

## Contemporary Catalan Classics – Contemporary Catalans and Classics

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Conventionally, we could identify the beginning of the *Renaixença* with the publication of Carles Aribau's *Oda a la Pàtria* (1833). Ideally, this ode could represent the beginning of the recovery of Catalan literature –after a long parenthesis during the XVIth-XVIIIth c.–, which will lead to the rich growth of the successive production, until the contemporary age. In less than two centuries, the spread and diffusion of an impressive artistic-literary development will allow once again the Catalan area to play a prominent role in the international culture.

Particularly, during the XXth c. we observe the appearance of outstanding tendencies, artists and masterpieces which can be considered “Contemporary Catalan Classics”, a very ascending parabola with a constant progression, lasting until today.

The articles presented in this volume examine some peculiar key figures and innovative tendencies of this process, taking into consideration the specific features which characterize them, according to the most recent and experimental trends.

From this point of view, the reflection on Catalan language, its normativization and normalization, and the dialectic between linguistic and philological-literary perspective, as it stood out in the relationship among some personalities which were involved in it, is an essential crux. Isabel Turull's contribution deals with such topic, analyzing the relations among Alcover, Fabra, Coromines and Riba. Regardless of their different positions, sometimes energetically conflicting, the systematic study of Catalan and the purpose to define and outline its structural features and evolution, allowed them to consolidate the fundamentals of a Language able to express the identity peculiarities of its community. These events implicated the reaffirmation of Catalan culture and of its contemporary artistic and literary manifestations.

Alessandro Scarsella's paper focuses on Eugeni d'Ors, who identifies a turning point in the intellectual and stylistic high profile philosophical divulgation and militant criticism, as he realizes the postmodern intersection of genres and registers, of reflection and self-narration. D'Ors adapts the gloss, a short essay form, to his wide ranging capability of interpretation, conforming it to his intelligence which aims for the control of the whole. The author projects himself in the European and North-American dimension of those years and expresses the intent to acculturate and deprovincialize the Catalan culture of the beginnings of the XXth c. All this comes to light through the analysis of d'Ors' correspondence with many artists and intellectuals: the study of his unpublished epistolary exchanges with relevant figures of Italian culture provides a captivating demonstration of it.

Gabriella Gavagnin outlines in her article a close examination of the state-of-the-art about another Classic of the contemporary Catalan literature, Salvador Espriu. Indeed, during the past twenty years, the profoundness, complexity and richness of Espriu's production have been the object of renewed interest on the part of scholars, whose purpose was to explain its still unclear and controversial aspects. These pages highlight the undisputed Espriu's stature in XXth c. literature and the importance of its implications for future developments. So, the studies carried out recently gained in lucidity thanks to the historical distance and new interpretative patterns (retrieval of private documents and unpublished correspondence, genetic criticism applied to Espriu's texts, etc.), which Gavagnini describes in detail.

Martina Cabanas' essay allows the readers to hear the voice of a Protagonist of the

period sketched out in this volume. Cabanas is a member of the theatre company Joglars and she offers a direct testimony about the socio-cultural environment of the last fifty years, which led to the emergence and consecration of the contemporary Catalan Classics. Joglars' plays express the extraordinary eclecticism of its members (pantomime, legacy of the *Commedia dell'Arte*, text-based theatre, experimentalism, etc.), their militant socio-political activism combined with humour, irony and satire. The Company can be defined as a Classic which dialogues with Classics, as its recent Cervantine trilogy demonstrates. With it Joglars reaffirms its impressive receptive and creative capability and constant innovation, which made of it a very Protagonist in the renewal of contemporary stage.

But modern times see the rise and global success of the "seventh art" too. This event is specially outstanding, due to its aesthetic and critical implications, which derive from the same nature of cinema, opened to contaminations with other forms of artistic expressions. Undoubtedly, the cinema succeeds in catching and reflecting the post-modern perspective, also going beyond the 'narration' to concentrate on a defined thematic nucleus. So, Bou in his contribution studies the key role of Pere Portabella in the present catalan cinema. The film-maker begins his activity as a director at the end of the 60ties, achieving a personal aesthetics similar to the *Nouveau roman* or the *Nouvelle vague*. Moreover, the author underlines that Portabella's cinema shows a double perspective: the political militancy and the research on cinematographic language, according to the different manifestations of the audiovisual and anecdotal syncretism.

Finally, the tendency to interdisciplinarity and transmediality reaches its highest expression thanks to another contemporary Catalan Classic: the performance group La Fura dels Baus. In the Fura's productions analyzed in the last paper, Orazi sees the definitive synthesis of many consolidated trends, which the group develops until their extreme possibilities. The transgressiveness of these original and multidisciplinary plays combines with radical innovation and a constant dialogue with universal Classics. The article studies three dramatizations of poetic or narrative sources, which take the form of text-based theatre and large-scale show, where coexist cyber theatre, *cabaret*, music, performance, audiovisual and multimedia effects, influencing the same idea of scenic space and the relationship with the audience. The result is the convergence of contemporary different languages, which main aim is to stimulate the reflection on sensitive topics, according to the challenging aesthetics and socio-political commitment of the group.

So, a very *mirall trencat*, which fragments reflect some novel facets of contemporary Catalan culture, projecting them on a transnational dimension, due to their prominent features. The purpose of this volume is to highlight some of the cutting-edge personalities and groundbreaking tendencies which are the undisputed protagonists of actual culture; definitely, with the embarrassing awareness and clear evidence of how many other impressive cases haven't been included –for reasons of space– in this short but we hope icastic gallery of contemporary Catalan Classics.