

## ■ review

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## osep M<sup>a</sup> Terricabras (ed.), *La filosofia d'Eduard Nicol*, Girona: Documenta Universitaria, 2010

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The Ferrater Mora Chair of Contemporary Thought was established in Girona in 1989. Its importance, as Ferrater Mora himself said, would lie in what the new institution was capable of creating. Under the guidance of its first and only occupant so far, Josep Maria Terricabras, it has followed standard models of rigour and quality, of which the present volume is a good example.

The Ferrater Mora Chair has had great significance for the University of Girona, while becoming one of the fundamental institutions for philosophical activity in Catalonia. Besides bringing the brightest and best figures of contemporary thought to Catalonia (Prigogine, Sloterdijk, Chomsky, Davidson...), it has also advanced studies on contemporary home-grown authors. This second branch of activity has been undertaken through annual seminars studying the works of: Ramon Turró, Eugeni d'Ors, Eusebi Colomer, Josep Ferrater Mora, Joaquim Xirau, Joan Maragall and Eduard Nicol. The papers and speeches presented and debated at each of these seminars have then been published.

The book we are looking at is a collection of the texts presented in the seminar dedicated to Eduard Nicol i Francesca, one of the most rigorous and prolific Catalan philosophers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and, at the same time, one of the least known in Catalonia due to his exile.

The seminar was organized in 2007 to celebrate the centenary of his birth in Barcelona, and his widow was among those taking part. The seminar was a splendid opportunity for dialogue between Catalan and Mexican Philosophers and historians of iberoamerican philosophy. The book is a collection of writings by different specialists and Nicol's followers in the Iberian peninsula and Mexico: Miquel Siguan, José Luís Abellán, Bernat Castany, Miguel Ángel Martínez Quintanar, Guadalupe Olivares, Rush González, Ricardo Horneffer and Joan Cuscó.

Reading this miscellaneous collection means rediscovering the prolific and forceful writings of Nicol, his ceaseless activity founding journals, seminars and whatever else was needed, the importance of the Barcelona's Autonomous University in the Second Republic, the breach and annihilation that Franco's regime inflicted on Catalan philosophy, Nicol's influence on Mexican philosophy and his international status, his moral integrity and his power as a thinker who is fully aware of his present and the universal perspective on human life that philosophical reflection must provide...

Nicol's work is first-rate, and ambitious. Even so, he is practically unknown in Catalonia. He is rarely mentioned in study plans and his books are hard to find in university bookshops, but hopefully this book can help to redress this anomaly. First of all, there is an analysis of philosophy and Catalan philosophers at the time when Nicol was studying and taking his first steps. After that comes the study of his life in exile. Finally, there are a series of works that aim to analyze the fundamentals of his work, and contributions that look into the current situation of certain ideas put forward by Nicol. They are all interesting, but the work of Guadalupe Olivares showing the importance that Nicol acquired in his host country, and Ricardo Hornoffer on how Nicol's energy has been passed on to his pupils, are of special interest.

A writer such as Nicol is too valuable an asset to be overlooked by any culture, but especially one such as ours in our current situation.

Eduard Nicol i Francisca (Barcelona 1907 – Mèxic, 1990), is a major philosopher for many reasons. Because he tackled the most important authors without prejudice, because he was clear about the challenges of philosophy in his time; because the influence of his teachers meant that he was rooted in the native tradition that was then beginning to establish itself; because his capacity for synthesis and for lucid observation never abandoned him (even in the theatre reviews that he wrote in his youth to pay for his education). As a philosopher he created his view of the world, while his awareness of the problems of philosophy as a discipline made him reflect on it and its values, going back to its Greek origins and, finally, as a prestigious intellectual, his was a critical voice on the contemporary world. These three broad themes give his work weight and relevance today. As this book shows, he makes it clear that ideas are not inert, and the act of thinking is itself a praxis, as Nicol himself liked to say.