



A Citizen's Democracy in Authoritarian Times

An American View on the Catalan Drive for Independence

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Agents of sedition who are heedlessly destroying Spain's "consolidated democracy"? Xenophobes simply interested in protecting their own wealth who are, behind the rhetoric, not that different from the tribal authoritarians coming to the fore in Hungary and northern Italy? These are but two of the many narrative tropes the Spanish government and the establishment press in Europe and the US are rolling out to counter the rise of separatist sentiment in Catalonia. The real story is much more complex and edifying. In this book, Thomas S. Harrington, an American with a deep familiarity with Catalan culture and history, argues that, far from being a threat to democracy in Europe, the scrupulously peaceful and people-driven movement for independence in Catalonia is, perhaps, the best hope we have for spurring its much hoped-for renewal.

Thomas Harrington is Professor of Hispanic Studies at Trinity College in Hartford (USA) where he offers classes on contemporary Iberian literature, cinema, and cultural history. His main lines of research are recent Peninsular movements of national identity, Iberianism, Contemporary Catalan culture, cultural theory (especially Polysystems Theory), and the migrations between the so-called peripheral cultures of the Peninsula and the societies of the Caribbean and the Southern Cone. He is the recipient of two Fulbright scholarships (Barcelona and Montevideo, Uruguay) and the Batista i Roca prize for his work in disseminating of Catalan culture in the world. He has also studied or taught in Madrid, Lisbon, Rome, Havana and Santiago de Compostela. In addition to his academic work in Hispanic Studies, he is a frequent commentator on politics and culture in the US press and a number of Spanish and Catalan-language media outlets.