

■ preface

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This special issue is dedicated to the memory of the philosopher Josep Maria Ferrater Mora (1912–1991) on the occasion of the centenary of his birth.

There are many reasons to produce an issue such as this one. Ferrater Mora was the leading Catalan philosopher of the twentieth century and a distinguished essayist in several languages. Useful and clear, his extensive writings not only reached a wide audience, but are characterised by original speculation. Indeed, much of his work remains valid today, inviting reinterpretation and extension. Also, from the standpoint of intellectual history, the study of his contributions and personal journey are crucial to gaining a clear understanding of the revival of Catalan thought between 1955 and 1975, Franco's military dictatorship notwithstanding. Beyond that, Ferrater Mora was the only Catalan philosopher of his time who conquered the Catalan and Latin American publishing markets and then set out to make an impact in the diffuse and challenging Anglo-Saxon arena as well.

While some of Ferrater's writing on logic, epistemology and philosophy of language are now of little more than historical interest, his work in the latter two areas was highly influential at the time and it does reveal his strivings and learning process. By contrast, his works in ethics, ontology and intellectual history — take, for example, the organisation, structure and content of his monumental dictionary — continue to have a wide appeal and they may yet provide a source of inspiration for future scholars and philosophers. Centres such as the Ferrater Mora Chair in Girona and the Ferrater Mora Oxford Centre for Animal Ethics are clear examples of his later impact. Researchers such as Carlos Nieto, Òscar Horta, Antoni Mora, Jordi Gracia and Narcís Garolera — to name but five picked from a broad spectrum — have shown renewed interest in his work. The excellent initiative of the Ferrater Mora Chair to digitise and disseminate the man's extensive collected letters (totalling nearly 7,000) has made it possible to delve more deeply into his life and thought, which had previously elicited memorable texts, such as Josep Pla's portrait in the series on important figures collected under the title *Homenots*.

Even so, we still do not have a significant number of academic studies that provide a thorough analysis of Ferrater's oeuvre as a whole and in its particulars, including his essays and his neglected fiction. In this spirit, we have

gathered in this issue a number of pieces written for the two-day conference dedicated to Ferrater Mora, held on 7 November 2012 in the Josep Viader Auditorium at the Casa de Cultura in Girona and on 8 November at the Institute for Catalan Studies in Barcelona.

For our part, we have focused on analysing aspects of Ferrater Mora's philosophical thought. We also bring to light three unpublished letters written by the philosopher to Salvador Giner, and offer an up dated bibliography kindly given to us by the Ferrater Mora Chair of Girona.