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Contornos de la narrativa española actual (2000–2010). Un diálogo entre creadores y críticos. Edición de Palmar Álvarez-Blanco y Toni Dorca. La Casa de la Riqueza. Estudios de Cultura de España 19. Madrid: Iberoamericana/Frankfurt am Main: Vervuert. 2011. 318 pp.

(En)claves de la Transición. Una visión de los Novísimos (prosa, poesía, ensayo). Edición de Enric Bou y Elide Pittarello. La Casa de la Riqueza. Estudios de Cultura de España 16. Madrid: Iberoamericana/Frankfurt am Main: Vervuert. 2009. 372 pp.

In recent years, the rate of publication of book-length studies of contemporary Spanish literature (both full-length monographic studies and edited collections of essays or articles, such as the present ones) has seen a marked increase. If twenty years ago, say, a student or scholar of the literature produced in Spain since the 1970s had to rely, in the main, on book reviews and publications in the periodical press and some, but few, scholarly articles, nowadays he or she is spoiled for choice in comparison, not only by the range of full-length studies of individual writers, but also by the number of books exploring the panorama of recent Spanish literature as a whole, or aspects of it. Both of the above new titles can be added to the list of welcome recent contributions by Fernando Valls (*La realidad inventada: análisis crítico de la novela española actual* [Barcelona: Crítica, 2003]), José María Pozuelo Yvancos (*Ventanas de la ficción: narrativa hispánica, siglos XX y XXI* [Barcelona: Península, 2004] and *Figuraciones del yo en la narrativa: Javier Marías y E. Vila-Matas* [Valladolid: Univ. de Valladolid, 2010]), Juan Antonio Masoliver Ródenas (*Voces contemporáneas* [Barcelona: Acontilado, 2004]) or José Carlos Mainer (*Tramas, libros, nombres: para entender la literatura española* [Barcelona: Anagrama, 2005]), to name a few of the ones that spring to mind.

Both collections explore contemporary Spanish writing, albeit in different ways: while Bou's and Pittarello's book focuses on those writers born after the Civil War (understood broadly enough to encompass prose narrative, poetry and essayism) whose shared aesthetic and poetics played a part in renewing Spanish literature from the mid 1960s onwards and still shape it today, Álvarez-Blanco's and Dorca's volume examines a very broad range of aspects of Spanish narrative prose in the first decade of the new millennium.

As such, and despite its narrow chronological scope, *Contornos*, prefaced by a suggestive introduction to Spanish narrative as either ‘narrativa nostálgica’ or ‘contranostálgica’ (P. Álvarez-Blanco), casts its net very widely in order to reflect on the multiplicity of phenomena it chooses to foreground: postcolonial literature in Spanish of the Maghreb (A. Campoy), the Catalan novel (M. Casacuberta), Basque literature (A. Martín, M. J. Olaziregi), Galician literature (C. Moreiras-Menor, D. Vilavedra), literature and immigration (P. Álvarez-Blanco), recent novels of memory, the Transition or the Civil War (S. Faber, T. Aguado, A. Gómez López-Quiñones, G. Labrador Méndez and E. Portela), the brave new world of publishing (R. Acín, J. Saval), women writers (C. de Urioste), the historical novel (T. Dorca), film adaptations (S. Torres), Roberto Bolaño (A. Medina) and E. Vila-Matas (N. Morgado). These contributions make up the first and major part of the book; a second section consists of a series of short texts by fifteen older (e.g., Rosa Montero, José María Merino, José Ángel González Sainz or Belén Gopegui) or younger (Óscar Aibar, Miguel Mena or Julia Otxoa) ‘creadores’ who also write on a variety of topics but with the freedom and insight they have gained as published authors. Inevitably, for a collection of such scope and assorted topics and contributions, some are more interesting, precise diagnoses or simply better than others, but the sheer volume of texts alone, coupled with a number of interesting and perspicacious discussions, allows one to gain good insight into some recent tendencies.

(*En*)*claves de la Transición* is a book examining the work of what is more or less a generation of writers who, as Enric Bou and Elide Pittarello maintain in their introduction, were the protagonists of an aesthetic and cultural revolution, whose beginnings is traced to the publication of Pere Gimferrer’s poetry collection *Arde el mar* in 1966 and unfolds up to the year 1992, which period coincides for the editors with that of the Spanish Transition. The term ‘Novísimos’ is rightly understood to include not only those writers who were part of José María Castellet’s fabled anthology of poets—*Nueve novísimos poetas españoles* of 1970—but also a number of others who formed part of this ‘momento de transformación’ and shared an aesthetic. All of the authors studied lived in part through and were marked by the ‘cultural revolution’ which began after the Second World War and produced a ‘youth culture’ that came to dominate much of the culture of the Western World and, sooner or later, made a significant contribution to the renovation of Spanish literature by way of the cultural shift that Spain also underwent at the same time and from the 1960s onwards, in particular, and a break with tradition, realism, Spanishness or the seriousness of cultural manifestations. In this context, a series of monographic essays explore aspects of the work of Manuel Vázquez Montalbán (C. Ramos), Terenci Moix (C. Ramos), Eduardo Mendoza (E. Bou), Félix de Azúa (L. Silvestri), Pere Gimferrer (J. Barella), Montserrat Roig (P. Rigobon), Vicente Molina Foix (I. Giménez Caro), Juan José Millás (P. Anastasio), Fernando Savater (J. Gracia), Guillermo Carnero (E. Pittarello), Ana María Moix (H. R. Song), Javier Marías (H. Scharm), Rosa Montero (S. Faber), Leopoldo María Panero (A. Mistrorigo) and Antonio Muñoz Molina (S. Ballarín). They are all invariably thoroughly researched, excellent contributions informed by original perspectives.

The one major shortcoming of both books is the absence of an index, which nowadays seems to be considered a luxury only few publishers are prepared to countenance, an absence felt particularly in the case of *Contornos*, given its wide-ranging and mostly theme-based focus; also the font size used in this volume is smaller than in the other, making reading more arduous, but the proofreading, on the other hand, seems to have been more thorough. Notwithstanding, I would recommend both books to those with an interest in contemporary Spanish literature.

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