

## ■ review

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oan Cuscó (Ed.), *Filosofia i consciència: Francesc Xavier Llorens i Barba* (Philosophy and Conscience: Francesc Xavier Llorens i Barba), Barcelona, Faculty of Philosophy. Universitat Ramon Llull, 2010

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Discussions on the life and thought of Xavier Llorens i Barba have a long and memorable history: Bishop Torras i Bages and scholar Menéndez y Pelayo were already, towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, embroiled in a dispute over his doctrinal evolution. A few decades later, when the professors of philosophy of the University of Barcelona –Serra Hunter, Parpal and Tomàs Carreras Artau– sought to establish him as the key figure of Catalan thought of the 1800s, Eugeni d'Ors and Francesc Pujols ridiculed the idea. Neither the latter nor the Bishop of Vic believed there was any need to attach excessive importance to the philosophical ideas introduced by Llorens. Nevertheless, in the end, the professors' obsession came, to a degree, to pass. Josep Pla caused the last notorious dispute in 1930, with an article published in *La Veu de Catalunya* that provoked the ire of Professor Tomàs Carreras Artau. Carreras, who had remained silent a few years earlier before the impertinence of Pujols and d'Ors, now replied with five articles published in the daily *El Matí* and collated in the book *Introducció a la història del pensament filosòfic a Catalunya* (Introduction to the History of Philosophical Thought in Catalonia).

Later on, the ramblings of Ferrater Mora and Vicenç Vives on Catalan *seny* (common sense), on the one hand, and Nicol's imprecise vindication of the "Barcelona School", on the other, ended up completely muddying the waters.

In more recent years, the episode of the introduction of the Scottish School of Common Sense, led by Llorens and Martí d'Eixalà, has once again attracted the attention of historians. The end of 1998 saw the appearance of *El*

*pensament de Francesc Xavier Llorens i Barba i la filosofia escocesa* (The Thought of F. Xavier Llorens i Barba and Scottish Philosophy), by Misericòrdia Anglès. A few months later came Joan Cuscó's *Francesc Xavier Llorens i Barba i el pensament filosòfic a Catalunya* (Francesc Xavier Llorens i Barba and Philosophical Thought in Catalonia).

Since then, Cuscó has made some significant contributions to the history of contemporary Catalan thought. In his articles on the brothers Pau and Manuel Milà i Fontanals, those on the links between Francesc Pujols and Salvador Dalí and those on the concept of character in the writings of Letamendi, Cuscó has in recent years been laying the foundations for a history of aesthetic ideas in Catalonia. Additionally, his insistent and effective claiming of a place in history for the work of Rodolf Llorens, a figure of relative importance in left-wing Catalan nationalism during the Second Republic and author, in those years, of a response to Eugeni d'Ors's *La Ben Plantada*, has helped to expand and correct ideas on those Catalan philosophers who went into exile in America after the Civil War.

And now, finally, he has had to return to his research into Llorens i Barba.

It is truly symptomatic that the two authors of books on the introducer of the philosophy of Common Sense have had occasion to recently renew these studies: Anglès has done so in the monographic issues of the journal *Enrahonar* dedicated to the history of Catalan thought and Cuscó encouraged by the preparation of the volume published as part of the *Col·lecció Eusebi Colomer*. Also to be added to this current revival is Fèlix Villagrasa's *Francesc Xavier Llorens i Barba. La Universitat de Barcelona i el pensament català al segle XIX* (Francesc Xavier Llorens i Barba. The University of Barcelona and Catalan Thought of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century).

Today, the situation is obviously not the same as that of the time of the controversies caused by Eugeni d'Ors and by Josep Pla. The information on the family origins of Llorens and on the philosophical influences he received has increased considerably. Despite this, however, the episode is still unclear in some regards.

It has also been possible to make progress in publishing the manuscripts of the different versions of the notes on classes given by Llorens: the collection *Filosofia i consciència* includes, together with other writings that were already known but worth republishing, part of some notes from the 1855-56 academic year that had not previously seen the light of day. Also, in the introduction, Cuscó has sought to show the influence on Llorens of the learned doctor Fèlix Janer, author of a speech on eclecticism given at Barcelona's *Reial Acadèmia de Bones Lletres* in 1846. However, the most important

new finding in this study –insofar as it helps to clarify one of the character’s most obscure facets– is the news of a letter written by a witness of the times –Antoni Maria Fontanals– on Llorens’s ideological evolution from the enthusiastic liberalism he showed whilst a student, a time that coincided with the First Carlist War, to the political conservatism and religious fanaticism of his later years –an evolution that we can also find in other Catalan and Valencian academics of the 1800s.