


## REVIEW

### JOAN CUSCÓ. *SUBJECTIVITAT I CREATIVITAT. TEMPS, MEMÒRIA I CREACIÓ.* BARCELONA: PUBLICIA, 2018

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Joan Cuscó's work *Subjectivitat i Creativitat. Temps, memòria i creació* (*Subjectivity and Creativity. Time, memory and creation*) is an attempt to comprehend creativity through the filter of subjectivity. The epigraph of the book already anticipates the trajectory and logic of the research presented by the author, who, in the form of an erratic movement—various authors, apparently heterogeneous—explores and discovers, as an explorer in an unknown land, a clear image, elaborated in a solid and disciplined project: the nature of human subjectivity. As the author tells us, subjectivity will be the way to approach or try to understand human creativity; and this approach will be done—as if it were a composition of a musical chord, constituted by four notes—through the comprehension and mutual relationship between mind, brain, consciousness and language. The research presented by Cuscó is based on a plural and multifocal approach between scientific knowledge, philosophy and art, always avoiding reductionist views and encouraging unconditional dialogue between these disciplines or perspectives. Throughout his composition, the author progressively reveals a certain conception of human thought or of human nature in general terms. Human nature, Cuscó defends, must be understood from the dialectic between necessity and possibility, that is, from the double perspective of understanding our existence as organisms attached to certain necessities and possibilities open up by our symbolic capacity. It is in this manner that the author tries to capture the space that sep-

arates biology from artistic creation; and he does this by avoiding at all times to fall into any kind of reductionism, mainly in the idealism that considers humans as singular beings in the bosom of creation; and also avoiding various forms of dualism, such as the one between biology and culture, between body and mind, and ultimately between philosophy and science. The whole work shows an extraordinary mastery of specialized literature on the issues addressed, from biology to philosophy, through art and artistic creation. Especially noteworthy is the attention to Catalan thinkers and scientists, often neglected by the academic research done in Spain itself—an element that shows how Cuscó's work has a clear international aspiration and remains rooted in the fruitful production of his homeland.

The thesis is structured in three major blocks, which together aim to achieve an “upward process of concretion”, ranging from the theoretical side of the issues addressed, to its concretion in the field of artistic creation. Thus, after an introductory chapter, the second chapter (“The Brain, Consciousness, and Mind”) deals with the notions of brain, mind, and consciousness in order to see how subjectivity is shaped in various ways. Understood from the notion of the three worlds of Karl Popper, reinterpreted by Roger Penrose, and placed in the context of the Theory of Living Systems, Cuscó defends the need for a pluralistic paradigm that includes the various perspectives mentioned above and to recover the way of understanding how the creative process takes place through thinking subjectivity. The third chapter (“creation and creativity”), the longest of all, clarifies in detail the notions of mind and brain, indicating their mutual relations, in order to access a certain idea of subjectivity. Following authors like Ilya Prigogine, Cuscó clarifies how subjectivity must be understood as a process, which is dynamic and open to change, which happens thanks to a time that is both duration and creation, “Time—Cuscó tells us—is important because from the perspective of the time of evolution we grasp the process that has allowed the establishment of the cognitive and productive conditions of the human being and, from the perspective of time—as a creation—we observe the processes that allow us to capture the creativity”. (p. 337). Thus, creativity is presented in this work as the element that connects the double human root in biology and culture, as that which connects the brain, consciousness and mind; thus, creativity appears as a result and as a creation of life in a biological sense, but also as a result and constitutive element of the mental and consciousness processes that constitute our subjectivity. In the words of the author, “in subjectivity, there is a reunion between what is quantitative and what is qualitative (through time), and a co-implication between order and disorder and balance and imbalance (‘creation’ and ‘creativity’), which is established in different levels of creativity.” (p. 330).

The fourth chapter (“On artistic creation”) parts from the already developed notion of subjectivity and adds to it research done on language and creativity. Indeed, language, which like the mind, consciousness and the brain, should not be seen as closed systems but as processes, must be understood from the perspective of creativity, as a dynamic and procedural reality, like a *llengua* (using the expression of Albert Bastardas). This chapter therefore serves as a concretion of all the previous elaborations, and also has the function of showing the cultural, educational and political centrality of creativity, in order to guide or think effective educational policies that can face this human reality. Following Eduard Nicol, Cuscó examines the act of creating as arising from a dialectical discontinuity between being and time, between the subjectivity that moves and lives and the ontological need. Also in this chapter, Cuscó analyses the relationship between crea-

tivity and madness, introducing a reflection on the figure of the genius and the relevance of dreams and memory. Throughout the description, the nervous system, understood as a living and plastic system, allows us to see, again, the close link between biology and human subjectivity.

In the conclusions ("From hypotheses to conclusions"), the author re-explains the whole of his work, adding summaries and diagrams and synthesizing all the achievements of the work. Creativity is closely linked to (although not limited to) cognitive activity, which as a reality that is both inherent in life and in human beings, implies the presence of time in all its dimensions. Through a series of diagrams, Cuscó finally shows how the elements exposed throughout the work interact with each other, the set constituted by the mind, consciousness, brain and language, as constituents of subjectivity, allow us to think about the concept of creativity. The work closes by adding two appendices, the first clarifying through a series of diagrams and figures which the author calls the citizen model; the second opens a new way of interpreting creativity as an "intelligence style". Joan Cuscó's book as a whole is a first-rate exercise of philosophy understood, as Jordi Sales has, as an effort to understand, an effort to understand in this case creativity through the understanding of subjectivity. Cuscó's reflection clarifies and generates at the same time many questions and introduces a fruitful dialogue between scientific, literary and philosophical perspectives, but also and above all a dialogue with himself, as a creator, as a musician and as a thinker.

Indeed, music, which always accompanies Cusco's work as a paradigmatic example, is shown as a model of a creativity that is both life and intelligence, that is both madness and order-building, that opens us to the reality of the human being, because it allows us to recognize, through what we are not, what we are or what we want to be.