

An Introduction to Literature in Brazil. By AFRÂNIO COUTINHO. Translated and with a preface by GREGORY RABASSA. New York, 1969. Columbia University Press. Institute of Latin American Studies. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Pp. xii, 326. \$10.00.

Afrânio Coutinho is professor of Brazilian literature and Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Brazil. He is the author of numerous works on Brazilian literature and on the theory of criticism.

This work is made up of essays written for *A Literatura no Brasil*, a four-volume work organized and edited by Professor Coutinho, and written by various Brazilian specialists. The essays contributed by Professor Coutinho were later published in a separate volume, the one now translated.

The opening chapter of this book is a discussion of theories of criticism which have been current among European and American scholars, followed by an exposition of the theories of the author, especially as they apply to Brazilian literature. The author rejects the historical method and the application of the criteria of sociology or other social sciences to literature, on the ground that such methods subordinate literature to other fields. He insists that literature should be an independent field, subject only to its own criteria. He therefore divides the literature of Brazil into literary movements or schools, disregarding criteria derived from history, science, philosophy, and sociology. He is basically an advocate of the New Criticism, to which he has given a strong impulse in Brazil. The essay leaves some doubt in the mind of the reader concerning the purposes of criticism, as the author sees them. Does criticism serve literature, or the readers of literature?

The remainder of the book is made up of essays dealing with the various literary movements or schools which have developed in Brazil. Although the chronology is more or less historical, the divisions are based on purely literary criteria. The reader will not find here detailed discussions, or even brief appreciations, of most Brazilian writers. But the clearly-expressed resumé of the basic concepts embodied in each of the literary movements are concise and illuminating analyses which constitute valuable contributions to the understanding of Brazilian literature.

The translation is adequate and readable, although the reader may wonder concerning the exactness of several passages. For example, on page 66: "National elements are: the internal development of the

Vicentian theater, or the world in which it took place. . . .” An exact rendering of the original is: “. . . the national elements: the internal movement of the Vicentian theater, or the world which stirs within it. . . .” It is not a question of mistranslation, here nor on numerous other pages, but of the interpretation of the translator. Since the author was at hand for consultation, and since he has had long experience with English, we should probably accept the translator’s interpretations.

The bibliography of the translation does not include non-Brazilian works on literary theory, included in the original, since most of them would be known to the reader in English.

Vanderbilt University

EARL W. THOMAS

Historia de los orígenes del Teatro Nacional Argentino y la época de Pablo Podestá. By MARIANO G. BOSCH. 2d ed. Buenos Aires, 1969. Ediciones Solar y Librería Hachette. Biblioteca Dimensión Argentina. Pp. 322. Paper.

The volume under review is a re-edition of a book published originally in 1929 under the same title. A brief prologue by the Argentine dramatist and critic, Edmundo Guibourg, has been added to the present edition. The study resembles a catalogue of the dramas and comedies presented on the Buenos Aires stage between the late 1880s and the early 1920s with critical comments on many of the plays. There is, unfortunately, precious little synthesis, thus yielding a book which is more useful to the critic of literature whose methodological bias is historical than it is to the cultural historian.

Bosch argues that the “national theater” of Argentina existed for generations before the beginning of what he calls its third era in the mid-1880s. This argument runs counter to that of some critics, notably Ricardo Rojas, who contend that the adaptation of Eduardo Gutiérrez’ story, *Juan Moreira*, to the stage in 1884, and interpreted by José J. Podestá, marked the beginning of a truly “national theater.” Bosch would have the reader believe that it was the transformation of such *gaucho* figures as Juan Moreira into characters more reflective of the changing Argentine rural scene that made the era around the turn of the century distinctive and significant in the development of the Argentine theater.

The popularity of the period’s early dramas was based, in large measure, on the theme of the gaucho fleeing from an unjust, uncompromising law representing both the social and political elite and the city. But the gauchos were little more than memories by the turn