



Selection of Writings*

*This selection of Perejaume' s writing was made by the author himself with the assistance of Pere Gimferrer and Carles Guerra. The introductory notes to each section were written by Carles Guerra. When the origin of the text is not indicated, the text is unpublished and appears here for the first time.

A FEW TEXTS ON COLLAGE

The texts which have been gathered together under this heading deal with collage as a technique which is no longer confined to the medium of paper. Perejaume first broadened the meaning of collage in *Ludwig-Jujol. Què és el collage, sinó acostar soledats? Lluis II de Baviera, Josep Maria Jujol*: using literary means, he draws comparisons whose territorial dimension suggests a new order which goes beyond “ cartographic order” . Thus, metaphor becomes the chief instrument by virtue of which we may “ go from place to place” . By transforming this last statement into something literal, the text itself becomes a means of transport.

Based as it is upon literary substitutes for reality, the circularity to which Perejaume’ s discourse has surrendered produces, according to Joaquim Sala-Sanahuja, “ metaphors of double circulation” . The most obvious consequence of this is that the focus of enunciation erodes. In two texts on Barcelona’ s Gran Teatre del Liceu opera house, we begin to see that distance is also a productive space for Perejaume.

LANDSCAPE, A POSTCARD MADE SCULPTURE

Just as the surface of a pond transforms the trees, men have learnt to flatten the earth out on a piece of paper, inventing a portable landscape, a hand-landscape, memory set out in a definitive version under a differed light. Here the gaze is fossilized on the paper, time has disappeared, the dregs of so many surfaces found on the water's bottom. This is what the printing of postcards and their copies entails: a series of mirrors, cardboard clarities upon non-existent waters. Doorways or postcards? Walls longing for windows, for one unchanging window remade on the exterior: printed trees and mountains, mountains here at hand, yet so far away! That morning was not this paper, it was everything I know about it, and all that I do not: the solitary hour of that light. This piece of paper speaks of that morning, the reflexion of that place in this hour, the seed of one place in another landscape. I conjugate that morning in the present, I rediscover it, shiny, in a turning of the postcard rack in the infinite tourism of the gaze: the water flows by, the grass grows, day breaks, it rains. That day and this day.

We live as we would have lived.

The present has become the rearview mirror of the future: a changing postcard where everything is shifted into two dimensions in some secret time, a collage being constantly dropped off and picked up, one postcard icing over into another, doubling over, being translated, something other: Sintra and Munich side by side, the sea half sea and half pond, Bulloses Lake, the Atlantic. Sintra and Sintra far away in the distance, the peak of Bassegoda reflecting the Jungfrau in the Brull gorge, in Bulloses Lake, in a previous sea, or along a cascade of retrospective waters.

A tree at Sintra, a tree in Munich, a postcard of Sintra in Munich.

I am in Barcelona a four o'clock sharp in the afternoon, on the peak of Bassegoda but also at Sintra, with a snowy landscape in my hands, and in Munich looking at the same postcard. Cars whiz by with their lights on, with sunbathed mountains in the rearview mirror, the sky above hiding the sunlight at four in the afternoon, thumbing through the postcards in the final railway car images of a long landscape. A forest of sequoias, the woods slashed by switchbacks with the railway lines nailed onto the mountain background, a snowy postcard view beneath a verdant sky, in a series of terminal points and limits set behind the same pane of glass that has now been altered by a never-ending parade of postcards. We are speaking of the climatic logic that fuses them together, the assemblage of an unfolding reality, only an amphibian gaze making it understandable as it passes by. I look at the window: *Mer de glace de Chamonix, Santa Cruz of giant sequoia, Eruzione Vesuvio*. Landscapes arising at the turn of a

leaf, moving from one place to another with the aid of a postage stamp on the vertex, in the hope that the glow of a lighthouse, the binding of an atlas, or the rising and falling curtain of the Liceu might make them reappear, here and now, in some orderly fashion. We follow the poetic order of appearances, for we have gone beyond cartographic order, and only metaphor allows us to go from one site to another without losing our sensibility for a weightless, detachable nature. Is this not the most extreme form of collage: the fragmentation of the sun, machine-reproduced landscapes, and their infinite transplantation onto the deserted surface of this *Âge de la colle*, as Max Ernst once termed it? On the peak of postcards of Bassegoda I am in the Liceu with postcards in the private boxes, meteorite fragments of one landscape against another, contemplating the lowlands of Brull –where the postcards are still so tangible, so orderly, that they do not seem to be what they really are– beneath that mobile firmament composed by the lights of cars, upon the inner lining of postcards sent from the four corners of the world, through four o'clock rearview mirrors, under an aviation of sun and moon. It is four and five in the afternoon, under a preterite sky with its four-sided panorama. Which as yet unseen route might trace the coast of this lonely postcard? Which mobile scenic sites might it follow? Which cascade, falling from a river dam, which balcony bannister, might hold it back? Where have the volumes of so many images gone? A flat landscape is a word, but the world is a poem turning in the nocturne of a mailbox. We have turned the world into a reiterating postcard, the only one illuminated on the surface of forgetfulness, and now, as part of our insecure existence, we require fragments unveiling fragments, rearview mirrors distinguishing and affirming each moment of this neverending postcard we live in on the front, though write upon on the back.

Bassegoda Peak, Les Tribunes.

Exhibition catalogue for *Postaler*. Barcelona: Fundació Caixa de Pensions, March, 1985. See also the French translation by Nathalie Bittoun Debruyne in the catalogue for the staging of the same exhibition at Centre Regional d'Art Contemporain Midi-Pyrénées, Toulouse, April-May 1987; and in *ALEA 9*, Paris: Christian Bourgeois Éditeur, 1989. See also *La pintura i la boca*. Barcelona: La Magrana, 1993, pp. 16-18, and Tonia Raquejo, *Land Art*. Madrid: Editorial Nerea, 1998.

THE DEATH OF ROBERT SCHUMANN

After the *Morning Songs* (Op. 133), Robert Schumann was unable to compose any more music. Whenever he would set out to write so much as a note, another even better one would come to him, and then another. Any murmur whatsoever –a door slamming, the buzz of the street, the subdued passing of a bee– would suggest an overture to him. Every sound, once freshly opened, would soon be put to the side, overcome by another sound that had just emerged, and then by yet another that would drown out the previous one, and once again by that B major assuming an independent life, suddenly pushing itself to the fore in all its solitary beauty within the dark volume of the composition. Everything thus began and nothing continued, like when we are driving in the snow at night and the carlights draw the constant appearance of the snowflakes into the centre of the gaze, melting just before reaching our eyes. The instant when everything disappears, the place where everything reappears. The fragment, and that "nothing is to be scorned". The meteoric intensity of the fragment and of that found sound, of any old sound. A precipitation of notes and blanks deliberately left in the writing. Whiffs of dawn, of the century approaching him, the one we now live in, instantaneous: I do not know if this is the emergence of everything or nothing, of ecstasy perhaps, or of death.

Exhibition catalogue. Barcelona: Galeria Joan Prats, Dec. 1986-Jan. 1987. This text also appeared in *La pintura i la boca*, p. 15.

LICEU GARAGE

The Gran Opera del Liceu (Barcelona's opera house) is a metaphorical operation: a shelter from inclement weather. Or better said: the true and tangibly sharp figuration of a metaphorical operation that with time, as with any artifice of language, has come into common use as something natural and deep-rooted. Once settled into one of the seats, we are brought to think of just how unreal these courteous Pyrenees really are, how the image they evoke has become so tactile and corpulent, supplanting and abandoning it in all its rustic weightiness, with steeply arranged seating in an interwoven ornamental style, the crimson and gold of the various strata, the wooden scenery of the veloured front curtains, the make-up, and finally the unfocussed state of everything else placed somewhere off in the distance.

Quite often there is a palace placed right in front of the landscape scenery, keeping a watchful eye on a rustic and sunny nature. At other times the palace is painted into the scenery and the seat then becomes a rough crag where one can contemplate it from. Together auditorium and stage seem to bring us nearer to a Pyrenees that one might look upon while listening to Berg or Monteverdi or Wagner or Messiaen. It would be much simpler to go to the mountain to find an oval-shaped gorge there, or better still a high ridge with a gully for the orchestra, a rich and solemn site, sometime after the thaw, where the hall might be the scenery itself. From there we would see the Gran Teatre for what it is: an enclosure for those days when it is too cold to be outside, a shelter from the rain. Every year the same thought comes to my mind: "when the good weather comes we will all go off to hold the concerts in the Busa Range or in Ribelles Valley or at the summit of Catiu d'Or." But things just do not seem to work that way. We prefer to watch our summer theatre in stifling heat, "conditioning" it with fresh blown air and carpet scents, closing the windows and widening the aisles, who knows whether to sharpen the artifice even more, making the language even more inevitable and the distance more real, without speaking of what the distances narrate.

Or perhaps this is all meant to protect us from the natural world, when we are obliged to begin protecting ourselves from language itself, in whatever place we find ourselves.

In the theatrical opacity of the seating and decorative mouldings, with that liveliness all subtly suggested things proclaim, the Pyrenees seem very far away. They are like some wrapping material dominating the object, suggesting only its forms. We are witness to a metaphorical pouring out of impossible longing and irredeemable distance, together with another in a body that is present, claiming for itself a certain etiquette, a lustre, even comfort: our time is spent in a highly ragged natural world where the inclemencies of the weather and overly long journeys are avoided.

Thus the Pyrenees reveal themselves to us in the moment the door is opened, though they are not exactly the Pyrenees. Instead it is an interior Pyrenees, like the exterior of a palace in the interior of a mountain, resembling even the confused agglomeration of all these elements in a garage that loses the real, concrete site in the effort to be all possible sites, even if they are not as real. It is then that we see the Liceu as what in fact it is: a gathering of frames, a garage full of moulding and velour curtains, a kind of picture gallery, the golden resting point of landscape.

Exhibition catalogue for *Coll de Pal-Cim de Costabona*. Barcelona: Galeria Joan Prats, June-July 1990. This text also appeared in *La pintura i la boca*, pp. 27-28

LICEU. MAP OF CATALUNYA PRINTED WITH ASHES OF THE GRAN TEATRE DEL LICEU

In the hope that the Mountain might be theatre FRANCESC MARÉS

The burning of the Liceu opera house allowed us to perceive the enormous format of a collapsing painting. The *mise en nature* of the Gran Teatre was a demonstrable fact in those fragments of the building falling upon all kinds of objects and places over a radius of various kilometres.

The very chemical make-up of the theatre had given the blaze the appearance of a volcanic eruption. A confined air, layered thick with performances, broke out amidst a tempestuous explosion.

The inconsistency of that abrupt density of images in the interior of the premises made such a reaction predictable. Audaciously piled up over various floors, the maleability of the golds, velours and rigid decorative reliefs was submitted to extraordinarily spectacular contorsions and folds.

The steep contours rose dramatically, full of images and assorted appearances, reaching saturation; above the stage a wooden structure held back a second tier of curtains which entered the repertoire in every new production. It was thus not strange to see the Liceu fall in a completely different figurative sense, shifting towards a new resting place.

After the fire of 1861 the official architect of the theatre, Josep Oriol Mestres, imagined the building to be soaring high in the sky, its golden features and velour curtains spreading out so as to encompass all things, representing everything. Now that the theatre had decided to extend itself outwards: the pigments flew far, from one end of the country to another, only coming to rest when they were so far away from each other that they had come to fear that the link between them could get lost, deciding then to fall upon the ground, like stitches applied to the earth.

The gloomy night sky carried all the specks of the theatre in suspension, letting them fall as they would. A fleck of velour came to rest on a three thousand metre peak; another bit of moulding reverently and obligingly dropped on the slopes of Costuix or on the beach at Llançà; meanwhile tiny particles of the seats settled upon the town of Noedes or upon the holm oak at Mas de Borbó. Indeed, the Liceu had become all told an enormous painting set for landing, after flying across the earth in decomposition, tracing the contours of the surface in the air, its pigments later coming to rest in a most imperceptible way. The theatre remained, to a certain point, intact –there in the facade, the staircase, the hall of mirrors, Ferrera Valley, the Busa Range, Garrigues County– and the ash flakes did nothing but respond to that idea of musée éclaté with which the new museography might encompass an entire region in a permanent collection.

It is in this way that figuration only becomes suspicious behind these images that we so love to feed and let ourselves be fooled by. Like a reddish air set in a great dark space, the cirque at Gorgutes beneath the Mall Pintrat, now has turned into a theatrical architecture of the 18th century. Things become simply whatever we contemplate; figuration makes them ostentatious, yet hard to get a handle on. It is not so much that figuration makes this or that image real, but that it is able to make itself even more real, more decisive, more peaceful and discreet, than any other image. In this way the theatre that houses everything inside itself, is the theatre which represents all things outwardly. I see the theatre that falls here beside me, my breath pushing at the stank air, because this is happening inside a theatre, just as it might occur at the Gorgutes cirque. In ruined grandeur, nature seems to have grown by placing a theatre of our day within the sets of a theatre that once was.

A half sunk pillar testifies to this, like the deep though tiny cracks that painting has formed in submission to climactic trials. In fact, the configuration of theatres is indebted to a geological model –a soft slope curving upon a rising surface– just as it responds to the attentive form of a head with the stage

placed inside the eyes. All posterior velveting and upholstering went about transforming this empty form of a head into a heart: a majestic and intimate heart, drifting from one point of reference to another. I could go on for pages and pages trying to convince you that the Liceu is all this, that its walls are drawn to each other and dilate like a heart, that it has now become a theatre without limits leaving nothing on the outside. The curtain is as red as the day as it rises and sets, or like the red of the sun when we close our eyes, or simply red, for the curtains are enough to make the images "bleed" for us along with each duration, each framing; or just as well as red as fire, with a golden fringe on the bottom and the flames shooting up the folds. Leave the painter's palette where you wish, wherever you feel, loaded or not, it does not matter! Theatre has expanded. This irrepressible capacity of paint to be something else has been passed on to the earth, to our eyes, and to our hearts, so that we no longer can pick out a trace of theatre anywhere, all we see is the pigmentation of a velour curtain. Some saw a luxurious redemption, an unexpected luxurious rusticity in all of this. Others in turn have emphasized the return of all things to their separate models, while others still have perceived a threatening turbidity of agreements carved out between the real and the represented, on the basis of an immense pictorial reforestation of nature. It is true in fact that this embered Liceu, now using real objects for its scenery, inscribes the most genuinely representative mechanisms onto an experience of the natural, leading to a light and malignant phosphorescence for many. It is no less true, though, that this has been a common perception of the majority of Romantic travellers who have seen nature as a spectacle precisely in its most savage formations, those that are found furthest away from human influence. We might imagine that simulation is a sincere tendency of things, and that sites, in the course of offering us a fable, make them manifest to us more realistically than they would do without such fictional pretexts. The spectators for their part are always placed right in front of the paradox that all flight from pictorial reality implies, while insisting on some great figurative acceleration, without ever knowing if a viable –now we would say sustainable– agreement exists between one thing and another.

It is here where the velour curtains and mouldings offer a magnificent geologic, botanical, natural presence, with decorative quadrants, mirrors and columns. The high golden reliefs, with busts of composers and fantastic animals, image rockpiles, bottom valleys and recesses of all types and sizes with all of the elements we have mentioned, as if the Liceu had changed its address and had gone off to those spots in the Pyrenees that so many scenographers have longed for, an upside-down Liceu, purer and less reducible, the origin and final buffer of an enormous cleft of stages.

Beneath Mall Pintrat in the Gorgutes cirque, there is an enormous amphitheatre gully with damask sphagnum moss and craggy tapestries: a cushioned Pyrenees with high backs and snowy embroideries, with the private boxes and slopes similar to those found in that high valley in Comalada, near Canigó, which according to Josep Sebastià Pons "draws itself out and widens like an amphitheatre made especially for the epic of Saint William". Once in the Gorgutes cirque, in the middle of the valley along a low ridge with ironwork like in a found Liceu, we see how easy it is to configure one thing in another. Strictly speaking we are dealing with more than just anything; we are speaking of the real exhibited object which becomes the illusory structure exhibiting them, connecting them from below and from within. Instead of seeing the Liceu or the rocky crags, we try to see the figuration that they carry with them. Yet not so much the figurative image as figuration itself, this thing that must be figuration, its very density: the ceiling so high that the theatre comes to comprise everything to be found therein.

Cave Canis n. 1, Barcelona, October 1995

ADDENDA ON THE WAY TO OGASSA

We do not discover new relationships between things until we have moved far away from them. Catalonia is a morning land, the waterways flow towards noon, with its farmhouses, quaint sites and little villages set along a slight slope to the east. I see this from Sant Arranç, or from Mount Taga, or from Estela Peak in the Cavallera range, far from Bavaria and the Tarragona countryside, but with Bavaria and the Tarragona countryside in the distance regardless. They are present in the extremes of the Pyrenees as well, closer to Bavaria in appearance though in real space closer to the Tarragona countryside. In the end, Linderhof and Casa Bofarull move into alignment: an architecture set diagonally across an intersection of words and the gaze. Everything we have said about them has been in vain –except for the way we might approach that hidden point they are based upon, relating and distinguishing them; except for the way we move around this point whose existence we only sense, though remaining latent, unrevealed. In fact neither art nor knowledge –faithful as they are to a definitively uneasy and incomprehensible cosmos– have ever aspired to eliminate the mystery. Just the contrary, they have strived to heighten it.

We know that the creator of Casa Bofarull, Casa Negre and Vistabella was Josep Maria Jujol. But who was the creator of Ludwig II: Lohengrin? Bavaria? Louis the 14th? He himself? His biographers? His castles? What –to continue– is Ludwig II really the author of? Did he create *Die Meistersinger*, composed by Wagner under his protection at Berg castle? Was he the creator of the winter sleighs he ordered carpenters and machinists of the royal theatre to construct? Was he the author of Neuschwanstein, designed by Jank and carried out successively by Riedl, Von Dollman and Hofmann? Or of Lindehof, whose architect was Von Dollmann, with its Quoglio decorations and Effer gardens? Or perhaps he made the Herrenchiemsee, designed by Von Dollman and later completed by Julius Hofmann? Even in his most intimate diary there are jottings in someone else's handwriting. Nor can we be sure whether his many extravagant habits were real or had been attributed to him by his enemies. Ludwig is all of these things; or to be even more precise, he is what all of these things wanted to be, the victim and driving force behind all these elements, which all told are the monarch's creators and creative destinations.

We return to look upon the plains, slashed by cuts and incisions, as if contemplating from the summit of an ornamental letter an extensive codex rivetted with toponyms. We believe, along with Bofill i Ferro, that "a Gaudi-like construction in the mountain would be a redundancy, it would be senseless", admiring the contrasting locations of Ludwig's castles, their isolation heightening artifice, set in imposing natural sites with their artificial-natural grottos and internal gardens. The afternoon is an aging though sumptuous tapestry, courteous and intensely rural, the golden thread running along the ridges which divide Bavarias from sunnier climes. There in the background, the wide curvature of the sea is retained along an embroidered line of snow. Catalonia, as I once remarked, is a unique Pyrenees set in the confluence of waterways. Metaphor reaches its zero point when Joan Miró points at a tool in his studio and says "that" without naming it. In the mountains, in turn, faced with an excessive accumulation of exposed elements, with a primitive, unarguable language -the box shrub that is the language of box, the spring that is the beginning of water, the stone which is itself in the moment it is abandoned- this zero point, this "that", is made overly manifest. The only metaphor that fits responds to a traditional shifting of senses, the saying of "that" or "the other thing", or just as well pointing to the nearest stone to say "there". I imagine a landscape whose foreground shows a vague and spinning ground of distant, misty mountains, with the background distinguished by the sea represented in great

detail, in a close-up view that clearly shows each blue ripple and each rising wave, concise and sharp like a precise line delineating the dark fir-green tone of a Turkish sky in the paintings of Lucas Cranach. It is a landscape I have not seen anywhere, nor has anyone ever seen it, though we might make it comprehensible and almost visible through language. It is in vain, however, that we try to represent all of this with the landscaping elements of the traditional cork bark nativity scene. If we take the piece of cork bark that represents the mountain range and we put it in the foreground, it is no longer a range, becoming instead a nearby stubble field, the stony edge of a edge, a rough rock, and finally the bark of a cork oak. If I push the moss further away from this bark, it does not maintain figurative illusion either; it is no longer a field, but returns to the state of a small woods, a lush hill, or a distant forest again. It is almost dark. It is not hard to construe figurative qualities in the grass at Ogassa, with its northern firs as tall as the mountains themselves. If we keep the illusion up, we will see that it half invites us to lose ourselves in the patches of new greenery sketched out by tender birch groves, dotted with winter oaks, resting upon the stems of dry grass. In the film *Parsifal* H. J. Syberberg brings pessebrism into play: the winter, the mountains, the temple, the gorge, all of this is suggested by Wagner's death mask placed flat upon the earth, face up upon the expanse of the stage. Just as years earlier Antoni Tàpies had added a photo of a mask in profile in a similar position into a painting done in homage to Wagner, like a rocky monticule or a maquette of the Alps.

Captivated by these lost limits between the "that" and "there" of all metaphorical shifting, we once again think of that mountain range that dissipates when the cork bark is brought closer than the grass, which becomes gigantic as the moss is placed further off. We do not understand how we can verbally express a background placed in the foreground, but cannot so express a traditional piece of cork bark. The two limits of language –words and what they designate– correspond to the two distances that separate cork bark and the observer: bark and mountain range. One of them is supposedly formless in the language of words, unlike objectual metaphor. The biblical man was formed out of clay, but the clay had no concrete figure, deciding to adopt the form of man. If I make a nativity scene out of plaster, I might represent a distant mountain range; upon bringing it closer to place behind it the sea, where the water can be touched, it continues to be a distant range. Language is thus in fact a plaster nativity scene which, in certain cases –such as when I made *La tarda és un tapís* (Afternoon is a tapestry) or just as well when I said "Language is thus in fact a plaster nativity scene"– we set out like a cork bark nativity scene, though made in plaster. I thus hike down this plaster path that hardly modifies the path it represents at all, comfortable and completely natural, until I make it to Mitjavila.

And now in the darkness I contemplate Linderhof and Casa Bofarull: Ludwig makes a nativity scene out of plaster or ice, while Jujol dreams up an architecture made of cork bark, moss and tin foil.

Mitjavila, June-October 1987

Ludwig-Jujol. Què és collage sinó acostar soledats? Lluís II de Baviera, Josep Maria Jujol. Barcelona: La Magrana, 1989, p. 91-95.

PESSEBRISM

The word “pessebrism”¹ alludes to a creche or nativity scene showing the figures traditionally associated with the birth of Jesus in a rural landscape. Cork has normally been used in such scenes to simulate mountains. While collage consists in transporting something to something else, pessebrism is a matter of “seeing something in something else”. Thus, pessebrism is doubly realistic: it is an effort to represent with material that is readily available; furthermore these materials are taken from the very landscape which they represent. The illusionism which triggers a burst of vision and the fleetingness of these depictions serve to place these images in a spectacular scale, as *El suro de Sils*. (The Sils Cork). For the first time, Perejaume considers pessebrism to be a method applied and repeated. Yet by designating pessebrism as a method, he means to liberate the resulting vision from the very subjectivity of the viewer, with the caveat that “the method that commands us is the method we command.”

¹ For the rendering of the English version of this and related terms, see p. 155, note 10, of this volume. (Translator’s note)

PESSEBRISM

“To look at ice without thinking it is water”

RAMANA MAHARHI

We remain in uncertainty, and whoever claims to understand perhaps is only making things up. They pretend to understand by seeing in one thing some other thing, but in the act of seeing it, they merely invent it. Any reading seems to provide us with a certain experience of invention, the same situation that makes it possible, when writing, for language to precede what we are about to say. Certain creations fit perfectly into these sites of connections and artifice where the relation between facts is never proven anyways. It is just as illusive to wish to capture reality whole, as to resign oneself to its ups and downs. Understanding and invention are only with difficulty discernible to those who try to follow that certain reality where form serves to block out distance, articulate connections, take hold of facts and legitimate fiction. This is a reality where we can comment upon the rupture while at the same time eluding it, in this unexpected solidity that the most discordant facts seem to give rise to, in pessebristic fashion. We have commented on this elsewhere: just as if we had gone from a paternal and agrarian painting to a service sector painting, it is not so much the pigments that we must figurate but that which binds them together. More than the simulation of a territory, we long for an extended and sustained territory of simulation. As if painting would permit us to perform an operation around painting, standing upright on grooves in the earth, like someone who moves along the ridge where no ridge exists, following those little peaks that someone or something has, with connections of so many figures that we can make our way across. Ridges then, and aligned watercourses, followed and written, where the word reads whatever the world does not tell it, and painting gives the world the meaning it cannot encounter. We could go by foot along a straight ruler of what I have written, or hold onto the line as if it were a bannister set before a delicate exhibit of ivory objects, of cool and cloudy sites. With *Pessebrisme* I do not wish to offer up a pseudo-scientific code of cork bark perceptions. Away with gratuity! What method has not failed in such a wild land? What building? It is good to

improvise as well. Let the figure come, let it be the figure that comes. There are no failproof strategies. The cork bark is the co-writer. We do not see the idea coming, it turns us over and there it is, like in the studio. Later it wonders whether it has really turned you over, if it was justified in doing so. How can we be confounded by an idea that comes as a given, though we do not know where from? How can its direction be shifted so that it might go elsewhere carrying something that is ours, something we have ever so lightly put our mark upon? The method that commands us is the method we command.

We are three thousand metres up above embers from the 1800s, on planks of wood, right on the spot we must see from. Wherever there is path on each side, all we need to do is make use of bridges set over the canyon. With the bricks laid out longways along the archway, defining its trajectory in an inexorable flight, pessebrism creations a real sundrenched example of these intermediate passages. Its domain is thus not just the cork bark nor the resulting pessebre, but a fuller, straighter and more refined pessebrism that connects them, basking in a rustic air.

With brusque uneven steps we often obtain a kind of Pyrenees that is sharper than that normally depicted, in the very flight path of creation. It is there that the mountains surge and disappear. They pass by like a seismograph wave, the scenic apparatus that is everything to the eye, covered with shrubs just like the models that bring them closer to us. So that with oil paint and words, with bronze and light –and leaping over the rhetoric of appearances– we observe, as mountainous as a pessebre, as concrete as the bark, pessebrism itself: a painting wrapped in theatre, padded with nature, lined in velvet.

This term must be difficult to understand for those who have never lived the pessebristic experience in a traditional, everyday way. Joan Amades says that the word pessebrista appears for the first time in 1805, applied to the Barcelona cutler Ramon Beguer. In fact, the tradition of making scenes with figures depicting the birth of Jesus is age-old and widespread throughout many countries. But in 19th Century Catalonia the stable where Jesus was born was reduced to a kind of miniaturized cave tucked into massive wooded mountains, with rivers and cultivated fields representing the rural areas of the land in great detail, with all kinds of additional references to specific local customs. This localism was reenforced by the inclusion of elements from the immediate surroundings, which hinted at a greater reality: a piece of bark could be an entire mountain range; a twig could become a tree; a chunk of moss, a pasture. And with all this they were still able to give a sense of the isolated deserts of Judea united with those woody surroundings of their own day.

“The principal idea of of a pessebre is the landscape”. So ran the first prescription that Josep Oriol Mestres wrote for the Barcelona Pessebrist Association in 1863. This too is the trait that undoubtably defines the Catalan pessebre: a creation lying somewhere between the Baroque and Romanticism, where the figures seem to obey the style of a retable, with its union of sublime and profane, with the site and the figures depicted taking on an even more markedly Romantic air, with a rural tone and homey feel.

J.V. Foix is the first to use the word “pessebrista” in a figurative sense. He does so in a text on Dalí where he speaks of “astral pessebrism”, and again in another text called *Miró, el pessebrista astral* (Miró, the Astral Pessebrist). In a later text the poet Foix is more explicit, recalling the case of an Italian professor, Giuseppe Sansone, who after reading a poem that he wanted to translate from *Gertrudis* (also dedicated to Miró), commented to him: “C’è un originale presepio”. “Like us”, added Foix, “the Italians have transferred the name of the pessebre from that of the visual representation

of the Nativity scene to mountain landscapes with houses and huts scattered about amongst pine forests and cool springs.”

Set on the table is the world or a piece of the world pursued by so many authors, authors who could convert the term “pesebrism” into a highly extensive style. The shrunken world of Noah floating on the water is the precedent, Zen gardens the period of splendour, the Tuscan *Thebaides* of the 14th and 15th centuries the most faithful depiction in paint, with those Miró’s where Montroig can be seen in the carob trees or in a few blades of grass one of its most intimate manifestations. Is it not a pessebre to place time in a watch, or to see, along with whomever might turn to look, certain things far away in time captured in the bluish hues of distance? All of these changes in scale take place along a dividing line halfway between consciousness and automatism, which arranges along the same line the art of cork bark displays, latent images of Dalí, Foix’s rocks set on plinths, the stained and unexpected sonorities of John Cage’s prepared piano, the stone disease of the entrance arch at Ripoll monastery, the smudged walls of Leonardo, Alexander Cozen’s landscape studies begun with just a stain, Max Ernst’s *frottage*, or that “living vegetation from the trunk of a tree” stamped upon a closet door that Pere Gimferrer has observed “as if he were a medium”. These pictorial effects are set against an imposed figuration, maintaining indecision and inexactitude at all costs, searching for a miniaturized Alps in a piece of cork bark, then to be liberated by poets, children and painters.

Just as with no intervention on our part the effects of time, humidity, and a general wear and tear deteriorate the walls, paint often pretends to be unaware of the image it represents, presenting sites and figures as a careless act. Sometimes we are confronted by a figuration that has been patiently stored up over the years. Other times we are faced with a surface that has cracked from drying too fast, full of pocks, ridges and plateaus. Just as well we find ourselves in mid-air between pigments and their limits, with the signposts partially hidden in the bushes. And still other times we come up against something concrete and real, looking carefully until we are able to surprise a figure in the painting, as if the site had come to us without our hardly intervening. Just like that image now coming to find us, catching our eye and dragging us along from a longstanding obsession to put a name and a face onto the official report, this image, with its highly illusionary spectacularity and exceptional relief work, and with its well-dotted theatricality –however encrusted by time– reveals to us a new visual overlapping of mountains and theatre stages. Now among the statues that give rise to a reading, we contemplate how the gaze itself has been gathered into a pile of cork bark. How much bark is necessary in the land of words to explode our vision, so that the rise of these words might allow us to forget the letters and take hold of an alpine world in the purity of its primary materials? We find ourselves before the gaze and its related parts, in a place that is happy to assume any form at all, as if it had felt an incredibly strong attraction for the very precariousness of things. There is a closed off horizon, an interior horizon with the light of a table lamp there on the horizon. And then we hear the images fall with a crash in the closing of the book.

Exhibition catalogue for *El grado de verdad de las representaciones*. Madrid: Galeria Soledad Lorenzo, October-November 1991. The catalogue includes a Spanish and English translations by Ángel Crespo and Jeffrey Swartz, respectively. This text also appeared in *La pintura i la boca*, p. 282.

CORK BARK AT BATH

Observe amidst the woods, a theatre curtain before the cork bark harvest, when the bark is peeled back and the velour begins to bleed! All wild thicknesses have originally been a velour curtain like this one, with a rusty copper tone, the colour of grape juice later rusting, rusting until the landscape begins. You might say that the cork bark sap seeps out to take a peek and goes rusty, though not as murky as sap itself, more celestial and airy. Once done, year after year, the curtain folds in upon itself in a falling orography and –sprouting elevations, acrobatics in the rocks, final raisings of the earth– never stops growing and moving. The more image is derived (offering us as a gift more territories it does not own) the further the final cut, separating it completely from the trunk. It is then that only in seeing the cork bark laid flat, we begin to search for a high rocky place. Everything –ravines, fields, hills– is set upon a pattern of clearly perceptible intercuts. After we have observed the process, the bark cries to the harvester who puts another piece of cork bark to the task.

William Beckford learnt the art of staining from Alexander Cozens: the ability to see one thing in another just as Cozens did, with his clean landscapes born out of messy tinctures. Joan Miró, who surely did not know Cozen's method, offers an exemplary and just as systematic application (or more) in his collage-based paintings, like Cozens attaining a concrete reality from an unpredictable sketch, though accomplishing an even more remote and intimate degree of associative suggestion. William Beckford's application of the method is in turn more free-roaming. The sketch or the stain –in a literal sense as well, applied to smoky England, dirtied by nascent industrialization– is the surrounding reality upon which Beckford dresses up and illuminates a parallel life. More than a discovery of that stain's suggestive capacity, we are dealing with a total invention, a flight towards external figurations extracted from his travels and diverse readings. Travels, we must say, where the landscapes interpret remote realities, found even further afar. Places, like books, are a support for other places. The materials are positioned so that the gaze might capture them, cork oak groves, stand-in characters. As his last biographer Didier Girard said, "before the itinerant poetry of Henri Michaux, Beckford used places as a veritable support for vision."

This glimpse in some sites of more and more other sites –remember that the so-called "Caliph of Fonthill" did not ever set his feet in the Orient except via a multitude of texts (the first of them being the *Thousand and One Nights* that Cozens gave him when he was only thirteen years old), or recall the oriental aura he discovered in Venice or Andalusia– brings us to Joseph Wright of Derby, the painter of light. Wright of Derby, Cozens and even Beckford were linked to the city of Bath in one or another period of their lives. They were practically contemporaries (with twenty odd years of difference in age between them), all slightly marginal, all nevertheless associated with official art. Of them it is Wright of Derby who was known to have elaborated all sort of risky endeavours around the picturesque nature of night illumination. His is the smallest light of that enlightened, defenseless century which in his day already languished, surrounded by darkness. I am thinking of those paintings with lanterns, lamps, heated forges and planetariums illuminating the characters and the things lying closest to the centre of each painting, while the rest of the scene is left in darkness; or just the opposite, of that other painting where the skeleton of death walks across a placid and serene scene in the middle of the day.

Wright of Derby made his voyage to Italy as well (February 1774 to July 1775). Various drawings from his stay in Rome have come down to us, along with two oils of a grotto in Naples, as well as a

painting in tempera (of uncertain authenticity) of Vesuvius erupting, apparently done on the spot. The rest of the works of Italian subject matter were painted in Bath (some of them were later finished in Derby) or just as well, around Bath. Nocturnes continued to be frequent, though those tiny focal points of light that are familiar to us from the previous period grow and expand, like pessebres, in a most unusual way: first –on winged rays of light– in the great fire castles done in Rome; and later –in a definitively corky light– in his views of Vesuvius burning in a total re-creation –Wright never really coincided with a real eruption of the volcano– of lanterns, planetariums and forges, accumulated and resplendent, conserving in spite of everything an equally or even more extensive wrapping of gloom.

One thing recognizes itself in another, putting on the cork we have taken to it, looking at us with it on. The fact that the bark changes trunks like an actor changes roles aligns and unites everything, though at risk of confusion, without hardly distinguishing the cork where the mountain begins from the cork where the peak ends it. We know of a Wright of Derby drawing in Cozen's landscape style, starting out from a previously observed stain. After much walking, I found a place in Bath that reminded me of it. It is not so much that Bath and the drawing are trying to resemble each other, however; I made this discovery, we might say, in spite of them both. In reference to the method of Cozens, the cork as used by Catalan nativity scene makers has the advantage of being natural, the woody botanical expression of pigments that the landscape already holds within; unlike the *New Method*, which suggests a lack of interest in the actual presence of the site, preferring to fabricate stains in the dominion of language, the cork bark nativity scene maker discovers his stains in the very model. It is thus profoundly realist; it does not turn its back on the world nor disdainfully flee from immediate reality, unlike the pessebrists of Bath.

Let the ascendent growth of cork bark, with its ruts and ruddy stains, its scratches and serrated surfaces like those in Wright of Derby's paintings that take us from the lantern to the hill, from the light to the lava, bring us back again to Beckford. Once, on the occasion of a stay in Switzerland where he met Henri Benedict de Saussure –one of the founders of meteorology and a great lover of mountain climbing– he came into contact with the rough and aged cork bark of the Alps. His first novel, *The Vision*, takes place in an intensely fictitious alpine setting, much like the world of lonely lights and solitary moons portrayed by Wright. "The rays of this glorious planet", he wrote, "gave the crusty stone pinnacles a strange, fantastic air, sometimes like giant idols, others like obelisks or even mysteriously formed pyramids, great sculptures which seem to stand as if confessing." Later, a few lines further on, the cork bark is liberated: "It is with serenity that I now observe the rocky pinnacles, nothing but pinnacles."

Everything rises and falls, a piece of cork bark gives account of itself in the order of something which seems something else; the larger it gets the sharper it seems, the higher it gets the more broken up it becomes. Beckford carries out these enlarging ascents outside of the text. Aware of his rejection of the world as it is, he has another sort of elevation available, another type of writing; already at the age of seventeen in a letter addressed to Cozens, he swears that he will raise "a Tower with which to escape from the earth of men towards another place where the air will not be corrupted by the breath of those miserable folk who are the object of our disdain and rejection." Years later, when he writes *Vathek*, he constructs a verbal palace for the caliph: the palace of Alkorremi, in the city of Samarah. A palace, as Beckford explains, which Vathek has inherited from his father, though he expands it, adding on five more palaces, one for each sense:

Eternal Festival or the Unsatiated; the Temple of Melody or the Nectar of the Soul; Delight of the Eyes or Support of Memory; Palace of Perfumes or the Spire of Voluptuousness; and the Jewel's Retreat, or the Perilous One. To finish Vathek invokes the aid of the genies and with great speed a tower of eleven thousand stones is raised, "not so much to save us from the flood, but out of the insolent curiosity to penetrate into the secrets of the Heavens."

At Fonthill Beckford plans to bring the Palace of Alkorremi to life. He raises this piece of cork bark on the top of a hill, on the airiest spot in the region, in a pointy Gothic which flees from the more austere English Gothic. The architect hired is James Wyatt. The first tower raised collapses just after it is built in October of 1793. But by 1807 Fonthill Abbey can finally be inhabited, its main tower climbing to the extravagant height of 84 metres. Unlike the exoticism of Splendens –the palace at Fonthill inherited from his parents, which behind a Palladian facade enclosed an exotic array of curios from Egypt, Turkey, Holland, or China– the interiors of Fonthill Abbey were furnished with highly valuable pieces from as far away or more, never failing to demonstrate a great erudition in taste: precious porcelain, ostrich eggs, a six-thousand book library -essentially literary and biographical works, but also medieval manuscripts, occult tracts, spiritual texts, Blake illustrations- as well as exotic fruits, perfumes, paintings by Raphael, Watteau, Velázquez, Bellini, silverworks, reptiles, all told creating a multitude of exquisite, unpredictable references constituting a pre-spotting or sketch of the type of ambience which Huysmans insinuated in *À rebours*. Meanwhile, once set up in Fonthill Abbey, Beckford demolished Splendens, the mansion at Fonthill where he had spent most of his life, Beckford's Hohenswangau, his inheritance at the edge of a lake which had become the workshop for the latter construction.

In 1810, as a consequence of the falling prices of Jamaican sugar –there is always some far-off cause, distant and remote– his fortune is considerably reduced. In 1822 Fonthill Abbey appears in a Christie's auction catalogue. Three years later, James Wyatt calls Beckford to his death bed to plead forgiveness, confessing that the foundations of the structure had not been laid according to his instructions, so that the building was bound to tumble some day. Suddenly the cork bark cedes and that very year the tower falls, the entrance way and cloister also collapsing. Beckford decides to move to Bath to live, where from 1826 to 1828 he erects another tower, the Lansdown Tower, raised on a hill at the highest spot in the town. Henry Goodridge, the architect hired for the project, designs a cemetery at the foot of the tower two years after Beckford's death where the latter's sarcophagus, designed by Beckford himself, was laid. Still today Beckford Tower can be seen climbing above the red granite sarcophagus set flat upon the earth.

Cork bark imitating copper, in a parody of dark etchings, allows Ludwig the Bavarian king to wander into these lines. He buries a view of the Edward III gallery at Fonthill (Beckford believed himself to be descended from the king), giving rise to a never-ending, ever-flowing collectionism, convoking styles and latitudes in a story, like that of Ludwig, of centuries and kings in corresponding degree.

Now the cork bark cracks with the sound of badly burning wood, tree trunks or fishing sinkers, as if a name had been revealed to its memory: Hohenswangau? Fonthill? Falkenstein? A whole series of towers are raised and then collapse. Whatever they may be, golden tones shut off all apparitions with goldleafed cork bark and wooden mouldings. Time has softened some creators with a carpet of moss, while the cork bark leaves other, fatally capricious creators exposed to the elements.

The corkers of Bath, unlike the Catalans, tend irresistibly towards the shadow, with a certain disdain for the immediate world. We have not mentioned that what Vathek accomplished with his eleven thousand stone tower was, finally, the Citadel of Infernal Fire, "the first truly atrocious hell in litera-

ture", as Borges would say. There is a painting by Wright of Derby that narrates such a pompous discovery. It is called *Miravan Forcing Open the Entrance of the Tomb of his Ancesters*. The very author described it as thus: "Miravan, a young Hungarian noble, orders a tomb to be opened which is headed by an inscription that reads: Within this tomb is found the greatest treasure that Cressus could ever possess. Once inside the tomb we find only filth and another inscription: Here reigns repose. Miserable sacrilege commits he who searches for gold among the dead! Go, son of Lucre, you will never find this repose." In the painting reproducing this scene there is a central light as well, a lantern hung with a small bronze figure which, as Judy Egerton remarks in the catalogue text, "spins unperturbed, turned eternally away from the world to keep its feeble light over the tomb".

La pintura i la boca, pp. 150-157

THE SILS CORK

All this turns into a stage at Sils. Then a nativity scene maker, dressed in a three piece velvet suit, shows the auditorium a piece of cork. First he shows the back with its admirable, velvety reddish colour that cork bark typically acquires a year after harvest. Next, he holds the cork with all its wrinkles and pocks in his open hands, as a kind of ceremonial offering to the public. Within a few seconds, the cork begins to grow until it reaches the size of the stage itself. Then –even more impressive– it doubles and then triples its size, though its immense optical field never diminishes the true dimensions of the stage. There comes a moment when the audience is surprised to see the expanse of the entire town in real size, like a nativity scene in cork bark, full of all kinds of details. The expectation is extraordinary. The performance lasts until the nativity scene maker suddenly turns the cork bark back around and everything disappears. He waves to the audience and the applause rings out, a delayed noise surging from out of those very extensions which in a flash have shrunk in size as if the spectators were squeezing what they had just witnessed with their hands. It has been said that some spectators, after leaving the show, went off to their own cork oak groves to pick up chunks of bark in their hands, in the hope of playing out their curiosity.

EXERCISES IN WRITTEN PAINTING

In this series of texts, the illusion that one can journey across painting undergoes an elaborate process which begins with the statement that “ the canvas and nature are one and the same” . Once this has been accepted, writing, painting, and walking take place in the same territory. The animism which emanates from this is an effect of Perejaume’ s having removed the traditional medium from painting, which is now placed in the landscape. To reach completion, this process requires a moment of forgetting, such as that in which Perejaume writes, “ Mondrian, Mondrian, Mondrian —on and on until the name becomes odd to your ears.”

The tone of these texts, and especially of the briefest among them, is typical of the impersonal propositions of Conceptual Art. In this case, it is practically impossible that the conditions needed to accomplish such propositions should be met, despite Perejaume’ s suggestion that the reader check them —as his choice of verbal moods reveals. The indirect function of these texts is, therefore, one of indicating the imbalance between the conditions of enunciation and the real conditions with which we live.

PAINTING ON A WALK

Do I love –you’ll say– this landscape,
so beautiful, green and covered with waves!
How I delight in going beyond with it
on to the canvas, with a few brush-strokes

at night! And to let the brush open pathways,
as though I willed myself to vanishment, and at times,
between painting and umbrage, edgeways,
to sit on a frame under golden oak-trees.

Landscape and I are set free through the painting,
we go deeper into the woods again:
Montalt, Montnegre, the sea, nothing halts us.

I return weary when I think, happily enough,
that picture and nature are the same thing.
Walking along, the paintings keep growing.

Translated by J. L. Gili

Nova antologia de poetes del Maresme, Vilassar de Mar: quaderns de la font del cargol, 1983. *Traç*, 21, Mataró 1988.

This text also appeared in *Perejaume, Oli damunt paper*. Barcelona: Empúries, 1991 p. 11

PICTURE GALLERIES

Painting is probably living out one of the most rebellious moments of its history. On one hand, the cession of part of its repertoire to photographic or cinematographic supports has grown to such a degree that these photographic images can be composed, invented and virtually processed with technological pigmentation and sophisticated post-pictorial methodologies. On the other hand, painting has become more and more a territorial reality, spacious and independent, a legacy that is

not so different from the earth, the forests, or from our language. The very name "Picture Galleries" corroborates this ever so expansive legacy, with Louvres trapped in nature and autonomous Himalayas aligning themselves in a museological ordering of time. Here the creator employs other creators, along with walls and frames, as the support for monochromatic fields; here painting, thick and obscure, exposes its own opacity onto the image of the photographic support: covering and concealing what until now it had attempted to represent. Thus leaving the pigments to the side in what was a much wider possibility of meaning and silence, using real, accessible pigments instead, as if in the end paint were not considered for painting, but simply for its own existence.

Exhibition invitation for *Pinacoteques*. Barcelona: Galeria Joan Prats/Artgràfic, February 1992. This text also appeared in *La pintura i la boca*, p. 166.

THE PAINTER

The painter has surprised us while he was working, uncovering us in a chance combination of brushstrokes; we have watched him search us out, and in a most familiar way put his signature upon what he has seen.

La pintura i la boca, p. 85.

EVERYTHING EVOLVES

Everything evolves in pairs like in a spacious dance hall. Sometimes the painter does not come back, he takes the path of painting and never returns.

La pintura i la boca p. 86.

ANAPHORAS, SYNECDOCHES, AND ASYNDETONA

to Saint Luke

They say that the Virgin Mary took visible form, in mystical fashion, on a picture surface when Saint Luke attempted to paint upon it. As if Saint Luke would now try to paint something that had already appeared, untouched, that Saint Luke had already painted.

La pintura i la boca, p. 101.

DETOUR A WILD CREEK

Detour a wild creek home, or send a whiff of the sea into the theatre pit. Build picture galleries at the foot of the mountains, with avalanches rushing in.

La pintura i la boca, p. 90.

DRAPE THE PYRENEES

Drape the Pyrenees in canvas, from a certain height up.

La pintura i la boca, p. 91.

GRIND

Azurite blue, malachite green
reds and yellows of cinnabar
vermilion, realgar, and orpiment
minium orange, gypsum white.
In a small mortar grind up the entire world.

THE WHITENING

The whitening of the Pedrera facade by sandblasting.
The whitening, by sandblasting, of the crags of les Agudes, on Montseny.

TAKE ELEVEN STILL LIFES

Take eleven still lifes by Zurbarán to the main field at Can Tarrades. You arrive by lorry on a rough road and, once there, unload the paintings one by one in the middle of the field. Make sure that the paintings are laid out evenly side by side so as to form a flat retable upon the ground. Exhibit the paintings right where the field lightly rolls, so that the retable might gently curve with it.

THE PLENAIRIST

The pleinairist makes up his eyes and lips and then, before the dressing mirror, a terrible commotion is raised. Right there, with a twist in the air, another room appears: on a promontory he sees an old woman carrying a bunch of broom. Behind her, great clouds drift through the walls. At the far end of the room a buzz of surprise and admiration is heard. Then the vision slips away and the air is once again shut off, like a curtain falling on the stage.

PAINT FIVE BRUSHSTROKES

Paint five brushstrokes in oil on a piece of ice as if the painting were the future, able to return to the earth in just a few hours. As if the paint, in clock-like fashion, were to join time; as if it had incorporated itself into time so as to separate itself from its necessary support. As if the support itself were time.

La pintura i la boca, p. 96.

FLY IN A SMALL PLANE

Fly in a small plane at eight or nine hundred metres above sea level, picking up enough speed so that a brush placed outside, loaded with heavy paint, might run as soon as it touched the air, turning the air into a rigid base. In this way the paint flows out from the brush as if spread upon a wall, with the air holding the brushstroke flat and long for a metre or so, before letting it fall.

La Pintura i la boca, p. 95.

MONDRIAN, MONDRIAN

Mondrian, Mondrian, Mondrian – on and on until the name becomes odd to your ears, until you are sure it is the site of an inevitable, preemptory reality. Who has never been to Mondrian, to the toponymic Mondrian, to the ever so indigenous Mondrian?

La Pintura i la boca, p. 100.

SOME WORKS HAVE PUNCHED HOLES

Some works have punched holes and dented my thought, making my head spin. Some have been made and done, and I have not been able to get rid of them, as they strike my forehead, bruise the nape of my neck. Works made from that paint we carry in our mouths, never able to find the words to get it out.

A MAN

A man sits on a rock. He holds a long brush as if it were a spear. He reaches out his hand and points to another man, off in the distance, who is approaching with a brush as well. Nearby eight men are speaking, each with an enormous brush in his hands. Right in front of us, a lump that we had taken for a rock stands upright: it is another man with yet another brush.

NOTION OF THE ARTWORK

Pulverize all notion of the artwork. Make pigmentation out of such a notion. Agglutinate, with linseed oil, the pigmentation of the notion of the artwork.

UNPAINTING

As subgenres of late Modernity, the abstraction-induced elimination of representation, monochrome, and dematerialization are radicalized by unpainting. Premised on a view of painting as 'predatory', unpainting is meant to methodically restore the materials which have been given over to the representation in which we are immersed. The phrase "to stop making", which appears repeatedly in these texts, is conceived of as a way of allowing things to appear already made. This is effectively an ironic comment on Duchamp's readymades. The activities which are suggested after the interruption of representation are of such a rich range that there is no room to speak of an ultimatum: "we half-discover an active will in stopping making". Unpainting is, rather, a point of inflection which assumes that images and representations are to be treated in accord with sustainable principles.

Parcs Interiors: l'obra de set despintors (Inner Parks: The Work of Seven Unpainters) affirms the co-occurrence of painting and unpainting and ultimately develops unpainting as a paradox. The range of attitudes for which these seven painters stand suggests a number of possible ways out of a hypothetical crisis which threatens to deplete our natural resources. Yet this text may also be read as a history of art in the future, in which 'chosen' artists will react to what is at present unquestionable.

OH PAINTERS

Oh painters, here where we stand, is there or is there not painting? Must it be or must it not?
Should we lay some down, add some on, or should we not?

ART AND ARCHEOLOGY

Art and Archeology seem to fulfill each other somewhere.
Perhaps one day, in a dig, we will find the art of what is to come.

SCULPTURE OF BUSA

Do no sculpture on the Busa mountain range. See the range as the sculpture it already resembles. Be aware that there is something of Foix written in the margin and signed upon it. And what is more, another part that we now sign, upon reading the sculpture I am speaking of.

La pintura i la boca, p. 105.

POSTNATURALISM 1

Spread out a Giacometti, straighten out a Soutine, fill the fauves with greys, curve a Mondrian.

La pintura i la boca, p. 98

ERASE EVERYTHING

Erase everything and blur the erasures! Eagerly seek out new delays! We do not have to know whether paintings hinder us from getting where we are going, or whether they lead us there. An avenging site drives us on, headstrong, and it is with this irrepressible desire to paint that we conjure up Lutheran whites, the erosion of impediments, open formats – and with paint fixer on a rubber eraser, we half discover an active will by stopping doing things.

La pintura i la boca, p. 112. A Spanish translation of this text by Ana Romero appeared in the exhibition catalogue for *Espacios públicos: Sueños privados*. Madrid: Government of the Autonomous Community of Madrid, 1994, pp. 156-157.

POSTNATURALISM 2

By real genetic transformations in a rose, obtain the very scarlet that Emil Nolde used to paint a rose.

La pintura i la boca, p. 99

TURPENTINERS

*Not a precipice, not a torrent, not a cliff,
but pregnant with religion and poetry.*

THOMAS GRAY

Oh painters, all too bold, we who make pictures out of anything! Just try some day to go to the peaks. If they are real, if there are any left – can't you hear their laughter as they watch you climb them? Can't you hear the peak's guffaws on seeing you with your canvases? Can't you see them, high above us, laughing and laughing?

La pintura i la boca p. 110. This text also appeared in *Espacios públicos. Sueños privados*, pp. 156-157.

PUT GOLD BACK

Put gold back into the earth, scatter the mountains with bronze and marble and ivory, so that they might represent just what we are missing most: the place from whence they came.

La pintura i la boca, p. 113. This text also appeared in *Espacios públicos. Sueños privados*, pp. 156-157.

INDOOR PARKS: THE WORK OF SEVEN UNPAINTERS

Sweep away these footsteps on high /
I will not be a bother any more.

J. VERDAGUER

To the end and effect that painting as such be banned from painting.

CODEX OF THE CROWN OF ARAGON

Unpainting is an upside down formula, where painting questions some of its very own foundations. It is difficult to imagine the painters of our day not being tuned into this budding point of concern and illusion, where everything seems painterly. It is in this way that, in as much part of the craft repels today's painters and the other attracts us, painting has become a vibrant centre of reflection and controversy.

All told, we do not yet know how to clearly discern if unpainting is a new craft or if it is still a pure simulacrum of the painter's craft, or just as well a subterfuge that has chosen painting itself in order to keep on painting, simply using (or at least seeming to use) the very pigments that have come up against it.

The examples of unpainters that we have united here are, as we will see, greatly varied in intention. What really brings them together is the starting point, which is the same for all unpainters: the search for a higher myth where painting and anti-painting might come together. It is in this search that unpainters unfold all the ambiguity of their position, vaguely conscious of the fact that they paint to not paint. Trying to chose the exact dissolvent, the adequate anti-colour... Even though, when you think of it, they could just as easily search for some place to hide away artist, painting and art itself, in fact they try to continue practicing their craft, even when united in the rhetorical licence that the term 'unpainters' grants them.

If unpainting rose again, if such a moment came, if it were to be a fundamental trait of the art of the future, then the trajectory of its language would have had three well-differentiated phases: the use of expressive materials in the traditional period; the cheapening of expressive materials in the modern period; and the staged suffering of materials, their effective elimination, or the attempt to eliminate them, in the current period. But this remains to be seen; for now we can only refer to the artful question concerning the painting some artists seem to be doing, among whom we have chosen the seven that follow.

The first unpainter we must turn to has become an archer. For him, colours are put into the world just right, so full of oil that in the simple act of opening the paint pot the point of the shot has been fulfilled; to add more paint or to copy colours would be redundant. Thus this unpainter travels towards the sites he wishes to unpaint prepared with a bow and quiver, with long brushes as arrows. He chooses the most picturesque sites and, grabbing his polished wood bow, is the first to get his colours right, each according to the exact tone it already has.

It is difficult not to find a medieval, legendary air in his exercises, where with each tone he seeks he lets go an unerring shot, battling with the landscape like a knight with a dragon until no more brushes are left in the quiver, so that these brushes, within this archer's reality, cause the landscape to fall flat, with turpentine streaming from its wounds.

The second unpainter also shuns his craft with the idea that the world is beginning to break apart. A long time ago he observed the chemically poisoned turpentines and the grime of the earth, carried from one place to another in great abundance, along with the successive paintedness shining from within things, piled up in glowing layers. He then decided to close himself off in the studio for days on end, in the hope that he might find a paint so porous as to be transparent, vanishing once it had been used.

His investigations into a paint that leaves no traces apart from a miraculous effect on the observer, have lead him to imagine a painting that might appear before a small public through the action of a few images shown by projection, though always by a secretly guarded mechanism. Our unpainter believes that this kind of technological pigment marvellously suits the overall sense of creation. With the dissolution it allows, very soon we might employ an opalescent and thinly luminous paint kept in small flasks, which we could make appear in expanded form in the most unexpected of places, all thanks to a technology so well prepared that it lightens the excesses of its very processes. In this task it remains absorbed, searching for a painting that sparkles, one that is full of holes, an eminently porous painting with an extreme mediatic cleanliness, thanks to which the frame that supports it need not be soiled, nor bear any contagious substance other than the pure miracle of its appearance.

Another unpainter –the third as we go– proposes repairing a secular grievance, trying to turn paintings into those places they have been taken from, returning images someone had tried to take away to the places they had come from. In order to do this, he travels to those motifs and places which he knows have inspired these paintings, and, when finding them, lifts all the paint off of them, using strippers and dissolvents. The flakes of paint he then obtains are carefully guarded in a box, and box in hand he goes to the places which inspired the pictorial content of these pigments. Once there, he digs a hole in the ground, a forearm deep or more, and deposits the paint crusts like someone making a votive offering. When done, he covers them up with earth so that they can never be found again.

The following unpainter, driven by intense conviction, has taken it upon himself to persuade his fellow painters to stop painting. He is, thus, an activist, accustomed to verbal discourse, defending a nature free of unctions and paints, like a fresh face, lacking make-up. Eloquent and articulated, he travels through studios and the other places where he knows artists gather, especially going to those places frequented by those who paint in the open air; and once there, he speaks to them like this: "Stop reproducing things, and stop inventing things to reproduce as well! Observe the grove as the grove really is, what other could better it! Take pleasure in each thing just as it appears to us. And if literary or pictorial activity is an obligation, take the very grove as an infinitely unfolding literary or pictorial activity, just needing to be captured. You should not take more pleasure in anything, nor in anything should you be more spellbound, nor in any way should you feel you are before a more realistic and true art, than in the art of painting that the sky performs on things, which things do between themselves, which each thing does to itself. Believe me, artist friends, whoever continues to paint things should not put more paint on them than the paint they already have on them; better even to take off a layer, if in this way we could learn more than in painting them again." We can see here how this unpainter loves to speak to other painters he encounters,

doing everything possible to seek them out and tell this to them, urging them to renounce the world of images, of banal, flighty layerings: 'Make yourselves a hole inside', he tells them, 'so that the world might turn inward, because the world thus returns to its origin as unique and original; and the world rests, once again, within itself, and vision is not just exterior but interior as well'. The work of this unpainter is anyone who will listen to him. And this comes to mind because some of his most ardent followers have come together under the name 'The Gazers'. We do not as yet have conclusive enough data to really say how many of them there are, nor to what degree their attitude will last, nor whether it is a pure emanation of the doctrines of the master.

'The Gazers' –as far as we know– are those who practice gazing and try to maintain it without having need of anything else, trying to make sure that the gaze, so carefully protected, may be translated through them in their way of living, seeing and speaking. For their part, with their eyes they signal out what they only know, thus letting things speak out in favour of themselves, without holding anything back.

Painting for them is a pure source of light. Rather than going out to see, the gazing author travels to places to ask himself what there is of him that these places draw, watching the sites observing him, as they make light sketchings in the air that only he can see and admire. Here we see that 'The Gazers' practice the act of painting or watch it being carried out in their very selves, while at the same time they themselves are the work of this unpainter we have just met, whose enthusiasm seems to have converted them.

The fifth unpainter is, for his part, quiet by nature, fleeing from overly crowded places. Perhaps it was due to his timidity and gentleness that he loved to go walking for hours on end, his painting implements around his neck. It relieved him tremendously to wear himself out. It was an act of restoration and pleasure for him to celebrate the fact that things stayed in their places, that it was not necessary to reproduce or paint them, but rather just pass them by, materials in hand.

He knew no painting as reverent and erasable as that which carried him past the roughest of places with his painter's utensils. Later on, thinking of the strictly graphic activity of his hikes across the land, he determined which landscapes would not be drawn, as well as all the pictures that are constantly moved across the world to be shown. It pleased him then to imagine the enormous quantity of paintings that every day go from here to there, how these paintings were able to outline the natural reliefs with their own landscapes, or draw their destinations in the air, with the help of all kinds of transportation vehicles.

Seeing how the paintings generally chose routes that were not very safe, but rather too straight and slippery, he thought of having a few paintings made by authors he especially admired, to be done along surer, more intercut paths. In this way he wore a painting around his neck, just as previously he had carried his painting utensils, directing himself towards a craggy spot outlined by the painting itself, so that little by little the painting would come to obey the real relief he was carrying it across. While he was doing this, he noticed a third dimension in painting, a sculptural aspect in finished canvases that their creators certainly had never imagined. Thanks to these sort of imaginings, he has carried a small Giotto through the mountain ranges of Wales, a Rodchenko monochrome along the east coast of Corsica, and is thinking of tackling the peaks of the Atlas Mountains accompanied by a Ferdinand Hodler landscape.

As with those who have come before, the sixth unpainter venerates the landscape as the most fundamental thing of all, for like them he believes that the landscape is all-encompassing, that it is everything. For this unpainter, however, painting may no longer sidetrack us, nor can it be played around with. The great physical and human transformations that the land has undergone have made him take sides in favour of those activities that strengthen places, in detriment of those others, whether painterly or sporting, that ravenously consume the land's reality and presence. This unpainter would find it distasteful if we were to speak of him for much longer. He has simply decided to stop painting to work within the landscape in the profession that, according to him, most benefits it, whether farming the earth, working in the woods, tending livestock, or simply being friendly to those who still live in it in the way he thinks is right. His is an exercise in disappearance: to become a farmer, woodcutter, or shepherd, to enter fully into the landscape and directly avoid any popularizing derivation of his art.

There is still a seventh unpainter, even though the landscape is so round and nature so concave that this unpainter goes back to being a painter. According to him, Duchamp had already tempted unpainting, as the ready-made was already, as he observed, a subterfuge, the attempt to make a clean, alert painting. For this reason we can now affirm that the painting of the ready-made has not been any less predatory than traditional painting, since it has ended up capturing things in a more invisible fashion and in greater number. The unpainter-become-painter likes to note how even though at first we believed that it was pleasant enough to take art as anything that came our way, it has not taken long to see that, as a consequence, our surroundings have become even more artfied, painterly, excessively reworked. From this he thought that perhaps it was painting itself and not any other thing that had to take us away from hateful painting, and it was our fault for not knowing how to make use of it adequately, for having overwhelmed it through misuse. From here we see that he has directed all his efforts to find out if there is a painting that has kept its innocence, with a style that feeds representation, a style that more than covering it over, takes root; an art so arid and ingenious that it overcomes all expectations, so that a ready-made painting might remain after having senselessly tumbled all over the place. The great fidelity with which this artist lives out his vocation allows him, so he says, to discern to what degree paint is pure and to what degree is it soiled, and once this has been established, to go on from there.

El paisaje, collection "Arte y naturaleza", n. 2, Huesca, 1996, pp. 163-167. Republished in *Perejaume, Tres dibujos*, Santiago de Compostela: Centro Galego de Arte Contemporánea, 1997, pp. 40-45.

OISM: VOICE EXERCISES OF A PAINTER

Oism¹ concentrates the perception of landscape in the sense of hearing. Perejaume has consistently addressed the question of phonetics in his writings. (Indeed, *El puig* [The Peak] appeared in 1993's *La pintura i la boca*) The figure of the place-namer, which first appeared in *El paisatge és rodó* (1995) refers to the technique of naming. In a later book, *Oisme: Una escriptura natural a partir del croquis pirinencs de Jacint Verdaguer* (1998), Perejaume enlarges his hypothesis of sound which is liberated from writing and discerned from vision. Nonetheless, oism gets underway with a poetics based on latent writing and linked to territory, *La bardissa* (The Bramble Patch). Writing thus behaves just as painting does when granted its independence from the canvas.

Oism allows landscape to be reformulated as a “field of transmission”. Although based on sound, the texts in this series visualize connections which fill apparently empty space. Thus, despite their old-fangled rhetoric, these texts address a very contemporary problem by alluding to the invasion of physical space by communication technology. Texts such as *El suro sorollós* (The Noisy Cork Bark) make it evident that the essayistic spirit present throughout these writings manifests itself in shapes and genres as different as the short tale.

¹ From the Catalan “Oir” which means “hear”. Oism could be understood as “hearism”. (Translator's note)

THE BRAMBLE PATCH

More than once, while out walking somewhere, I have come to see a most marvellous rubric in a bramble patch. That web of lines, floating and twisted, is perhaps nature's way of putting its signature on everything, there where it can be seen, with each bush sprinkled with various names in an entangled and interwoven handwriting. Not in vain, clearing the woods or a field consists above all in pulling out blackberry bushes, honeysuckle and saddle trees, so that the remaining trees and the ground below might be freed of that graphology the land expresses itself with, that writing which serves as its shade and protection.

I have always thought that instead of personal and unchanging autographs, we would do better to bring into our written modes those odd, easy-going, tree-like traces that nature seems to be woven with. Such brambly flourishes are in fact beautiful writing models. It seems at times as if reality operates as these bushes do, proceeding in a similarly mangled prose, closing in on the certainty and measure of a definitive version in a never-ending series of loops and leaps.

We must admit that any notion of interlacing tends, in our thought, to respond to an unruly and capricious graphology. Rarely are we able to comprehend where what we say begins, or where it ends, or where it might take us: we always pick it up somewhere in the middle, in the midst of speaking, just letting it happen. This is the mystery that makes things real, happy to abandon us half way down the road, slipping us up, showing us again and again how all connectedness is extended and widened, how it lives amidst the missing links. Disorder is thus an interlocutor we have requested to enable us to move on to wherever he might take us, with that natural spontaneity that disorder seems to instinctively carry out everything with, like a mute and cunning guide we are left to follow.

It is quite probable that a profound and hidden order does exist, though we can rarely transmit this order with common language or intellectual concepts. It is rare that we can even conceive of it. Instead we insistently perceive it as something certain, copious, vast, even tutelary, though it can never be followed up. If it does appear it does so like a lightning strike, shaking us out of our habits and logic, dynamiting the rule of order we carry with us. It is in this way that we might observe how the course of events is shifted, how it changes direction, like a kind of fold which ends up being the most abrupt way this profound order –this apparent disorder– has to emerge. Sometimes it is as if we were unable to think at all, as if we were unable to concentrate enough. All vertebrate peacelessness is hopeless. We know that this or that other is fundamental, though we cannot quite distinguish it clearly, nor give it all the attention it deserves. First off we abstain from writing until the subject is made fully manifest. Finally, however, we annotate the instructions that have come to us out of fear of losing them, out of fear that in spite of all indications, they will be forgotten to us, slip away from us, and depart. Words are not able to fully write themselves out either, their foliage thinning out and getting lost within the shadows and twists of a bramble patch. They look like they are going to speak about a fact or thought just as we have ordered them to, but they stop half way as another word comes along to distract them, as if obeying an even vaster order than the one we tried to impose. It is then that you get the impression that, as if sitting upon a white swan, everything moves back and forth without stopping to rest. It is then too that the stable and changing worlds coincide, coming to pertain to a single order, tracing its phosphorescent signature through all we have just written. [...]

Oïsme, pp. 17-19.

THE NOISY CORK BARK

The toponymist went about with his ears covered, no sound distracting him; there he was all right, listening to himself. The very site he was in was making the sound within him. The sound would always ring out in his head after staying still and silent on the spot for a while. It was a dry sound that did not repeat itself, made in each site only upon entering for the first time; the sound in each place was different, completely genuine, the buzz of each site that settled inside of him.

Another toponymist tried to read in the sites the eurythmics of the surrounding horizons, a harmonious arrangement of relief lines. "Perhaps the relief is in fact a wave shape", he thought, "the oscillograph of a sound someone has emitted." This toponymist wandered about the cliffs, as carefully as someone walking across the roof of his mouth, speaking the sites out loud in the conviction that they were mere sounding devices. He saw the voices, or tried to see them; and then, in front of some name he had suddenly discovered he would exclaim: "Learn, oh poets, to write. Observe Mount Carlit or the Valley of Oo or the Rosal lowlands, it does not matter.

No word has ever been written so splendidly!"

It might also occur that the name is listening to us, like it does on the Montsant range: a gigantic range which, as Joan Coromines wrote, looks from the town of Cabdella "like a series of small heads on top of an near-impenetrable wall". Great attention must always be paid. In the majority of cases the breaths escape so timidly that no one is afraid of them. All of those who move through toponymistic territories are aware to what degree a sound, even the most deafening sound, is nothing more than a quality of silence. It is precisely with such conviction that they might go to the mountain pass at l'Oreller –at twenty minutes from Espinalbet– to the deep pools of Fumanya –in the Lluçanès river gorge– or over Tambor ridge –on the way to Oris near Pont de Suert– to carry out their investigations. Apart from whether the air is more or less lively, the earth for these oists, as if set in an outdoor kiln, often carries the air as if trapped in clay letters. If we want to guess what they are, we would have to do so in complete silence. It has been told in this regard that some oists made deep wells in the earth for the sole purpose of discovering the hidden depths of a name.

None of this contradicts what has been a widely held belief about all kinds of sounding stones: stones which keep sound closed off and recorded within. As with the case of a stone from Gallicant, near Gallecs in the Vallès district, where it is said a rooster crow is heard. In the rock of Polls on Montserrat, on the path from Collbató up to the monastery, the chirping of a brood of baby chicks is heard, while at Àngels rock, within the ancient walled compound of Pedralbes, you can hear the song of birds in spinning flight. It seems that the harvesters at Hortsavinyà who discovered the Virgen Mary of Erola in a bale in the middle of a muddy field just as they were undoing for threshing, heard a voice which clearly pronounced each one of their names.

We have also been told the story of those who named the Busa flats. It seems that three men had climbed up the Ora Valley through the mountain passes at Ordigues and Arques, until reaching the The Cross, when none of these places yet had names. Upon arriving they mutually decided that the name they would give to the place would encompass all that they could see before them.

Soon enough they all agreed that the site, though itself quite large, required a short name. After all, what good would it do to draw out the name when they knew that the marvellous variety of forms, colours and textures that lay before them was undescrivable? Instead of a bunch of letters put together to describe the place, they were required to think of a group of letters that would contain all they could see.

Together they came across the form of an "s" in the scrub grass that pleased them enormously, so much so that they were then able to see it in the hills as well, and along a long curved ridge. So they had the "s", but it was not easy for them to find other letters. One of the climbers noticed that the changing light and the splendour of the view had distracted them from carrying out their appointed task, so they all decided to close their eyes for a moment and put their hands on the earth to see what sound could be felt. It was in this way, as if they were the sounding boxes of the site they were at, that they discovered the sounds of the "u" and the "a".

The three of them then set about to combine these letters, writing the combinations they felt were more appropriate down on a piece of paper: "Sasu", "Assusa" and even "Asussa". They became aware that the name had grown all too emphatically, deciding that such sounds were not right for a place of that altitude. The discussion continued, and with it a rising uncertainty. Some say that the "b" was dictated to them by a bubbly creek nearby. Others say that the clouds wrote it out for them, like an ornate initial letter on Capolat Peak. They are not even sure what led them to the name Busa. The fact is that they would have been hard pushed to analyze how they came to the Busa name. But the truth is that not one of them came to it first; they all saw it at once, and it frightened them to witness the enormous breath of truth that the name seemed to expire from within when they pronounced it. It was as if the name had always been there, established on those heights, and that all they had done was flush it out into the light.

Perhaps all names were here first. It is possible that in each site there was a name written on a label before anything else, and that all the landscapes had to do was settle into the thrones of honour and other armchairs set across that great amphitheatre of names. Perhaps all sites, all things and our lives themselves are nothing but the ornamentation of names. Or perhaps the mountains and all other things have taken the place of such naming, with their names held within them. This sound within invites us to find such places, to go out to them, correcting our hearing so that we might distinguish the sounds which best suit them. Or perhaps each site is little more than a thickening residue accumulated around the word that names it.

[...]

Oïsme, pp. 47-51.

A BOX OF VELVET

[...]

In vain you attempt to smooth the cork bark of your tongue out on a piece of paper. You take pen and paper and go to the tongue to make a copy; exhausted, you see that it is impossible to follow the voice the tongue articulates, and how the tongue is too high and wide for the voice, with an impassioned will bringing forth a great flow of words, sinking the world into the words and printing them in volumes and volumes so that no word may be forgotten. In the volumes of the tongue the words are pleated and pressed, pushed up in even newer folds and altitudes by the weight of the tongue.

Oh landscaped voice! Great sonorous compression of airs and geological reliefs! Whoever speaks has the landscape itself as a discursive field! A pure crack setting apart the voice, and the path the voice takes as it passes by. Observe this dark mass of respirating trees nearby: all the woods has been unfolded to receive the warm, rising breeze, the lively winds search for a brave chest that might make them even more sonorous; they would blow down some site along the straightest of routes into the darkest reaches of the woody hill, and having arrived, hack their way through the wall of undergrowth, throwing their sketching voices into the void of the air.

Oratory of winds and of the vernacular! Local character of the breezes! The oral use of geological reliefs in the moment the wind comes to squeeze them. Sound out (for you will sound out); we move from field to field with the wind blowing us onward through names which appear in infinite quantities and variety. Mutual soundings of air and elements! "Cacaphony of noises pursuing their adventure through the valleys" (Lezama Lima). All things stretched out along the places they sound out, the wide channel of the voice agitating the forests with names of yet other forests.

The windy valley has become a twisted muzzle, the brambles offering a fitting pose for the sound they wish to emit. Certain rocks retain air so they might make a lighter sound, a sound coming from deeper within, ventilated, as if drawn from a well. Wide channel of the voice! Long-winded landscape of the air! Gaze upon a huge exhalation within this grand physiognomy.

"Ora" is the synonym of "oratjol", a "soft wind". The rocks at Busa, seen from the Valley of Ora, have the shape of a great snorting mouth, with sharp teeth and a spiky oak tree tongue. A few rock juttings hold off the wind, while small acoustic masses condense and fall due to the gravity or air conditions, with others in turn taking to the air, gravity-less, or just as well floating through it.

Everything responds to the forms and measures of the voice: a leafy speech with windy characters and silent vowels set beneath unfinished peaks along an all too thin finger of stone. The river of the Valley of Ora begins as a stream between the Upper Berguedà and the Cardener. It then cuts through the gigantic ranges of Busa and Bastets. Each one of these names is inflated and respectively deflates in the puff of a flat ridge; sometimes the wind stops suddenly with an almost animal sigh, while other names are placed upon the sites in an arid lexicon that once again invigorates the wind, and the stream continues to move downwards through silences and heavy exhalations. There is another Busa sounding out at Serralbo in Upper Aragon. It does so, in fact, indirectly, all alone. We refer to a small isolated church called Saint John of Busa whose origin is unknown, as not the least bit of documentation has been found in reference to it. And even further away, in Portugal, we are lead to the paronym "Buçaco", a rough mountain range to the north of Coïmbra from where we can just make out the waters of the Atlantic. [...]

Oïsme, pp. 85-88.

OF GREAT LANDOWNING AIRS

[...]

In the same way that the site goes forth to tell us its name, or to speak of itself tucked away in a creator's name, so on the site we often note the passing of a voice that does not belong to it. This fact especially intrigues us. We are often dealing with unspeakable phrases, murmured and confused, which cross the air, cooling it down as they leave it cracked and out of breath, lingering for a good two or three minutes. They are phrases that go on their own, without any external support. The air brakes the letters as they leave a whistling sound behind them.

It is hard not to be surprised by these eagle-like phrases that estrange both the air and the sense of all they move across. We have always thought that a turning and twisting ribboning was the representative form painting gave to these phrases in antiquity. We are dealing, after all, with sound's links to revelation, to godsend. They are phrases that the poet Hölderlin knew how to gather, the hidden meanings that Blake deciphered, the never-expiring god of the great writers of the air, the sonorous and transparent territories of the ether. Curiously enough, technology has provided us with an enormous proliferation of errant and annoying words and images that move invisibly in electronic formats. An enormous volume of language that draws the territory in, modelling it without even trying to, like no descriptive language has ever done.

We would hear voices everywhere if this type of incessant technological telepathy, traversed by dark waves and materials, would only reveal its trajectories to us. We would then see how the voices of the lowlands make it to the peaks, how once there they are thrown across to another ridge or just as well bounced off a satellite to be immediately heard in some other lowland, only to be tossed about again, depending on the case. Today a silent mass of voices compresses the air, circumscribing geological reliefs, cabling peaks, linking plains and mountain passes together with a copyist's wanton spirit. Each historical moment lays out certain basic questions about the landscape; nowadays one of these questions is the idea of landscape as a transmitting field. If until now we have spoken of an idiomatic nature that the earth prescribes and the currents describe, from now on we have to add this fattened air to earthly diction, stuffed as it is with codes and paperwork.

It turns out that air makes sites ring out. The vernacular of the site makes a sound, but the air that moves through the site carries all kinds of phrases printed in the deepest and darkest reaches. It is a great composition that cannot be followed. You would say that everything is calculated with the view towards some final result, which seen from here cannot be guessed at. This new sonorous environment gives off an overall sensation of connectedness and erasure, speaking to us of an ecumenical world, porous and polycentric. The multiple layers of electronic media provide a new but undefinable pantheon of legends. All sounds and images move across each point indiscriminately and the air stirs the old toponyms with a shock that is noisier than the imprints it carries, more so than those it may find.

This foreign ambience has given rise to an unavoidable, uniform, atmospheric presence. It is not odd to view, on a lonely highland, the wide murmur of the circuitry or the buffeting blows of high frequency, or even the silent mechanisms of a security camera. Nor is it strange to be found interpreting an ordinary and anodine message in the most sublime of spots. It seems as if all we had to do was plant paper in channels and on mountain passes, for it to end up being printed from top to bottom (considering the general state of baseless reason, the connectedness of electronic space, so misplaced, as if rolled into a ball and adorned with ribbons and a bow). It turns out that

all words and no word at all are the same thing in the end, and that in this gluttony of language, amidst so much naming, the earth becomes uncultured and wild once again. It is perhaps for this reason that we need to convince ourselves that some names are fictitious, that they are more real because a place gives them substance, with the toponyms ringing out in sweet firmness, appearing to us as the most ostensible of all words, so that upon reading them the visual cone of the reader is framed by a writing so real we could go there by foot, with stains so high and us standing below. In a space that is more and more pocked with words, nothing is so well spoken of as a bramble patch, undoing itself in spirals or buttoning itself up even higher up, like bindweed pulling at itself amongst the branches, waiting to be grabbed at, like water whose rush has become so deafening that it cannot be read. No more careful solution is applied –the drawing appropriate for the sound it wants to emit– as with those characters rooted to their originary supports in the moment that mountain springs, brambles and serpents are ostensibly darkened, and the site where each name emerges entertains panting zephyrs and four heads huffing with misty breaths, reading the entire earth. It is then that a sigh of names is spread out, hovering widely over us, as if torn from the natural world, even though each one of them has the limits of its reign well marked: the concrete site where each site aligns the letters of its name, where in each angle the air puffs cheeks with sonourously inspired air, firmly held in place by the four corners of the earth. It is quite pleasant to observe each site in the sculptural immobility of its letters, and even more agreeable to perceive the great fluidity of space through the solid walls of those letters, as it is precisely this specific firmness of the letters that advances our gaze upon reading them.

Oïsme, p. 94-97.

THE PEAK

In an extreme of language, in an inhospitable cranny of language, rough and wild, prepare a concert. Carry up the instruments and chairs, but once there, do not play a thing. Let the instruments listen too, there on high, to the extreme volume of language.

La pintura i la boca, p. 104. Also published in *Espacios públicos. Sueños privados*, pp. 156-157.

ON HIS LIPS

On his lips, like on the rim of a well, a cord and bucket. On setting out to write, the bucket reached slowly into the darkness, the sound of his voice growing dimmer and dimmer, searching out inky, phreatic depths.

ELOQUENCE

Touch your lips with a drawing by Raphael.

THE TONGUED SITE

As if in a land of bewilderment and ruin, like the air fluttering in a mouth pronouncing "Comoloforno" or "Maragall". Single breaths are filtered into view, bathing themselves in ink; shadows shut out names, spying out caves where onomatopoeia guides the dripping: Tring-tring rock, Trington corner, Ting-a-ting spring, in a dark auditorium, awaiting an opening to the sky.

SAIRES TERRATIENENTS

[...]

De la mateixa manera que el lloc es dreça per dir-nos el nom, o per dir-se entaforat en un nom d'autor, de vegades notem, en el lloc, el pas d'una veu que no li pertany en res. Aquest fet ens intriga especialment. Es tracta, sovint, d'unes frases indicibles, remorejants i confuses que travessen l'aire i el refreden i deixen, al seu pas, l'aire trencat, sense alè, fins ben bé dos o tres minuts després. Són frases que van soles, sense suport de res. L'aire en frena les lletres i deixen un soroll xiuladís rere seu.

Costa no sorprendre's d'aquestes frases anguilejants que estranyen l'aire i el sentit d'allà on travessen. Sempre hem pensat que els filacteris rutllats i sinuosos són la representació que, d'aquestes frases, va fer la pintura en l'antiguitat. Es tracta, al capdavant, d'uns sons lligats a la revelació, al do... Són les frases que el poeta Hölderlin sabia recollir, les enraonies que desxifrava Blake, la deu inescotable dels grans escriptors de l'aire, les terres sonores i transvisibles de l'aire. Curiosament, la tecnologia ens ha procurat una enorme proliferació de mots i d'imatges errants i neguitoses que es desplacen en format elec-