



TERRY, Arthur, *A Companion to Catalan Literature*, London, Tàmesis, 2003, pp.172, ISBN: 1 85566 089 X, £ 40.00.

This is a much expanded version of Terry's book *A Literary History of Spain: Catalan Literature*, published by Bonn, Barnes & Noble in 1972. It is a very much needed reference volume offering a sound and general exposition of the wealth and complexity of Catalan Literature to the English reader. Only someone who has studied European literatures of all periods for a lifetime could produce such a credible overview. The reader does not need any language other than English to enjoy this book. All quotations have been translated and there is a list of available English translations of Catalan texts at the back as well as the expected bibliography in Catalan. Terry offers a combination of historical, critical and linguistic commentaries with enough specific detail to entice the reader to read on and to read further after this book. Divided into five chronological chapters on Medieval and Early Renaissance, Decadence and Enlightenment, the XIX Century, the present and an epilogue, each one has subsections on the key writers and works of the period. As a direct reflection of literary output, the length of the chapters ranges from 7 pages in Chapter 2 to 13 in chapter 5 and 20 in the epilogue, but they all start with a brief but extremely lucid introduction to each period offering key historical and socio-economic events. They also include authors from all over the Països Catalans (especially Valencia and Mallorca) with emphasis on the international readings made by each author which had influenced their output. However, this is not an encyclopaedic work. It is not exhaustive (for instance, there is surprisingly little on Josep Pla or Joan Fuster) but certainly able to represent the big picture of what constitutes Catalan letters avoiding the off-putting inclusion of too much detail. Nonetheless, all limitations, bias or oversimplifications are addressed in the epilogue where Terry aligns himself with an alternative approach to the classical progressive movement: 'Wanting to suggest the more general image of Catalan literature I have been trying to create: that of a body

of writing which, for all its objective achievement refuses to settle once and for all into the fixed patterns of literature but remains a constant challenge to writers and readers at the present day' (p.152)

Comparing this new edition to the 1972 original text we notice that in the first chapter, apart from noticing the inclusion of a prose translation to all quotations, which continues throughout the volume, Terry has modestly expanded his commentary on Jordi de Sant Jordi's 'Presoner' (pp.33-34), has added some extra information on Roig de Corella and his links to Ausiàs March and an extra page on Joanot Martorell's *Tirant* (pp.47-48). There are no changes at all in chapters 2 and 3 whilst there is a very slight repositioning in the opening paragraph to Noucentisme (now dated to 1911 and not 1906) (p.84) followed by a greater explanation, no doubt informed by critical debate in recent years (pp.85-87). There have been some additions to the appraisal of Guerau de Liost (pp.88-89) and Carles Riba (p.93), one more quotation has been added to Salvat Papasseit's entry (p.94) and a further 2 pages to J.V.Foix (pp. 95-96) while there has been a slight shortening of the entry for Santiago Rusiñol. It also includes a mention to Miquel de Palol (p.100), who was not present at all in the original version. From this point onwards we notice the addition of dates to all writers dead in the 1980s and 1990s. This chapter has been divided into poetry, fiction and theatre. In the poetry section, Terry adds a mention and quotation from Salvador Espriu's 'Setmana Santa' (p.105), a quotation to Gabriel Ferrater and references to those who he calls "minor poets", such as Leveroni, Vinyoli (p.107), and some major writers such as Estellés (pp.107-108), Agustí Bartra and Joan Brossa (pp.109-111). There is also some expansion of Joan Sales (p.111), a new entry including a quotation for Llorenç Villalonga (pp.111-112), Salvador Espriu (pp.112-113), Mercè Rodoreda (pp.113-114), Pere Calders (pp.114-115) Manuel de Pedrolo (pp.115-116) and Montserrat Roig (pp.116-118). In theatre there are new inclusions in the entries for Joan Oliver (pp. 118-119), Espriu (pp.119-120), Pedrolo (pp.120-121) and Brossa (pp.121-122). Chapter 5 is brand new. Also divided into Poetry, Fiction and Theatre, it comments on Martí I Pol, Sarsanedas, Francesc Vallverdú,

Gimferrer, Comadira and Parcerisas' poetry, Joan Perucho, Sarsanedas, Gimferrer's *Fortuny*, terenci Moix, quim Monzó Biel Mesquida and Jesús Moncada in Fiction and Jordi Teixidor (pp.142-143), Benet I Jornet (pp143 – 146), Rodolf Sirera (146 –147), Sergi Belbel (147 – 149) as well as a list of independent and performance groups in theatre. The epilogue is also new and open ended as it offers a general recap and a look into the future which is not as pessimistic as those offered by some Catalan writers and which finishes the same pro-nationalist quotation by W.B.Yeats that Terry used to end his book in 1972.

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