

## ■ reviews

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**I**gnasi Roviró Alemany (ed.),  
*Estètica catalana, estètica europea.*  
*Estudis d'estètica: entre la tradició i l'actualitat*  
*[Catalan aesthetic, European aesthetic.*  
*Aesthetic studies: Between tradition and today.]*  
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The third volume in the collection «Philosophy and Culture» (Filosofia i Cultura) gathers a series of works, drawn towards the study of contemporary Catalan aesthetics, to draw attention to the sociocultural influence of these statements in Catalonia and Europe.

Professor Giuseppe Di Giocano's publication is the first to offer a detailed analysis of the relation between image and temporality in three very influential contemporary authors in modern aesthetics: Aby Warburg, Walter Benjamin and Theodor Adorno. Warburg establishes a duality in the images between the Apollonian and the Dionysian, the visible and the invisible, and states the new senses of the artistic images in relation with a complex, omnipresent historic memory. Benjamin and Adorno focus on the relationship image-reality. Benjamin supports a dialectical image, formed by presence and representation, which appears and becomes visible without a historical continuity. Adorno, on the other hand, understands the work of art as a display of its own content linked directly to temporality and historicity and conceives the images as dynamic processes with an indefinite number of meanings. These European statements were hard to accept in Catalonia and weren't introduced until some years later, after the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939).

In the second study, professor Luca Marchetti talks about the difficulty of discerning what art is in Arthur C. Danto's philosophical interpretation. The identity of artistic constructs form the triad of productive intentionality

of the author, the historical and artistic context (the art world) and the piece of art itself. For Danto, each work of art is ontologically different and holds within an immutable essence and therefore, only one correct interpretation. When connecting the work of art with the context, its identity becomes totally unstable, with a continuous risk of becoming a mere object.

Next, professors Ignasi Roviró, Manuel Jorba, Xavier Serra and Conrad Vilanou, present the state of their investigations about XIXth. century and early XXth. century Catalan aesthetics. In the first place, Ignasi Roviró goes more deeply into one of the paths to liberal thought and the influence of the English aesthetic in Catalonia during the first years of the XIXth. century. He refers to the rhetorician Scott Hugh Blair, who was taken by liberals (Catalans and also Spanish), as an ideological standard. In Catalonia, Blair's thoughts were introduced by Manuel Casamada i Comella, a friar from Barcelona who defended the moderate government of the liberals which was quite important in the Catalan context. Casamada is not a much studied author, but he stands out for the distinction he makes between beautiful and sublime in the Real Acadèmia de Bones Lletres of Barcelona speech in 1837.

In second place, Manuel Jorba, from the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, shows us the importance of Manuel Milà i Fontanals in the diffusion of aesthetics outside the academic world. The publication of the first aesthetics text for both students and professors from universities (*Manual d'estètica*, 1848), has been attributed to him. But, overstepping the limits of the purely academic, this scholar wanted to give readers with different backgrounds in ethical and aesthetic principles guidelines with respect to artistic and literary works and orient their judgement towards works that deserve them. Before the creation of a new doctrine, aesthetic had a target: providing solid and reasoned bases.

The third research, done by Xavier Serra, reveals a character from the Renaixença who has been forgotten, the professor Josep Vicenç Fillol, from the time of Manuel Milà i Fontanals. In October of 1862, Fillol opened the university course in València with a speech about intellectual taste «El gust intel·lectual», in which he highlights the importance of developing correct intellectual taste through study and work. The holder of the chair of general and Spanish literature in the Universitat de València, Fillol, «vernacular poet», evolved towards a Catholic integristism, turning (assuming the linguistic inferiority complexes typical in that time) into a firm defender of Spanish. He published several works, among which we can highlight his teaching manual written in verse *Ensayos poéticos sobre la estética y la oratoria*, from 1853.

And last, Conrad Vilanou centers his attention on the aesthetic thoughts of Joan Roura-Parella, a philosopher and educator who exiled himself to the United States. A lover of music, painting and literature, Roura-Parella combined his intellectual interests with teaching, becoming a professor at Wesleyan University. As an educator he taught several subjects related with aesthetics, emphasizing the importance of the work of art, the genius of the artist and

the aesthetic pleasure. Vilanou focused his research on reviewing the content of his two most successful courses («Art in human experience» and «Art style as a World view») and transcribes the content of the classes.

*Translation from Catalan by Dan Cohen*