

〔書評〕

Review and Discussion of *Catalonia : History and culture*  
by John Payne and *Catalonia : A cultural history* by Michael Eaude

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The autonomous region of Catalonia, in northeast Spain, maintains a strong sense of local history and culture, and is a destination for tourists as well as historians, other scholars and international business. Transitions into our modern, technological and globalizing world society has happened along ancient landscapes, remains of feudal estates, medieval towns and cities as well as entrepreneurial, industrial and commercial traditions. This article discusses John Payne's and Michael Eaude's approaches to the history and culture of Catalonia. Each work presents a unique view of Catalonia through the author's eyes which together provide a thorough introduction to the region for a variety of audiences. First, an outline of each work is given with comments, and a comparative discussion of the two works follows.

***Catalonia : History and culture* by John Payne**

John Payne presents his work in three main parts : *Catalonia – a Sense of History*, *The Cultures of Catalonia*, and *Catalonia Today*. In Chapter one Payne introduces the reader to Empúries, in the province of Girona, which was established by traders about 550 BC. He reminds us of the presence of Iberians, Phocaeans, Phoenicians, Rhodians and Carthaginians who were also players in this era during which the Romans were advancing their dominance in the Mediterranean. Roman ruins are found throughout Catalonia, some of the most impressive in Tarragona. Some of the present day towns maintain layouts from Roman times, not to mention aqueducts, bridges and old city walls. This sets the stage for the deepness of the history of people who inhabit a place for millenniums and the continuity of culture.

In Chapter Two, the Visigoth era is told through visits to various towns in the Pyrenees and the Romanesque architecture found there. He discusses Muslim influences as well as Christian. Clerics and landowners advanced their interests ; life was dangerous, and feudalism was developing.

Chapter Three gives notable attention to the Mediterranean Empire of the Catalan-Aragonese Federation. Feudalism, business, trade and the role of the church in the feudal system and economy are discussed. The empire expanded to include Valencia, the Balearic Islands, the area of Rosselló in France, Sardinia, parts of the Italian Peninsula and Greece. Piracy was on occasions condoned by the crown, and the expansion of Catalan culture included brutal resettlement of some conquered lands, often disposing of the previous inhabitants through slavery or exile. During this period, much development occurred in the city of Barcelona especially in terms of trade and commerce in the port and civic life and culture.

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Chapter Four takes the reader from the 1600's through the *Renaixença*, industrialization and the accompanying social changes leading into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Catalonia had a series of defeats, as indicated by the title *Backing the Wrong Horse*, supporting the Carlists and in the process losing territory and also political autonomy under the New Plan of the Bourbons. Payne tells us the experience of the city of Cervera, the venue of the marriage contract of Ferdinand and Isabel. Later, Catalonia also experienced new opportunities for wealth in the Spanish colonies—money which could be invested in the textile industry and other economic development when successful émigrés returned home. Payne gives us examples of Sitges and Vilanova. The upper middle class expanded, art and culture were revived thanks to financial backing from industrialists, but working classes remained in difficult conditions. Industrial progress was accompanied by changing views about the church, new liberalism and growing syndication of workers.

The next chapter takes the reader from the Republic through a difficult war to the post-war repression of the Franco dictatorship. The chapter draws on Orwell's writing regarding his experience during the war years, but also numerous other works on the war as well as the experiences of individuals. Payne does not detail the forty years of post-war repression or the details of the transition to democracy after the Franco era ; however, the later part of the chapter discusses the social phenomenon of "collective amnesia" that seemed to be the price of peace and a necessary base for the transition to democracy. The silence about the war and repression created "internal exile" for some, and the role of film, literature, poetry have been important in breaking this silence toward a recuperation of collective memory. This is an ongoing process of recuperation and integration of the experience of those repressive years, which in the case of Catalonia was often considered an attempt at cultural genocide, into both national and regional histories. It is important that Payne includes this concise and well expressed section which emphasizes the continuous intersection of past and present.

The second part of the book covers the development of culture in historical layers which are further detailed in each of the chapters from the Visigoth era through the present. Payne returns to the question of cultural diversity in Catalonia in chapter six considering the Christians, Jew and Muslims. The city of Girona is the readers introduction to the historical Jewish culture and the city of Lleida is chosen to introduce that of the Muslims.

Chapter seven addresses the expansion of the city of Barcelona in the 19<sup>th</sup> century into wide open quadrangular blocks, in contrast to the narrow winding streets of the old city, along with *modernisme* which Payne describes as "Catalonia's own version of art nouveau." The architecture, the architects and their politics defined the nation and national character, although sometimes from rather different social viewpoints as socialists or conservatives creating new spaces and facilities for the citizens of their cities or for their private clients. Growing social class divisions accompanied industrial expansion and its representation in architecture.

Barcelona as the main venue of many of the political and social developments of the 20<sup>th</sup> century is presented in chapter eight. From the beginning of the century, with a seven year hiatus under the Primo de Rivera dictatorship, through the Republic and into the war from 1936-1939, the focus on architecture continues, a process which Payne describes as moving from *modernisme* into *modernista* style. Some of the projects were interrupted by the war or during the post-war Franco era. Urban development was under a great deal of pressure with increased immigration into the city, the growth of immigrant neighborhoods and suburbs and continuing divisions between social classes. More recent projects in urban renewal have occurred with the hosting of the Olympics, Forum and other international events as well as development for tourism. Payne also introduces the neighborhood organizations, which remain very important in the city, as well as new interests in ecology and initiatives for sustainable development.

Popular culture in Catalonia is the theme of chapter nine. The meanings of older traditions which continue to be represented in festivals often date back centuries with origins in religion, good against evil, agriculture and harvest, annual renewal and natural phenomena. The chapter explains that there are also very local traditions in towns,

rather than a single regional tradition. The cultural priority seems to be taking part as opposed to mere observation. Although change over centuries cannot be totally avoided, there is maintenance of many original features of these traditions. Payne gives examples from various towns in different provinces.

Chapter ten moves onto tourism. Rural areas are the focus rather than urban architecture, museums and restaurants. Payne adds more details of the history of agricultural development and the multicultural influences over the centuries. He includes a few pages on the typical expectations of British tourists interested in enjoying the seaside on the Costa Brava. But then he returns to the theme of tourism and nature, national parks and agriculture with positive comments on what he sees as successful green tourism and enjoying nature as part of local culture as well as local consciousness for sustainability.

The reader by now may be wondering whether or not Picasso, Dalí, Casals and other world renowned artists of Catalonia would be mentioned. Chapter eleven addresses these contributors to regional, national and international art as well as their importance in tourism today.

From a European viewpoint, Payne looks at Catalan identity and the identity of Catalonia in chapter twelve. Catalan, Spanish, European or some combination of these are identity options for many people living in Catalonia. He discusses Catalan political elements, the multicultural nature of Spain and the importance of the Catalan language as an element in Catalan identity. Language in Catalonia is the theme of chapter thirteen ; the repression and revival of the Catalan language, the present situation of normalization of the language, the changing roles and social territories of Spanish and Catalan in the region, and the increasing use of English in Barcelona are mentioned. Language choice by writers, bilingual lifestyles and the increased presence of Catalan in mass media are some of the details he elaborates.

The northern part of old Catalonia, now part of France, is introduced in chapter fourteen by its role in the Spanish Civil War as the passage out of Spain into Europe and, shortly afterwards, as the passage out of Nazi occupied France for some hoping to flee Europe through Spain and Portugal. The reader is taken along the Catalan-French border.

Chapter fifteen focuses on immigration and resulting diversity in present day Catalonia. Multiculturalism is a long term historical fact in Catalonia, often thought of in terms of religions in the Middle Ages. Though even then regional cultural and linguistic identities existed among groups native to the peninsula and also among groups of invaders and immigrants. Especially during the twentieth century, mass domestic immigration to Catalonia put regional identities in contact with each other, exacerbating the differences between Catalonia and Spain in linguistic, ethnic and socioeconomic terms. Globalization in more recent decades has brought in many new cultures, including those that had been expelled from Spain under the Catholic Kings. The chapter provides a look at this present day multicultural global society intertwined with domestic history and Catalonia's long term differentness from Spain.

Chapter sixteen considers Catalonia's situation in a globalizing world, the pressures of internationalization and necessary adaptation for participation in Spain, Europe and the world.

### ***Catalonia : A cultural history* by Michael Eade**

Eade also divides his work into three sections : *Birth and Rebirth of a Nation, Geniuses, Tourism and War*. He begins at Portbou, on the modern day Spanish Pyrenee border with France, the border where various people crossed into Spain to observe or participate in the Civil War and where people fled World War II Europe. He dedicates several pages to describing the town and it's events. Later in the chapter he takes the reader to the Abbey of Montserrat, a symbol of Catalonia, which has played its part in history since before Ferdinand and Isabella.

In chapter two, the reader is introduced to Tarragona, as the center of Roman civilization in Iberia. Still present

are the aqueduct, amphitheatre and other ruins, many of which have been restored. In the later part of the chapter, Empuries, the early trade city of Phoenicians and Greeks later taken over by Romans, is introduced. Chapter three looks at Romanesque structures in various areas of the Pyrenees with historical explanations of the Visigoths, medieval Christians and also Jews.

Chapter four expands on the historical roles of the Cistercian order in the development of feudalism and the heroes Roger de Llúria and Roger de Flor in their pirate activities during the expansion of the Mediterranean Empire of the Catalan-Aragonese Federation. Eade often shows the darker side of historical events and their heroes by an analysis which takes into account those who were affected. Through his chosen examples, the reader grasps the feeling of the reconquest, empire building and ongoing conflict over centuries including the events of social discontent after industrialization and prior to the Civil War which affected these monasteries.

The focus of chapter five is the biographies of Jacint Verdaguer and Antonio Lopez and their relationship. The financial success of many émigrés to the colonies allowed them to return and invest in local industry and also in architecture and art, as was the case of Verdaguer's patron, Lopez. The chapter brings to light the financing of cultural development by exploitation abroad in the sugar cane industry, slave trade and other such commercial activity.

Chapter six continues the story with the marriage of Lopez's daughter to Eusebi Guell who became Gaudí's patron. The chapter comments on the works of various architects, their architecture and their politics. More details of the financing of industrialization with money made overseas are brought to light. These nouveaux riches of their time created industrial colonies in urban centers where oppression of workers led to class struggles, uprisings and violence.

Gaudí and his works are the theme of chapter seven. The presentation is not particularly flattering, and Gaudí's unpopularity with many, even at times his clients, is shown. This unpopularity was in part for a style of excessive detail and also for his conservative viewpoints.

Chapter eight introduces Rusiñol, and Casas, a generation of modernist painters less conservative than Verdaguer and Gaudí, and then dedicates several pages to Picasso and his life and work in Barcelona.

The controversial and complicated art and person of Dalí are the topic of chapter nine. Eade shows the political views which supported the Franco regime as well as Dalí's business and marketing skills. His family background and eccentrically extravagant lifestyle are described as well as comments on a few of his works.

The life, artistic struggles and developments of painter Joan Miró is presented to the reader in chapter ten. This is a biographical discussion of this painter's life and passage through various stages in his creativity as well as his grounding in his Mediterranean roots and rural experiences. While Miró would not be overlooked in any work specifically focusing on Catalan modernist painting, he is sometimes overshadowed by Gaudí and Dalí in travel literature; this chapter is welcomed.

Continuing chronologically into the later post-war Franco era, the reader meets the popular singer Raimon and other musicians of the "new song" genre in the first part of chapter eleven. The chapter continues with music, both classical and traditional folk based genres some of which have imported characteristics expressing the returned émigrés nostalgia for the colonies. Eade gives interesting anecdotes in his analysis of genres of Catalan music and the revival of some of these during the Franco and post Franco eras.

The last section takes the reader around the region again from a less biographical and more aerial view for a look at today's Catalonia. In chapter twelve, Eade gives the reader a view of society in the Raval which has long been the quarter of the lower classes. This has also been an area of entertainment, shows and popular theatre, Barcelona's Montmartre, as Eade describes it. While this area also draws tourists, Eade offers blunt descriptions of the seedy roots of poverty in the area that are still sprouting prostitution, other vice and crime. Chapter thirteen

moves onto the old Gothic area of the historical landmark structures of the old city. He gives a guided tour of the Cathedral, including the crypt of St. Eulalia and the story of her martyrdom at the hands of the Romans. Her biography appropriately accompanies the existence of the remains of the Roman walls of the city mentioned several times in the chapter. Eulalia is the city's second patron saint, for whom the Cathedral is named, and is less well known than Our Lady of Mercy whose elaborate festivals steal the show in September. As in the case of Miró and Raimon, Eulalia's short biography is a insightful elaboration. He ends the chapter with comments about the increasingly touristic character of the Gothic area making it less of a real people's city.

Chapter fourteen outlines the often hectic, tiring and noisy modern lifestyle of an average person in Barcelona, a way of life which is in some ways stressful but which also keeps the streets lively and busy with everyday real people who casually socialize and shop into the late evening on the streets of their neighborhoods. Alcoholism, angry drivers and other social problems exist. Overcrowding of high rise apartment buildings in response to mass immigration over decades has expanded the city and created enclaves of immigrants as well as an apparently disorganized city. The second part of the chapter continues some kilometers north up the Costa Brava where quaint and often poor fishing villages have, over the decades, been converted into concrete covered tourist resorts full of alcohol, sun-creams, discos and noise in the summers. The tourist industry is an economic boom which not only buries the history and culture of the areas under business establishments and apartments but eats away at the natural resources of fresh water, land, vegetation and the sea. Consciousness about these problems at the local level exists, and perhaps some towns will change their image and fate while still maintaining a sustainable economy based in tourism. Chapter fifteen leaves the urban provincial capital and commercialized northeastern coast for the more rural areas in the south and west. The chapter centers around the Ebro River along which events of wars have had important impacts on history as well as the current agriculture combined with tourism in the delta area which continues today. The chapter also offers insightful details not always found in works on Catalonia.

The 1936-1939 war is seen largely through George Orwell's writings, but also other works, in chapter sixteen. The conditions which allowed anarchism and social revolution to prosper are revisited, and also how these uprisings justified, in the eyes of some, Franco's victory and long post-war repression of the region and country, including implicit collective social silence about that era. Eade's presentation of the experience in which Orwell immersed himself is again biographical.

The last two chapters focus on cuisine and the Barcelona Futbol Club—two points where real daily life and international tourism easily merge. Wine, cava and open markets for fresh seasonal products allow professional chefs and local restaurants the resources to create specialty dishes but still allow the local products to maintain elements of local identity. In the last chapter, some developments of the Futbol Club are outlined, naturally including the long term rivalry with the Madrid based Real Madrid and the embodiment of local nationalism intertwined with team loyalty.

## ***Discussion***

### *Approach, style and critical viewpoint*

Payne approaches much historical information by introducing the modern place, as though one were driving through the region and stopping to enjoy the natural environment or a sleepy little town on a quiet day. From there history emerges from the landscape, a bit like ghosts at first and then facts, events and their effects on society are told. The information is well documented and academic but presented in a very personal, sometimes poetic style which often draws the infinite past into the present moment through an elegant nostalgia for the essence of centuries of history recorded in the land even though modern developments have encroached. The work is not without criticisms of Catalan society and includes descriptions of social inequalities and unfair conditions imposed on

lower classes and resulting social unrest.

Eaude's approach is more biographical, getting into the minds of particular historical figures and illustrating historical eras or events through the life and experience of the person. His accounts often show the negative or less flattering side as well as the more usual and widely known accomplishments of the person in question. There is a thread of showing sharp contrasts and ironies in people, places and society. Eaude offers the reader a knowledgeable and sophisticated narrative, but periodically breaks the sophistication by interspersing seedy elements.

The critical viewpoint of each work revolves around the degree of continuity and contrast, the degree of optimism and also opinion. Payne's work is more continuous through history and in working through the issues of the present while Eaude makes more use of sharp contrasts. Payne gives his work continuity through deep roots which provide a foundation which is developed throughout the book whereas Eaude provides a time line running along the surface of history with close-ups on important players, periodic clashes of past and present, pros and cons and ironies along the way.

Payne's work is more optimistic about Catalonia in general and his own attachment and connection are evident in his work. Eaude's more contrastive approach comes across as less optimistic and sometimes negative. This may be projected, in part, because Eaude's style is more overtly opinionated. Eaude's book seems to be an editorial essay offering a perspective to the reader while Payne's style involves the reader in a virtual experience of past and present. Of course, the optimistic undercurrents and fond nostalgia implicit in Payne's expression also provide the reader with the author's opinion, though more subtly.

#### *Particular themes*

Both books treat many of the same issues of history and culture ; however, they each include details which differ from the other. Payne includes frequent mention of Jewish elements and also Moorish elements. The contributions of these two cultures are evidently very important in the history of the region, but often summarized too concisely in both historical and travel literature. There is also a chapter on the area of France which was part of the Catalan-Aragonese Empire ; Catalan culture in this area remains important today. Payne includes a chapter addressing the idea of *nation* in which he discusses the significance of history and local identity in Catalonia and in Spain and how these concepts play out today. A chapter addressing the linguistic situation of co-official languages and bilingualism in Catalonia is well done and includes many references to important authors and the language in which they chose to write.

Eaude includes chapters on Miró and the singer Raimon. These artists are well known, especially to those knowledgeable about Catalonia, but they are sometimes not given extensive elaboration in travel literature ; these are important chapters. Overall, the biographical approach to Catalan history and culture is very interesting, and the life sketches of the characters he has chosen give the reader a view of the real person behind the hero. He also gives a focus to Catalan cuisine and the Barcelona Futbol Club, both of which bring tourists into the real world of Catalans.

#### *Sources, format, presentation*

Both Payne and Eaude draw on historical, literary and travel literature sources. Robert Hughes (*Barcelona*) and George Orwell (*Homage to Catalonia* and other works) are referred to by both authors and they cite each other's work as well. Payne's bibliography is more detailed, but there is no index. Though the chapter titles are representative of the content, the table of contents alone is not an adequate guide for someone who already knows their way around and wishes to search for details. Eaude, on the other hand, includes an extensive index which is helpful to the knowledgeable reader and also to the traveler who wishes to refer to the book on an ongoing basis. Eaude includes a map of Catalonia and photos which are useful and pleasant additions for any reader. Payne's book does not include supplementary visual information.

The information in Payne's book is somewhat denser and more developed. It is a longer book than Eade's. As mentioned above, the historical background from Roman times through the early twentieth century is given in the first part. Many of the themes in the second and third part revisit and expand on the earlier chapters. Eade's presentation is perhaps more artistic ; there is a chronological base but also some elements that seem to be added on. The early history is presented, and the eras of the *Renaixença*, *modernisme* and *noucentisme* are illustrated through biographical sketches. The last section of chapters on themes from the war to the present is rather eclectic but nonetheless relevant and interesting.

*Intended readers*

Though any reader or traveler could use these books to enhance their knowledge or travel experience in Catalonia, they seem geared toward the reader who already knows this region and has a base from which to develop deeper knowledge and expanded perspectives. For readers who know Catalonia well, both works will likely transmit nostalgia, albeit in different ways.

In summary, both authors cover history, culture and modern life in Catalonia from a strong base of knowledge founded in their own long term experience in the region. Both offer a wide view of Catalonia and include events and places from diverse areas of the region. Each author also has a distinct approach and style and each offers different details to illustrate historical and cultural themes. The critical view of each is also distinct. These differences make the two books complementary, especially for the reader who is already knowledgeable about Catalonia.

**Bibliographic Information :**

Eade, Michael. 2007. *Catalonia : A cultural history*. Oxford : Signal Books Limited (281 pages).

Payne, John. 2009. *Catalonia : History and culture* (second revised edition). Nottingham : Five Leaves (339 pages).