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***"Decrèpita i teatral"?* On Literary Explorations of Barcelona** **Enric Bou**

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“DECRÈPITA I TEATRAL”?
ON LITERARY EXPLORATIONS
OF BARCELONA

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ABSTRACT

Two novels, Montserrat Roig's *El temps de les cireres* (1976) and Luis Goytisolo's *Recuento* (1973), provide numerous examples of how walking in the city can be a particularly significant experience, profoundly marked by history and politics. This article discusses the ways that Roig and Goytisolo guide their characters and readers into an urban jungle of words with a very precise purpose: the critical interpretation of space according to the values of the writer in the present. Proffering a quasi-archeological reading of a jumble of temporal traces scrawled on the walls of old buildings, Goytisolo's narrator expresses, in a manner not unlike that of Roig's characters, a complex *mise en question* of the past and the present. In Roig's novel, what comes to the fore is the funereal-like theatricality of the old Ribera neighborhood, which functions not only as a space of habitation but also as a setting for cultural memory and the representation of Catalan history.

A Patrizio Rigobon

When I visited the impressive exhibition, “The Dawn of Photography: French Daguerreotypes, 1839-1855,” at the Metropolitan Museum in New York City in March 2004, I was struck by two things. First and foremost, I was impressed by the startling quality of the pictures, taken more than one and half centuries ago. The vivacity of city life at that time was noticeable in every detail of the small images; one could see, with breathless exactitude, houses and streets, sky and distant landscape. Secondly, I was impressed by their theatricality. The primitive techniques, including the long exposure time, made it seem as if every daguerreotype presented a scene from which life had long been absent, as if the houses and streets therein depicted were to be used as the background for some sort of state ceremony. A daguerreotype is the result of an early photographic method with the image made on a light-sensitive silver-coated metallic plate. The length of time needed for the physical and chemical process to work made it difficult if not impossible for early photographers to take “instantaneous” pictures. That is why all daguerreotypes have a rather sinister

and funereal quality (see images 1 and 2), or why it seems as if they were some sort of theatrical background for scenes of city life—not unlike those depicted in Eugene Sue's *Les Mystères de Paris* (1842-43), Antoni Altadill's *Barcelona y sus misterios* (1884), or Josep Nicasi Milà de la Roca i Guilla's *Los Misterios de Barcelona* (1844), where action and movement are at the service of a vivacious picture of city life.

The daguerreotype is, of course, a medium that changed the history of art and visual representation forever. The aforementioned exhibition at the Metropolitan allowed the visitor to reconsider the sensations that people experienced in mid-nineteenth century, when the pioneers of photography used the invention for a broad spectrum of artistic, scientific, and documentary purposes. Daguerreotypes are characterized by incomparable detail and a sculptural quality that led one of its earliest champions, Jules Janin, to describe them as "divine perfection." In fact, it could be said that the invention of the daguerreotype forever altered the way we see and understand our world. No invention since Gutenberg's movable type had so altered the transmission of knowledge and culture, and none would have so great an impact until the digital revolution of the late twentieth century.

A modern invention, the daguerreotypes' relation to the city is particularly significant. Walking the streets of a big city can be an inspiring experience, brimming with a diverse array of situations and encounters. As Fernando Pessoa puts it in *Libro do desassosego*: "A morning in the countryside exists; a morning in the city is full of promises. One makes you live, the other makes you think" (133). I was musing about these words by Pessoa when I realized that I had been considering two different ways of portraying the city: with daguerreotypes and with novels—specifically several novels set in Barcelona, in which the urban landscape is reflected in a some very compelling ways. It is well known that the use of painterly techniques, perspective, and spectacle in nineteenth-century narrative, or simply its reliance on an abundance of visual description, served to create, enlarge, revise, and/or update the reality shared by readers of the time. Nancy Armstrong has stated that she would like "to hold the very kind of description we associate with realism at least partly responsible for changing the terms in which readers imagine their relation to the real" (6). With respect to more contemporary novels, including many of the literary experiments of the 1970s in Spain, basic realist techniques may still be present, even prominent, but there is in general less description and more sophisticated, multilayered cultural and aesthetic commentary, with the narrator or narrative voice engaged in metafictional speculation on what lies "beneath" or "behind" objects, places, and people.

The modern city has obviously opened up new venues for life, bringing human experience to new heights—and lows. Josep Carner,

a *noucentista* intellectual who was trying to advance an idealized vision of the city, rather brilliantly invokes some of the changes in city life in "El badoc" or "La ciutat sense ara," two prose works that offer keen insights into urban characters and activities. Spanish and Catalan narrative from the 1970s is no less insightful, and provides numerous examples of how walking in the city can be a particularly significant experience, profoundly marked by history and politics. In what follows, I would like to take a look at two of these novels, one written in Catalan and the other in Spanish, both of which are set in Barcelona: Montserrat Roig's *El temps de les cireres* (1976) and Luis Goytisolo's *Recuento* (1973).

In one of the final chapters of *El temps de les cireres*, the main character, Natàlia, recalls a long walk through the city with her nephew Màrius. The walk takes place in a neighborhood, the "Barri de la Ribera," in which the otherwise changing urban landscape of Barcelona still offers relatively fixed coordinates, that is to say, structures and signs that have not changed dramatically over the years and that consequently allow for critically conscious amalgamations of past and present that are rarely, if ever, the stuff of standard history books. In Roig's novel, Natàlia strolls through the Ribera, the same neighborhood where Santiago Rusiñol's emblematic novel *L'Auca del senyor Esteve* (1907) about a conservative and colorless Catalan shopkeeper takes place. Reflecting on what she sees as she strolls through the old streets of the neighborhood, Natàlia ponders the distance between her great grandparents's time of bourgeois grandeur and proletarian unrest and her own rebellious near past, marked by student protest and the revolt of the younger generations to which her nephew Màrius belongs. Natàlia's and Màrius's reactions to the names of the streets and to what they mean personally and collectively are indicative of their different understandings and experiences of urban landscape in general:

Feren la volta per Santa Maria del Mar. No se sentia cap més remor que les gotes que davallaven dels balcons i alguna passa llunyana que feia eco dins del silenci del carrer. Passaren pel davant d'una plaça oberta, com un descampat, que servia d'aparcament de cotxes, "al fossar de les moreres no s'enterra cap traïdor..." , digué la Natàlia. Què dius?, féu en Màrius, res, recitava un vers que em llegia el teu avi. Saps qui és en Pitarra?, en Màrius va dir que no. La Natàlia pensà que el barri no havia canviat. . . . És un barri decrepít i teatral, sembla que les cases siguin decorats a punt d'ésser traslladats a un altre escenari, pensà la Natàlia. [. . .] Per què hem fet aquesta volta?, preguntà la Natàlia, perquè és un ritus, contestà en Màrius, aquest barri em deixa l'estómac buit, com si hi hagués viscut en una altra època. (192)

Natàlia is here quoting from "El fossar de les moreres," a famous poem by the popular nineteenth century playwright, Serafí Pitarra. In

so doing, she effectively brings to bear a nineteenth-century rendition of the fall of Barcelona (to Bourbon forces in 1714) on her and her nephew's stroll together. Interestingly, although *El temps de les cireres* is from the mid-1970s, the quote from Pitarra was later inscribed—on September, 11, 1989 to be precise—in the stone base of a concave memorial designed by Carme Fiol, thereby replacing the “plaça oberta, com un descampat, que servia d'aparcament de cotxes” that Roig here describes. The changes that occur in the urban landscape *after* Roig writes her novel allow us to reflect critically on the changes—and continuities—that are presented *in* the novel. And in the novel, what comes to the fore is the funereal-like theatricality of the Ribera neighborhood, which functions not only as a space of habitation but also as a setting for cultural memory, for the representation of Catalan history. The couple's long walk through the night casts light on the many contradictions and meanings of this urban space, and constitutes a negative instance of the aforementioned “theatricality,” a moment of otherness between the reading subject (or “spectator”) and the object of representation.¹

Natàlia's view of the houses in the neighborhood as so many set designs ready to be moved to another location may allude to the fact that many buildings in Barcelona's Medieval and Renaissance districts were indeed moved at the beginning of the twentieth century, particularly between 1908 and 1913, when the Via Laietana, an important thoroughfare connecting the waterfront to the nineteenth-century grid-like expansion (the *Eixample*), was created. One of the most famous of such buildings is the Casa Clariana-Padellas, which currently houses the Museu d'Història de la Ciutat. In fact, most of the so-called “Barri Gòtic” or “Gothic Quarter” is an invention that dates from the time of the 1929 World's Fair. The urban historian, Stéphane Michonneau, in his examination of the changes that took

1. In a now classic essay from 1967, Michael Fried examines the history of hostility towards the theater from the time of Plato to the present; see also Josette Féral, Michael Quinn, and Marvin Carlson. According to Féral: “the notion of theatricality recurs in many different disciplines: theater, anthropology, sociology, psychology, business, economics, politics and psychoanalysis, where the term is used either metaphorically or actually resorted to as an operative concept. When used outside the field of theater, the notion of theatricality seems to refer to familiar characteristics, as if its meaning were somehow implicit for those who use them. The notion of theatricality is related to the spectacular, that is to say, with the transformation of everyday life into a spectacle, involving the creation of an «other» relationship with the world. This means that it implies the recognition of an act of representation, the construction of a fiction (...) Theatricality thus emerges from the recognition of a dialectic between the spectacle and the actor or the spectator. This dialectic allows the actor to escape identification to his role while it allows the spectator to escape the catharsis. In this way, theatricality deconstructs the scenic illusion (another name given to mimesis) while it relies on it for dramatic representation” (“Foreword”, 7-8). I am most indebted to my friend and colleague Sharon Feldman for her insightful comments on this matter.

place in Barcelona after 1860, has noted precisely the invented, decorative qualities of the "old city":

La ciutat es convertí en el decorat en què es projecten les classes opulentes, un espai d'urbanitat d'acord amb la imatge que volien promoure aquestes elits nascudes de la indústria i del comerç. En endavant, la ciutat serà l'instrument estimulant d'un orgull cívic i l'expressió més aparent de la modernització. Els carrers es convertiran en un text instructiu que pot manifestar i difondre un nou ordre moral i polític, els valors i les aspiracions de la civilitat en curs de definició. (20)

The transformation of the streets into a manual, or "text instructiu," for a dominant understanding of order and modernity is exactly what Roig deplures in her novel: what used to be a platform of a heady, early modernity is now virtually a dead space, "un barri decrepít i teatral."

In *Recuento* (1973), Luis Goytisolo also presents the city from a historical perspective, through a pastiche of nineteenth-century guides and literary texts. Signaling an ideologically laden gap between pre-war splendor and post-war misery, Goytisolo grapples with two cities, one from the past, a city of bourgeois expansion, and one from the present, a city of bourgeois crisis. Goytisolo complicates the presentation of the "two cities" by positing one as a real historical place hated by the main character and the other as a utopian "no place," in accordance with Raul Ferrer Gaminde's Marxist ideology. Ferrer Gaminde, the main character in *Recuento*, is a young student and a militant in the Communist party, seeking the overthrow of Franco's regime. In a veritable demonization of bourgeois Barcelona, the narrator incorporates lines from Joan Maragall's "Oda nova a Barcelona" (1909) in a manner that not only criticizes the bourgeoisie but that also denigrates Gaudí's Sagrada Família, which is here no longer a "sacred temple" but a:

Sagrado aborto, una obra en la que no parece sino que la burguesía barcelonesa hubiera querido no sólo reflejarse a sí misma sino, sobre todo, perpetuarse, proyectarse, darse permanencia, plasmar en piedra su futuro, como en un libro abierto situando a la familia en el centro de toda organización social. (181)

He goes on to provide new motifs for the church's main doors: instead of the Nativity and the Passion, they are now called the "Revolución" and the "Nueva Sociedad" (184).²

2. La Sagrada Família is described as "templo inconcluso de inusitadas perspectivas, cuatro campanarios, un ábside y una fachada de exuberante imaginería, astros, sangre, niños, rebaños y reyes, grupos escultóricos, arrebatados retablos, un precursor o profe-

In another chapter, Goytisoló reads the *Eixample* in devastating critical terms:

Desde el vano sinuoso se divisaba la ciudad ensanchada hacia poniente, crepuscular, sonora como una caracola, el Ensache extendido hacia poniente en mecánica repetición de la ya vieja cuadrícula, fórmula planeada más de cien años atrás, el plan Cerdá, empresa nacida bajo los mejores augurios de la con tanto empuje burguesía decimonónica en aquellos años de gracia y desgracia, de dolor y gozo, de revoluciones y restauraciones, de barricadas, represiones, atentados y comunas, cuando un fantasma recorría Europa, empresa destinada a transfigurar la ciudad, predestinada, ensanche proseguido aún, sólo que de un modo un poco más estrecho o mezquino, cuadrando como un estadiño, sólo sobre el plano, cuadrícula arterioesclerótica, sin parques intercalados ni bloques abiertos a jardines recogidos, manzanas cerradas entorno a garajes, almacenes, pequeños talleres, apretadas edificaciones mecánicamente repetidas, ventanas frente a ventanas, balcones frente a balcones, terrazas frente a terrazas, con amplios panoramas de más terrazas, balcones y ventanas, más algún solicitado sobreático, pura fachada, piedra artificial, viviendas ya que no hogares ni con el muy apreciado simbólico hogar, simples puntos de concentración familiar, mecánicamente convencionales con respecto a unas formas de vida demasiado fluctuantes, pisos ya sin las holguras decimonónicas, sin salón, comedor y alcoba rígidamente prefigurados, sin recibidores oscuros ni soleadas galerías, una sala de estar y basta, y una avara profusión de paredes medianeras, patios inferiores, flacos tabiques, calculados recuentos de metros de alzada, metros cuadrados, metros cúbicos, palmos, estrecheces, ruines calles cruzadas en degradada extensión de un retículo en otros tiempos proyectado como liberador, excrecencia celular, gris enrejado, fantasmal contorno de aquellas verticalidades, cuatro torres como púas alzadas al atardecer. (169)

This aerial view of the *Eixample* carries, as noted, a vicious critical charge and illustrates, at the very least, Ferrer Gaminde's contempt for the city. Evoking the original Roman settlement through the eyes of a visitor to the Museu d'Història de la Ciutat, near the Plaça del Rei, the narrator sets notices the superimposition of different historical moments and the manipulation of the urban landscape. He waxes poignant when he describes how the main character considers what this historical superimposition means for the city—and for him—in the present:

Imagen fascinante, sublimada, evaporada, desaparecida, formas prefiguradas y sobrevividas por estas otras, tanto tiempo soterradas y confundidas y, al fin, de

ta de encendido verbo encarnado en transportada efigie, coloraciones del ocaso, obra inacabada, simple anticipo del futuro prometido, profetal estructura de formas presu-
madas, elegantes, mera fase inicial de lo que algún día iba a ser ambiciosa plasmación de una
gran empresa realizada sobre sacrificios de generaciones, dogmática protoplasmación
edificada en lo que ahora era solo un erial sombreado de espectrales perfiles⁸ (169-170).

nuevo aflorantes, tramo a tramo, de las entrañas del casco viejo, circuito excavado, descombrado, pacientemente redescubierto por la piqueta municipal, progresivamente limpio de adherencias, huellas residuales de las edificaciones encubridoras ya derruidas, paneles de azulejo, empapelados florales, marcas de revoque, de escaleras esfumantes, negruras de chimenea. (219)

Proffering a quasi-archeological reading of a jumble of temporal traces scrawled on the walls of old buildings, Goytisolo's narrator expresses, in a manner not unlike that of Roig's characters, a complex *mise en question* of the past and the present.³

Both Roig and Goytisolo present a view of Barcelona that questions some of its most cherished values, especially those that pertain to its lavish "modernization" in the nineteenth century and, more specifically, to a rationalized expansion that still had strong links to parts of the old town, whether it be the "Barri gòtic" (Goytisolo) or the "Barri de la Ribera" (Roig). In so doing, they implicitly react against Joan Maragall's famous vision of Barcelona in his "Oda Nova," in which the space of the city nourishes a dream of the future and of hope, which was the only way that he could address—and come to terms with—an extremely violent moment: the *Tragic Week* of 1909. It is precisely the tension between hopeful peace and desperate violence that Maragall conveys so masterfully in his ode

Tal com ets, tal te vull, ciutat mala:
 és com un mal donat, de tu s'exhala:
 que ets vana i coquina i traïdora i grollera,
 que ens fa abaixar el rostre
 Barcelona! i amb tos pecats, nostra! nostra!
 Barcelona nostra! la gran encisera! (789)

It is surprising that so authoritative a scholar of Catalan modernism as Jordi Castellanos could write that Maragall "tanca el poema amb una declaració de barcelonisme" (152). In reality, what Maragall does is a bit more sophisticated than a simple declaration of "Barcelonism." He acknowledges the city's dualities, its ties to the past and its aspirations for a better future, its bourgeois projects and its working class vindications. That said, in his personification of the

3. Even a political journalist such as Manuel Vázquez Montalbán wrote in Barcelones a stage rendition of the old center of the city: "Aquests barris patricials i alhora populars, residencials i comerciants, continuen conservant vells aires, encara que una mica pausteritzat pels temps. Però entre el carrer Baix de Sant Pere i el barri de Santa Maria encara sobreviu aquella Barcelona [. . .] La mirada de la jove Barcelona s'ha reconciliat amb aquestes velles pedres, en altres temps considerades antihigièniques, sobretot després d'haver travessat el desert de la geografia d'una suposada Barcelona modernitzada per un urbanisme especulador i moralment miserable" (93).

city as a woman (“vana i coquina i traïdora i grollera”), Maragall expresses his fraught, if firm, love for it. Perhaps Maragall also expresses, albeit more subtly, what Joaquín Romero Maura wrote in *La Rosa de fuego*: “[e]n el interior del remoto cinturón de chimeneas de fábricas, las avenidas anchas y empedradas, rodeadas de árboles: ahí las viejas casas opulentas de inconmovibles sillares, ahí los grandes edificios de los arquitectos modernistas” (quoted in Vázquez Montalbán 117).

In a number of texts by Roig’s and Goytisolo’s contemporaries we find similar, if still powerfully distinct, conceptions of the city as a theater shot through with dualities. Jaime Gil de Biedma’s poem “Barcelona ja no és bona, o mi paseo solitario en primavera” is a case in point. In this poem, Gil de Biedma invokes the 1929 World’s Fair, located on Montjuïc: “que la ciudad les pertenezca un día. / Como les pertenece esta montaña, / este despedazado anfiteatro / de las nostalgias de una burguesía (81). A son of the Barcelona bourgeoisie, Gil de Biedma, here invokes non-Catalan immigrants (the “charnegos” of Juan Marsé’s novels), to whom he wishes the city to belong. One can better appreciate this projected change of command by comparing it to what Joan Maragall proposed. In an article titled “La ciudad del ensueño” (1908), Maragall wrote about the old section of the city, which was slowly disappearing:

Esos callejones van a desaparecer; esas plazuelas quedarán disueltas en la amplitud de la vía nueva; caerán esos oscuros macizos de piedras seculares, y el sol que ahora se filtra en la estrechez centelleará anchamente dorando las grandes nubes de polvo de los derribos; y el viento correrá libre a lo largo de lo que fue ciudad vieja. [. . .] Al fin este barrio que va a morir me agobia y me enternece, y me voy, y me lo llevo dentro; por mi, ya pueden derribarlo. (1981, 744)

One can perhaps best understand Maragall’s attitude here in the light of what Josep Pijoan reported: “ell [Maragall] no sentia cap pietat pels carrers on va néixer i s’estalviava tot el que podia de passar-hi, exasperat per la fetor de les clavegueres” (22-23).⁴ Obviously, Maragall’s position is that of a “user,” a dweller who knows only too well what it means to live in certain parts of the city. Consequently, Maragall seems to be looking towards the future and trying to forget the past. Gil de Biedma, for his part, seems to accept the social transformation of certain spaces of the city occurring under Franco (which is not to say, of course, that he accepted Franco). The ruins of the World’s Fair are, after all, a “despedazado anfiteatro / de las nostalgias

4. I am thankful to Lluís Quintana i Trias, a leading Maragall scholar, for his comments and this reference.

de una burguesia." Maragall, in turn, seemed to be willing to sacrifice the old part of town, the "Barri de la Ribera" where he was born, for his dream of a new future embodied in a new city: the *Eixample*.

Having examined a few literary depictions of the city, let us return now to the daguerrotypes. Nancy Armstrong has argued that the images of contemporary reality provided by daguerreotypes and photographs gave literary realism the means to invert the classical relation between image and object represented, an inversion that endowed photographic images with the power, if not to produce their referents, then certainly to condition how people saw them (30). This may be true for nineteenth-century realism, but not for the writers from the 1970s that I am examining here, all of whom impugn urban images that they consider to be "theatrical," fake and frozen in time. Both Roig and Goytisolo react, directly and indirectly, against the rationalized, ordered, and controlled nineteenth-century city as well as against many of the images produced by writers such as Pitarra, Rusiñol, and Maragall.

It is true, nevertheless, that collections of photographic images bear witness to the "archival fever" described by Jacques Derrida as arising from a wish to locate some original and patriarchal form of authority in order to preserve and disseminate publicly (1-3). A "patriarchal form of authority" is very much noticeable, of course, in Roig and Goytisolo—and can perhaps be most directly related to the dictator, Francisco Franco. They take into account the existence of a powerful collective imaginary, reacting against what they consider to be "fake pictures" inspired by historical reality and projected onto the present as a reassessment of politics and culture. In fact, the reaction of the two writers, for all their differences, seems to confirm the triple meaning practices that Michel de Certeau discerns in urban toponyms: "le croyable, le memorable et le primitif" (158).⁵

In a not unrelated vein, both Roig and Goytisolo reproduce, whether consciously or unconsciously, an almost religious possession of the city, as their characters follow the centuries-old paths of religious parades through the "Barri de la Ribera" or the so-called "Barri gòtic". (Michonneau, 414-17). With both writers, the reader

5. "Ces trois dispositifs symboliques organisent les topoi du discours sur/de la ville (la légende, le souvenir et le rêve) d'une manière qui échappe aussi à la systematicité urbanistique. On peut les reconnaître déjà dans les fonctions des noms propres: ils rendent habitable ou croyable le lieu qu'ils vêtent d'un mot (en s'évidant de leur pouvoir classificateur, ils acquièrent celui de 'permettre' autre chose); ils rappellent ou évoquent les fantômes (morts supposés disparus) qui bougent encore, tapis dans les gestes et les corps en marche; et, en tant qu'ils nomment, c'est à dire qu'ils imposent une injonction venue de l'autre (une histoire) et qu'ils altèrent l'identité fonctionnaliste en se détachant, ils créent dans le lieu même cette érosion ou non-lieu qu'y creuse la loi de l'autre" (Certeau, 158-9).

seems to be treading the terrain described by Baudrillard: the modern world as a gothic Disneyland in which "tout est déjà mort et ressuscité d'avance" [everything is already dead and resurrected in advance] (17). In other words, Roig and Goytisolo guide their characters and readers into an urban jungle of words with a very precise purpose: the critical interpretation of space according to the values of the writer in the present. At the same time, the two writers read space as if they were in front of the Emperor's map as described by Jorge Luis Borges in "Del Rigor de la Ciencia," the text on which Baudrillard founded his concept of the simulacrum.⁶ In Borges's allegory, the emperor has the obsessive pretension of producing the most accurate map of his empire. He will only be content when he has one that coincides exactly with the territory that is being mapped. Form and representation are thus the same and they delete one another. Borges's parable enabled Baudrillard to introduce an era, that of the present, in which "le territoire ne précède plus la carte, ni ne lui survit: c'est désormais la carte qui précède le territoire [...] c'est elle qui engendre le territoire (10), adding that "c'est elle qui engendre le territoire et s'il fallait reprendre la fable, c'est aujourd'hui le territoire don't les lambeaux pourrissent lentement sur l'étendue de la carte" (10). The operation could be related to the one performed by Roig and Goytisolo. As we have seen, in their literary representation of the city, the two writers encounter places that, in Roig's words, are "*decrépita i teatral*". We might add that theirs is a city that has the quality of an old daguerreotype, sinister and funeral. The writers, however, revoke the past city and propose a new one in accordance with a progressive vision of the future.

In a recent article, Carme Riera movingly underscores one aspect of contemporary revisions of the city, of other "progressive visions of the future." Comparing speeches by the mayors of Madrid and Barcelona, she summarizes her concerns: "Me preocupa, [. . .] y mucho, que el interés por esa Barcelona de escaparate turístico enmascare que existen carencias graves que afectan a los más desfavorecidos, ancianas, emigrantes y discapacitados, un tanto por cien considerable de personas a

6. "Del Rigor de la Ciencia. ...En aquel Imperio, el Arte de la Cartografía logró tal Perfección que el mapa de una sola Provincia ocupaba toda una Ciudad, y el mapa del Imperio, toda una Provincia. Con el tiempo, esos Mapas Desmesurados no satisficieron y los Colegios de Cartógrafos levantaron un Mapa del Imperio que tenía el tamaño del Imperio y coincidía puntualmente con él. Menos Adictas al Estudio de la Cartografía, las Generaciones Siguientes entendieron que ese dilatado Mapa era Intil y no sin Impiedad lo entregaron a las Inclemencias del Sol y de los Inviernos. En los desiertos del Oeste perduran despedazadas Ruinas del Mapa, habitadas por Animales y por Mendigos; en todo el País no hay otra reliquia de las Disciplinas Geográficas. Suárez Miranda: Viajes de varones prudentes, libro cuarto, cap. XLV, Lérida, 1658" (Borges, 106).

quien la ciudad nunca va a pertenecer" (2004). The idea of Barcelona as a touristic showcase is consonant with Roig's and Goytisolo's vision. Barcelona—let's face it—has become, among other things, and like so many other cities, a theme park. These writers, with the biting teeth of literature were shrewd enough to conjure up a *preview* of coming attractions. Too often we forget the power of literature as a weapon of mass construction. And instruction. Literature allows us to come to our senses and wake up from a nightmare. And yet, it also announces, more somberly, the map of a city that is ready for, as the *Collectiu J.B. Boix* puts it, "sis milions d'innocents (menys uns quants espavilats)."

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