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From Dalí to Gaudí: The Building of Artistic Identity in Catalonia

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Abstract. During the twentieth century, the Catalan painter Salvador Dalí and philosopher Francesc Pujols wished for contemporary art an exceptional position in society, based upon an understanding of reality through scientific knowledge, and a new type of Humanism able to provide human life with spiritual values. This is a type of art and a worldview built on the legacy of architects Antoni Gaudí and Claude Ledoux, painters Marià Fortuny and Gustave Moreau, Wagnerism, and philosophers Aguste Comte and Ramon Llull.

Keywords: Salvador Dalí, Humanism, Francesc Pujols, Mysticism.

1 Introduction

The issue we will deal with in this article has three main characters: an architect, Antoni Gaudí; a philosopher, Francesc Pujols¹; and a painter, Salvador Dalí (Folkenstein, 1996). Our contention is that Gaudí was very highly valued by Pujols and by Dalí. Pujols and Dalí considered Gaudí to be the essential link between Catalan Modern Art, together with the painter Marià Fortuny (Reus, 1838 – Rome, 1874), and the medieval philosopher Ramon Llull². In this sense they rendered Gaudí «a classic». We learn two things from this fact. The first is one that Pujols mentions in the book he dedicated to the painter Marian Pidelaserra (Barcelona 1877 – 1946), when he stated that Antoni Gaudí and Josep M^a Jujol³ (as the Greeks had done to the Parthenon and as it is understood by Gothic Art) «carried out Renoir thoughts and words, going back to the constructions that built the movement and life of the Ancients» (Pujols 1935, 17). Because of this, Pujols considered that the Catalan architect Gaudí deserved to be

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¹ Francesc Pujols Morgades (Barcelona, 1882 – 1962), was an existentialist philosopher, writer, and art critic who introduced surrealism in Barcelona (Cuscó 2015, 77-89). His short novel *La tardor barcelonina* (1908) (The Autumn of Barcelona) has recently been translated into German by Magnus Chrapkowsky (*Der Herbst*, Arco Verlag, 2016). The novel was influenced by Alfred Jarry and by Apollinaire, and is a thoughtful work of avant-garde before the avant-garde.

² I have devoted a course to this question at Universitat de Barcelona in 2016, with the title «From Llull to Gaudí and Dalí». See also Cuscó (2016). I have also dealt with these issues in two different lectures that were requested by Francesc Pujols Foundation: «Francesc Pujols, in three acts. Life and philosophy.» (2014), and «Thinking in Catalan. From Ramon Llull to Francesc Pujols» (2016).

³ Josep M^a Jujol (Tarragona, 1879 – Barcelona, 1949) was an architect and disciple of Gaudí.

named «architect of the universe», and highlighted that he has been the first one who has dared to deform the buildings.⁴

The second thing that is worth mentioning is the book that Pujols wrote on Gaudí in 1927 (Pujols, Descharnes, & Prevost, 1982). Regarding the first concept mentioned by Pujols, we should note that from the very moment Pujols and Dalí claimed Gaudí's figure, they distanced themselves from the general feeling in Spain, which had since 1928 moved towards a rationalist architecture.⁵ On the other hand, by establishing in the book of 1927 the theoretical foundations of what their claims were and what their work was, they made clear their expectations of themselves and of Art. Accordingly, setting the construction of this «tradition» (and the resulting «identity») is interesting in order to understand these authors and the diversity of their discourses, which developed during the XX century in what we call «the Catalan artistic tradition».

They were aware that if they were building a «tradition», and they had to begin with *destruction*. (It is not in vain that we have called the paper: «From Dalí to Gaudí»). Because of this, they liked chaos and the baroque (the «monstrosity») in Modern Style, mainly in Gaudí, against Josep Lluís Sert's rational vision, which claimed order and cleanness in urbanism and architecture (Peter, 1994 [1959], 246-259).⁶ As for the theoretical basis, spirituality, responsible for making the Sagrada Família a completely hyperbolic temple, is essential — as it contains a deep expression of freedom and religious feeling which is more powerful than the one Catholics used to have in that time.

This spiritual background forming the plastic shape of architecture is what we have to visualize from a strict scientific knowledge of reality, as Gaudí does. Pujols and Dalí focus on these two aspects (Dalí, 1971).⁷ It is this same aspect that allows searching for the universality of a Catalan culture through Art. Because of this we may find Ramon Llull at a level with Dalí, who would be the first great «architect of passions» within Catalan culture (Perelló, 2016). Pujols and Dalí are interested in Ramon Llull's passion and excessive desire. When building his «Ars» we have to put all our senses into it and much fantasy and imagination, as we must with Gaudí. The avant-garde poet J.V. Foix (1893 – 1987) also finds in Llull this strength that springs from the tension between reason and madness that is vindicated by Surrealism in 20c.⁸ This tension gives life and strength to Art, as Pujols said. That is the reason why Dalí will be able (like Gaudí) to prove that «the life of Art can exist on its own». Why is that? Because it is surreal and paranoid (Pujols, 1974). Thus, we could say that Llull is the great architect of medieval thought, Gaudí is the «surrealist of architecture», and Dalí is the great surrealist of painting; and according to Dalí, Pujols is the surrealist philosopher (Dalí, 1974). All of them also have in common having been considered mad: «Then Gaudí's surrealism, like Dalí's today, had few friends and many enemies, because it looks like more a chimera than Horacio's harmony», Pujols says (Peter, 1994 [1959]).

⁴ Pujols' ideas on the importance of deformation of harmony between form and content can also be found in Sebastià Gasch's article: «the current deformers may claim that Egyptians, Japanese, Chinese, Persians, Byzantine, Romantics and Gothics, while the followers of Imitation painting may only appeal to a small number of Hellenic statues and four centuries of European painting. [...] We will eventually realize that there are two types of deformation: the expressive, and the plastic one». Gaudí's one is a plastic deformation that deforms the outer appearance to show the expressive force of nature (as caricature and humor do, as Pujols claims). Both Pujols and Dalí share the idea that what Gaudí does is a deformation of the second type.

⁵ See Pujols, «Projectes arquitectònics» (1929).

⁶ In the building of this «tradition» that it is made through Fortuny and Gaudí, we have to bear in mind the heritage they received from «La Renaixença» (the Catalan romantic movement in the 19 c.). Gaudí was trained together with the philosopher Francesc Xavier Llorens Barba and the painter Pau Milà Fontanals. He shares with the later one some essential aspects to understand the meaning of Sagrada Família (Milà 2011). About what Pujols borrows from Llorens Barba and Manuel Milà Fontanals to create his aesthetic vision, see Cuscó (2008).

⁷ From the same book, in 1969, a Spanish version was released and in 1989 an English one.

⁸ Between 1933 and 1935 J.V. Foix wrote some articles on Ramon Llull in the newspaper *La Publicitat* of Barcelona. They may be found in *El Procés* (2016).

2 D' Ors, Pujols and Dalí

The period of maximum influence of the philosopher Eugeni d'Ors (1882 – 1954) in Catalan culture is between 1906 and 1920 (Cuscó, 2013). It is said that after him the cultural hegemony was taken over by Francesc Pujols (he would have it till 1926, when he published the political heterodox work: *Història de l'hegemonia catalana en la política espanyola*). Nevertheless, Ors' influence from 1943 on was important and interesting within the Catalan academic and intellectual worlds. Pujols appeared in 1918 with the piece of work *Concepte General de la Ciència Catalana*. We should note here that the relationship between Ors and Dalí was quite complex.

Pujols' real misstep (if it can be said in this way or considered as such) was the publication of *La visió artística i religiosa de Gaudí* (1927), a work about the spiritual vision of Gaudí's architecture. There, one can find the most nihilistic part of Pujols who broke away with *La Renaixença* and *Noucentisme* (the two hegemonic cultural movements in the Catalan culture since 1850), and looks forward to a new period parting from Gaudí. This book became essential for Dalí; when he was asked to write a book in French to introduce Antoni Gaudí — who had caught the attention of the rationalists (like Le Corbusier) and surrealists (like Bretón) he answered that the best they could do was to translate Pujols' book. One year later, the book had been translated into French and English. A book that in its second reprinting (in 1969 with Dalí's foreword) (Clovis, [1969] 1971) (Descharnes, 1989) was published utterly pruned by censorship, and it was not fully reproduced until its 1996 reprinting (Pujols, 1996).

Gaudí's figure, together with the tradition that generated from 1927 in Pujols' interpretation assumed by Dalí, brings us to an active intellectual period from 1920 to 1938. In this period, Pujols and Dalí wrote their most important works, and gave birth to «creative surrealism» —reaching its highest point with Dalí's «classic surrealism». It all took place under the theoretical reflections of Gaudí's work, Pujols' philosophy, and the revisiting and rereading of Ramon Llull's works. The will of demolishing to rebuild fuelled the creation of an «intellectual tradition» and an artistic «alternative» to *Noucentisme*.⁹ Dalí considered that there was a need of a real «Ben Plantada» facing the symbol of «La Ben Plantada»¹⁰. This is a fruitful tradition that offers a wider and more plural vision of 20th c. Catalan culture. It sprouts from creative Nihilism and it draws the whole topology of the art of 20th c. It is the initial paradox that faces 1985 Dalí's fuzzy syllogism, in which after stating that (1) he was *the* surrealism, and (2) he was deeply Catalan, (3) he would leave unsolved the answer to the question whether surrealism «was Catalan».

3 Gaudí's heirs

After 1914, and until 1926, Gaudí is an artist that creates from loneliness. By 1914, his contact with the Güell family was over, and in 1912 the avant-garde got to Barcelona beginning what Xavier Antich has called «realisme noucentista» ... He became devoted to the construction of the Sagrada Família. While facing this project (which still generates controversy) four different points of view emerged. In the first place, we find the architects who followed the piece of work in agreement with the bishop Josep Torras i Bages' aesthetics postulates. Those would be the Catholic postulates of *La Renaixença*. In second place, we find the authors who were related to *Noucentisme*. There are two different groups: one of them formed by the philosopher Eugeni d'Ors and the poet Josep Carner (who attacked Gaudí for being out of his place)¹¹ and; in the second one, Josep Palau, who thought that despite his

⁹ In fact, Pujols and Dalí loved that dream and reality came into contact with one another, that irrationality and rationality must be in Art altogether, that excess should generate the organic order in forms.

¹⁰ The «Ben Plantada» is a female character created the year 1911 by Eugeni D'Ors that symbolizes the Mediterranean classicism based on beauty, harmony and the serenity of the Classic Greece.

¹¹ To give an example of Ors' criticisms we reproduce a quote from a piece of work called «Architects» that was published in the newspaper *Arriba* on the 3rd of April 1949. According to him, Gaudí never cared about what he was asked to do, and instead he made disasters (such as Malloca's Cathedral and Milà's house). «The most wonderful, the famous Antonio Gaudí, great artist and guy. He would free himself completely from his clients and their requests; while he was building a piece of

baroque style Gaudí was a «realist» author who deserved to be considered (Palau, 1935). In the third place, the rationalist architects who were also divided in two groups: the ones who said that architecture done like big «Easter cakes» should be left behind, and the ones who said, like J.L. Sert, that in Gaudí and in his research on nature there was something that would have a great influence in the future. In the fourth place, Pujols and Dalí. They stood up for Gaudí saying that he was the necessary step in the building of the present and future. However they saw him as Wagner in the architecture world.¹² We shall deal only with the latter ones now, although Sert and Palau's disquisitions are still worthy of noting nowadays.¹³

Let us begin by considering what Pujols said about Gaudí. Besides what has already been pointed out on the subject, we should emphasize that according to Pujols the Sagrada Família was an expression of spirituality that was looking towards the future of mankind. According to Pujols, it was a piece of work that hallmarked the beginning of a new era; an era in which the Catholic religion had died. In the above mentioned booklet, this fact appears obviously, and because of this it was censured during the Franco regime. Pujols thinks that Catalonia is the culture that must sink Catholicism. The Sagrada Família was to be the symbol of the religion that had to be sacrificed and the opening door to a new spirituality (a Humanism based on science). The Catalans' mission, he maintained, must include the offer of a type of spirituality that should be able to leave behind, lost in the sea of oblivion, the three big monotheistic religions (hence, Pujols updates Lull's project). According to Pujols, a new spirituality was necessary and *Hiparxiologia* (the philosophical system by Pujols) and *Classic Surrealism* (the utopic project by Dalí) would provide the leading principles.

As we read on the handwritten notes kept in the Fundació Francesc Pujols¹⁴, Catholicism should be kept away as Catholics are nothing more than backward Lutherans. Some platonic ones had ended up clinging to Kant, he said, adding: «Religion must effectively be the Catholic one, this is universal, [...] it has to fill everything, time and space. Like science religion should walk under the day light and not in the shadows, only one religion should exist. [...] Religion like science that studied it must answer to real and positive facts, and there is just one reality that is the same to everybody».¹⁵ Religion away from superstition and martyrs. Religion and science that are imposed or opposed to each other. This is the new spirituality that arises from the Sagrada Família as a symbol of the great freedom in creativity from that great imagination that has grown tired of a wide knowledge of nature shapes. Pujols' Nietzscheanism is quite clear and he implements it with all its consequences. We can read it in Pujols' (1962) own words:

if in Wagner and Cézanne's age, who contorted the pictorial and musical visions they had, shattering the standards of Italian music and painting [...] and during the era of Strauss and Stravinsky in music, and Picasso's in painting [...]. While Wagner, Strauss and Stravinsky searched for new types of music by going back to a more primitive conception of art which emerged from the highest form of refinement - that is the one that is closer to a primitive conception of art since all extremes meet- Wagner deformed

work, neither before nor after, he didn't let them say a word. He left a brand new Cathedral to Mallorca's bishop, when he only had to do a canopy. [...] Don Antonio only let him see it, when he had no choice. »

¹²Related to this, we may add that in 1928, the painter Joan Francesc Ràfols (1889 – 1965) published Gaudí's first biography (Gaudí. Barcelona: Editorial Canosa) and in 1956 he was the first person to hold the then-recently created Gaudí professorship in Universitat Politècnica of Barcelona. After Pujols's book in 1927, the first one who studied him from the theoretical and conceptual view was Juan Eduardo Cirlot (1916 – 1973), in 1950 in the book «El Arte de Gaudí.»

¹³ We could also round off Dalí and Pujols's interpretation with the capital contributions by Gabriel Alomar (in 1904 and 1908), by Josep Aragay (in 1917), and also by Eugeni d'Ors in his series of Glosses under the epigraphy «Arte Vivo» (1971), published between 1952 and 1954 in the magazine *Revista. Seminario de Información Artes y Letras de Barcelona*. We should highlight Alomar's influence on young Dalí when he started writing and painting in 1918 and 1919. He was Dalí's teacher at high school, and their aesthetic ideas have relevant common characteristics. About Dalí's early years, see Gibson et al. (1995). We should also consider Alomar's contributions (which break the romantic vision of art, geniality, and excesses of bohemia at the end of the century), as they match with what was going on in Europe. In relation with Alomar's Futurism, we should also mention that the magazine *Futurism* was published in Vilafranca del Penedès in 1910. It dealt with art issues, and was written by Catalan local authors (such as Carner and López Picó), with some few contributions written from Madrid.

¹⁴ *Box 34(Lot 691)*. Fundació Francesc Pujols.

¹⁵ The final aim is to avoid superstition and religious clashes resuming the humanistic ideals that have lead western thought from classical Greece to modernity (rereading Lull's project). Pujols is aware, at least since 1938, of the deep crisis Humanism is living. War made it easy. However, like Dalí, he adopts an idealistic position. A challenge that defends the value of art for mankind. It keeps Modernity alive, despite some voices that claimed the end of art in the 50's and 60's.

the canonical scenario of the Italian music, as we have noted, Strauss increasing and giving shrillness to the sonority and Stravinsky cleverly breaking the melodies and the harmonies in order to reach all the way into their insides, and while Cézanne deformed the figure and the landscape to strengthen the life of the pictorial vision, and Picasso doing what only he could with his brilliant and feline traces, gaining success in Paris, [...] Gaudí, silent as stone, without saying a word, was doing the same, obeying the rhythm of the modern revolutionary artistic tragedy to return to the basic principles of all the nations, without leaving Barcelona.

To find a new plastic value in architecture, Gaudí's «Wagnerianism» led him to bring expression to its highest point of complexity so that disrupted anything that might come afterwards. Dalí was fascinated by it since he was very young. It made him interested in the idea of morphology, and he would have been captivated by the exotic traits of bi-dimensional substances that can often be seen in his pictures.¹⁶ In this sense, for Dalí (and Gaudí and Fortuny) there were already «pre-surrealist features» in that time. The reason for this is that for either Pujols as well as for Dalí or for Gaudí, reality widens and it gets deeper, more real and closer to the truth. Nature becomes artistic, and dreams, myths, legends and rationality mix up fruitfully. Hence, a more «realistic» thought is needed, able to go all along the psychic life from the conscious to the unconscious side of mind. And it must be linked with the scientific knowledge of reality, for as only knowledge leads to a more universal sensitivity. It entails a new spiritualization in human life, and this is what Pujols with his “ladder of life” (*Escala de la Vida*),¹⁷ and Dalí, opposing his works to Picasso's cubism, were looking for¹⁸.

Thus, if Gaudí says that the most important thing in art is returning to the origins (to the basic Laws of nature), the «Quantum Mysticism» in Dalí —that is to say, the stage of his pictorial creation based on the mixture of Spanish mysticism and quantum theories— is the expression of this «return to the origins» claimed by Gaudí. It is the reflection of the spiritual return to the Matter of Nature (and Life and Spirituality).



Front cover of the book *Pujols per Dalí (1974)*
Source: Fundació Pujols.

It is also at the end of 1920's decade when, from the theoretical point of view, Salvador Dalí lived a splendid moment at the time his painting made a switch into Surrealism. Besides beginning to be known as a painter, what is relevant to us here is that during this period he writes his theoretical-philosophical texts. To highlight the most important ones: in 1927, his article on *Sant Sebastià*; in 1930, *La Femme visible*; in 1931, *L'Amour et la mémoire*; and in 1937 *Métamorphose de Narcisse*, among others. Moreover, in 1926 he puts forth a concept of great value: «putrefacte» («decayed», literally «putrid»). The idea of decay as a source of renovation, and the necessity of digesting the old to create the new. These are the paths both to the impure and the decayed that are in Wagner and

¹⁶ Thouless, Haldane and Kosterlitz were awarded with 2016 Physics Nobel Prize for their studies in topological phase transitions and topological phases of matter.

¹⁷ The *Ladder of Life*, «Escala de la Vida», is a «scala naturae» that Pujols uses as a central axis of his philosophical system.

¹⁸ It is in that sense that perhaps Dalí understood Picasso, and perhaps it is in this way that we should read Picasso's last exhibition: the one with aggressive and messy pictures, aggressive traces, strong colors, full of excess and obsession. That posthumous exhibition showed his exhaustion (as it was said in that time), as it would be his last cry for life.

Gaudí to become the source of power of his «classic surrealism» and «Quantum Mysticism», from the 50's up to the decade of 1970. That is the pure, the angelic world (or the «Angel»).

To reach mysticism, or rather, to define it, Dalí borrows from Gaudí a statement according to which while life moves forward the body gets weaker and weaker, and spiritual strength grows stronger and stronger.¹⁹ This is the description of Pujols' «Escala de la Vida»: in human lifetime, substance and spirit slowly split up until the substance completely disappears (Pujols, 1921).²⁰

In the whole Surrealist movement there is a Neoplatonic background, that in Dalí can be linked with Llull. Surrealism is —in Dalí, Breton, Aragon, Éluard or Desnos— «ascent» (from an idealistic philosophy approach). Ascent in the quest of love. But what is usually searched for in this ascent upwards is not the transcendence; it intends to go further into what can be considered human (the «highest point»). In Breton, for instance, it is the reconciliation of the human being with himself (through the rupture of the logical discourse). As in rupture, opposites meet. Beauty, that what usually touches deeply, is always a synthesis, the resolution of opposites to come back to the basic unity. As philosopher Ferdinand Alquié contends, poetry that is a bridge between wakefulness and sleep. Breton, like the Greeks, thinks that the poet must be possessed by a visionary power (because of the platonic «mania»). Poetry awakens a new attitude with which to face reality, and this helps us to understand ourselves as part of the Universe and not as the center of it. Dalí, bearing in mind Llull and Spanish mysticism, adds one more step to the process of arising (religious transcendence), fixing the political project of this rise, indicating the pattern of the so called «classic surrealism»²¹. Dalí clearly stated: «for me surrealism involves a myth that requires a complete freedom of spirit [...] my ambition is to beat any trace of materialism and atheism in surrealism and incorporate in its inspiration sources the Spanish mysticism, including Christian and mystic contents» (Dalí, 2002, 81). Here we may find the peculiarity of Dalí's project that linked it to that of Pujols, Gaudí and Llull. He hoped to find in it what he lacked: faith.

4 «Tradition» and «Classic Surrealism»

Pujols and Dalí make this tradition stretch to Ramon Llull. Ramon Llull believes that every building must adapt itself to its sense and symbolism. He differentiates between a church and a palace; what they are used for and what they represent. The buildings must be practical and at the same time meaningful. This understanding is also very clear to identify in Gaudí. He contributes with two masterpieces: The Sagrada Família and the Palau Güell.

Both Dalí and Pujols attributed their inspiration to Llull and, following what Gaudí had done, contended that no one could be an artist or a philosopher without a strong scientific vision of the whole reality. Because of this, bearing in mind Freud, Dalí puts into scene the paranoid-critical method and using scientific progress, he creates the «nuclear mysticism» painting the quantum physics or DNA spiral. Because of this, he used to meet scientists such as Ilya Prigogine and Richard Watson. If Llull for each book tried to have a meaningful image (like with the image of the seven part cross in the *Llibre de contemplació* of 1272, representing the Virgin Mary's number seven), Dalí tried to give an image to the hypercube.²² Moreover, Dalí put or translated into pictures Pujols' philosophical system (called «Hixarxiologia») in the picture *Cel hiparxiològic* (1960).

We can draw three conclusions. The first one: Dalí and Pujols understand that Gaudí and Llull (as the writer Josep Pla said) have been two outstanding builders of rationality. Secondly, both of them defend that there must be consistency between the acceptance of «realism» (or the «naturalist realism») of Gaudí and Llull and their own. They claim it following what Ramon Llull had written in *Llibre de Contemplació* (Chapter 120). Ramon Llull

¹⁹ In the book *Pujols per Gaudí* (1974) we find the following statement that it is thought to belong to Gaudí: «...à mesure que mon corps se fatigue / mon esprit se sent plus libre...» (Puig-Boada 2004).

²⁰ It is not in vain that this text was also included in the book *Pujols per Dalí* in 1974.

²¹ Vid. Alquié (1988), Aragon (1988), Breton (1989).

²² In Llull we must also bear in mind that, as in *Breviculum*, he translates into images the fight against Averroes and Aristotle, depicting ideas as battles between enemy armies.

complains that painters just recreate the shapes but these ones have nothing to do with reality and life. According to him, paintings lack depth: «There is nothing like man in works of art and thus I see many men looking like men in figure and shape». Art is dead and it doesn't give life. Painters paint golden crosses, but not blood crosses —he says. This, he contends, is not good for society, and this is the challenge that Pujols assumes. The defence of an art that does not fall into the absurd (Pujols, 1961), living art («living harmony») that expresses a new spirituality. An updated Humanism that has as a symbol the Sagrada Família (made of stone), and Human Towers made of men called «Castellers» (as Pujols and Dalí said); and as we may add, Palau Güell (representing for the civil field what the Sagrada Família means for the religious one).

Finally, we can go back to what Dalí answered when he was asked if Surrealism was Catalan. He replied this could be answered positively or negatively. I suggest that we could understand it from the point of view of the Renaissance utopias —the participation of artists into the ideal cities—, and also from the perspective of the «Classic Surrealism» as an ideal goal, the reformulation of humanist and modern ideals in the context of 20th c., after two world wars, the Spanish Civil War, and the Vietnam War, where Surrealism had been touched by death. Thus, «Classic Surrealism» is what emerges from the synthesis —the «sweet point», Pujols would say—²³ between three French and three Catalan authors, and between Paris and Barcelona as the capitals of new Humanism and Art: (i) between two architects (Gaudí and Ledoux), (ii) between two philosophers (Pujols and Comte), (iii) and between two painters (Fortuny and Moureau). This is Dalí's future commitment. He, like Pujols, believes in the need of making Humanism regrow (not only in Europe but in the whole world) through science, art and thought. This is a vision that he also releases during his last years, and it matches with that one of Ramon Llull, also during his last years of life, in *Llibre de la ciutat del món* (1314). From the rational perspective, Llull raises the question whether humanity deserves to be destroyed; nevertheless, it is eventually forgiven by divine justice. Because of this, the world's city is not destroyed but restored (Llull, 2008).

To achieve «living art» Dalí leans on two authors: Francesc Pujols, and his literature teacher in Figueras, the poet and philosopher Gabriel Alomar. He takes from the former the concept of beauty containing the so-called «Ciència dels sentiments» («Science of the feelings» or «Kalologia»)²⁴, and the concept according to which Time, like human existence, is Art and Art is Time; creation and destruction at the same time. Dalí takes from Alomar the theory according to which the human being has four stages of relation (and knowledge) with Nature (and life): vision, perception, ponderation and poetization (where the poet is the strong man able to create and transform society).²⁵ Both philosophies unfold through the paranoic-critical method, and the good scientific knowledge of the whole reality (biological, physical and cosmological). He believes with Gaudí and Pujols that science fertilises art (Gaudí, 2004); and he finds in art the way to give expression to Hiparxiology and the matching of what is local into what is universal (what must be done, as both Alomar and Pujols assessed).²⁶ Moreover, he was influenced by Alomar's conception of «futurism» as an expression of a cause of «beauty and resurrection.» This means, tomorrow's dream comes true in Classic Surrealism. In Alomar's words: «Futurism must be the strongest aftertaste of one's own eternity, [...] Time eternal energy, as space is eternal stillness, health; if you kill the shapes of current beauty only to form an endless and never seen future beauty.» (Alomar, 1907)

²³ The «sweet point» is the sensual vision of the classical «aura mediocritas», and of the Cinquecento concept of «mediocrità.

²⁴ This is a vision of beauty opposed both to Ors' neoplatonism of «arbitrary beauty», and to Lluís Farré's aesthetics. The latter one inherits Torras i Bages' approach, the Catholic vision that shares stage with Pujols and Dalí in contemporary Catalonia. It is an alternative to Francesc de Paula Mirabent's aesthetics as well. All these thinkers were eager readers of Plato and Kant. For Pujols, on the contrary, beauty is essentially time.

²⁵ The three first stages can be performed by everybody and allow seeing, assessing and reasoning. The fourth one is carried out solely by people able to develop some more skills. In nowadays words, the ones who bring to unsuspected limits these two elements that allow a qualitative and cognitive jump in relation to any other form of life: brain and language. Poets, then, transform life (Alomar 1970).

²⁶ Pujols wrote in 1935 an article on Dalí in the newspaper *Las Noticias* of Barcelona, dated 22nd of September. He called him the painter of reality through surrealism, and as he had already done with Ramon Llull, he compared him to Cristòfor Colom (because of his endeavor, we will be able to see a totally new world).

5 Of Pleasure and Desire

It is worth noting that Dalí's proposal adds the figure of Claude-Nicolas Ledoux, «the architect of passion and desire». This is the one who designed the «Oikema» (the Pleasure House) in the 18 century France, which he shared with Marquis of Sade. This was a place governed only by passions. Pujols knew and identified himself with the problems between sensitivity and taste that started in the 17 c. and unfolded through the French moralists in the 18 c. (Cirici, 1991).²⁷

In this sense, we could say that Pujols and Dalí recover old topics from the reflection on «the man of genius» of Plato and Aristotle. On the one hand, they lead to the end Plato's statement that figuring out techniques is not enough. «Eagerness» and «obsession» are also necessary (besides madness), and the poet is not only a medium (Plato). On the other hand, we could consider Aristotle's statement (which goes along with Llull's) that pleasure is not a quality by itself but gives better quality to what goes with it. And it gives value to the fact that only human beings are able to create and enjoy art (Aristotle, *Metafísica*) (Aristotle).

Besides their classic background, Pujols and Dalí recreate the 18th century voluptuousness. This was the century in which the defence of freedom entailed criticism of religion, and Sade put the expression of Hedonism next to desire and pleasure. Hence, he opposed his own «Encyclopaedia of pleasures» as a compilation of human passions to Diderot and d'Alembert's «Encyclopaedia of knowledge». Likewise, nowadays neuroscience focuses on pleasure and pain as two essential aspects to know who and how we are. Curiosity, ludic and educative game, and physical and intellectual pleasure are constitutive elements of personality and human life (Mora, 2006).²⁸ Once again, this matches with Llull's contributions, for whom biological and intellectual pleasure are the basis of human life: «as the taste feels pleasure when sweet and tasty food is swallowed, human body rests and feels pleasure when it is full of love, thoughts and memories from his God (creator and saviour).»²⁹

When Dalí describes the necessary nihilistic process to approach Gaudí's work, he contends that what it is required is eating, defecating, and thus appraising all food nourishments to have new fertilizers for the future. Blood and body are at the heart of everything.

6 Reality and Hyperreality

Classic Surrealism is a proposal of an open Utopia. A utopia with six great recognitions: (i) two philosophers (Comte and Pujols), representing the need of grounding philosophy and art on scientific knowledge of the whole reality, and sharing, living, and adding a transcendental sense to human life; (ii) two painters (Fortuny and Moureau), representing the expressive strength, emotion, artistic symbolism, and transmutation of scientific knowledge into images; (iii) and eventually two architects (Gaudí and Ledoux), accepting sensuality, hedonism, and the hyperbole and exuberance of pleasure that leads humanity to its full scientific and artistic development. Elaborating on these points would lead us far away from the issue we are dealing with, but we must bear these concepts in mind, and we should consider utopia as a living and open process.

Behind this utopia there is a certain vision of the human being, and of «Geist» or «Esprit». The «subjectivity» is conscious, unconscious and over-conscious (as stated by Freud). It is also, sleep and wakefulness (as Llull had said in *Doctrina Pueril*):

²⁷ It is worth mentioning that Pujols published in 1906 the erotic novel *El nuevo Pascual* (2005).

²⁸ Moreover, as the same author states in another book reinforcing Aristotle, Pujols and Dalí's vision, the neural substratum of intellectual pleasure is the same as what is usually called «hedonistic pleasure», i.e. the physical pleasure (of food) and sexual pleasure. So that the combination between pleasure and curiosity, linked to emotion and the interest that it raises, is essential to learning (Mora, 2013).

²⁹ That it was written by Llull in *Llibre de Contemplació* and it fits in the way he understands the development of the abilities of human soul (Llull, 1932).

«Staying awake and sleeping are good for men, and do you know why? Because when a man sleeps he rests, and to watch means work, because when man sleeps his spirit recovers his natural warmth because of the rest; and when he is awake he tires by executing what the faculties of the soul dictate, and because of this the natural warmth grows and keeps its natural heat because of the body heated by movement.» (Lull, 1736)

On the other hand, Pujols saying that he is also Joan Lluís Vives' heir, lets us link our issue to Vives' 1538 statement in *De anima et vita*, where he emphasized the associative memory of human learning. That means, as neuroscience asserts, acquiring new neural representations of information and establishing a relation among them. Memories allow the link between past and present, and the projection to the future of our ideas and thoughts. This is the basic outline that matches with what Pujols wrote about human subjectivity and art.

Pujols and Dalí are going a bit further. They contend that we should give a tragic sense to artistic creation. Art should assemble both Dionysian and Apollonian elements.³⁰ Gaudí's art is tragic because the tension between form and content makes a grotesque, monumental, and at the same time, more free architecture as the use of the hyperbole and the catenaria allow the design of higher buildings, with wider and more luminous rooms than the ones built in Gothic times. Thus, Gaudí is more free as architect. Pujols, against Ors' Platonism (and any kind of Neoplatonism) contends that beauty is not an idea, truth or good outside existence. Truth, goodness, and beauty belong to existence. This lowers the Platonic vision to a ground level. So that beauty is harmony, it is not static (such as the *Ben Plantada*'s character) but a living harmony (such as the actress Margarida Xirgu on the stage) (Pujols, 1911; Ors, 1935) It is a harmony built from feelings that, as contemporary neuroscience states, are the processes that let us know emotions (through fear, frustration, desire....). In other words, the subjective reaction of emotions. This is assuming but also turning inside out —as it is not essentialist any more, but existentialist— Plato and Ramon Llull's vision on the importance of love (erotic and filial). Once more, this Copernican turn is aligned with the findings of contemporary neuroscience.



*The philosopher Francesc Pujols (left) and the painter Salvador Dalí, at Pujols' home "Torre de les Hores" (Martorell, Barcelona, 1956.)
Photography: Josep Pal-Latorre
Source: Fundació Francesc Pujols.*

For Pujols, instincts (aggressiveness, lust, desire...) are at the bottom of the «soul», and since these instincts are located in the human body they always match with some virtue (lust, for example, with chastity).³¹ We should

³⁰ Lluís Farré offered a good description of the meaning of Attica tragedy (we will find the same meaning later on in Molière and Shakespeare, defended also by Wagner and Nietzsche, and by Palau i Fabre in the 20 c.): “the distinctive quality of tragedy is the reality of the human being qua human being; [...] the pain inflicted on the victim of the tragedy can be so intense that[...] it clarifies what there is in man of animal-like and what there if of sensitivity.[...] The category of tragedy bring us close to that which is human through pain yet it preserves nevertheless a great dosage of elevation which belongs to the sublime.” (Farré, 1966). This is the tragic force Pujols rediscovers in Job's character.

³¹ According to Alexandre Cirici (1991) these «dual instincts» are: Greed-fasting; lust-chastity; pride-humanity; violence-sacrifice and selfishness-love. Freedom from these instincts and the search for the «sweet point» in each of them and between them is the basis of power for human life, according to Pujols.

find in each one of them the sweet point between two ends (to drive and conduct life). The psychic structure on which we build existence is like a brain where we find the primitive part and the cortex; or like the «Ego» in which the duality of unconsciousness and consciousness is found. To the extent we unfold our abilities from our instincts we start building morality, truth, and art on a path to full completeness and spiritual freedom.

Body is human life and the basis for art, from the body we develop feelings and psychic life —that is, wakefulness and sleep, as Lull contended— and also drunkenness and somnambulism. As stated by Pujols, these are two different ways of dreaming by means of which we go down to the lower rungs of the «Ladder of Life».³² It would be the field where the paranoid-critical method gets in. Nature can only be known by science. It is real, and it can be artistic, but never moral. Art is «hyperreal»: artistic things that human beings create in their way to infinity, where they figure out truth and morality which, as it happens in art, are always work in process.³³

Hyperreality, the grotesque, or humour and the excess³⁴ that art creates is a strong and aggressive expression, something sweet and sour. It offers a different perspective. Poeticizing reality changes reality and changes ourselves. It is in fact the path from beauty —that is, harmony and balance in human life— to unbalance, the ugly and the sublime.

7 Dalí, Pujols, Husserl

Pujols' philosophical and Dalí's artistic stances are quite unique in the European context, especially if we point at the moment when they took place (between the 1920's and 1970's). During these years, a general crisis in Humanism happened, and especially in the field of art. They were well aware of it. A good example is the lecture that Husserl gave in Vienna in 1935 (Husserl, 1954).

Husserl contended that the crisis in the European existence had two solutions: (1) the decline (getting away from the rational sense of life), or (2) the rebirth (in virtue of heroism defeating naturalism). Both Dalí and Pujols are representatives of the second option. Perhaps because they experienced side by side the Spanish Civil War from 1936-39, and to a certain extent, the two World Wars. We cannot know it. Anyway, it is a very different path from the one we find in western art world.³⁵

We should say that both Pujols and Dalí were not the only ones in Europe who thought of a new Humanism based on scientific knowledge from which the creative imagination should take flight. Likewise, this new Humanism based on «Híparxiologia»³⁶ and «Classic Surrealism» occupies a place of transcendence that measures what is human and leaves a door open to the mystery of reality. In 1949 different thinkers and scientists met in Geneva to talk about this issue. There, Karl Jaspers raised the question of whether the old Humanism should be rehabilitated or should a new one be created (Grousset, 1949). The debate reappeared about whether this Humanism and transcendence should be understood from Jean Paul Sartre's or from Heidegger's approaches³⁷. The philosopher Samuel Ramos in 1940 suggested in Mexico a new Humanism for the West (linked it to a possible only one

³² Cf. «Notes que deixa Francesc Pujols (segona tanda)» [Notes left by Francesc Pujols (second round)]. Fundació Francesc Pujols, Capsa [Box] 30.

³³ On the same manuscript («Notes que deixa...») we can read: «The eternal life that awaits us after death in infinity where the truth does not need science.» Fundació Francesc Pujols, Capsa [Box] 30 (I).

³⁴ In this sense Pujols and Dalí are heirs of the «escriure al ritme de la sang» [writing to the rhythm of blood] stemming from the Catalan Modernist movement, which also had dealt with madness and brilliance. This topic has been globally studied by Maria Dasca and, in the specific case of Antoni Fuster Valldeperes, by Magí Sunyer, See Dasca (2008).

³⁵ It is worth noting that George Orwell wrote in 1946 that as a result of the Spanish Civil War, political aspects, in the broad sense of the term, were very present in his works (Orwell 2004).

³⁶ «Híparxiologia» is how Francesc Pujol's called his philosophical System, stemming from two terms of Ancient Greece: «Híparjos» (drive) and «logos» (science): «science to drive the human existence».

³⁷ Sartre talked about this issue in 1945 in a lecture given in Paris, published in French in 1946, and translated into English in 1948 (Sartre 1989).

«Mexican» philosophy arguing with Husserl and Heidegger). Contributions made by André George were restudied as well (George, 1942).

In 1914, at the beginning of the First World War in Europe, the *Mancomunitat de Catalunya* took place in Catalonia. It was the first project of a Catalan National Sovereignty since 1714. As Catalan authors experienced the War from 1936 to 1939 first-hand and they did not live the second World War, they had a different vision and experience from the rest of Europeans of the humanist crisis and the challenges that it involved. As stated, this fact is the background of Dalí's surrealist proposal. He was inspired by Alomar, Pujols, Gaudí and Lull. A proposal of worldwide Humanism that goes beyond what was proposed in Europe at the time, as science is universal and can be shared by everybody. It is a Humanism based on philosophical anthropology remodelling human «reality» and subjectivity in such a way that is entirely compatible with the findings of contemporary neuroscience. Therefore, it rationalizes and gives a plural, complex and powerful character to 20th century Catalan culture.

8 Bibliography

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