració, no només per oferir un bon ensenyament als nouvinguts sinó també per preservar el coneixement i l’ús del català en aquest nou context multicultural i plurilingüe que, ja fa alguns anys, caracteritza les nostres aules.

ISABEL MARCILLAS
Universitat d’Alacant


*Ficció i realitat a l’Espill* is about a remarkable medieval Valencian work in Catalan by Jaume Roig, an author who had a good education, became an important doctor in the city, and who made literature out of his life and marriages. It is also one of the most difficult first person narratives to interpret. Roig died in 1478, and *l’Espill* must have had little or no circulation in his life. It is not until the first printed edition of 1531 that we begin to get a sense of its readership.

The introduction to *Ficció i realitat* (“Introducció a l’Espill,” 15-44) sum-
marizes the different parts of Roig’s work and its most relevant characteristics (including a description of the unique manuscript, editions, title, authorship, and translations) for those who are not acquainted or do not remember the text well.

The second chapter (“Fonts,” 45-167) studies the possible sources of the work, its relation to Lo somni de Bernat Metge, Versos Proverbials by Guillem de Cervera, works by Francesc Eiximenis, Francesc de la Via, and Joan Rois de Corrella’s translation of Lo Cartoixà, with the last being the most extensive, because of its influence on l’Espill.

Chapter three (“Temps i espai de la ficció autobiogràfica,” 175-207) examines the connections between the real and the fictional narrator of the work by dealing with all facts known about the author. The chapter cites the places l’Espill makes reference to the author’s birth, childhood, youth, marriages, and widowhood. In between the last two, Roig intercalates a long digression called La lliçó de Salomó in which Salomon inveighs against the author’s attempt to remarry. (This section is perhaps the most misogynist of the book, but the theme pervades others as well). The chapter then studies references to historical persons alive during Roig’s life (like Sibila de Fortià, the wife of Pere el Ceremonios; Violant de Bar; Ramon Boïl; Vicent Ferrer; Isabel de Pellicer; Francesc de Pertusa), which spanned some one hundred years, and to events like the fire in the fur shop and market of Valencia. Guia i Marín contends that, although some of the events and persons l’Espill references appear to be anachronistic, they are real and that the voice of the narrator reflects the experience of the author (204).

Guia i Marín gathers in the fourth chapter (“Dades per la datació de l’escriptura real,” 209-230) all the documentation that contains information about Jaume Roig and the books that may have influenced l’Espill to examine the a quo dating of the work and counter the idea that it was written mostly in 1460.

The fifth (“Correcions de lectura,” 231-244) corrects readings of some passages of l’Espill and contrasts this study to those that have gone before. It is, however, dedicated mostly to unrecognized sayings that the work incorporates. The sixth (“El valor fraseològic de l’Espill,” 245-248) is really an extension of the fifth that points to the richness of l’Espill’s phraseology, with some 67 proverbs incorporated to the narrative.

The brief concluding comments (“Epíleg,” 249-250) summarizes the book’s intent. “He presentat,” says Guia i Marín, “noves fonts (particularment Lo Cartoixà), correccions de lectures i interpretacions errònies, dades inèdites sobre la biografia de Jaume Roig, documents relatius a situacions i personatges mencionats a l’obra, així com la transmissió textual de Lo Cartoixà a Valencia” to deny critical positions that consider l’Espill a work from the pen of Jaume Roig, a physician, and his son, Jaume Honorat Roig, a canon of the cathedral of Valencia. For Guia i Marín, l’Espill has only one author.

Perhaps the most valuable contribution of Guia i Marín is his findings
about the debt of l’Espill to Joan Roís de Corrella’s translation of Lo Cartoixà. The chapter that examines this correspondence takes up half of the book. However, in spite of the fact that the book thoroughly fulfills Guia i Marín’s statement, it reads like a collection of unintegrated notes. Hopefully, these notes will be preliminary to a study of l’Espill. Otherwise, there is not much interpretation. Ficció i realitat concludes with a brief bibliography.

FRANK A. DOMÍNGUEZ
THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL


A decade and half ago, Jo Labanyi and Helen Graham dramatically changed the landscape of Hispanic Studies with the publication of their Spanish Culture Studies: an Introduction. With this superbly conceptualized collection (encompassing numerous cultural fields heretofore seen as being none of “our” business), they established a theoretically sophisticated, yet highly practical guide for those who understood the need to break with long-moribund philological practices, but were unsure how to imbue new and more broadly conceived forms of cultural analysis with the older pursuits’ much-cherished emphasis on precision and rigor.

It was quickly followed (though not surpassed) by David Geis’ Cambridge Companion to Modern Spanish Culture and Barry Jordan and Rikki Morgan-Tamosunas’ Contemporary Spanish Cultural Studies. The striking aggiornamento of Peninsular Studies within the last decade — evident every time we go to a conference or review the syllabi of fellow colleagues in the field— owes a great deal to these suggestive compendia published at the turn of the last century.

As the book’s introduction makes clear, the catalytic example of these volumes was very much on Dominic Keown’s mind as he mapped out this much-needed Companion to Catalan Culture. And rightly so.

The institutional problems confronting Catalan Studies are many and quite familiar to those reading these pages. Most of the time we concentrate on issues connected with its evidently subaltern status in our departments and, by extension, our universities. While this focus is understandable, it would appear to have blinded us to some of our own shortcomings, most notably, our failure— induced by the same tendency to fixate narrowly on literary texts and literary analysis that plagued the more ample field of Hispanic Studies for so long— to generate materials capable of helping English language readers understand the enormous breadth and dynamism of Contemporary Catalan Culture. With the exception of Josep Sobrer’s valiant, if somewhat unsystematic (understand-
able given the then still nascent state of “normalized” culture), Catalonia, a Self-Portrait, produced two decades ago, very few serious attempts have been made in this area.

With this volume, comprised of an introduction and ten generally well-written and quite comprehensive chapters, Keown has gone quite far toward remedying this enormous gap in our field.

Perhaps its greatest triumph lies simply in the way the collection refuses to reify traditional sites of privilege within Catalan Studies; though the institution of literature is, as it should be, much invoked through the volume, it does not in any way “lord over” or obscure the importance of other repertoires within the national cultural field. In fact, by deploying discrete essays on sport, music, cinema, festivals and cooking in the absence of a similar essay on canonical letters, Keown is making a very clear, and in my view, much-needed, statement about the need to pay attention to other, arguably more dynamic, sites of cultural production in Catalan life.

Though the editor expresses a certain reticence about including it in a volume that is otherwise concerned with contemporary matters, Alexander Ibarz’s “Medieval Catalan Culture 801-1492” is probably the highlight of the book, a stunningly broad and highly entertaining explanation of how the matrices of the national culture were forged. Almost as effective as panoramic essays are Keown’s own “Contemporary Catalan Culture,” Antoni Segura and Elisenda Barbé’s “Catalonia: From Industrialization to the Present Day,” Toni Strubell’s “The Catalan Language,” and Jaume Martí-Olivella’s “Catalan Cinema.”

However, for those that come at Catalan Studies from a literary background (which is probably the majority of us) perhaps the most useful essays—insofar as they systematize bits and pieces of knowledge acquired while reading for other purposes—are Tess Knighton’s “The Music of Catalonia,” Dorothy Noyes’ “Festival and the Shaping of Catalan Community,” and Montserrat Roser i Puig’s “What’s Cooking in Catalonia?”. Similar in its intent, but less successful in its execution owing to its somewhat choppy style and structure, is Louise Johnson’s “Sport and Catalonia.”

Rounding out the collection is Robert Davidson’s “Barcelona: The Siege City.” While quite well-written and informative, the essay suffers, in my view, from an overly schematic and inflexible view of the city’s ontology. While it is true that Barcelona has often lived with its back against the proverbial wall its inhabitants have shown a remarkable penchant for resistance and re-invention, aided in no small part by their marked ability (especially when compared with the inhabitants of Spain’s other major cities) to acquire and assimilate new energy and ideas from around the world.

And this leads me to one of my few criticisms of the book’s structure: its failure to engage with the enormously important role of migration and exile in the country’s modern development. Yes, the eighteenth century was a time of enormous cultural loss. But it was also a time of economic renewal made pos-
sible in great measure by Catalan merchants and mariners operating in places like Havana, Montevideo and New Orleans. It was the capital they accumulated working within a decidedly cosmopolitan and expansive world view overseas that made possible the revival of the autochthonous culture at home in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Similarly, while the post-1939 exile experience induced intense levels of devastation, it also served as an extraordinary incubator of personal and group creativity, efforts that have contributed greatly to the vitality of today’s Catalan cultural system. Finally, is it really possible to understand today’s Catalonia without an understanding of the effects that successive waves of immigrants (Galician, Andalusian, Maghrebi, and now Pakistani) have had on the social fabric of the nation?

My only other reservation about the book has to do with the way it sidesteps the always-problematic issue (think of the controversies that surrounded Catalonia’s privileged status at the Frankfurt Book Fair in 2007) of how to classify “Catalan” cultural production produced or displayed in Castilian and other languages. Whether we like it or not, Catalonia is, and will remain for the foreseeable future, a decidedly multi-lingual society. It is therefore incumbent upon those of us whose job it is to translate the reality of that society to non-Catalan others to find (one such tool that comes to mind is Polysystem Theory) and/or develop theoretical frames which enhance our ability to describe this complex reality with refinement and accuracy. In the grand scheme of things, however, these are relatively minor problems.

With this volume, Dominic Keown sets out to fill an enormous gap within the extant literature on Catalonia. He has succeeded on at least two very important levels. First he has given “lay” readers of English an accessible introduction to the country’s history and culture. Second, he has but provided his colleagues in the field of Catalan Studies with a very solid conceptual base for future growth and innovation. The editor and his collaborators should be warmly saluted for carrying out this very important work.

THOMAS HARRINGTON
Trinity College


Scholars approaching Joan Brossa’s wide-ranging artistic trajectory have inevitably been obliged to contend with the multidisciplinary character of his work: his experimentations with hybrid artistic forms, such as collages, installation art, performance, and visual poetry, and his often-paradoxical combinations of popular and paratheatrical art forms with more elite cultural references. An impulse toward innovation, experimentation, and transgression continually
animated his creative endeavors, inspiring him to invent, on occasion, his own lexicon to describe his artistic production.

John London’s *Contextos de Joan Brossa: L’acció, la imatge i la paraula*, awarded the Premi Critica Serra d’Or de Catalanística in 2011, is an intellectually engaging and provocative study that offers a series of varied frameworks and prisms through which to view Brossa’s traversals of artistic disciplines and genres. At the same time, the book demystifies some of the more enigmatic dimensions of Brossa’s experimentation with a diverse set of media and in a diverse set of literary contexts. It is clear that, in writing the book in the Catalan language, London’s aim as a British critic was to engage straightaway in a healthy debate with other scholars who have attempted to posit their own theories with regard to the work of one of the most noteworthy representatives of twentieth-century Catalan culture. London has thus immersed himself fully in the existing body of Brossa scholarship, offering his own particular vision of how Brossa’s work might be situated within an international context of experimental artistic production that includes the hermeticism of Giuseppe Ungaretti, the “ready-mades” of Marcel Duchamp, and the conceptual art of Joseph Kosuth. The book contains abundant visual material to support his theses.

In approaching Brossa’s work, London exhibits, particularly in his introduction, an overt consciousness with regard to the challenges that face any scholar who would dare write about the work of an artist who was often known to express a certain (mocking) skepticism, mistrust, or even distain toward those who pretend to be learned intellectuals and critics. With a deferential nod to the diversity, depth, and complexity of Brossa’s artistic production, the introduction offers a chronology of already existing studies and situates London’s own critical intentions. London’s views, furthermore, are informed not only by his training as a critic, but also by his work as a translator of Brossa and his personal relationship with the artist/writer. He defines his intentions as a desire to contribute to existing debates from the perspective of five “contexts,” which in turn correspond to the five chapters of the book. Within these contexts, the study also sheds light upon the reception of Brossa’s work and related misconceptions, as well as Brossa’s position vis-à-vis an existing literary-artistic canon. Especially interesting is the way that London allows Brossa’s own voice to come through at times, to speak about how he would contextualize his own role as an artist.

The first chapter, “Les paraules senzilles i el compromís polític: una comparació d’estils i de poetes,” contextualizes Brossa’s poetry through a comparison with that of the aforementioned Italian writer Ungaretti. Here London focuses on the political engagement of the two poets, revealing subtle aspects of Ungaretti’s “feixisme d’esquerres” and, most especially, of Brossa’s collection *Em va fer Joan Brossa*. In the second chapter, “La imaginació i la realitat al teatre,” London considers the ambivalence surrounding the reception of Brossa’s theatre during the period of the Franco dictatorship and describes the alienation felt by certain critics of the 1950s and 1960s who perceived in Bros-
sa’s plays a universe that was significantly divorced from reality. The chapter also elucidates Brossa’s anti-naturalist aesthetic and the complicated tension between art and reality that sustains his theatre. Brossa, as London reveals, presents us alternative ways through which to explore “the real.”

The third chapter, “L’art com a acció” (with subsections devoted to “L’omnipresència del teatre,” “El teatre a l’art,” and “L’art al teatre”), ponders what is perhaps the most original “context,” in the book, in that it explores the relationships established in Brossa’s work among various genres and cross-generic forms emerging from the realms of theatre, poetry, and the plastic arts. London demonstrates in detail how the different genres have mutually overlapped, contaminated, and permeated each other within Brossa’s creative imagination. Special attention is given, for example, to Brossa’s poemes objecte, poesia visual, poesia escènica, and installation art.

For London, one of the most beneficial ways to garner an understanding and appreciation of Brossa’s work is through translation. In the fourth chapter, “Entenem el poeta? La impossibilitat de la traducció,” he draws on the experience of several accomplished translators, such as Pere Gimferrer and David Rosenthal, showing the creative solutions that they have proposed in resolving certain dilemmas that have emerged in their experience with Brossa’s work. Often, when faced with Brossa’s verbal inventions and turns of phrase, the solutions proposed by translators have brought new meaning to the original work. London provides, in addition, some of his own solutions to predicaments that have arisen when he has confronted, in his work as a translator, Brossa’s audacious treatment of verbal language. The chapter, however, is not only about translation; it is also about how Brossa himself ponders the limits of language. Additionally, the chapter includes a discussion of Brossa’s own work as a translator of Arthur Rimbaud and of the way Brossa’s art implicitly enters into a dialogue with the conceptual art of Joseph Kosuth.

In the fifth and final chapter, “Qui és Brossa?,” which in many ways represents the culmination of prior chapters, the reader is offered London’s personal reflections with regard to the friendship that he shared with Brossa over the course of several years. London’s impressions bring a meaningful touch of humanity to his object of study, as we are given insight into the relationship between the tangible (mortal) person and his (immortal) artistic universe. The chapter also includes a description of Brossa’s avant-garde personality and an account of the religious-spiritual dimensions of his work. The chapter is followed by several appendices containing a list of visual materials, a bibliography, an index of Brossa’s cited works, and an index of names.

The book exhibits London’s extensive knowledge of aesthetics and of the connections between literature and the plastic arts, all of which has enabled him to navigate seamlessly the various genres that were expressions of Brossa’s imagination. Contextos de Joan Brossa: L’acció, la imatge i la paraula is, consequently, multidisciplinary in scope, intrepid in its aims, comprehensive in its research, and rich in visual components. London’s prose may seem slightly
truculent at times, as he is a critic in the most complete sense of the word, yet it is also captivating in the way that it aspires to operate on an original theoretical plane that offers surprising conclusions and juxtapositions. The book will likely become a compulsory point of reference for scholars of modern and contemporary Catalan literature, theatre, and culture, in general.

SHARON G. FELDMAN
University of Richmond


In this compact volume of ten short essays by Catalan poet, architect, and professor, Joan Margarit, a wealth of insights unfolds for the non-Catalan and non-Castilian readership, thanks to Christopher Maurer’s well wrought translation and “Afterword.” The English text captures the concise and powerful style characteristic of both Margarit’s poetry and prose. It makes accessible the personal defense of poetry he expresses with an authority derived from decades of experience as a poet and a teacher, and with the intimacy of tone that is a constant in Margarit’s work. Presented as advice for a contemporary young poet, Margarit pays homage to early twentieth-century poet Rainer Marie Rilke and his epistolary responses (*Letters to a Young Poet*, 1903-1908) to the aspiring poet, Franz Xaver Kappus, while he also tips his hat to many others who have been part of his poetic world.

In the opening lines of the first essay, Margarit offers that he is not responding to a specific individual who has sought his guidance and judgment, as was the case with Rilke. Instead, he establishes the namelessness of his correspondent: “the person I’m addressing is someone who has never asked me whether he or she might become a poet, and who has no doubt he will become one, or is one already; someone who hasn’t quite yet found her own poetic voice, but knows it is out there, someplace in the future” (10). Margarit is apparently addressing his younger self, at a stage when he regrettably rushed to publish his first book in 1960, although he did not recognize “a voice finally my own” until fifteen years later (11). He presents a dialogue between the mature poet and a younger, struggling poetic self, a relationship that emulates a depth of understanding between correspondents similar to that present in Rilke’s letters to Kappus. In both cases, the self-identification between mature and young poet derives in a great expressive poignancy and an outright preachiness in many segments of both texts.

In his preface, Margarit informs readers that he first read Rilke’s letters when he was twenty years old, and that he returned to them over the years as his comprehension grew, leading him to discover he shared a great deal with Rilke.
Maurer’s translation provides access to Margarit’s frank explanations of the essential lessons he learned. For example, Margarit explains: “A poem is either a good one or it is nothing, and this is why it can be cruel to have mistakenly believed yourself a poet as a young man or woman” (9). He does not shy away from hard lessons, and although many of Margarit’s comments may seem harsh initially, his driving concern with honesty and authenticity becomes apparent. For both Rilke and Margarit the fundamental condition for a poet is an acceptance of individual experience—the experience of feelings—as the true source of poetry, rather than aspects of an outer reality. They both return to a profound appreciation of solitude, which they consider necessary for that experience to occur. When Margarit describes the kind of poetry he talks about, the kind of poetry he writes, Maurer communicates the essence of Margarit’s poetics: “I’m not talking about poetry qualified by adjectives or poetry that is in itself an adjective, but about poems which end up in writing, published and read: poetry as noun, as substantive ... I’m not interested in the poem that doesn’t help make me a better person, bring about greater inner balance, console me, or leave me a little closer to happiness, whatever it means to be happy” (x-xi).

Margarit’s ten essays filter perceptions expressed by Rilke through his own twentieth-century Catalan context and register. Maurer has made some small adjustments in the texts, such as separating a few paragraphs that were not separated in the original, breaking some long sentences into shorter ones to conform to English syntax, switching a metaphor into terms that will be more meaningful to English-language readers. In a few instances Maurer’s word choices are surprising; overall, his version of the essays maintains the straightforward, conversational register of Margarit’s writing. Having in hand Christopher Maurer’s translation, one marvels at the persistence of Rilke and Margarit’s ideas, at the enduring cohesiveness of their arguments, particularly when we take into account that this is a sixth rendering of them: from Rilke’s original German text; to a 1957 reprint of a 1941 translation into Spanish that Margarit first read; then his text in Catalan, followed by his own rewriting of it in Castilian, and subsequent revision of that version. Margarit incites his readers to participate in a century-old round of the telephone game that will continue when one of us discovers our own inclusion of these ideas in something that has not been written yet.

The newcomer to Joan Margarit’s work will be well served by beginning with Maurer’s “Afterword” to New Letters to a Young Poet. It contains biographic information about the poet, as well as segments of selected poems, quotes and contextual tidbits that provide an effective foundation for comprehending the poetics and life’s lessons in his ‘letters.’ The section of notes at the end of the volume provides brief bibliographic information and explanations of the significance of many of the names and the origins of concepts alluded to in Margarit’s essays and in the “Afterword.” These notes, in addition to being very helpful to the reader, are further proof of the great care that Maurer has taken in preparing this volume. In its entirety, Maurer’s translation provides
fascinating insight into the uniquely expansive intimacy of Joan Margarit’s poetic world, a world of unrelenting and even painful honesty. This translation invites new readers to join the dialogue with one of Catalonia’s most renowned contemporary literary figures.

PAULA SPRAGUE
Trinity College


Bernat Metge (c. 1347-1413) is best known for his masterwork Lo Somni, a dream-vision and journey to the Other World written in prose in 1399. Six other works by Metge survive, including the Llibre de Fortuna e Prudència from 1381. The latter, composed in noves rimades, is the longest of his three works written in verse. Like Lo Somni, the Llibre, whose aim is both consolatory and admonitory, takes the form of an allegorical journey to the Other World. A chronicle of the narrator’s voyage on a mysterious ship that collects him one early morning at the docks in Barcelona, it narrates his arrival at a strange island full of contrasts and contradictions. There he meets the at once beautiful and ugly inhabitant of a splendid and simultaneously ruinous castle. She is the woman Fortune, to whom he complains of his dire fate. Fortune explains that her work is both to dispense and retract the blessings of the world, thus defending the nature of her labors. She illustrates her role with examples of recent booms and busts drawn from the usurous banking practices in the Barcelona of the time. The confrontation ends with an exchange of mutual reproach, just as Fortune grabs the narrator by the arm and hurls him into the air, out and away from her castle. After his fall, he recovers his senses just only to encounter the most beautiful woman he has ever laid eyes upon. It is the lady Prudence, accompanied by her seven handmaidens (the Liberal Arts), who counsel reason and patience, just as they warn against flawed human judgment. Prudence and her entourage return the narrator to his ship, which takes him back to Barcelona, where he hurries home off to the safety of his house.

The exceedingly simple plot of the Llibre disguises a work firmly rooted in high medieval scholastic thought, which draws principally upon Boethius’ The Consolation of Philosophy, Henry of Settimello’s Elegia, and Alain de Lille’s Anticlaudianus. It also draws upon a variety of other sources, including the French Roman de Philosophie by Simon de Freine, Gervais de Bus’ Roman de Fauvel, the Roman de la Rose, and contemporary Catalan texts like Vicenç Comes’ Adventure and Guillem de Torroella’s Arthurian La Faula (c. 1370). The Llibre thus stands as a testament to the breadth and the lofty level of Catalan culture, plus the taste for both philosophy and poetry in the Romance ver-
naculars at the court of Pere IV, El Cerimoniós, where Metge was a royal functionary.

At the same time, the complaint that seems to inspire the *Llibre* —the socio-economic malaise that sets into the Mediterranean world beginning with the Revolt of the Ciompi in Florence in 1378, followed by the banking crisis of Barcelona in March 1381 and the collapse of numerous banks in the rest of Catalonia— points to historical realities that are important for understanding the decline of feudalism as well as the state of poetry and philosophy in the Crown of Aragon. To be sure, the narrator makes specific reference to the default of the royal treasury on high interest loans taken out from banks in the 1370s (“Digats, què us par dels mogobells?” the narrator begs Fortune to explain) thus demonstrating the decisive role that economic realities are beginning to play in the cultural production of the late Middle Ages.

David Barnett’s translation of the *Llibre* published under the title of the *Book of Fortune and Prudence*, constitutes the first English translation of the work and provides an accessible version of it to a wide audience of both scholars and lay readers alike. Based on Lluís Cabrés’ recent edition of the *Llibre* (Barcelona: Barcino, 2010), whose text is reproduced on the facing verso pages, Barnett’s translation comprises a readable and faithful rendering of the original text in plain eggs and bacon prose. In order to facilitate greater understanding, Barnett employs current English equivalents for much of the coinage in the text, often accompanied by brief explanatory notes. Names are Anglicized throughout, with the exception of those that allude to Metge himself or to his family members, a practice I find somewhat problematic given the often allusive, *roman à clef*, nature of the onomastics one finds in medieval dream allegories, especially in many Catalan texts (i.e., the later bilingual, Catalan-Castilian, *Triste deleytación*).

Barnett’s translation is accompanied by a substantial introduction which provides an overview of Metge’s work, a brief biography, a synopsis of the *Llibre de Fortuna e Prudència*, a description of the latter’s extant manuscripts, the work’s principal sources, and a note on the methods and strategies employed in the translation. My only quibble with the introduction is that at times the notes in it are intrusive and gratuitous to the point of being amusing, grossly understating any interested reader’s possible level of literary culture. This is the case, for example, on p. 14, at note 9, where we are obliged to interrupt an exposition on Metge’s *Història de Valter e Griselda* to look down at the note and be told that “The Decameron is a collection of 100 novellas, placed within a narrative frame in which a group of ten friends flee plague-ridden Florence to a country villa where they while away ten days telling stories . . .” etc.

Minor dissatisfactions aside, Barnett’s translation of Metge’s *Llibre* into English is both serviceable and welcome. It will doubtless enable both medievalists and generalists alike who do not know how to read Catalan to become familiar with an important, though minor work, of a major medieval author. At
the same time, it will serve as clear evidence of the very high level of culture and erudition of Catalan civilization during the late Middle Ages and provide entry for the larger scholarly community into the intellectual and social milieu of a lamentably neglected sector of medieval studies. In the end, exposure to Metge might even serve as a stimulus for scholars who are not proficient in Catalan to acquire a reading knowledge of the language and broaden both their awareness and expertise in the Middle Ages.

E. MICHAEL GERLI
University of Virginia


This erudite study affords the Spanish-language university-level reader an in-depth, panoramic understanding of 300 years of intense literary creativity authored by native-born Catalan speakers representative of the geographical regions and non-Iberian nations where Catalans have lived and/or were exiled: Catalonia, Valencia, Aragon, Roussillon, the Balearic Islands, Sardinia, and as far away as London and Paris. Literatura catalana moderna (siglos XVI-XVIII) appears to be a companion volume to the Catalan-language Panorama crític de la literatura catalana, Edicions Vicens-Vives, Barcelona, 2011, vol. III, prepared under Rossich’s direction. By “literary,” the authors, senior research professors at the University of Girona, adopt a holistic, contemporary, history of sociology methodological approach, one that includes not only belles lettres, but also every imaginable example of the written word: historical treatises, philological tractates, personal diaries, catechisms, etc. Surprisingly, yet fortunately, the language or languages of this impressive “Catalan” literary productivity are not exclusively restricted to the “mother tongue” of Catalonia, for many of the authors and their works analyzed in this comprehensive study wrote also or exclusively in Spanish, at times Latin, Italian and French, and some authored and/or published their works outside the Iberian Peninsula. The authors’ central argument or thesis revolves around a very compelling attempt to discredit the reductive branding of the myth of 300 years of Catalan Decadència by staunch, traditional nineteenth and twentieth-century Catalan academicians, who argued that the intellectual literary productivity of all the Catalan native-speaking individuals between c.1500 and c.1800 was nothing more than banter penned in a less-than-acceptable overly Spanish-language infected and, therefore, inferior patois.

Notwithstanding the validity of the thesis, buttressed as it is by the breadth and creative quality of the majority of the works cited, one would be hard-pressed, in fact, to negate that the Renaixença, lead by its anti-Decadència stal-
warts, adopted a potent *raison d’être* to kickstart a Catalan cultural revival that has finally begun to function on all cylinders in today’s post-modern world—with its multivalent forms of creativity, in fields as diverse as architecture, the visual arts, music, literature (in all genres and registers), education, law, science, industry, banking, religion, gastronomy, and sport.

*Literatura catalana moderna* (*siglos XVI-XVIII*) is the result of decades of on-site research, hands-on editing and textual criticism, exhaustive bibliographical retrieval, and constant personal contact with active, committed scholars throughout Europe and the Americas. In essence, it provides a mine of useful and vital information as well as brief critical evaluations of key authors and their works: e.g., Vicent Garcia, Francesc Fontanella, and Agustí Eura. A salient aspect is the appreciable amount of the period’s lost literature—of the multitude of manuscripts and printed books that have yet to be located. Some prime examples are Pere Serafí’s *Arte poètica* (mid 16th c.) (182), Joan Binimeli’s numerous scientific works (late sixteenth century) (202), and Josep Blanch’s *Pancàrpia poètica* (1668) (91). Another of the book’s valuable contributions are the numerous indications of possible future research needed to be undertaken, especially regarding manuscripts ripe for critical editing. Examples are Antoni Febrer i Cardona’s unedited poetic works (1761-1841) (140) and Guillem Roca i Segui’s manuscript verses (mid-nineteenth century) (142).

A third reality that stands out is the absence of the rise of the novel in Catalan, of a school of secular drama in the language, and the existence of an appreciable corpus of highly lyrical italianate verse in Catalan in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Catalan-speaking lands, while, at the very same time, the Spanish Golden Age *ingenios* were churning out these same works at an unrelenting pace with superior esthetic quality, and then disseminating their genius often via the Barcelona, Tarragona and Valencia presses. Despite the valid points Rossich and Valsalobre make, that is of an editorial marketplace reluctant to invest in unprofitable reams of novelistic or theatrical printed paper in the Catalan language, of the dearth of disinterested literary benefactors and a community willing to promote Catalan-language novelists and playwrights while also underwriting their related publication and presentation expenses, as well as the statistical, demographic reality of a minority culture speaking a local Romance language while oft times living side-by-side with the majority culture of an international Spanish-speaking empire, this reviewer is not entirely convinced by the apology for 300 years of having done little to nothing. What needs addressing is the *converso* question, and how it relates to intense literary creativity, especially for the novel and secular drama. For instance, in my latest academic studies on Cervantes and Fernando de Rojas, I argue that the imprint of Judaic and *converso* creativity by each of these *converso* personalities significantly defines the way their works—the forerunner to the novel and the greatest novel of them all—must be read and understood according to their respective contemporary (that is, contemporary to their original drafting) sociological, intellectual contexts: i.e. their *angst*. Rossich and Valsalobre do cite
Vives in addition to a shortlist of other Valencian converso humanists, but the question remains to be posited as to why it is that Spain’s Golden Age index of major authors can boast so many “marginalized” conversos and possible or wannabe judaizers, whereas during the sixteenth-eighteenth centuries of Catalan literary creativity this matter goes begging for answers. Furthermore, how is it that in a micro-community of no more than 400 Sephardim in Hamburg during the mid-eighteenth century, the ingenious Jeosúah Habilho was able to pen a picaresque novel in verse in the Portuguese tongue, with momentary incursions into Hebrew, Spanish, Dutch, French, German, English, and Yiddish, and then have the novelette published “a costa sua” (“at his own expense”), when the far greater multitude of Catalans of the sixteenth-eighteenth centuries were unable to produce anything comparable? In a cultural milieu of hundreds of thousands of Catalan-speakers and readers, serious sponsorship was lacking, a genuine commitment to cultural survival was not a burning issue, the competitive spirit was spent, potential authors weren’t there or had fled the coop for the greener pastures of literature in Spanish, and the conversos, the marginalized “others,” were too dispersed or too assimilated or too decimated to care in writing about their own painful predicament. Perhaps the 1391 Barcelona pogrom still clanged a death knell for any future narrative creativity in the quest for modernity in fiction and drama.

Nowadays, though, Catalan literary success is right where it should be. The Generalitat’s leadership supports a full-fledged cultural agenda, and the advent of increased secularization, political freedom and gender equality, the beehive activity at the universities, the mentoring afforded by Montserrat Monastery, as well as new generations of young writers and an influx of significant others from everywhere under the sun have provided the Catalan-speaking and writing public the impetus to write on, at times even in Spanish. This is a natural and healthy occurrence. But it is also true that were it not for Catalan literature of the sixteenth-eighteenth centuries keeping the thinking and writing process alive and well, we wouldn’t be where we are today; for that reason Literatura catalana moderna (siglos XVI-XVIII) is ever more crucial to our understanding of the way things are now.

KENNETH BROWN
University of Calgary


In late 2001, the construction work on the Barcelona Provincial Library, on the site of the old Mercat del Born, uncovered the remains of earlier buildings and the ensuing archeological dig revealed Roman remains, traces of medieval
roads and foundations but especially remains and relics of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It was what remained of what had been the heart of the “Ribera de Barcelona,” burned by the Bourbon army after September 11, 1714. In view of the importance of the find, the library project was moved and the Born became a symbolic space for studying the history of this part of town and of the Repression.

Given the growing interest in this place the City Council, assisted by the Catalan Government and other institutions, prompted a series of ten case studies to raise awareness of this research jointly agreeing that they should be contextualized under the supervision of Professor Albert Garcia Espuche and be edited under the general title “La Ciutat del Born. Barcelona 1700.” Eight titles have already appeared (http://www1.diba.cat/llibreria), very elegant editions, characterized by their factitious nature and always entrusted to teams of specialists. Each study includes a multitude of reproductions of documents and pictures resulting in a colorful mosaic of society and daily life of the time.

The volume in question, the sixth, includes six papers: 1) “La decadència de la Decadència. Consideracions sobre un concepte historiogràfic precindible,” by Joan Santanach; 2) “Llegir, escriure i escoltar a la Barcelona del Sis-cents,” by Xavier Torres Sans; 3) “La llengua en la documentació notarial de la Barcelona del 1700,” by Xavier Cazeneuve i Descarrega; 4) “Paraules de la ciutat del Born,” by Albert Garcia Espuche himself; 5) “La llengua literària,” by Francesc Feliu; and 6) “Literatura catalana barroca: meravella & mixtura,” by Josep Solervicens. Due to their content, the chapters can be grouped in pairs (Torres-Garcia Espuche, Cazeneuve-Feliu, Santanach-Solervicens), as it is certain that each introduces or points to the theme of the others. Thus, Garcia Espuche is almost a bridge between the historical and the linguistic/literary. Something similar occurs with the Cazeneuve chapter in addressing notarial records. It may also be considered a bridge between various aspects as may the Torres chapter.

Joan Santanach, a connoisseur of medieval Catalan literature draws a panoramic picture of the transition from this to the modern age and particularly from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century, analyzing the groundless pejorative legacy of this period which has only served to blur or mask the literary, cultural and intellectual interest of these centuries; a gateway that serves to value the Catalan literature of this age and to link the ensuing chapters through the intellectual vitality of the city.

Xavier Torres, historian and expert on the modern age, here takes a more sociological view; outlining a picture of teaching and reading in an age in which several languages coexisted (Catalan, Latin and Castilian), with different uses for different purposes, with total normality. All this without forgetting the world of printing and the different types of printed material, particularly propaganda. Let us not forget, among other things, the Catalan Revolt in the seventeenth century or the War of Succession in the eighteenth century.

Xavier Cazeneuve, an historian well versed in the world of notary proto-
cols, carried out a historic-linguistic study of documents from various notary colleges in Catalonia to show the vitality and richness of Catalan in the sphere of social and formal life, while claiming the wealth of these findings to deepen the knowledge and evolution of language in this period.

Albert García Espuche, an historian with extensive works, on this occasion studies 400 obscure words and expressions drawn from documents of the time. On the one hand, this allows light to be shed on historic documents, and on the other hand, it illuminates a lexicon commonly used, also in protocols, in domestic language and in literary compositions. For this reason it is no longer a unique study connecting different research interests. As we noted at the beginning, this characteristic is a piece of the substratum of the whole: the interconnection of various studies from the vitality of language in a particular city at a particular time.

Francesc Feliu, language historian, focuses this time on the study of literary language, and in particular, the Baroque Aesthetic. As is known, at this time Catalan literature closely followed the impulses and fashions of Spanish baroque literature. Literary applications, linguistic artifice, prose models, verse models, popular (and populist) records, worship (and their functional levels in-between), focus much of the text. Feliu, moreover, does not neglect such thorny issues as the linguistic interference of Castilian or Latin.

Finally, Josep Solervicens, well acquainted with the literature of the modern age, revisits the most significant authors and works of the period, particularly of the seventeenth century, and he offers insight into the various attempts to revitalize and modernize literature (and the literary language) in its various genres, with Francesc Fontanella and Josep Romaguera as the most outstanding names. In short, literature made in Barcelona and the immediate vicinity, the sparkling space where readers would gather.

Altogether we have a highly divulgent work that puts before our eyes the written, literary and cultural life of Barcelona in the decades before the War of Succession; a collection of studies of a very high standard that focus on the everyday intellectual life of Barcelona society in the seventeenth century. In short, an image that is totally removed from the earlier view of a century, poor and dark and utterly devoid of interest.

GABRIEL SANSANO
Universitat d’Alacant


L’assaig de Josep Miquel Sobrer és important, per començar, per dues raons objectives: és la primera monografia publicada no solament sobre el teatre de Josep M. de Sagarrà sinó, també, sobre el conjunt de la seva obra—poesia, nar-
rativa, memòries, articulisme, crítica teatral—i tot i el seu entusiasme pel teatre sagarrià, l’assagista sap mantenir l’esperit crític, i així no cau en l’elogi gratuït o poc fonamentat, un elogi que, en realitat, no ajuda gens ni a qui el rep ni a qui el fa perquè posa en dubte la credibilitat de tots dos. Aquest no és el cas, afortunadament, del llibre de Sobrer.

L’assaig s’estriba en sis parts—seguides d’uns apèndixs cronològics—, encapçalada cadascuna per un títol que és una citació d’un vers del teatre sagarrià, i per un subtítol, de caràcter descriptiu, de l’autor del llibre. En les parts primera i sisena, Sobrer hi concreta, respectivament, els plantejaments i les conclusions del seu estudi, mentre que en les quatre restants, hi fa un recorregut per tota la producció escènica de Sagarra, amb atenció a cadascuna de les peces que la integren.

Trobo un encert que el professor Sobrer hagi aplicat l’expressió poesia dramàtica al teatre sagarrià, perquè, d’una banda, recupera una denominació de les poètiques tradicionals—que col·locaven la producció literària sota els epígrafs de poesia lírica, poesia èpica i poesia dramàtica—que s’adiu molt bé amb el teatre de fonament vuitcentista que estudia en aquest assaig; d’altra banda, la denominació és oportuna, igualment, perquè la producció escènica de Sagarra, sobretot l’anomenat poema dramàtic, és la contribució més sòlida i duradora al teatre poètic català, aquella aspiració amb la qual es va identificar una part important de la intel·lectualitat catalana en el pas del segle XIX al segle XX.

La primera part de l’assaig, “La mentida deliciosa. Reflexions d’entrada”, segurament és la més suggeridora del llibre i, alhora, la més desigual. Perquè hi trobem pàgines molt atractives, amb referències bibliogràfiques pertinents, com les que Sobrer dedica a la influència del melodrama en el teatre de Sagarra (22–23). Però, al mateix temps, hi ha observacions sobre la teoria i la pràctica dramàtiques que són precipitades o molt parcials. Tampoc no sembla que l’assagista tingui prou en compte que el teatre de Sagarra té l’origen en alguns poemes narratius que ja figuren en el Primer llibre de poemes (1914), entre els quals, i sobretot, el magnífic “Joan de l’Ós”, que Sobrer esmenta, però que trobo que no aprofita del tot en el sentit que l’assaig requeria. Altrament, les pàgines que recullen les reflexions sobre la significació i l’evolució polítiques de Sagarra resulten superficials. No sembla que el professor Sobrer hagi tingut prou en compte la vinculació de Sagarra, en els anys vint, al projecte d’Acció Catalana, la composició d’alguns poema patriòtic per invitació del president de la Generalitat Francesc Màcia, com “El Cant del Poble”, o la concessió de la Gran Cruz de Alfonso X el Sabio per part del règim del general Franco. Les conseqüències de tot això, i altres circumstàncies, van pesar molt, massa, en la valoració del teatre de Sagarra, com l’assagista reconeix en definitiva. Crec que calia precisar més per poder entendre millor què va passar en aquest aspecte de la projecció i la valoració de Sagarra. Em sembla que Sobrer s’ha deixat endur per un estil desimbolt, que, d’altra part, és molt d’agrar en un assaig com el seu, i que ha redactat aquestes pàgines amb una certa precipitació.

Les quatre parts següents de l’assaig són un recorregut, com ja he dit, per
tota la producció dramàtica sagarriana. En poc més de cent pàgines (37-142), Sobrer ens ofereix una visió de conjunt d’una cinquantena d’obres que resulten, globalment, essencials en el teatre català del segle xx. Això significa que l’assaigista ha fet un esforç notable que és molt útil per al lector i a l’estudiós del teatre de Sagarra. Ara bé, com que l’autor vol ser exhaustiu en el recorregut, però alhora, no ho pot ser de cap manera en l’anàlisi de les obres tractant-se d’un assaig, es produeix de vegades la situació d’haver de tractar una peça breu d’una manera fugaci. En aquest sentit, l’exemple més clar és el de la farsa Les tres gràcies, que l’assaigista resol en tres línies i mitja. Potser el resultat hauria estat més coherent abordant la poesia dramàtica sagarriana temàticament—em penso que és possible de fer-ho—o mitjançant l’aproximació genèrica tradicional. En un i altre cas, i sempre respectant les característiques de la prosa d’assaig, l’autor del llibre hauria pogut incidir més profundament en les peces destacades i fer referència a les altres a través de les primeres. D’altra part, això li hauria permès d’anitzar cada peça amb una metodologia semblant—ara no sempre ho fa així—, cosa que ens dubte hauria beneficiat la solidesa i l’eficàcia del text.

Cal agrair, igualment, al professor Sobrer que hagi començat una labor de recuperació de la crítica a les estrenes de Sagarra apareguda en la premsa barcelonina. Aquí ens en dóna mostres procedents del diari La Vanguardia—durant el franquisme, La Vanguardia Española—i de les revistes setmanals Mirador, Teatre Català i Destino. És un primer pas important, però en caldrà donar d’altres per tal de poder disposar d’una visió completa de la recepció del teatre sagarrià.

La part sisena i final, “El baf d’aquesta terra. Reflexions de sortida”, té, en certa mesura, els encerts i les deficiències de la primera part. Però està redactada amb més deteniment, amb la qual cosa resulta, com és natural, més matisada, sense els descuits i la manca de precisió, massa evidents, amb què són tractats alguns aspectes en la primera part. A més, el lector hi trobarà suggeriments, idees i observacions que, generalitzades adequadament, poden desenvolupar-se en altres monografies sobre el teatre i potser sobre altres gèneres que Sagarra també va cultivar amb abundor.

Malgrat tot, aquest assaig de Josep Miquel Sobrer serà, des d’ara, lectura més que recomanable per introduir-se en el conjunt del teatre de Josep M. de Sagarra.

MIQUEL M. GIBERT
Universitat Pompeu Fabra


Antoni Tàpies (1923–2012) is arguably the most relevant and original artistic presence in Spanish contemporary art from the second half of the twentieth century.
century and his preeminence in Spanish and European Postwar art is indisputable. The experimental nature of his artwork as well as the mysticism of his artistic persona are crucial features in understanding the renewal and international success of Spanish Avant-garde art since the late 1950s. Tàpies’ writings document and expand the artistic preoccupations and semantic issues he explores in his artworks. Written between the mid-1950s and the 2000s, Tàpies’ texts have been compiled for the first time in *Collected Essays*, a book recently published by the Tàpies Foundation and Indiana University Press. In these texts, Tàpies reflects on the intricate force of his creative processes and the relevance of his artistic influences while discussing the cultural politics of his time. The reader will find in this collection texts on art, culture, politics, and public life that disclose the richness of Tàpies’ intellectual universe. The essays reveal the intimate nature of his artistic mysticism and his engagement with his specific political and cultural circumstances, engaging themes that range from Zen meditation to the formation of Modern Catalan identity.

One element from his artwork that permeates into his writings is the iconic symbolism of the wall. As Manuel Borja-Villel and Xavier Antich have shown, the wall occupies a prominent place in Tàpies’ intimate and mystic universe. A prolific and experimental production for more than five decades, the wall reigns in his creative process as the main visual and semantic metaphor in which visual art, personal language, and physical scar coexist. The wall embodies in Tàpies’ works the image of both an architectonical support and a rhetorical surface. Furthermore, through the visual and tactile richness of the wall as public screen and intimate skin, Tàpies’ walls simultaneously explore the visual and semantic possibilities of matter, spatial enclosure and symbolic writing while concurrently functioning as testimonials to the passage of time and an inquiry into ruin; an exploration of the fragmentized body; an arena for personal inscriptions; and a visual space for social allegories. The irreducible metaphorical force of the wall as both spatial surface and personal symbol recurs consistently in Tàpies’ artistic universe in which walls, windows, doors, body parts and scratches are transformed into liminal images of wounds and decay that suggest a symbolic exorcism where the exterior world of the object encounters the expressive dimension of his personal inner world. As he writes in 1955, “Art is a sign, an object, something that suggests reality in our spirit” (52).

Tàpies’ cultural curiosity and ceaseless exploration with diverse matter and surfaces applies to his textual legacy. Suggestive and intimate, Tàpies’ texts further introspect and increase the abyss of his personal and visual universe. Far from being anecdotic supplements to his artwork, his writing expands the mysticism of the walls as textual opportunities in which he reflects on his artistic inquiries, personal dilemmas, and historical circumstances. In so doing, his texts become windows to look through the inanimate surface of the walls—vases, thus revealing the sources of his creative process as well as the literary, mystical, and cultural referents of his personal experience. In “A Report on the Wall,” from 1969, Tàpies states: “How many suggestions may be gotten from
the image of the wall and all its possible derivations!” (107). As Josep Miquel Sobrer remarks in the translation of the text, “tàpies” in Catalan means “small walls” hence expanding the semantic possibilities of his artworks as both public social apparatus and intimate metaphors (108). This literal and symbolic closeness between his visual and textual metaphors happens always by means of the intimacy of his works with his mother tongue Catalan. The Catalan spirit as Tàpies refers to it, incarnates both as language and political identity and plays a crucial role in his work, as can be seen in those texts that situate Tàpies as a contemporary interlocutor and critic of Spanish and Catalan contemporary culture (see for instance “Modern Art, Mysticism and Humor,” where he explores the meditations of medieval Catalan mystic Ramon Llull, or “Conceptual Art Here,” where Tàpies discusses the politics of Catalan conceptual artists in post-Franco Spain).

Beyond being a direct testimony to Tàpies’ creative process, the texts included in Collected Essays discuss the main themes and preoccupations that shaped his artistic persona and further furnished his intellectual itinerary. As Serge Guilbaut writes in the introductory text of the volume called “And So Said Antoni Tàpies,” Tàpies’ textual production creates a “double engagement” that situates his personal artistic voice and his bold and determinate intellectual voice in the specificity of Spanish postwar art which includes the response to the claustrophobic cultural environment under the authoritarian Franco regime and the posterior political evolution towards social democracy. The artistic, mystic, political, and cultural dimension of Tàpies’ words is now available in English thanks to Sobrer’s translation of the original texts in Catalan and Spanish. Sobrer’s translation successfully renders Tàpies’ personal universe into English by paying special attention to the semantic richness and lexical ambiguity of Tàpies’ words. Sobrer acknowledges and highlights Tàpies’ profuse linguistic ambiguity by providing helpful historical, lexical, and bibliographic references in concise Translator Notes throughout the essays. If, as Cervantes famously stated, any translation is in itself an act of betrayal (as the famous Italian motto said: traduttore-traditore), every attempt to render the original meaning into a different language performs inevitably a deceptive displacement. Resisting this textual law, Sobrer’s rendering of Tàpies’ words compellingly captures his artistic language while maintaining his persuasive and thoughtful content. In so doing, Sobrer’s text preserves the richness of Tàpies’ original and intimate universe by balancing the difficult tension between the artist’s interior and exterior walls in the original texts while at the same time making readable into English his personal world and the unique language of his voice in his thinking process.

Collected Essays is the second of a six-volume publication of Tàpies’ Complete Writings, and follows his autobiography Personal Memory, which appeared in 2006. This second volume of Tàpies’ writings is hugely beneficial for anyone interested in the particularity and artistic relevance of Tàpies’ creative processes, and is also a valuable document for understanding his specific artis-
tic voice in the European postwar artistic context. This volume of essays is not only a valuable source for any scholar studying Tàpies but also offers the opportunity to experience Tàpies’ inner world and the profound relation between the semantic and mystic nature of the art he creates.

FERNANDO HERRERO-MATOSES
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN


Vicent J. Escartí has provided the first complete edition of Isabel de Villena’s Vita Christi in almost one hundred years. The previous one, Ramón Miquel i Planas’ three-volume edition and study published in Barcelona in 1916, is available in relatively few libraries in the U.S. Abridged versions of the Vita Christi appeared in 1986 (ed. L. Parra, Valencia: Institució Alfons el Magnànim) and 1995 (ed. A. Hauf, Barcelona: Edicions 62). Escartí’s fine edition is therefore a timely boon to scholars of Isabel de Villena’s monumental and groundbreaking life of Christ.

Pere Maria Orts y Bosch of the Acadèmia Valenciana de la Llengua wrote the biographical sketch of the noble-born but illegitimate Sor Isabel, which precedes Escartí’s own introduction. On the death of her father, Enrique de Villena (a renowned if infamous author and member of the Trastámara family), the four-year-old Elionor Manuel de Villena went to live at the court of her relative María de Castilla, wife of Alfons V el Magnànim. Due to the circumstances of her birth, the orphaned child was probably compelled to become a nun, and she joined the Order of the Poor Clares in the Convent of the Santíssima Trinidad, where she eventually became abbess. It was here that her religious devotion and desire to educate other nuns intersected with her literary gifts, resulting in the Vita Christi, one of the monuments of Valencian literature in the fifteenth century, and the first work in Catalan written by a woman.

In Escartí’s introductory study (17-42), he briefly recounts Sor Isabel’s contributions as abbess before commenting on the didactic nature of her work. Here he mentions the sources of the Vita Christi, summarizes its contents, and cites some of the remarks made by literary critics over the centuries about the merits of her work. One would have wished for a more developed introductory essay, as readers who pick up this edition to gain access to the complete text will have to look elsewhere for a general study of what makes Sor Isabel’s text so significant. It would have been beneficial to read how this work is related to the Vita Christi tradition in the Middle Ages, particularly to Fray Íñigo de Mendoza’s version that most immediately preceded it. Readers would have benefitted also from an evaluation of Sor Isabel’s use of canonical Gospel texts,
alongside apocryphal accounts, analysis of her engaging discourse that is as emotional as it is doctrinal, and commentary on her defense of women that pervades the text. This last issue could have been examined in light of other profeminist works of the era written in response to the misogynist tracts, and more specifically to Jaume Roig’s l’Espill, to which she is thought to have responded. In short, an edition that aspires to be the most authoritative text available of the *Vita Christi* would have been improved by the inclusion of a more comprehensive introductory study. Escartí does include an up-to-date bibliography that refers readers to previous scholarship about various aspects of the work (43-45).

The edition presented here (51-570) is based on the 1497 incunable published seven years after the death of Isabel de Villena, the printing that was also the basis of Miquel i Planes’ 1916 text. Escartí has used the conservative and useful criteria for editions that are accepted in contemporary preparation of editions of medieval manuscripts and early printed books. These criteria provide for some regularization of orthographical incidents (such as *v* for *u*, *i* for *j*, etc.), the addition of punctuation, separation of words, and resolution of abbreviations, all of which facilitate reading of the text. These modifications maintain the integrity of the text by not altering such characteristics as variable orthography. The footnotes that Escartí provides concern only matters of language, such as the observation of Latinisms, popular use of lexical items, words that originate in Castilian or Aragonese, and other such issues.

The edition is followed by an index of chapters with their headings (571-89) then by a glossary of words likely unfamiliar to the contemporary reader. This is a handsomely produced volume that will be most beneficial to scholars seeking a complete version of the *Vita Christi*.

NANCY F. MARINO
Michigan State University