

WRITING BARCELONA: REFLECTIONS ON CITY PLANNING
AND URBAN EXPERIENCE, 1854-1888

BY

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DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation analyzes the articulation and the reception of the new urban model that transformed the city of Barcelona between 1854 and 1888, a period of urban expansion in which Barcelona evolved from a walled industrial city to become the host of the first World's Fair beyond the Pyrenees. Through an interdisciplinary approach that includes the analysis of poetry, fiction, essays, engravings, paintings, photographs, and specific proposals of urban planning, I examine how the conception and the representations of public spaces generate, support or reject a meta-narrative of urban modernity based on a over rationalization of space. The new urban rationale brought forth new opportunities for financial speculation and, more importantly, the consolidation of the idea of the city as spectacle.

In particular, I explore the ways in which some authors—like Robert Robert, Emili Vilanova, and Narcís Oller among others—, artists—such as Lluís Rigalt—, and photographers—like Franck, Puig, and Martí—reflected on the new modern articulation of space conceived in the two major urban planning proposals of the period: Ildefons Cerdà's project of urban expansion and Àngel Baixeras's plan of reform of the inner city. I propose that the construction of the foundations of Barcelona's urban modernity—consolidated with the local *modernista* movement after 1888—depended on a dialectical debate between a new hegemonic conception of the urban space and a number of explicit and implicit critiques of the emerging urban rationale. This negotiation confronted two different notions of space: on the first hand, the conception of an almost aseptic space that proposed a extreme rationalization of the city based on hygienic, mathematical, and aesthetic grounds; and, on the other hand, a popular understanding of the urban milieu that reclaimed the central role of the urban practices of its citizens in the production of space.

The intertextual relationships between these discourses uncover the inner tensions of a project of urban modernization which was fuelled by the emerging bourgeoisie and remains in question to this day. Indeed, this dissertation aims at exposing the initial articulation of what has recently been called the “Barcelona model,” a multi-faceted plan of urban development based on the concept of the city as spectacle which has been implemented cyclically according to periodical mandatory rites of passage: the Universal Exhibition of 1888, the International Exhibition of 1929, the 1992 Olympic Games, and the Fòrum Internacional de les Cultures in 2004. Ultimately, I suggest that these two apparently irreconcilable positions—the overarching plans of urban transformation led by the local administration, and the local dissent of citizens threatened by these periodical revolutions—are not only an integral part of the modernization process but also that these two positions are, in the final analysis, fundamentally modern.

Per a la Carla, el Marcel i la seva Barcelona

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My interest in urban transformation is closely linked to my personal life. My first gaze on the city took place in the mid-70s, from the balcony of the condo that my parents bought on the twelfth floor of Numància St. in Barcelona. It was there that I discovered the city. From that twelfth-floor balcony I was able to scan the city from Montjuïc and Tibidabo to the distant coast of el Maresme. I witnessed the transformation of the city, the traffic growth, the disappearance of the old industrial buildings, the development of brand new public squares, and the construction of gleaming shopping malls. Paraphrasing Narcís Oller, that balcony was like a car that allowed me to travel around the city without moving. The first page of this dissertation was undoubtedly written there. It was on that balcony that I became aware of the complexity of the urban experience, of the sacrifices that modernity imposes, and of the priceless value of vision in our apprehension of urban space. Then would come the theory, the primary works, and the analysis of the visual and literary representations of Barcelona.

This initial curiosity would not have been transformed in an academic interest without the support of many people that have helped me to develop my critical gaze over the years. From Prof. Susan Ballyn—who became a model for me in my early years in the University of Barcelona—to Prof. L. Elena Delgado—my adviser, mentor, and friend—a large number of academics have taught me not only the skills of literary and cultural studies but also the work ethics of the trade. In this personal trip of discovery, the Department of Spanish, Italian, and Portuguese of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign has been my home. In SIP, I have had the privilege of attending classes with professors like Mariselle Meléndez and Dara Goldman from whom I have always enjoyed their courses and admired their intellect. Unable to take their wit with me, I have tried to learn from their thoroughness in teaching and research.

When I arrived in Illinois, a well-known professor of Spanish poetry and drama, John Wilcox was the head of the Department of Spanish, Italian, and Portuguese. Professor Wilcox kindly opened his house every summer to welcome all the members of the department back on campus. Little did I know then that Professor John Wilcox would play such an important role in my personal and academic lives. Since then John and Julie Wilcox have opened their home to Silvia and me countless times and, throughout all these years, John has become an academic mentor, a personal guide, and a good friend.

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fundamentals of visual analysis. I am glad to count her as one of my mentors and friends.

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És clar, amor, que aquesta tesi no s'hagués escrit mai sense el teu suport incondicional, sense la teva paciència, la teva comprensió i el teu amor del dia a dia. Urbana-Champaign m'ha donat moltes coses però sense cap dubte conèixer-te a tu, Sílvia, i tenir l'oportunitat de construir la nostra llar a John St. amb una catalano-manxega com tu ha estat el millor de la meva vida illinoica. Com sempre somiem, que tinguem sort i que la vida ens doni un camí ben llarg.

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

THERE WILL ALWAYS BE ANOTHER CITY: A JOURNEY THROUGH A REAL AND IMAGINED BARCELONA (1854-1888)

Dessota de la Barcelona aparent,
que de vegades ens enganya,
hi ha l'altra, la de debò i de sempre
—Pere Benavent

This dissertation analyzes the articulation and the reception of the new urban model that transformed the city of Barcelona between 1854 and 1888, a period of urban expansion in which Barcelona evolved from a walled industrial city to the host of the first Universal Exhibition beyond the Pyrenees. Through an interdisciplinary approach that involves the analysis of poetry, fiction, essays, engravings, paintings, photographs, and proposals of urban planning, I examine how the conceptions and representations of public spaces construct, support, or reject a meta-narrative of urban modernity based on a drastic rationalization of space. Ultimately, the new urban rationale brought forward new opportunities for financial speculation and, more importantly, the consolidation of the idea of the city as a spectacle.

In particular, I explore the way in which authors (like Robert Robert, Emili Vilanova, and Narcís Oller among others), artists (such as Lluís Rigalt), and photographers (like Franck, Álvarez, and Martí) reflected on the new modern articulation of space as conceived in the two major urban planning proposals of the period: Ildefons Cerdà's project of urban expansion and Àngel Baixeras's plan of inner reform. I propose that the discursive construction of the foundations of Barcelona's urban modernity—consolidated with the local *modernista* movement after 1888—depended on a dialectical debate between a new hegemonic conception of the urban

space and a number of explicit and implicit critiques of the emerging urban rationale. As I explain in the following chapters, this negotiation confronted two different notions of space: On the one hand, the conception of an almost aseptic space that proposed a thorough rationalization of the city based on hygienic, mathematical, and aesthetic grounds; and, on the other, a popular understanding of the urban milieu that reclaimed the central role of the urban practices of and for its citizens. The tensions among these discourses uncover the inner frictions of a project of urban modernization fuelled by the emerging bourgeoisie which was—and still is—constantly questioned. Indeed, this dissertation aims at exposing the initial articulation of what has been recently called the “Barcelona model,” a multi-faceted plan of urban development based on the concept of the city as spectacle which has been implemented cyclically along the pretext of periodical mandatory rites of passage: the Universal Exhibition of 1888, the International Exhibition of 1929, the 1992 Olympic Games, and the Fòrum Internacional de les Cultures in 2004. Ultimately, I suggest that these two apparently irreconcilable positions—the overarching plans of urban transformation led by the local administration, and the local dissent of citizens threatened by these periodical revolutions—are not only an integral part of the modernization process but also that these two positions are fundamentally modern.

The relation of Barcelona and modernity has received sustained critical attention in recent years. Especially noteworthy is the groundbreaking work of professors Brad Epps (particularly his edition of a special volume of *Catalan Review* on Barcelona and modernity) and Joan Ramon Resina (author of the recent *Barcelona's Vocation of Modernity*). But, the interest in Barcelona's modernity trespasses the merely academic boundaries. In 2006, the Metropolitan Museum of Art held the exhibition “Barcelona and Modernity: Picasso, Gaudí, Miró, Dalí” with enormous critical and public success. This retrospective covered the period from 1888—the date of the first

Barcelona Universal Exhibition and starting point of the local art nouveau movement—to 1939, which saw the start of Francisco Franco’s fascist dictatorship. The exhibition privileged this period (1888-1939) as the moment “that advanced the city's quest for modernity and confirmed it as the primary center of radical intellectual, political, and cultural activities in Spain” (Metropolitan Museum of Art n.p.). The era inaugurated with the Universal Exhibition of 1888 and finished with the Spanish Civil War in 1939 has been frequently explored as the consolidation of Barcelona’s modernity. In 1985, the exhibition “Homage to Barcelona: the City and Its Art, 1888-1939,” held at Hayward Gallery in London, also privileged this period. My dissertation explores the emerging conditions which make possible the modern city praised in these exhibitions. The historical circumstances and the cultural milieu of Barcelona between 1854 and 1888 were in fact the inauguration of this “quest for modernity” and the dawn of what has been called the “Barcelona model.” While current approaches to Barcelona’s modernity privilege the top down perspective—sanctioning the exclusive agency of the local elites—my approach takes a bottom up viewpoint. Through a multidisciplinary approach, I analyze how various literary and visual representations of Barcelona’s urban expansion questioned and resisted the model of modernity proposed by the local bourgeoisie.

This project should attract to a wide range of scholars interested in the representation of the city, in the scientific conception of the urban space in the nineteenth century and in the particular case of Barcelona. I believe it can also shed light on the particular debate regarding Spanish modernity and the more general discussion of the ascription—or lack thereof—of modernity to a clearly delimited space (being that in the municipal, regional, national, or continental level) or any given historical period.

1.1 AN EXCURSUS IN SPACE AND TIME: ON MAPPING AND (RE)PRESENTING SPACE

In some respects, all the urban planners, photographers, painters, cartoonists, and authors interested in (re)presenting the urban reality of Barcelona in the second half of the nineteenth century were engaged in the task of mapping the city. But, what do we understand by mapping? In English, the verb “to map” refers to the action of describing, outlining, charting or representing something “as if on a map” (*OED* n. pag.). According to this definition, to map is the job of cartographers, geographers, architects, engineers, urban planners, and the like. This definition indicates a clear division of labor, according to which not everybody who participates in representing the city is making a map. Ptolemy was the first to differentiate between two major types of representations of the city: on the one hand the cartographic representations that, based on mathematical precision, tried to convey an “objective” account of the city; on the other, a “more subjective” depiction, which relied on the visual apprehension of space, was aimed to create a “portrait of the city” (García Espuche 16). According to Ptolemy, this division of labor—between mappers and portraitists—was necessary in order to grasp the city in all its aspects. This approach would generate the figure of the urban portraitist who, either communicates his or her perspective on the urban experience or invents a certain image of the city (García Espuche 16). But according to the traditional definition of mapping, these artists—the portraitists of the city—have never been counted in the select group of those considered as mappers. The Spanish verb “mapear” offers a different perspective however. In most Spanish speaking countries, the verb “mapear” is used exclusively in fields such as biology; in Chile “mapear” has the same meaning as English “mapping” (*RAE*). Yet in Catalan language, the vernacular language of Barcelona, the verb “mapar” (to map) acquires a broader meaning, which

includes drawing, copying, and portraying (*Diccionari de la llengua catalana* n. pag.).

According to this definition, the action of mapping would not be restricted to the technical work of cartography but would also include the artistic representation of a given reality. Thus, painters, cartoonists, engravers, photographers, and even journalists and literary authors—the portraitists of the city—all participate in mapping. The term mapping already encompasses the possibility of being able to blur the boundaries that Ptolemy tried to set between the presumably “objective” and mathematically precise representation of space and the “subjective” portraits of the city. Of course, the possibility of blurring such a distinction is not always possible but an artist like *El Greco* attempted to do so (Fig. 1.1). In “Vista y plano de Toledo,” *El Greco* reflected on the contrast between the different approaches of representing the urban reality. The painter includes three usually conflicting attitudes of representing space: In the foreground, a map with the cartographic rendition of the former capital of Spain. Beyond the map, we see a landscape of Toledo that meticulously reproduces the city with an almost realist approach. But such apparent realism is questioned when we pay attention to the two sets of figures that escort the young man, forming a triangle that frames the city. On the bottom left corner, there is a boy with a jug—an allegory of the Tagus River that surrounds the city. Emerging amidst the clouds, the Virgin Mary and a choir of angels appear as the guardians of the city. These two elements take *el Greco*’s rendering of Toledo to the realm of the symbolic, to an allegorical representation of Toledo not only as the former capital of Spain but also as the capital of the Counterreformation.

“Vista y plano de Toledo”—like the verb “mapar”—blurs the boundaries between the task of the cartographer (the creator of maps) and that of the artist (the creator of pictorial landscapes). The combination of the three approaches—the cartographical, the realist, and the

symbolic—demonstrates the painting’s attempt to synthesize these three possibilities. As we have seen, this possible conciliation does not take place on the canvas, as the three approaches are clearly separated. The observer must synthesize the three images of Toledo in order to understand the real city. Indeed “Vista y plano de Toledo” invites viewers to look at the city with an open mind, beyond the division of labor (between mappers and portraitists) imposed on the representation of the city. Of course, *El Greco*’s approach is rare. There is no similar attempt to synthesize the possibilities of urban representation in the case of Barcelona. But, why not accept *El Greco*’s invitation? Why can’t we try to negotiate the differences between these two contrasting visions of the city? My dissertation proposes that we compare and contrast the gaze on the city offered by mappers and portraitists of the city. A close look at the plans of urban transformation and the artistic and literary renditions of the city will prove that there was an active debate about the model of urban modernity. As if they had the term “mapar” in mind, architects, engineers, urban planners, painters, and literary authors were all mapping the city.

Of course, the interest of a wide number of artists in mapping the city is not restricted to the 19th C. Still today writers, painters, photographers and filmmakers still reflect on the impact of urban planning in Barcelona. In 2001, José Luis Guerín gave us one of the last episodes of this dialectical struggle in his documentary *En construcción*. Guerín’s film chronicles an urban transformation. After living in the neighborhood of El Raval for three years, he wanted to document the disappearance of a working class neighborhood, not only focusing on the transformation of the urban landscape but also on the alteration that it produced in the human environment (“Entrevista Guerín”). By focusing on a short number of non-professional actors playing themselves, Guerín wanted to find the spectacle of everyday life (“Entrevista Guerín”). Guerín’s sensibility is related to the debate on urban modernity as it was articulated in the

nineteenth-century. First, Guerin's gaze on the city springs from the well-established literary tradition of Spanish nineteenth-century *costumbrismo*, which I will discuss later. Second, the urban transformation that we see in *En construcción* is nothing but the long delayed implementation of a project of nineteenth-century urban planning initially designed by Ildefons Cerdà and modified later on by Angel Baixeras.

Allow me to introduce you to one of the main characters of Guerin's film: Antonio Atar. Antonio, a former sailor that speaks five languages, finds himself retired in El Raval and tries to make ends meet by rescuing miscellaneous junk from the city's trash cans. In the opening scene of *En construcción*, we learn, by the gaze of onlookers, that Atar is at the margins of society and is perceived as bordering on madness. As Antonio Atar appears on the scene, a sunny but battered street of the working class neighborhood of el Raval, he politely tries to start a conversation with one of the passers by. The surprised stroller ignores Antonio, who casually decides to proceed with his morning conversation despite lacking an interested audience.¹ But let's hear what Antonio Atar has to say...

He trabajado en un transatlántico. He ido a Londres y he recorrido el mundo. En Londres ves cada avenida, con plazas, árboles... En Londres, una gran ciudad, de plazas. Aquí... pues si nos dedicamos a urbanizar, se vuelven las calles estrechas, y no hay lo que debe de haber, una ciudad moderna. Está anticuado. Esta pasado de moda. La gente se ha envejecido prematuramente. No hay capacidad. No hay educación. ¿Cómo va a haber educación esta juventud que no van a los colegios ni estudian? ¿Cómo? [...] Eso son asuntos multimillonarios. Necesitan ayuda de los fondos de conexión [...] europeos, para facilitar al gobierno español los fondos de conexión de toda Europa y todos los bancos tienen montones de

millones. Para hacer esta, esta cosa, tirar todo aquello, aquella plaza. Ampliar, desde allá hasta aquí plaza, todo una plaza... Ya se hacen los planos... Todo eso, todo eso de allá, sí, también tirarlo y todo esto convertirlo en una gran plaza. Por que en Londres, una gran ciudad cosmopolita, tienen muchas plazas, árboles, plazas, árboles... Y aquí nos dedicamos a construir, a construir, a construir, a construir... y resulta que terminamos con calles estrechas y anticuadas. Y aquello, aquellas casas que hay allí al lado, esas hasta la otra esquina, todas irán al derribo. Está viejo, anticuado. Y a hacer otras casas para los que viven allí, otras, [en] otro sitio. Es que hay muchos defectos. Mire, allí dice los metros cuadrados que hay, de *longitud, latitud y altura*... Latitud, longitud y altura... ¿Usted sabe la cantidad de viviendas para colocar a esta gente que hay por aquí, la cantidad de metros cuadrados que hay de largo, y de ancho, y lo alto que es? Pero hay que hacer más plazas y extender la ciudad más... extender, de longitud, más... latitud, longitud y altura... (*En construcción*)

As a local of El Raval, Antonio Atar plays himself in front of Guerín's camera in order to reflect the effects of the transformed neighborhood. Antonio epitomizes old Barcelona, a repository of local lore who tries to find his place in the ever-changing urban geography. But Guerín's opening scene introduces the audience not only to the character but also to the main conflict of the film: the tensions between the drive of urban transformation, lead by the City Hall, and the effects of this intervention in the social microcosm of the neighborhood. In fact, Antonio himself embodies this tension. As we have heard from him, he believes in the benefits of urban transformation. Recalling the time he spent abroad, he poses the urban layout of London as the epitome of urban modernity. London's squares and trees are nowhere to be found in old Barcelona. But when

Antonio needs to summarize the driving force of the urban transformation he resorts to a particular mantra of three words: *latitud, longitud y altura*.

In Atar's perspective as a former sailor, *latitude* and *longitude* help him understand and articulate not only global positioning but also urban reality. For him, longitude, latitude, and height are the three measures liable to rationalize his otherwise abstract spatial experience. Longitude, latitude, and height allow him to conceive a logical and formal abstraction of space. Antonio appropriates a mathematically measurable understanding of space that is liable to be rendered in a blueprint or map. He places himself in the shoes of the urban planners, of the architects that are about to transform his microcosm. Antonio, the citizen gives way to Antonio, the city planner. He dissociates himself from the environment, from the social practice of the public space. Under this lens, his fellow neighbors become only people that need to be relocated elsewhere. Ironically, Antonio is not able to recognize how his epistemological stance towards space may affect him (Fig. 2.2).

The urban transformation of El Raval implies not only the physical transformation of this space but also the undercover process of gentrification of the inner city. The urban reforms promoted by the City Council are aimed at transforming the character of a working class neighborhood in which communal forms of socialization occupy the streets. The disappearance of people like Antonio from the streets of El Raval is one of the premises of the plan of urban transformation as conceived by the local government. Of course, Guerin's lens makes sure the film articulates this conflict even when Antonio does not seem to realize what is happening. As one may expect, not everyone welcomed this proposal of gentrification like Antonio. Guerin makes this sense of rejection clear by showing the graffiti on the walls (Fig. 1.3 and 1.4).

While Antonio calls for urban modernization, the graffiti seem to shout from the

walls, pleading the case of those threatened by urban transformation. From the rat devouring a tenement building as a metaphor for the impending real estate speculation, to the plea for renewal and refurbishment of old buildings as a solution against the projects of demolition, graffiti show the attempt to reclaim an urban territory threatened by urban planning. In the presence of the aggressive intervention of the City Hall in El Raval, the social network of the quarter claims “the neighborhood is ours.” As this other graffiti insists, in front of these urban policies, the anarchist proposal of squatting—the act of occupying an abandoned or unoccupied space or building, which is locally known as the *okupa* movement—seems the only alternative. Thus, the images of this scene pose an antithesis to Antonio’s logical discourse on urban modernization.

As we will see in the pages of this dissertation, both Antonio Atar’s plea for urban modernization and José Luis Guerin’s project of denunciation of a project of urban transformation based on real estate speculation can be identified as the two sides of a project of modernity that started to be negotiated in the 1850s. Both Antonio’s unquestioning belief in the benefits of urban transformation, and the reaction of the anonymous painters of these graffiti are a perfect example of what Marshall Berman and other critics have identified as the main inherent tension of modernity:

To be modern is to find ourselves in an environment that promises us adventure, power, joy, growth, transformation of ourselves and the world—and, at the same time, that threatens to destroy everything we have, everything we know [...] it is a paradoxical unity, a unity of disunity: it pours us all into a maelstrom of perpetual disintegration and renewal, of struggle and contradiction, of ambiguity and anguish. (15)

1.2 THE SPANISH CASE AND THE PHENOMENA OF MODERNITY

Inevitably, an analysis of the representations of the emerging urban modernity of Barcelona has to consider two key factors: the particular relation of Spain with the hegemonic project of modernity epitomized by some Western powers and also the specific relationship between Barcelona, as the capital of Catalonia, and the rest of the Spanish State.

As we know, the case of the particular relationship of Spain with modernity has raised a lot of critical attention. For some scholars the key to the debate about Spain and modernity relies on the belief that Spain experienced a “*belated* [and] *uneven* development” (Graham and Labanyi 14). Following this line of thought, Hispanists like Stephanie Sieburth have qualified Spanish modernity as “uneven” and based on a “tardy” assimilation of “foreign models” (12). The analysis of Spanish modernity has been reduced to a matter of difference, of exceptionality, of idiosyncrasy, and even of “abnormality” regarding a supposedly unitary and cohesive model (Afinoguénova and Martí-Olivella xi). Recent scholarship, however, has questioned the existence of a single, valid and homogeneous modernity, acknowledging the existence of alternative models (which have been called, among other things, peripheral, alternative, resisting or recalcitrant).² Spain’s late and partial industrialization certainly led to an asymmetrical regional development, with only a few urban centers considered modern according to the normative Eurocentric model that is being questioned today. By the late nineteenth century, thanks to a late but deep industrial revolution, Barcelona was the only Spanish city perceived as unequivocally “modern.” In spite of this, Barcelona’s peripheral situation in Spain has always situated it in a paradoxical position: while it has been perceived as part of the avant-garde of modernity vis-à-vis Europe, in the Spanish context, it has been identified as the internal other

and has been systematically subjected to serious political and cultural hostility on the part of the Spanish state. Such double location has caused a twofold and apparently untenable perception of Barcelona either as an agent of European modernity or as peripheral subject in Spanish culture. The consolidated alterity of Barcelona in particular and of Catalonia in general—within the Spanish political borders—has been, as one may have expected, a key factor in the exclusion of Catalan culture and society from any political, social or academic consideration regarding a supposedly coherent Spanish character.

Of course, the erasure of Catalan culture from the homogenized Castilianized version of Spanish culture is no different from the Basque or Galician cases.³ However, the cases of Catalonia and the Basque Country are quite interesting if we keep in mind the way the apparently peculiar relationship of Spain with modernity has been traditionally studied. Critical analyses of Spanish modernity have recurrently used adjectives to qualify Spanish modernity. These analyses have tried to conciliate what was perceived as a hegemonic, an apparently homogenous, idea of modernity with the actual perception of a Spanish difference that was codified as an instantiation of Spain's *national peculiarities*. As Delgado, Mendelson, and Vázquez have summarized, Spanish modernity has been articulated as a deviation from the norm:

This understanding of cultural difference was rationalized as the reason why Spain had failed to follow the “normal” path to European modernity and exhibited instead what has been labeled an “uneven”, “incomplete”, or “failed” modernity. Thus, Spain was not considered modern because of its (essential) cultural difference and, in a circular argument, was considered different because it had never been modern. (Delgado, Mendelson and Vázquez 107)

But, we must not forget that this “fundamental “lack” was also inseparable from an overt process

of exclusion of those internal others who did not conform to a simplified reduction of the Spanish complexity articulated around the notion of “Spain as Castile” (Fox). The outcome of this process of exclusion was a simplified version of Spanish culture reduced to a cultural production in the native language of Castile, a social hegemony restricted to the traditional aristocracy, a national economy based exclusively on the agricultural sector, and an urban experience reduced to the referential model of Madrid. Certainly, these traits dominated the vast majority of the territories ruled by the Spanish crown but not all of them conformed to these particular characteristics. The deviation from these standards was—and still is—perceived almost as anecdotal, a banal digression from the national norm that should not be taken into account or should simply be relegated to a footnote. As a result of the combination of this reduction—based on the erasure of the internal others—and the comparatist anxiety with a supposedly uniform model of modernity, Spain’s modernity has traditionally been assumed as failed, lagged, and flawed.

The perceived gap that separated Spain from its northern neighbors—those proudly waving the flag of modernity—has traditionally been perceived as the result of the colonial tensions articulated in the Black Legend of Spanish imperialism and religious fanaticism during the sixteenth century (Silverblat 100). However, besides the actual moral implications of the unquestionable Spanish methodical violence in the conquest of the Americas and the elimination of religious dissent, the discursive articulation of the Black Legend is also intimately linked to the international struggle for colonial hegemony. As Iarocci explains, sixteenth-century Spain was actually “at the center of the modern to the extent that conquest and colonization are modernity’s engines; but as power increasingly drifts northward, replicating the flow of wealth that passed from the Americas through Spain to the Low Countries, another modernity emerges,

a modernity that will make its own claims to exclusivity [that of Anglo-Germanic Europe]” (10). By the eighteenth century, the Spanish and Southern European difference was consolidated and sanctioned in the works of Enlightenment authors who, like Voltaire, considered that Spain was “a country of which we know no more than the most savage parts of Africa, and it is not worth the trouble of being known” (Voltaire 182). Voltaire carries his disdain for Spain to the ultimate frontier. In the encyclopedic age, he does not only exclude Spain as a country liable to produce knowledge but he even questions whether Spain deserves to produce any knowledge about itself. Certainly, the epistemic violence of this kind of explicit exclusions of Spain from the selective club of Western modernity remains at the core of the debate on Spanish modernity and the Spanish difference. But, besides these satirical assessments from some of our northern neighbors, which testify the symbolic exclusion of Spain from the core—and even the periphery—of the Enlightenment, it will be necessary to recognize the phenomena that are traditionally identified with modernity in order to explore the particular situations of Spain and Barcelona.

Modernity—a term commonly defined as a “departure from or repudiation of traditional ideas, doctrines, and cultural values in favour of contemporary or radical values and beliefs (“Modernity” *OED* n.p.)—is based on the notion of discontinuity from the past, with the introduction of a historical break that brings forth social, economic, and cultural changes. Modernity is always posed as a dialectical antithesis to tradition. Deeply rooted in the Renaissance, Western modernity was consolidated in the Enlightenment and rearticulated as a belief in reason and truth through scientific empiricism⁴ (“Modernity” *Collins* n.p. and “Modernity” *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* 230). According to Hegel—who, for Habermas, was one of the first theorizers of a clear concept of modernity (4)—modernity was articulated as a breaking point, as a period of transition that marked a discontinuity from the past,

as a new beginning: “It is not difficult to see that our epoch is a birth-time, and a period of transition. The spirit of the age has broken with the old ways of thinking, and is in the mind to let them all sink into the depths of the past and to set about its own transformation. It is indeed never at rest, but carried along the stream of progress ever onward” (*The Phenomenology of Mind* 10). The drive of the Enlightenment posed the intellectual basis for this European “stream of progress” built on the profits of colonial exploitation as the foundation for industrial capitalism. Economic growth—measurable as “economic output per capita” (Armer and Katsillis 1884)—and industrialization—as the systematic implementation of mechanized production—progressively became the quantifiable standards for measuring the process of modernization.

As Habermas explains, the idea of modernization relies on a series of mutually reinforcing processes, which range from “the formation of capital and the mobilization of resources; to the development of the forces of production and the increase in the productivity of labor; to the establishment of centralized political power and the formation of national identities; to the proliferation of rights of political participation, of urban forms of life, and of formal schooling; to the secularization of values and norms” (2). Indeed, the complex interaction of these factors generate an intricate geographical distribution of the phenomena of modernization, generating spatial gaps and an increasing polarization between the city—as the locus of modernity—and the country—understood as the idealized site of tradition and or as the ultimate location of backwardness.⁵ Furthermore, in the areas of influence of nineteenth-century industrial centers, the increasing hegemony of industrialization and the gradual decline of agricultural economies brought forward massive migrations from the country to the city in search of a secure salary. But besides the geographical and demographic bases of modernity, the issue of historical periodization also plays a central role in our understanding of the processes of modernization.

While early modernity is firmly located in the end of the Middle Ages, the wide variety of phenomena summarized by Habermas point at a range of social, economic, and cultural changes that are liable to take place in different historical moments. The accumulation of capital originated through European colonial exploitation, the implementation of mechanized production characteristic of industrialization, the political modernity of democratic representation,⁶ and the secularization of values are certainly interdependent processes, which do not necessarily appear in the same space at the same time. Modernity is characterized by the diverse and wide geographical and temporal distribution of its phenomena. From the roots of Eurocentric modernity that Weber finds in the secularization of Western culture brought forward by the Protestant Reformation (*The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*), to Karl Marx's perspective of capitalism as an alienating factor for humankind ("Estranged Labour"), to the experience of modernity that Baudelaire defined as "the ephemeral, the fugitive, the contingent, the half of art whose other half is the eternal and the immutable" (40), most of the critical analyses about modernity account for the multiple factors that determine modernity.

In the following chapters, I will analyze the articulation and perception of some of the central phenomena of nineteenth-century urban modernity: the new rationalization of the public space, the emergence of an urban rationale governed by vision, and the progressive commodification of the image of the city for public consumption. Furthermore, I will also focus on the way local authors and artists perceived the progressive rationalization of the urban space, and on the anxieties and the alienation caused by the sudden recognition of the ephemerality of particular urban realities threatened by the impending urban transformation.

1.3 BARCELONA AND MODERNITY

As we have just seen, mid-nineteenth-century Barcelona presented a series of interconnected phenomena that have traditionally been associated with the processes of modernization according to Western hegemonic standards. In the recent years, critics like Brad Epps and Joan Ramon Resina have paid special attention to the relationship of Barcelona with modernity. In 2001, Brad Epps contributed to the volume *Iberian Cities*, edited by Joan Ramon Resina, with a chapter titled “Modern Spaces: Building Barcelona.” More recently, Epps edited a monographic issue of the *Catalan Review* titled *Barcelona and Modernity* in 2004—to which he contributed with an article with the same title. Joan Ramon Resina has recurrently analyzed the Barcelonan case. After his 2001 introduction to *Iberian Cities*, Resina has written about the emergence of Catalan modernity in the volume *After-Images of the City*, which he coedited with Dieter Ingenschay; but his most important work on this topic is his recent award-winning book *Barcelona’s Vocation of Modernity: Rise and Decline of an Urban Image*. Beyond the work of Epps and Resina, four other major volumes have paid special attention to the nineteenth-century local literary and artistic production and its relationship with modernity: Marilyn McCully’s edition of *Homage to Barcelona: The city and its art, 1888-1936*, the catalogue of an exhibition at Hayward Gallery in London (held between November 14, 1985 and February 23, 1986); the volume *Barcelona and Modernity: Picasso, Gaudi, Miro, Dali* edited by William H. Robinson as the catalogue for the exhibition organized by the Cleveland Museum of Art and the Metropolitan Museum of Art of New York (held initially in Cleveland between October 15, 2006 and January 7, 2007); the two volume work *Retrat de Barcelona* edited by Albert Garcia Espuche and Teresa Navas as the catalogue for the exhibition held at the Centre de Cultura Contemporània de Barcelona (between April 25 and August 13, 1995); and, finally, Rosa Cabré’s work *La*

Barcelona de Narcís Oller: Realitat i somni de la ciutat.

In most of these works, the analysis of Barcelona's modernity—always posed as an unquestionable phenomenon—has been traditionally focalized on the historical period inaugurated with the Universal Exhibition of 1888. Both McCully and Robinson, by focusing mainly on the artistic production after 1888, anchor Barcelona's modernity on the artistic production of local *modernista* artists creating an immediate identification of *modernisme* as the main agent of modernity. For Resina, Barcelona's modernity was undoubtedly born in the 1880s: "Modern Barcelona had come to being exactly one century earlier [to 1992]. In the 1880s the city had entered the world stage and initiated the historical cycle that was winding down on the eve of the 1992 Olympics" (*Barcelona's Vocation of Modernity* 6). According to the Catalan critic, the previous decades of the nineteenth century had only served as the foundations of the actual modernity—"The foundations for this cycle were laid in midcentury, after the city burst through its historical confines and spread like oil all over the plane between the Besós and the Llobregat rivers" (*Barcelona's Vocation of Modernity* 6-7). In this sense, Resina's analysis in *Barcelona's Vocation of Modernity* leaves a certain void that eludes the explanation of what I consider a key period in the articulation of local modernity: the stage of conception of the new urban layouts that took place between the demolition of the medieval walls in 1854 and the Universal Exhibition of 1888.

Among all of these critical analyses of the modern image of Barcelona, the one that perhaps summarizes my own position is Brad Epps's introduction to the special issue of the *Catalan Review* on Barcelona and modernity:

Multiple as modernity is, it has become a common place (perhaps because it is true) to say that in the Iberian peninsula modernity was forged in Barcelona first,

and it is common, if not yet a common place, to present this as triumph rather than a problem, as if modernity's ties to ever more efficient and devastating ways to kill and destroy did not, could not, cast a shadow on the plethora of lushly decorative objects and sensuous services [...] that most people associate with pleasure. ("Barcelona and Modernity" 18-19)

Epps's remark points to one of the main problems within most critical accounts of Barcelona's modernity: the exclusively celebratory tone of many analyses. More often than not, the articulation of Barcelona's modernity is described as an unquestionable triumph of a model led by the turn-of-the-century bourgeoisie, which fostered a supposedly triumphant Universal Exhibition in 1888 and patronized the consolidation of the *modernista* architectonic movement led by Doménech i Montaner, Gaudí, and Puig i Cadafalch (McCully, Robinson). This self-complacent gaze inevitably tends to hide what Epps describes as the "efficient and devastating ways to kill and destroy" inherent in modernity. These accounts of Catalan modernity, deeply rooted in an industrial capitalism financed by the last decades of the Spanish colonial project, erase the inner negotiations between the totalizing strategies of urban modernity and the particular tactics that voiced the inner dissents of those affected by the constructive destruction of modernity.

Joan Ramon Resina is also certainly far from voicing the complacency of other scholars versus Barcelona's modernity. His critical gaze, however, also serves to consolidate the image of the unquestionable modernity of Barcelona by seemingly granting the city itself a metaphorical free will that compels her to follow the path of modernization. In *La vocació de modernitat de Barcelona*, the city is personified as a unified being with distinctly human attributes, with an identifiable and unquestionable character and with a clear determination. Through this rhetorical

device, the social, economic, and cultural complexity of the city is instantly reduced to a single agent that is, always, symbolically confronted with the central hegemonic power of the Spanish government in Madrid.

It was in the last decades of the nineteenth century that all the elements that were to endow Barcelona with a *modern personality* came into view: a puissant industry, an organized working-class movement, the fin-de-siècle art and architecture locally known as modernisme, standardization of the Catalan language (a cornerstone for literary revival), emergence of a theoretically mature Catalan nationalism, and of course the city itself, which spread westward to assimilate villages and orchards into the regular grid of its newfangled rationalistic Expansion. [My emphasis] (*Barcelona's Vocation of Modernity* 7)

But, even when the emergence of the working class movement is considered a key factor in Barcelona's identity, her unquestionable "modern personality" does not allow for a double consciousness. In order to erase the potential split personality—in an increasingly diverse city inhabited by the local bourgeoisie, traditional *menestrals*, an emerging proletariat, and an increasing immigrant population—the social diversity of the city has to be reduced to a single agent responsible for Barcelona's will to modernity. Once again, Resina identifies the unified and unquestionable agent in his first chapter of *Barcelona's Vocation of Modernity*: "The Bourgeois City" (10-63). In Resina's analysis, the local bourgeoisie is appropriately identified as the standard-bearer of modernity. Taking into account Habermas's approach to modernization—as "the formation of capital and the mobilization of resources, [...] the development of the forces of production and the increase in the productivity of labor," among other factors (2)—the Catalan bourgeoisie was obviously the champion of these interests, which eventually derived in

specific plans of urban transformation. However, in my view, Resina's account of Barcelona's modernity as the result of an almost exclusive dialectical negotiation between center and periphery may underscore the local social and cultural dissent that questioned the totalizing project of urban modernization. As I will address in the following chapters, the case of Barcelona's urban modernity should be analyzed beyond the national negotiations center/periphery. My own focus will be on a new set of implicit and explicit resistances and negotiations arise at the local level. These micro-local negotiations are the ones traditionally underscored by the macro-national dichotomy—Catalonia vs. Spain—and the macro-international one—Spanish modernity vs. European modernity. And yet, only these tactics expose the minute mechanisms at play in the dialectical negotiation of urban modernity. Furthermore, a closer analysis of the local tensions helps to understand the socio-cultural complexity of Barcelona's negotiation of modernity. This way, the supposedly uniform will of Barcelona explodes in a myriad of discourses that help to conceive, support, reinforce, sustain, distrust, question, or radically oppose the prevailing metanarrative of urban modernity.

According to Brad Epps, the constant negotiations of Barcelona's modernity can be catalogued in a taxonomical periodization of “four *overlapping* modernities”:

one marked by the triumph of bourgeois liberalism, that runs from the rise of industrialism, the demolition of the city walls, and Cerdà's planned expansion to the Universal Exposition of 1888 and beyond; another marked by the growing contestation of bourgeois hegemony, that runs from the first bouts of Anarchist direct action or terrorism (depending on one's perspective) in the 1890s through the popular uprising against the mobilization of troops to Morocco in 1909 known as the *Setmana Tràgica* o *Setmana Gloriosa* (again, depending on one's

perspective) and the revolutionary movements of the Civil War to the triumph of Franco; a third, under Franco, marked by a technocratic capitalism hostile to civil liberties [...] and a fourth, generally called postmodern, in which neoliberal global capitalism grapples with environmentalism, historical memory, and the rights of citizens and neighbors. (“Barcelona and Modernity” 18)

In these pages I will exclusively focus on the period that Epps identifies as the “triumph of bourgeois liberalism,” the demolition of the city walls, and the urban expansion along Cerdà’s rationalized blueprint. In this period, due to the capitalization of the colonial profits obtained from the last Spanish colonies in the Caribbean, nineteenth-century Catalonia witnessed the progressive transformation of traditional manufactures into steam powered industrial production centralized in the Barcelona plain but also in provinces like Vallès Occidental and, progressively along the beds of the rivers Llobregat, Ter, Cardener, and Anoia. In 1833, the Bonaplata factory, the first Spanish factory powered by steam, was introduced in Barcelona. By the end of the 1840s, a large number of other steam factories—like el Vapor Vell, La España Industrial, and the factory of Puigmartí and Vilaregut—had consolidated the local industrial revolution in the Barcelona plain. A series of urban and technological improvements followed the consolidation of these local textile industries. In 1840, the first local factory for the production of gas lighting, the Societat Catalana per l’Enllumenat de Gas, was founded in Barcelona. Two years later, Barcelona became the first Spanish city to inaugurate the first public spaces illuminated by gas. On October 27, 1848, the first train line of the Iberian Peninsula was established between Barcelona and the coastal Catalan city of Mataró.⁷ In 1851, Barcelona inaugurated its local stock exchange. By 1853, the first Spanish interurban telegraph lines connected Barcelona with the Spanish capital. The structural changes of these economic and technical transformations were

accompanied by a series of social changes, which included the gradual polarization between an emerging industrial bourgeoisie and a growing local proletariat—attracted from the Catalan countryside by the new industrial network—that shared the urban space. By 1854, the industrial city of Barcelona was still surrounded by ancient medieval walls and was desperately calling for the demolition of the stone belt that hindered its growth, the expansion along the Barcelona plain, and the modernization of its inner urban layout.

1.4 MODERNITY AND URBANISM: NINETEENTH-CENTURY BARCELONA AND THE RATIONALIZATION OF THE URBAN SPACE

Amidst such local process of economic and social transformation, there was a patent need to revise the spatial reality of Barcelona in order to accommodate the new needs of an openly industrial and capitalist society. The urban reality of Barcelona became a matter of public debate that reflected on how the new city of Barcelona should be conceived. By the late 1850s, a Catalan engineer, Ildefons Cerdà, came to theorize the new urban reality of the city proposing the much-desired plan of expansion as well as its inner reform. Cerdà faced the task of conceiving the new city through a purely scientific approach based on reason and the observation of urban reality. Through a radically positivistic approach,⁸ Cerdà analyzed the material and socio-economic conditions of the old Barcelona that would serve as the empirical basis on which to build a general theory of urbanization and a precise proposal of the urban expansion and inner reform of the city. As one of the preliminary works of his project, in 1856 Ildefons Cerdà engaged in a through analysis of the living conditions of the working class of Barcelona—published as *Monografía estadística de la clase obrera de Barcelona en 1856*—in order to comprehend the main problems that the new city should be able to solve. His project was

published after 1859 and it ultimately crystallized in his major three-volume work *Teoría general de la urbanización y aplicación de sus principios y doctrinas a la reforma y ensanche de Barcelona* (1867).

Ildefons Cerdà's project was incontestably modern due to extremely ambitious goals. Firstly, Cerdà aimed to design a new urban rationale for the expansion of Barcelona along the surrounding plain and a plan of inner reform that allowed the old city to network with the new one. Secondly, Cerdà's rationalism impelled him to articulate his project on a thorough and methodical theory that was conceived as the literal birth of a discipline that he called "urbanización." Certainly, the rational organization of cities can be traced back to the articulation of Mesopotamian and Egyptian cities of the fourth millennium B.C. (Mumford 19, 55-93), and the consolidation of the Greek polis (Mumford 118-57). Also, the rationalization and regimentation of space can be identified in the earliest forms of temples (Mumford 106). The role of the urban planner in Western culture arose in Greco-Roman culture, creating a long dynasty of urban planners and surveyors from the Greek Hippodamos to the French Baron Haussmann (Mumford 172). In the Iberian Peninsula, the fourteenth-century Catalan friar Francesc Eiximenis conveyed the first local theory of medieval urban regimentation in his thirteen-volume work *Lo Crestià* ("Quina forma deu haver ciutat bella e bé edificada" 188-90). During the sixteenth century, the *leyes de indias* of Phillip II regimented the rational organization of space in the development of new colonial towns in the Americas.⁹ Taking into account his countless forerunners, Cerdà's nineteenth-century rationality drove him to articulate the long tradition of urban planning as a new scientific discipline that he labeled "urbanización."¹⁰

As he explains in his *Teoría general de la urbanización*, Cerdà's positivistic project faced the need to rationalize the empirical observation of the urban pandemonium. Cerdà recognized

the need for a new terminology that extended beyond the sheer materiality of the city. The new vocabulary should allow him to subsume the organic relationship of all the constitutive elements of the city beyond its materiality:

la necesidad de dar un nombre á ese mare-magnum de personas, de cosas, de intereses de todo género, de mil elementos diversos, que sin embargo de funcionar, al parecer, cada cual á su manera de un modo independiente, al observarlos detenida y filosóficamente, se nota que están en relaciones constantes unos con otros, ejerciendo unos sobre otros una acción á veces muy directa, y que por consiguiente vienen á formar una unidad. Sabe que el conjunto de todas estas cosas, sobre todo en su parte material, se llama ciudad; mas como mi objeto no era expresar esa materialidad, si mas bien la manera y sistema que siguen esos grupos al formarse, y como están organizados y funcionan después todos los elementos que los constituyen, es decir, que además de la materialidad debia espresar el organismo, la vida si asi cabe decirlo, que anima á la parte material; es claro y evidente, que aquella palabra no podia convenirme. (*Teoría general de la urbanización* 29).

His search for the new comprehensive term discards the terms “ciudad” and “civil.” Cerdà based his theory on the Latin term “urbs” (urbs, urbis: city) as the etymological origin of a term capable to encompass “sin violencia todo ese concurso de cosas diversas y heterogéneas que, armonizadas por la fuerza superior de la sociabilidad humana, forman lo que llamamos una ciudad” (29). Cerdà resorts to a term derived from “urbum”—which according to Cerdà’s explanation means plow.¹¹ As Cerdà recounts, the plow was related to the Roman process of rationalization of the city because it was the instrument used to mark the perimeter of the cities:

“con la abertura del surco urbanizaban el recinto y todo cuanto en él contuviese; es decir, la abertura de este surco, era una verdadera urbanización; esto es, el acto de convertir en urbs un campo abierto ó libre" (30). The simple use of the plow—driven by sacred bulls—magically transformed the rural space into the new urban reality.¹² The demiurgic power of the Roman plow anchors his decision to adopt the term “urbanización,” which becomes Cerdà’s instrumental discipline in order to rationalize the city. The new scientific discipline had two complementary aspects: the descriptive capacity—upon which Cerdà elaborates in the “parte analítica” that make up his first volume of the *Teoría general de la urbanización*—and the prescriptive power—the core of Cerdà’s proposals of urban transformation articulated in the second volume or “parte sintética.” The first volume (“parte analítica”) allows Cerdà to investigate the history of the rationalization of the urban space and the specific case of the old city of Barcelona. From the defects detected in old Barcelona, Cerdà elicits the main traits of what he conceives as the perfect modern urbanization for the new city. Ultimately, Cerdà’s discipline of “urbanización” is presented as

un conjunto de *conocimientos, principios, doctrinas y reglas*, encaminadas á enseñar de que manera debe estar ordenado todo agrupamiento de edificios, á fin de que corresponda á su objeto, que se reduce á que sus moradores puedan vivir cómodamente y puedan prestarse recíprocos servicios, contribuyendo así al común bienestar. [My emphasis] (*Teoría general de la urbanización* 31)

Cerdà’s discipline is presented as an ensemble of knowledge and principles—which remain at the core of its descriptive capacity—and a set of laws and rules that allow him to invest this science with the power to rationalize and regiment the urban space. As Auguste Comte proposed, Cerdà’s articulation of the discipline of “urbanización” responded to the needs of the perception

of scientific progress as a teleological process that attempted to emancipate knowledge from its preliminary and imperfect stages of theological and metaphysical knowledge in order to achieve the perfect final stage of “scientific or positive” knowledge (Comte 20). Knowledgeable about the practical needs of such a discipline in a moment in which urban transformations aimed at rationalizing traditional cities according to the modern hegemonic standards, Cerdà did not hesitate to assert that his discipline of “urbanización” was destined to “obtener un lugar distinguido entre las ciencias que enseñan al hombre el camino de su perfeccionamiento” (*Teoría general de la urbanización* 31). Cerdà conceived his project as a crucial element in the path of human perfectibility marked by the nineteenth-century project of modernity. However, Cerdà’s theory was far from becoming the landmark he imagined. While Cerdà’s theoretical articulation of urbanism and, in particular, his project of urban expansion for Barcelona has received considerable critical attention,¹³ it is still common to find his name absent from other general accounts of the birth of urbanism as a scientific discipline.¹⁴

The prescriptive nature of the Cerdà plan was firmly rooted in the notion of “creative destruction,” on the idea that the emergence of the new rationalization of space depended on the elimination of those pre-existent urban realities that did not conform to the demands of progress. The implicit articulation of this notion—as an inherent trait of capitalism—was first expressed in the work of Marx and Engels. In *A Critique of German Ideology*, they explained the process of “the materially determined destruction of the preceding materially determined mode of life of individuals, with the disappearance of which this contradiction together with its unity also disappears” (n.p.). More than half a century later, the Austrian economist Joseph Alois Schumpeter developed the Marxist concept of “creative destruction” in his major work *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*, published in 1942. In Schumpeter’s words, creative

destruction, the potential to create a new reality through the destruction of a previous one, “is the essential fact about capitalism. It is what capitalism consists in and what every capitalist industry has to live in” (83). Posed as the basic creed of capitalism, creative destruction is also the basic drive of modernity and a key factor in urban development. As Max Page argues in *The creative destruction of Manhattan*, “the process of creative destruction” should be placed “at the heart of the story of urban development” in order to “highlight the fundamental tensions—both physical and cultural—at the heart of the urban experience” (Page 3). Even considering Cerdà’s egalitarian utopianism, his project became the perfect blueprint for the erasure of those urban spaces generated by previous modes of production in order to build the city that industrial capitalism and the emerging liberal bourgeoisie demanded.¹⁵ The implementation of the Example was certainly marked by real estate speculation and the progressive consolidation of a notion of the city as spectacle. Both aspects, of course, were marked by the emerging bourgeoisie’s thirst for economic profit—as we will see in Josep Coroleu’s *Memorias de un menestral*—and by their need of performing their symbolic status on the new public spaces—as Narcís Oller repeatedly illustrates in *La febre d’or*.

In their critical accounts of Barcelona’s modernity, both Brad Epps and Joan Ramon Resina addressed the impact of the Cerdà plan in the local development.¹⁶ Taking into account Epps and Resina’s analyses of the Cerdà plan, my own reading explores the new rationalization and regimentation of the public space imposed by Cerdà’s grid as a reification of the industrial capitalist mode of production and the emerging class consciousness of the liberal bourgeoisie.¹⁷ Regardless of its particular process of legal sanctioning, I understand both the theorization of Cerdà’s plan—conceived by the Catalan engineer *motu proprio*, without any explicit directions or previous commission from the Spanish government—and its progressive development—

which deviates from Cerdà's most egalitarian conceptions—as the implementation of a new urban rationale that responded to the needs of the emergent industrial capitalism and the new class consciousness of the local bourgeoisie. In this sense, my reading of Cerdà's Eixample is based on Karl Marx's approach to reification in chapter 48, "The Trinity Formula," of the third volume of *Capital*.¹⁸

In capital-profit, or still better capital-interest, land-rent, labour-wages, in this economic trinity represented as the connection between the component parts of value and wealth in general and its sources, we have the complete mystification of the capitalist mode of production, *the conversion of social relations into things*, the direct coalescence of the material production relations with their historical and social determination. It is an enchanted, perverted, topsy-turvy world, in which Monsieur le Capital and Madame la Terre do their ghost-walking as social characters and at the same time directly as mere things. [My emphasis] (Marx *Capital* n.p.)

Even considering Cerdà's egalitarian utopianism, the Eixample was conceived, and developed, as the response to the needs of the dominant industrial capitalism, the mode of production that had become the steam engine of nineteenth-century Barcelona. As Resina explains, "the grid set the stage for a historical dislocation"—the distinctive dislocation of modernity—"for a city ensconced in the ideology of growth, an ideology based on the rationalization of progress, whose clock always keeps modernity time" ("From Rose of Fire to City of Ivory" 85). In this new stage, Monsieur le Capital and Madame la Terre were going to walk hand in hand.

1.5 ON SPATIAL THEORY AND THE REPRESENTATION OF THE CITY

The new rationalization of the urban space provoked countless daily negotiations between those who saw a threat in the creative destruction brought forward by the new plan of urban expansion and those who supported the proposals for inner reform of the old city designed by Ildefons Cerdà and by Angel Baixeras. As Joan Ramon Resina explains, “the rationality of planning” was forced to face “various forms of resistance,” which caused “that the public image of modern Barcelona became inseparable from civic struggles against the dominance of absolute space” (“From Rose of Fire to City of Ivory” 87). As I mentioned above, in this project I analyze not only the particular articulation of the new urban rationale as designed by the urban planners Cerdà and Baixeras but also the way in which certain authors, artists, photographers, and media reflected on such proposals of urban planning through their artistic and literary representations of the city. I argue that these contrasting representations of the city formed an integral part in the local dialectical negotiation of a viable project of urban modernity. These sources not only differ in their nature—scientific proposals of urban planning, photographs, panoramic paintings, ephemeral sketches, cartoons, essays, novels, short stories, or poems—but also, and more importantly, in their varying perceptions and representations of urban space. In order to analyze the intricacies of divergent perceptions, articulations, and representations of the city, I rely on the work of various critics: Michel Foucault, Michel de Certeau, Henri Lefebvre, Edward Soja, and the Catalan social anthropologist Manuel Delgado.

First and foremost, my conception of city representations is indebted to the groundbreaking work of Michel Foucault. My analysis of Ildefons Cerdà’s and Angel Baixeras’s projects of urban planning is rooted in Foucault’s archeological endeavor of revealing “a *positive unconscious* of knowledge: a level that eludes the consciousness of the scientist and yet is part of

scientific discourse” (*The Order of Things* xi). As I will try to demonstrate in the proceeding chapters, the urban planning of Cerdà and Baixeras derives from the particular anxiety of nineteenth-century industrial capitalism to regiment what Foucault calls “the utopia of the perfectly governed city” (*Discipline and punish* 198). This new violent epistemology of space aimed at the erasure not only of certain spaces considered obsolete according to the new modern order but also to the elimination of the spatial practices that these spaces allowed. The elimination of these spaces and the practices they allowed was aimed at the production of “docile bodies” (*Discipline and punish* 135-69). Ultimately, as Paul Rabinow recaps, Foucault has helped us to understand “the problem of the centrality of space—not as an ontological issue, but as a political and an analytic one” (Rabinow 355).¹⁹ This project emerges from Foucault’s invitation to explore the intricate interaction between space and power found in the nineteenth-century Barcelonan project of urban modernity.

I also remain indebted to Michel de Certeau’s analysis of spatial practices in *The Practice of Everyday Life*. In particular, I borrow from his particular attention to the everyday resistances of individuals towards spatial forms of social control and his detailed definition of “strategies” and “tactics.” On one hand, de Certeau defines “strategy” as

the calculus of force-relationships which becomes possible when a subject of will and power (a proprietor, an enterprise, a city, a scientific institution) can be isolated from an “environment.” A strategy assumes a space that can be circumscribed as *proper* (*propre*) and thus serve as the basis for generating relations with an exterior distinct from it (competitors, adversaries, “clientèles,” “targets,” or “objects” of research). Political, economic, and scientific rationality has been constructed on this strategic model.” (*The Practice of Everyday Life*

xix).

As I will analyze in the following chapters, the projects of urban transformation articulated by Cerdà and Baixeras, as any instance of urban planning, take the stance of the city and its surrounding plain as a “*proper*” space in order to generate a new set of relations for the traditional users of the city. These projects of appropriating the pre-existing reality uproot and disavow a series of micro systems that had been acknowledged as “proper” until the advent of the new economic, social, and urban rationale. Through the new epistemology of space, the minute strategies of the traditional city and its surrounding rural environment are rendered “improper.” In the following chapters I analyze the way certain artists and writers reflected on the attempt to delegitimize the pre-existing order. Through a purely nostalgic gaze, some Catalan artists and authors—like Lluís Rigalt and Emili Vilanova—witness and represent the progressive loss of ground of old strategies devoid of their traditional legitimacy. The habitual inhabitants of the city that is progressively disappearing become only a footnote to the new city and can only resort to the everyday usage of space that de Certeau defines as “tactics”:

I call a “tactic,” on the other hand, a calculus which cannot count on a “proper” (a spatial or institutional localization), nor thus on a borderline distinguishing the other as a visible totality. The place of a tactic belongs to the other. A tactic insinuates itself into the other’s place, fragmentarily, without taking over in its entirety, without being able to keep it at a distance. It has at its disposal no base where it can capitalize on its advantages, prepare its expansions, and secure independence with respect to circumstances. (*The Practice of Everyday Life* xix).

In this dissertation I propose the possibility of using de Certeau’s categories of spatial practices—strategies and tactics—to analyze the analogous divergent attitudes towards the

textual or visual representation of specific public spaces and the city in general. I contrast what I consider strategic conceptions and representations of the city—proposals of urban planning, panoramic paintings of the city, urban photography, and certain literary representations of the urban experience that support the prevailing metanarrative of urban modernity—and other representations that I regard as tactical—artistic and literary approaches toward the city that question the local project of urban transformation. Certainly, de Certeau’s dichotomy of strategies/tactics helps clarify the tensions generated by the projects of urban transformation with regards to the assumption of a “proper” place anchored in scientific, political, economical, or social hegemony. Beyond the central matter of power relations, there is also a radical divergence regarding the way the urban space per se is perceived, conceived, experienced, and also represented.

In addition, the works of the French sociologist Henri Lefebvre and the American geographer Edward Soja can help us to illuminate the main sources of these divergent approaches to the articulation of the textual and visual city. In Lefebvre’s *The Production of Space* and in Soja’s *Thirdspace*, both theorists propose a similar approach to the understanding of space through a “trialectics of spatiality, of spatial thinking, of the spatial imagination” (Soja 10). Lefebvre and Soja’s new approaches to the understanding of space as the result of a trialectical negotiation arise from the limitations of the traditional dialectics that marked the discipline of geography. As Edward Soja explains, the duality of “perceived space” and “conceived space” was the axis of the traditional dialectics around which geography had been traditionally articulated (Soja 11). The new trialectics—posed by Lefebvre and rearticulated by Soja—resulted from the negotiation of three kinds of spaces: “the *perceived* space or materialized Spatial Practice; the *conceived* space [Lefebvre] defined as Representations of

Space; and the *lived* Spaces of Representation (translated into English as “Representational Spaces”)” (Soja 10). As Edward Soja points out, these three ways of spatial thinking are not mutually exclusive, and the concept of *lived space* is simultaneously distinct from and inclusive of the other two elements of the trialectics of space (Soja 67). Lefebvre’s and Soja’s trialectics of space interact in a complex net of analogous terminology that, curiously enough, multiply by three each one of these concepts taking into account an initial descriptive term, Lefebvre’s technical term, and Soja’s particular terminology.²⁰ For the sake of simplicity, I will address the three elements of the trialectics of space by means of the initial descriptive terms *perceived space* (spatial practice/firstspace), *conceived space* (representations of space/secondspace), and *lived space* (representational spaces/thirdspace).

The notion of the *perceived space* refers both to the physical presence of space and to its own conditions of possibility as a direct product of the needs of the specific social formation that has produced it. According to Lefebvre, the “spatial practice” that articulates this space “ensures continuity and some degree of cohesion” (*The Production of Space* 33). As the French sociologist explains, “the spatial practice of a society secretes that society’s space; it propounds and presupposes it, in a dialectical interaction; it produces it slowly and surely as it masters and appropriates it” (*The Production of Space* 38). According to Soja’s conception of “firstspace,” this “perspective and epistemology” is the one that becomes instrumental in our understanding of “the “real” material world,” which is “fixed mainly on the concrete materiality of spatial forms, on things that can be empirically mapped” (*Thirdspace* 6; 10). As Soja explains, those epistemologies rooted in what I call *perceived space* “tend to privilege objectivity and materiality, and to aim toward a formal science of space” and they “become fixated on the material form of things in space: with human spatiality seen primarily as outcome or *product*”

(*Thirdspace* 75; 76).

My understanding of *conceived space* derives from Lefebvre's notion of "representations of space, which are tied to the relations of production and to the "order" which those relationships impose, and hence to knowledge, to signs, to codes" (*The Production of Space* 33).

This is the space of conceptualization,

the space of scientists, planners, urbanists, technocrat subdividers and social engineers, as of a certain type of artists with a scientific bent—all of whom identify what is lived and what is perceived with what is conceived. [...] This is the dominant space in any society (or mode of production). Conceptions of space tend, with certain exceptions [...] towards a system of verbal (and therefore intellectually worked out signs. (*The Production of Space* 39)

In Soja's terms, the "secondspace perspective" is to be found in the articulation and interpretation of the material reality of space—of the *perceived space*—"through the "imagined" representations of spatiality" through "mental or cognitive forms" (*Thirdspace* 6; 10). This notion of the *conceived space* is intimately related to Lefebvre's understanding of the generation of space as a direct product of the needs of the social formation from which it emerged. As Soja explains, *conceived space* is "tied to the relations of production and, especially, to the order or design that they impose [...] via control over knowledge, signs and codes" (*Thirdspace* 67). Soja describes them as "mental spaces" generated as "'dominating" spaces of regulatory and "ruly" discourse" that unfold as accurate "representations of power and ideology, of control and surveillance" (*Thirdspace* 67).

To the two main elements of the dialectics of traditional geography, Lefebvre and Soja felt it necessary to introduce a third element able to complement the initial dyad. The third

element is the notion of *lived space*, which Lefebvre described as “representational spaces,” those “embodying complex symbolisms, sometimes coded, sometimes not, linked to the clandestine or underground side of urban life, as also to art” (*The Production of Space* 33). This is the approach to “space as directly *lived* through its associated images and symbols, and hence the space of “inhabitants” and “users,” but also of some artists and perhaps of those, such as a few writers and philosophers, who *describe* and aspire to do more than describe” (*The Production of Space* 39). For Soja, the notion of *lived space*, through his particular understanding of “thirdspace,” implies also “a distinct mode of critical spatial awareness” (*Thirdspace* 10). Lived space, the space of inhabitants and users, remains elusive, obstinately resisting readability. It is in these spaces that—thanks to “their subordinate, peripheral or marginalized positioning”—resistance of the dominant order is possible (Soja 68). Lived space becomes the condition of possibility for what Henri Lefebvre calls a “counter-space”: “an initially utopian alternative to actually existing “real” space,” that stands “in opposition to the one embodied in the strategies of power” (*The Production of Space* 349; 381).

Strictly speaking, this dissertation is only concerned with the way urban space is *conceived* through the work of urban planners, photographers, painters, and literary authors. But, as we have seen through Lefebvre’s and Soja’s conceptualization of this trialectic spatial imagination, the nuances of each of these spaces allow us to identify traces and echoes of their counterparts in any other conception of space. All the sources analyzed in this dissertation will show traces of at least several spatialities. These texts and images respond to mental *conceptions of space* whether coming from the rational conceptualization of space presented by urban planners or from the selection of a particular artistic point of view by photographers, painters, and authors. Similarly, all of them participate in either one of the two remaining

conceptualizations of space by showing a tendency to focus either on *perceived space* or on *lived space*. My reading tries to show how these artifacts manifest an implicit or explicit allegiance towards one of these contrastive conceptualizations of space.

From the point of view of the urban planners, their work will show their commitment not only to the space of scientific conceptualization—inherent in the perspective of the *conceived space*—but also their necessary prerequisite to anchor their conceptualization in an empirical observation of the material world. In their task, urban planners are also instrumental in achieving the actual transformation of the “real” urban space. Urban planners are active in the supposedly abstract process of what Lefebvre calls “spatial practice,” which is in charge of “producing the material form of social spatiality [...] as both medium and outcome of human activity, behavior, and experience” (Soja 66). The demiurgic power of their textual theorization of the urban rationale and their visual articulation of the dreamed city in maps and blueprints helped to conceive the new urban reality. In due course, through political sanctioning, financial investment, and a certain social support their theoretical conception of space would become the new materiality of the city. But besides the work of city planners, a series of artists and literary authors also showed their compromise with the emergence of the new modern city through a gaze that privileged the first element of the trialectic. The realist narrative of Narcís Oller—analyzed by Cabré and Resina as an epitome of the emergence of Barcelona’s modernity in the nineteenth-century²¹—as well as the panoramic views of Alfred Guesdon, and the photographic albums of the emerging new urban reality; they all helped to conceive a particular image of the city aimed at “propound[ing]” and “presuppos[ing]” a modern conception of the city that “masters and appropriates” former traditional conceptions of the urban experience (Lefebvre 38).

Nevertheless, as Henri Lefebvre concedes, *lived space* was also the central focus of

“some artists [...] of those, such as a few writers and philosophers, who *describe* and aspire to do more than describe. This is the dominated—and hence passively experienced—space which the imagination seeks to change and appropriate” (*The Production of Space* 39). As I suggest in the following chapters, the need to claim and appropriate what is considered a proper space permeates the work of those local artists and authors. Through their romantic sensibility, they tried to document the radical transformation not only of the urban reality but also of the tensions that these changes provoked in the local social networks. The ephemeral sketches of the Barcelonan counter-spaces of modernity of the Catalan painter Lluís Rigalt i Farriols document the urban transformation just like Emili Vilanova’s tableaux of local customs describe the traditional experience of local spaces threatened by modernization. Both artists foreground those spaces and urban practices that are about to disappear under the pressure of Cerdà’s Eixample and Baixeras’s proposal of inner reform. In a way, their conception of the city aims at documenting and creating a comprehensive archive of the ephemeral spaces threatened by urban modernity. When contrasted with the emerging rational epistemologies of the urban space—as articulated by Cerdà and Baixeras—the work of these artists appear to denounce the project of modernity as it was articulated in the Enlightenment project through “its espousal of uniformitarian doctrines which leave scant room for individual diversity or cultural pluralism” and its removal of “all notions of absolute value from interpersonal relations” (Wokler n. pag.). These precise gazes on the urban experience try to foreground the dark side of modernity, the tensions between the promise of a better world and the disappearance of the urban experience, as it was known. Through his tableaux of urban customs, the Romantic gaze of Emili Vilanova documented a purely modern experience: the disappearance of a communal sense of belonging to a specific locale, the loss of certain spatial practices deeply embedded in the old urban layout,

and the feeling of loneliness and hopelessness of the alienated individual in the new regimented and homogenous space of the modern city. Faithful to their Romantic agendas, the works of Emili Vilanova and Lluís Rigalt—through their systematic archiving of those counter-spaces and spatial practices threatened by the urban rationale—are presented as remedies that could heal the maladies of modernity.

Following a line of work parallel to that of Henri Lefebvre and Edward Soja, the Catalan social anthropologist Manuel Delgado has devoted his critical attention to the vindication of the spatial practices of the city users.²² In his work, Delgado has concentrated regularly on the tensions created between the political attempts of consolidating what has been called the “Barcelona model,” a particular city branding based on economic speculation with public space, a progressive understanding of the city as spectacle, and the progressive implementation of proposals of urban transformation in periodical feverish periods justified by international events (such as World Fairs, Olympic Games, or the failed Forum 2004). This model, according to Manuel Delgado, is based on a fixated vocation of transparency that tries to render the city legible (*Elogi del vianant* 14). Simultaneously, the pretended legibility of the city manages to hide any social conflict, inequality, and unrest (*Elogi del viatjant* 14). Delgado’s critical gaze on the urban experience relies in the inherent tension between the planning and rationalization of the modern city and the way inhabitants and users practice the public space. As Delgado explains, “por doquier, constantemente, podemos dar con pruebas de la actualidad de un viejo contencioso inherente a la historia misma de la ciudad moderna: el que opone el conjunto de maneras de vivir en espacios urbanizados—la cultura urbana propiamente dicha—a la estructuración de las territorialidades urbanas, es decir la cultura urbanística” (*Sociedades movedizas* 11). Manuel Delgado explains this tension with reference to Henri Lefebvre’s distinction between the city vs.

the urban. “Lo urbano,” explains Delgado, “no es la ciudad, sino las prácticas que no dejan de llenarla de recorridos” (*Sociedades movedizas* 11). According to the social anthropologist, the tensions between the urban experience of the users of the public space and the conception of urban planning sanctioned by politicians becomes a binary opposition between “una ciutat socialitzada i una ciutat de la qual, de sobte, s’ha expulsat la complexitat humana, el malestar de les classes, tota contradicció” (*Elogi del vianant* 12). As Delgado summarizes, these tensions can be expressed as the binary opposition between *the planned city* and *the practiced city* (*Elogi del vianant* 13).

In the following chapters of this dissertation I will address the tensions between *the planned city* and *the practiced city*. My understanding of the *planned city* will obviously include the spatial epistemologies of Cerdà and Baixeras, but I also intend to prove that many other representations of the city respond to a notion of *conceived* space that tried to consolidate an unquestionably modern image of the city. In contrast, I will also show how some other artists and authors tried to go beyond the notion of *perceived* space in order to focus on the city *lived* and constructed by its inhabitants and users. Traditionally eclipsed by the powerful modern image of the *planned city*, in the work of these painters and authors the *practiced city* emerges.

1.6 ON PERIODIZATION AND PRIMARY SOURCES

From a cultural studies perspective, the analysis of the contrastive conceptions and representations of the urban space in nineteenth-century Barcelona has to face and negotiate a large number of disciplinary and historiographic boundaries. It is necessary to keep in mind that this is not a *history* of the representation of Barcelona in the second half of the nineteenth century. It is not an analysis of the *artistic* representation of the city or a comprehensive study of

the *literary* image of Barcelona. I aim to uncover visual or textual articulations of the city that reflected on the new model of urban rationality proposed by Ildefons Cerdà and Angel Baixeras. In order to do so, both literary and artistic canons present certain limitations.

It must be pointed out that the pictorial representation of the city of Barcelona between 1854 and 1888 was still not an accepted genre for the local art academies of the period or for the emergent art market. Therefore, the most interesting visual representations of the city are not found in the art galleries of the period but in the sketchbooks of local artists, the cartoons of popular presses, and in the photographic albums of the period. Regarding the literary canon, the analysis of the literary representation of Barcelona has been traditionally split between the two critical gazes represented by the Catalan and the Spanish philological traditions. The vehicular language of the primary work—either Catalan or Castilian—has traditionally determined the point of view from which it was analyzed. Unfortunately, the discrepancies in literary periodizations used from these vantage points further complicates the discourse.²³

Furthermore, the elective construction of literary canons has privileged certain works that comply, not only with the idea of national literature they wanted to convey, but also with the particular image of the (modern) city they wanted promoted. Thus, any analysis of the literary representation of the Barcelona of this period is almost exclusively focused on the work of the Catalan Realist author Narcís Oller (Resina, Cabré). But, as Resina confirmed, Oller's perspective of the city was certainly linked to the project of urban modernity proposed by the emerging liberal bourgeoisie. Curiously enough, his particular political and social affiliations seem to fade from view thanks to his realist approach to literary representation. For some critics, Oller's Barcelona gives his vision of the city a halo of authenticity that makes his representation—his *conception* of the city—as “real” as the material nineteenth-century city.

Oller's attitude has been interpreted as entirely objective: "Oller, que sempre havia estat un enamorat de la veritat, va optar per una literatura que, des de la percepció personal, fos testimony real i objectiu del seu temps" (Cabré 53). Of course, Oller's Realism, like any Realism, may fool us through its apparent transparency. As Linda Nochlin summarized, "Realism was no more a mere mirror of reality than any other style and its relation qua style to phenomenal data—the *donné*—is as complex and difficult as that of Romanticism, the Baroque or Mannerism" (14). It is not strange that current critics fall prey to the apparent transparency of Oller's work, since the very beginning critics like Josep Yxart, Oller's cousin, insisted on consolidating this particular illusion. Yxart, referring to Oller's work, stressed that "[e]n sus obras aparece Cataluña tal cual es, sin resabio alguno literario; y sus clases y su estado actual en su conjunto, resaltan bajo aquellos aspectos de estudio social, que, aun sin proponerselo su autor, hallamos en las novelas contemporáneas" (qtd. in Cabré 45). As I will reason in the following chapters, I intend to analyze Oller's work not as the most accurate representation of the Barcelona of monarchic restoration but as one more discourse that reflected on the project of urban modernity emerging in this particular period. The aim of this project is to understand the debate on the urban model of modernity and, specially, to uncover the tensions between the planned city and the lived city as they appear in multiple modes of representation of the city. In order to do so, Oller's narrative of urban modernity should be taken into account as just one of the multiple voices of the period and, as such, contrasted with those dissenting voices that have been traditionally discarded.

Beyond the literary approaches to the urban experience, by mid nineteenth century, the multiplicity of media that addressed the representation of the city literally burst into myriad new forms. The consolidation of the popular press and the popularization of photography as a medium to represent the city coincided with what has been called the literary renaissance of

Catalan literature—the *Renaixença* movement. In this period, literary and journalistic production both in Catalan and Spanish languages addressed the representation of the urban experience. In the arts, while Romantic painters were hardly interested in the representation of the city, some other ephemeral forms like engraving, lithographs, and drawing reflected the emergence of the modern city and the spaces that were about to disappear from the familiar landscape.

Simultaneously, photography emerged as a medium capable of creating the illusion of a completely objective and apparently unmediated representation of space.

Taking all these factors into account, the following chapters have to negotiate discrepancies not only in distinct media, genres, and styles, but also different historiographic and disciplinary periodizations. The period analyzed in these pages—1854-1888—is not demarcated by traditional historiography or literary periodization. Nevertheless, it marks a certain cycle in the articulation of a new urban model distinctive by remarkable urban expansion, which started with the green light for the demolition of the medieval city walls in 1854 and ended with the celebration of the World Fair of 1888.

Historically speaking, the period under analysis includes three major stages of Spanish politics: the reign of Isabel II (1843-1868), the democratic sexennial (1868-1874), and the Bourbon restoration (1874-1931). Within these comprehensive historical periods other distinctive—and radically important—moments marked the evolution of Spanish politics: the Moderate Decade (1845-1854), the Progressive Biennium (1854-1856), the governments of the *Unión Liberal* (1858-1863), the “Glorious” Revolution of 1868, the provisional government (1869-1870), the constitutional monarchic reign of Amadeo de Saboya (1870-1873), the Third Carlist War (1872-76), the First Spanish Republic (1873-1874), the reign of Alfonso XII (1874-1885), and the regency of María Cristina de Habsburgo (1885-1902). The particular political

agendas of these periods certainly determined both the fate of urban planning—like the decisive effect of the Progressive Biennium in the demolition of the Barcelona city walls—and the destiny of certain periodical publications according to how much they dissent from the Spanish central government.

For art historians this period is categorized as a transitional stage between Romanticism and Modern Art, a moment marked by what has been called Spanish Eclecticism. The impact on Catalonia of the German Nazarene painters coexisted with the introduction of landscape painting in Spain by Carlos de Haes, the popularization of historical painting, the timid rise of local Realism, and the pre-impressionism of Marià Fortuny. In Catalonia, like in the rest of Spain, the historical genre became the most important genre until the end of the nineteenth century followed, in a second position, by landscape painting (Fontbona “La història de Catalunya en l’art romàntic” 21). But, as we will see, the visual artifacts analyzed in this dissertation hardly respond to the expectations of clear-cut periods of art history, or to the selection process of national art museums. The hegemony of historicism and landscape painting excluded the representation of the urban experience as an interesting genre for the art market. As Albert Garcia Espuche explains, “els pintors condicionats no només per la seva formació sinó pels gustos de la seva clientela, tenien una disposició menor a la captació d’aquestes imatges tan poc comercials” (“Imatges i imatge de Barcelona” 47). A few painters, however, attracted by the new Realist spirit led by the French painter Gustave Coubert, paid attention to the urban landscape in their painting. As Fontbona reminds us, the late Venetian vedutisti Achille Battistuzzi (?-1891) promoted the genre of urban landscaping after moving to Barcelona in the 1860s (“Barcelona enmarcada” 58). Ramon Martí i Alsina (1826-1894)—considered by Jordi Carbonell as the master of Catalan pictorial realism (18)—also paid attention to the urban landscape motivated by

his “adopción y la defensa de una estética realista, positivista y progresista” (Trenc 25). Some other local artists also devoted their time to representations of the city. Artists like Lluís Rigalt i Farrivals represented the city in his sketchbooks as technical exercises of drawing, a set of artifacts fundamentally excluded from public circulation in the local market. As Teresa Navas explains, these small format sketches “forma el conjunt més nombrós d’imatges de la ciutat del segle XIX” besides the photographic archive (“Ciutat fragmentada” 202). The tensions between the demands of a local market (governed by historicism and landscaping) and the will to represent the urban transformations of this period caused in artists like Rigalt a certain scission. While Lluís Rigalt, educated in the academism of the local art school of La Llotja, remained faithful to Romantic landscaping in his oil paintings of rural Catalonia, he also decided to explore the urban landscape with a new Realist spirit but still moved by a certain Romantic nostalgia.

On the other hand, while the vast majority of painters did not focus on the city, engravers and publishers certainly wanted to exploit the niche market that the representation of the liberal city opened to the bourgeois (Corboz 34). In this market, the supposedly aerial panoramas of the city—like the panoramas of Spanish cities painted by the French artist Alfred Guesdon—create a new image of the modern city by stressing the presence of the train stations, railway lines, steamships, and new boulevards of the city (Corboz 34). Following this particular commodification of the city, the new medium of photography was inaugurated in Spain in 1839 precisely with a daguerreotype of one of the most representative spaces of the city of Barcelona. With the consolidation of this new media, a long list of local and foreign photographers specialized in the visual representation of the city: foreign photographers like Franck as well as local ones like F. J. Álvarez—with his *Álbum fotográfico de los monumentos y edificios más*

notables que existen en Barcelona (1872)—Joan Martí i Centelles—with *Bellezas de Barcelona: Relación fotografiada de sus principales monumentos, edificios, calles, paseos y todo lo mejor que encierra la antigua capital del Principado* (1874)—and the brothers Josep Esplugas i Puig—known as J.E. Puig—and Antoni Esplugas i Puig. As Albert Garcia Espuche states, the medium of photography will be the most interested in the representation of the expansion of the city beyond its ancient perimeter²⁴ (“Imatge e imatges” 48).

Beyond the visual representation of the city, this dissertation is primarily interested in those discursive conceptions of the modern urban experience that can help us to understand the tensions between the new rationalized city and the belief in public space as the locus of communal socialization. Accordingly, beyond the realist narrative of Narcís Oller, the following chapters will also analyze the work of Catalan *costumista* authors like Robert Robert (1830-1873) and Emili Vilanova (1840-1905). The Catalan tradition of tableaux of popular customs depended on the consolidation of the local popular press in the vernacular Catalan language. Spanish *costumbrismo*, which reached its peak between 1830s and the 1850s, is rooted on the tradition of the “cuadro de costumbres”, picturesque sketches initially developed in early modern texts. As a nineteenth-century phenomenon, *costumbrismo* can be perceived as a transitional genre that springs from Romanticism and bridges to Realism in its particular approach to the representation of reality. *Costumbrista* writers published their tableaux as a curious blend of short stories and essays that reflected the contemporary reality of their country. Eminently didactic, these vignettes of customs balanced humor, irony, satire, and more or less prominent proposals of social reforms. Nineteenth-century *costumbrismo* is intimately connected with the democratization of the press and the consolidation of journalism. Eighteenth-century British journals like *The Tatler* and *The Spectator* had an impact on *costumbrismo* when they spread a

new perspective on the essay that shortly impacted the rest of Europe. Following Addison and Steele's trail, French authors like Victor-Joseph Étienne de Jouy popularized their satirical sketches of Parisian life in *La Gazzete de France*. It was through these French authors that nineteenth-century Spanish *costumbristas* adapted the old tradition inherited from sixteenth and seventeenth-centuries literature to the new medium of the popular press. Authors like Mariano José de Larra (1809-1837), Ramón de Mesonero Romanos (1803-1882) and Serafin Estébanez Calderón (1799-1867) published their "cuadros de costumbres" in journals and magazines like *El Duende Satírico del Día*, *Cartas Españolas*, or *La Revista Española*. In the Americas, *costumbrismo* also flourished with collections like *Los cubanos pintados por sí mismos* of 1852, and with authors like the Peruvian Ricardo Palma (*Tradiciones Peruanas*) and the Chilean José Victoriano Lastarria (*Antaño y ogaño; novelas y cuentos de la vida hispanoamericana*, 1885).

Spanish *costumbristas* reflected modernity's pressure on urban communities and the way the Spanish countryside remained a repository of *casticismo*, the idiosyncrasies of the Spanish nation. In the work of *costumbristas*, the constant tension between tradition and modernity crystallized in a pervasive dichotomy between the urban and the rural, and in particular, in the dichotomy center vs. periphery. *Costumbristas* like Larra and Mesonero Romanos devoted his life to the representation of the urban customs of Madrid while, others like Estébanez Calderón focused on the life of provincial Spain in his *Escenas Andaluzas* like Antonio Neira did in *El gaitero gallego*. These peripheral authors focused on the social and cultural specificity of their natives Andalusia and Galicia. Their works not only point at the difference between Madrid and the provinces, they also help to understand Spanish cultural diversity.

In Catalonia, however, the bloom of *costumisme* in Catalan language depended on the consolidation of a local market for a popular press in the vernacular tongue. It was not until the

1860s that local authors found a market for their picturesque sketches on the urban experience of Barcelona. Between the 1860s and the 1880s, Catalan *costumisme* flourished because of two main factors: the recovery and popularization of Catalan language as a literary vehicle, and the emergence of a strong local press industry in Catalan. This period is known in Catalan literary historiography as La Renaixença—the cultural and literary renaissance of Catalonia. After three centuries of an extreme diglossia in which high culture was produced exclusively in Spanish, the local bourgeoisie started to demand newspapers, journals, fiction, poetry and drama in its mother tongue. Born from a Romantic sensibility, the Renaixença movement secured a new conscience based on a two-pole attitude: in the first place, it was based on a nostalgic look at a historical and cultural past that was perceived and rearticulated as glorious; in addition, the new economic and cultural energy of the period surfaced as a modernizing drive aiming at putting Barcelona back on the map. And Barcelona was the steam engine of La Renaixença. But the city was aware of her peripheral position. It was, and still is, peripheral both regarding the physical geography of the Iberian Peninsula and the political organization of the country with the capital in Madrid. But with the Renaixença movement Barcelona started to renegotiate its peripherality. The local bourgeoisie tried to capitalize on the outcome of the recent industrialization by trying to cover the gap that separated Barcelona from certain models of urban modernity. And Barcelona was trying hard not only by modernizing herself but also by projecting a modern image of the city abroad.

The literary Renaixença movement, based on an emerging consciousness of a distinctive local culture, worked for the vindication of Catalan as a literary language and for the recognition of the literature written in the vernacular language as a national literature. In this project, the movement consolidated the notion of Catalan language as the most distinctive trait of the nation.

Even though, as Joan-Lluís Marfany explains, cultural production in Catalan had never, in fact ceased to exist, the Renaixença was conceived as the reaction against the previous *Decadència* of vernacular literature (645). The appearance of Bonaventura Carles Aribau's poem "La pàtria" in 1833 has been traditionally posed as the opening of the Catalan literary renaissance. However, as critics like Marfany remind us, the publishing of the poem in 1833 did not have the impact that Catalan literary historiography wanted (641). The consolidation of the Renaixença was slow, and it was not until 1859 that the movement became ultimately institutionalized thanks to the promotion of local intellectuals and institutions like the Acadèmia de Bones Lletres de Barcelona, the University of Barcelona, and the Barcelona City Council. The official Renaixença movement, organized around the rebirth of the Jocs Florals in 1859,²⁵ was conceived and organized on the basis of an elitist approach to cultural regeneration led by the emerging liberal bourgeoisie. The conjunction of a historical revisionism of the Catalan past and the vindication of the native tongue as a literary vehicle derived from a cultural movement that sought the distinctive traits of a national literature in the troubadoursque tradition of the Middle Ages. In 1859, the philologist Manuel Milà i Fontanals, the historian and poet Antoni de Bofarull i de Broçà, and the historian and poet Víctor Balaguer i Cirera reinstated the medieval tradition of the Jocs Florals. As Antoni de Bofarull explained in his "Memoria" of the event, the Jocs Florals were based on a vindication of the old national character as a way to foster the present development of the nation²⁶ and its culture: "lo recort de la nacionalitat vella y respectiva pera enrobustir la nacionalitat nova, es ans bè lo medi per a conservar-la gran y forta, pera guardar-la ab sa fisonomia, desigual si se vol, pero la mès propia, la mès característica" (Bofarull 30). With their motto "Patria, Fides, Amor," the poetry contest rewarded the poems that were fit in these three categories which traditionally reflected a purely romantic sentiment on the nature of the

nation, its historical roots, and a strongly Catholic Catalan spirit. Taking these characteristics into account, one may compare the literary approach of the *Renaixença jocfloralesca* with the artistic traits that governed the local arts, marked by a strong Romantic sentiment that tended to focalize on landscapes of the Catalan territory and historical painting. These coinciding points also shared a lack of interest in the emerging urban reality of Barcelona. The academic *Renaixença* was consolidated with the help of journals like *La Renaixensa* (which gave a definitive name to the movement in 1871), *Lo Gay Saber*, *El Calendari Català*, and *La Il·lustració Catalana*.

But parallel to the cultural elitism of the conservative *Renaixença* movement, local popular culture continued the consolidation of a less class-based and more comprehensive vindication of Catalan language and culture. Authors like the politician Valentí Almirall, the musician Anselm Clavè, the politician Robert Robert, the playwright Frederic Soler—popularly known as Pitarra—looked with certain mistrust at what they considered to be an archaistic attempt to vindicate a language and a cultural tradition that was too far removed from contemporary Catalonia. This popular *Renaixença* was also fundamentally opposed to the *Renaixença jocfloralesca* in political terms. While, as I mentioned above, the *Renaixença* led by Balaguer and Bofarull was deeply rooted in the conservative interests of the local bourgeoisie, the popular *Renaixença* leaned towards a more radical left-wing political agenda organized around the Federal Republican movement. As one may have expected, their opposed political and artistic standpoints also manifested in their representation of the new urban reality of Barcelona. However, traditional philological approaches to nineteenth-century Catalan literature and culture also tend to exclude—or pay an eventual and anecdotic attention to—the cultural production outside the elitist *Renaixença*. In this sense, the hegemony of the *Renaixença jocfloralesca* over other forms of cultural expression has marked our contemporary perception of

the literary representation of the urban reality of Barcelona in the nineteenth century.

Since the 1860s, the short stories, miscellaneous articles, and poems published in popular satirical journals like *Un tros de paper* (1865-66), *Lo Noy de la Mare* (1866-67), *La Rambla* (1867-68), *La Pubilla* (1867-68), *La Campana de Gràcia* and *L'Esquella de la Torratxa* (1870-1934) reflected and often questioned not only the urban policies of the City Council or the projects of urbanization of the city but also the way in which the city was being represented. One of the most interesting aspects of these journals is that they became the springboard, not only for local authors but also for local artists—like Apel·les Mestres, Tomàs Padró, Josep Lluís Pellicer and Eusebi Planas—that contributed to their pages with their satirical cartoons. On the one hand, the popular press offered a constant supply of short stories that consolidated the local tradition of *costumisme*—that drank from sources like Larra's and Mesonero Romanos's gaze on Madrid but also from the local tradition of the eighteenth-century *Calaix de Sastre* by the Baró de Maldà—with the contribution of authors like Robert Robert and Emili Vilanova. Through these *tableaux* of daily urban life, local *costumistes* reflected on the experience of urban space, on the daily use Barcelonans made of their own city, which usually conflicted with the theoretical articulation of space and its expectations of modernization. Alongside these literary contributions, artists like Padró, Pellicer and Mestres gazed on the urban reality and their ironical reflections on the daily preoccupations of Barcelonans. Their cartoons offer an excellent counterpoint to the visual projection of the city created by local and foreign photographers that tried to convey an apparently aseptic and monumental image of the city.

This project is structured in four central chapters accompanied by this introduction and a final chapter of conclusions. Each chapter focuses on a different section of the city and the way

this specific area was being *conveived* by urban planners, artists, photographers, and authors. This project is concerned exclusively with the rational organization and the representation of the public space of the city—those spaces explicitly affected by the proposals of urban planning of Ildefons Cerdà and Angel Baixeras. The representations of those semi-public spaces like the opera house, and the large number of coffeehouses, theaters, and taverns not directly affected by the urban reforms are not analyzed in these pages. Due to the vast scope of this project, the specific areas analyzed on these pages respond exclusively to those directly affected by plans of expansion and inner reform of the city. Thus, the countless representations of the highly emblematic promenade of *les Rambles*—which was not affected by the Cerdà and the Baixeras plan—are not subject to any detailed analysis.

In order to introduce the analysis of the nineteenth-century debates on the conception and the representation of Barcelona, the second chapter explores the traditional projection of the image of the city in visual panoramas. Starting with an examination of the role of vision in the apprehension of modernity, this chapter introduces Ortega y Gasset's articulation of perspectivism as a powerful tool to understanding the role of the vantage point in the representation of the city. Through a historical revision of the evolution of the panoramic representation of the city, starting in the sixteenth century, I analyze a series of visual representations of Barcelona linked to the central monarchic power and its need to implement military control over the city that generate what I define as a military panoptic archive. Finally, I introduce the optimistic representations of Barcelona produced by the French painter Alfred Guesdon in order to analyze the way his two lithographs of Barcelona contrast with his representations of other Spanish cities. Guesdon's choice of the vantage point and the specific elisions and focalizations at work in his two lithographs of Barcelona helped to project an image

of the city dreamed by the emerging industrial and financial bourgeoisie.

In the third chapter, I initially focus on the historical demands for the demolition of the city walls and the approval of a project of urban expansion along the Barcelona plain. Given this historical context, I analyze Ildefons Cerdà's articulation of the project of urban reform and inner reform of Barcelona in his *Teoría General de la Urbanización* (1867). In his project, Cerdà elaborates a compelling hypothesis on modernization that relies on the eradication of obsolete models, which inevitably implies the elimination of traditional practices of space. Through Cerdà's plan, the regular and presumably aseptic regimentation of space emerged as the ultimate modern space and the blueprint for the Barcelona of the future. Cerdà's positivist approach to urban planning oscillated between his overt utopian egalitarianism and a clear will to achieve a pragmatic regulation of urban normalcy that complied with the needs of the local bourgeoisie. Ultimately, I explain the way in which the Renaixença movement—especially through the work of the historian Víctor Balaguer—would appropriate symbolically the blank asepsis of Cerdà's blueprint by incorporating it into the Catalan historical imaginary.

In the fourth chapter I focus on the new city dreamed by Ildefons Cerdà, the Eixample, following it from the moment of its inception to the beginning of its consolidation as the favorite residential neighborhood of the local bourgeoisie. In this area, we witness the transformation of a nerve center that was challenging the hegemony of *les Rambles* as the epitome of the city life: el Passeig de Gràcia. In these pages we will see how the Passeig de Gràcia is being incorporated into the project of Cerdà and progressively transformed from a democratic leisure place to a new modern promenade appropriated by the local bourgeoisie. Through some of the short stories written by Robert Robert, Oller's novels and short fiction, the representation of the new area of the Eixample in the photographic albums commercialized in this period and in the cartoons of

journals like *La Campana de Gracia*, I try to prove that this avenue was ideologically (re)constructed in order to become the representative locale of a new project of urban modernity.

Chapter five returns to the old city—to the quarters affected by the proposal of urban reform signed by Angel Baixeras. The fifth chapter delves into the deeper and usually ignored areas hidden in the old perimeter of traditional Barcelona. In it, I try to unveil the tensions that emerged between two radically different conceptions of the city. On the one hand, that of the planned city articulated through a systematic erasure of the preexisting urban layout and the implementation of a new model dominated by real estate speculation and monumentality. On the other hand, a notion of the city governed by the microscopic social networks that govern the urban experience. By the 1880s, expanding the proposals of inner reform of Cerdà, Angel Baixeras reminded the Barcelona City Hall that certain parts of town were a threat to the social order and to public health, and they had to be eliminated for the sake of progress. Emili Vilanova's short fiction, explicitly responding to the Baixeras plan, focused on the way of living of those neighborhoods threatened by the plans of urban modernization.

The archival material analyzed in this project includes maps, films, paintings, lithographs, engravings, cartoons, and photographs, as well as proposals of urban planning, city guides, pamphlets, essays, articles, poems, novels, memoirs, and short fiction written in Catalan and Spanish. When possible, I have used the first edition of these works in case they have ever been reissued. All these textual sources are consistently cited using the original spelling and syntax of the period either in Catalan or Spanish. Preserving the original Catalan versions as they were published in the second half of the nineteenth century, before the standardization and “normalization” of Catalan language by Pompeu Fabra in 1904, has helped me to identify certain linguistic usages—specially those of the terms “ensanche,” “ensanxe,” and “eixample”—that

uncover the nuances with which the inhabitants of Barcelona perceived the new city.

As I mentioned above, this dissertation addresses the tensions between what Manuel Delgado calls *the planned city* and *the practiced city*. Ultimately, my intention is to propose a new angle to the analysis of the complex relationship between Spain, Catalonia and modernity through the analysis of the articulation and representation of public spaces. I attempt to challenge the view that Barcelona's bourgeois modernity is attributable to the city as a whole, that it was in fact a project shared incontrovertibly by the vast majority of Barcelonans. From a wider perspective, my dissertation questions the belief that modernity is certainly located in fixed and unquestionable geographical sites. In this sense, I hope my conclusions will appeal to all scholars interested in modernity studied from non-hegemonic locations and archives.

NOTES

¹ That is, of course, besides José Luis Guerin's carefully located camera.

² In this sense, the conference "Recalcitrant Modernities: Spain, Difference, and the Construction of European Modernism" organized by Professors L. Elena Delgado, Jordana Mendelson, and Oscar Vázquez at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 2003 has been particularly influential in my research. As a result of that conference, Delgado, Mendelson, and Vázquez edited a special issue of *Tesserae: Journal of Iberian and Latin American Studies* (13.2-3) with the same title "Recalcitrant Modernities: Spain, Cultural Difference and the Location of Modernism."

³ In a similar process, we must also keep in mind the progressive minorization of local languages such as Aragonés and Bable under the progressive pressure of Castilian language.

⁴ Continental rationalism—led by Descartes, Spinoza, and Leibniz—and British Empiricism—through Locke, Berkeley, and Hume—appealed to the central role of experience in scientific knowledge (Markie n.p.).

⁵ As Raymond Williams summarizes, "on the country has gathered the idea of a natural way of life: of peace, innocence, and simple virtue. On the city has gathered the idea of an achieved centre: of learning, communication, light. Powerful hostile associations have also developed: on the city as a place of noise, worldliness and ambition; on the country as a place of backwardness, ignorance, limitation" (1).

⁶ Wagner identifies the beginning of political modernity in the American and French revolutions (3).

⁷ We should keep in mind that the first railway line in Spanish territories was inaugurated in 1837 in Cuba, between Havana and Bejucal.

⁸ According to Auguste Comte, “in the positive state, the human mind, recognizing the impossibility of attaining to absolute concepts, gives up the search for the origin and destiny of the universe, and the inner causes of phenomena, and confines itself to the discovery, through reason and observation combined, of the actual laws that govern the succession of similar phenomena” (Comte 20)

⁹ As Joan Ramon Resina reminds us, “since 1513 the grid had been systematically deployed in all new Spanish-American towns following royal instructions, later published in the *Orders for Discovery and Settlement* (1573)” (“From Rose of Fire to City of Ivory” 83-84).

¹⁰ Joan Ramon Resina suggests that Cerdà was the first one to theorize the notion of “urbanism” (Resina *La vocació de modernitat de Barcelona* 28). Indeed, while Cerdà’s *Teoría general de la urbanización* was the first systematic attempt to theorize urban rationalization and regimentation in purely positivistic terms, the Catalan engineer did not use the term “urbanism” but the related term “urbanización” in order to label the discipline.

¹¹ The term “urbum” or “uruum” meant plow but it was also used as an adjective translatable as “curved,” derived from the curvature of the blade of the tool (“Uruum” 664).

¹² This performative act remained at the core of Cerdà’s theory, as we can see in his motto for the *Teoría general de la urbanización*: “Rurizad lo urbano, urbanizad lo rural” (n.p.). However, as we will see in chapter two, the actual implementation of the Cerdà plan, marked by real estate speculation, eliminated the concept of the ruralization of the urban space.

¹³ See Christian Hermansen’s “Ildefonso Cerda and modernity,” Arturo Soria y Puig’s *Cerdà: The Five Bases of the General Theory of Urbanization*, and Thomas Hall’s *Planning Europe’s Capital Cities: Aspects of Nineteenth-Century Urban Development*.

¹⁴ For instance, a prestigious anthropologist like Paul Rabinow locates the first needs to

articulate a new scientific rationalization of space towards the end of the nineteenth century right after the publication of Cerdà's *Teoría general de la urbanización* and the events of the Paris Commune of 1870: "it was only towards the end of the century that a need was felt to articulate [power, social science knowledge, and spatial planning] into a common framework. Partially under the spur of the defeat of 1870 and the Commune, Frenchmen concerned with such issues began to look abroad and they found in Germany and England the beginnings of a new discipline, urbanism, which sought to combine the planning of space with political control based in a scientific understanding of a society. It was to be a long time before any comprehensive urban planning was done in France—really not until after the Second World War" (Rabinow 361).

¹⁵ Joan Ramon Resina suggests that the approval of the Cerdà plan by the Spanish government shows the weakness of a local bourgeoisie unable to make the proposals of urban expansion approved by the City Hall prevail in Madrid. For Resina, "l'execució del pla Cerdà va donar fe de la supremacia de la burocracia centralitzada per damunt de les elits econòmiques" (*La vocació de modernitat de Barcelona* 79). Of course, Resina's assumption relies on the hypothesis that the Catalan economic de-facto powers—deeply rooted in the local industrialization and in the Spanish colonial interests in the Caribbean and the Philippines—were opposed to the interest of the Spanish Crown.

¹⁶ Resina briefly analyzes Cerdà's plan in *Barcelona's Vocation of Modernity* identifying the Eixample as a non-place (84). In 2003, Resina analyzed the Cerdà plan thoroughly in "From Rose of Fire to City of Ivory." This time, Resina explores the construction of "Modern Barcelona" as "the image of the place bearing that name that emerged in the early twentieth century" which he considers "inseparable from the growth of the city after the demolition of

[the] wall in 1855, the growth not only of the city's layout but also of the means of production and the essential mediations: political institutions, [and] urban planning" ("From Rose of Fire to City of Ivory" 78). For the Catalan critic, Cerdà's grid responded to the needs of "bureaucratic thinking" and to "erected officialdom's predilection for a particular division of space, one that is easily surveyed and facilitates administrative control as well as rapid military maneuvering" (81).

¹⁷ As Teresa Vilarós sums up, "Barcelona's urban plan [...] provided the modern Catalan bourgeoisie with the broad, open urban spaces demanded by the circulation of its new cultural and economic capital" (Vilarós "A Cultural Mapping of Catalonia" 42).

¹⁸ Coincidentally, Ildefons Cerdà's *Teoría general de la urbanización* was published the very same year Karl Marx published his first volume of *Das Kapital*: 1867.

¹⁹ Beyond the influential work of Foucault regarding the connections between the techniques of power and space, we should also bear in mind the impact of the foucauldian concept of the heterotopia developed in "Des espaces autres" ("Of Other Space" 22-27).

²⁰ What for Lefebvre is the "espace perçu" or perceived space is articulated as "Spatial practice," which Soja renders as his notion of "firstspace"; the notion of "espace conçu" or conceived space is articulated as Lefebvre's "representations of space" and Soja's "secondspace"; and, finally, the "space vécu" or lived space is articulated in Lefebvre as "spaces of representation" (or "representational spaces" depending on the translation) and in Soja as "thirdspace" (Soja 65).

²¹ Certainly, as we will see in the following chapters, the city of Oller balances almost symmetrically all the three elements of the spatial trialectic. In this sense, his novels *La papallona* and *La febre d'or* pay a close attention also to the representations of the lived spaces

of the working class and the local bourgeoisie. However, as critics like Cabré identify, Oller's project was certainly compromised with an unquestionable projection of Barcelona as a modern capital. As Joan Ramon Resina explains, "Oller compartia la fe de la burgesia en el progrés, és a dir, en la inevitabilitat no necessàriament lineal del desenvolupament tecnològic dominat per una teleologia despietada" (Resina *La vocació de modernitat de Barcelona* 33). In this sense, Oller's representations of lived spaces hardly question the conceived spatial order.

²² *El animal público: Hacia una antropología de los espacios urbanos* (1999), *Ciudad líquida, ciudad interrumpida* (1999), *Elogi del vianant: Del "model Barcelona" a la Barcelona real* (2005), *Sociedades movedizas: Pasos hacia una antropología de las calles* (2006), and *La ciudad mentirosa: Fraude y miseria del "modelo Barcelona."* (2007).

²³ While Spanish literary studies use the traditional nineteenth-century periods Romanticism, Realism, Naturalism, as well as the questionable dichotomy Modernismo / Generación del 98; the Catalan literary periodization is strictly posed in local terms along the lines of Romanticisme, Renaixença, Modernisme, and Noucentisme.

²⁴ The vast majority of these local and foreign artists and photographers—along with the work of local cartoonists like Tomàs Padró and Eusebi Planas—contribute to the visual material I analyze in this dissertation. In this sense, this work is indebted to the impressive work of Albert Garcia Espuche and Teresa Navas in the two-volume work *Retrat de Barcelona*, the catalogue for the exhibition held at the CCCB (between April 25 and August 13, 1995). *Retrat de Barcelona* provided me with a comprehensive archive of the history of the visual representation of the city of Barcelona that guided me in my subsequent research.

²⁵ The medieval Floral Games were a literary contest created in Tolosa de Llenguadoc by the Sobregaya Companhia dels Set Trobadors in 1324. The contest, held until 1484, counted with

many Catalan troubadours as contestants—like Joan Blanch, Bernat de Palaol, Lluís Icart and Guillem de Masdovelles (“Els Jocs Florals” n.p.). In from 1393 to 1484, the Floral Games were held in Barcelona under the auspices of kings Martí I and Ferran I (“Els Jocs Florals” n.p.).

²⁶ As Bofarull explicitly notes in his discourse, the founders of the Jocs Florals saw the revitalization of local Catalan culture as a contribution to a plural conception of the Spanish culture. They were moved by a communal and diverse concept of Spain, but ultimately by their “amor de patria en nostra Espanya” (30). Because, the restorers of the Catalan Floral Games thought that "No pot estimar sa nació, qui no estima sa provincia" (29).

FIGURES CHAPTER 1

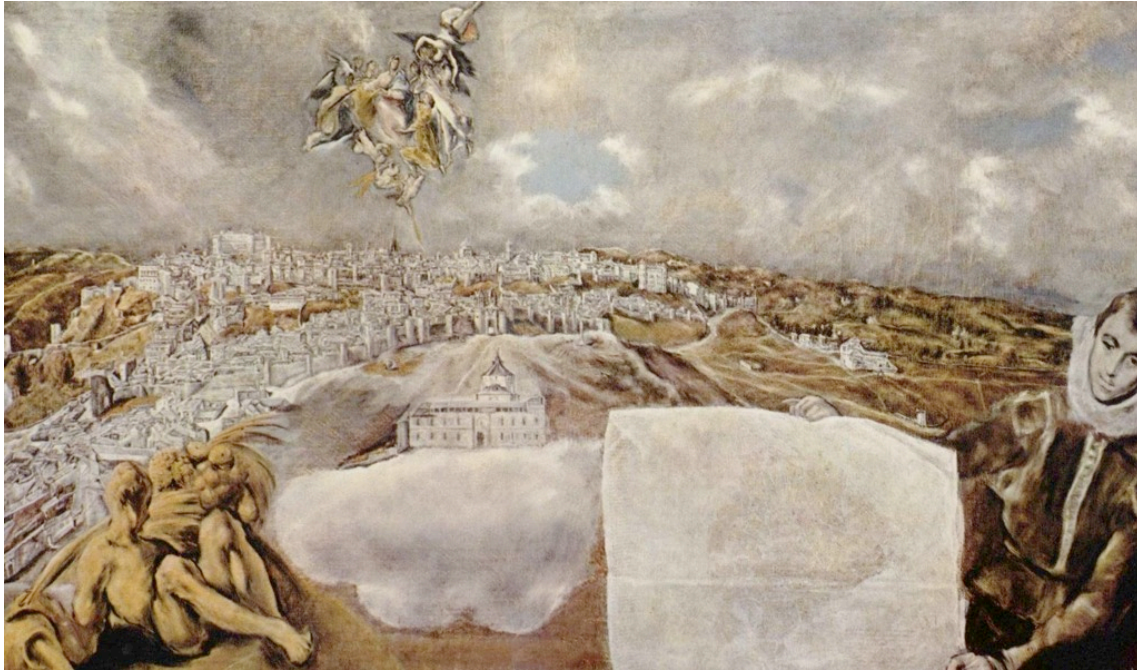


Fig. 1. 1: El Greco, "Vista y plano de Toledo" (1608-1614).



Fig. 1. 2: Scene from José Luís Guerín *En construcción*.

Antonio Atar walks at nightfall through a demolition area. On the wall still standing and surrounded by debris, someone has painted the word “speculation” spelled with the dollar sign.



Fig. 1. 3: Scene from José Luis Guerin's *En construcción*.

This brief scene with dogs playing in front of a graffiti calling for the rehabilitation of the neighborhood of el Raval instead of the planned demolition appears amidst Antonio Atar's explanation of the needs of urban reform.



Fig. 1. 4: Scene from José Luis Guerin's *En construcción*.

This brief scene is also inserted amidst Antonio Atar's explanation of the needs of urban reform.

In the graffiti on the background one may read "el barri es nostre" (the neighborhood is ours) and the "okupa" symbol of the Anarchist squatter movement.

CHAPTER 2

ON URBAN PANORAMAS: PERSPECTIVISM, URBAN POSITIONALITY, AND DESIRE IN THE SCOPIC APPREHENSION OF THE CITY

Those things of which there is sight, hearing, knowledge:

these are what I honor most.

--Heraclitus (DK22B55)

Analyses of representations of urban modernity in literature and the arts regularly refer to sight in order to analyze the modernity of certain urban spaces. Contemporary critic Marshall Berman, in his well-known analysis of Haussmann's Paris, describes the French capital during the nineteenth century as "a uniquely enticing spectacle, a visual and sensual feast" (151). For critics like Michel de Certeau, the primacy of the visual is inextricably linked with modernity itself, to the extent that in contemporary societies it has become somewhat pathological. For de Certeau, the contemporary world is characterized by a "cancerous growth of vision, measuring everything by its ability to show or be shown and transmuting communication to a visual journey" (xxi). Literary and artistic representations of the city of Barcelona in the second half of the nineteenth century did not escape this hegemony of visual representation and strongly relied on visual perception as the key to understanding urban modernity. Indeed, the representations of Barcelona, as a whole, characterize the city as an accessible, approachable, and comprehensible totality. Authors and painters invited their audiences to a visual journey of the city in which urban perspectives and panoramas were used as apparently naive testimonies of urban modernization. As I will demonstrate in this chapter, these representations relied on an illusion of transparency—an illusion that allowed for a naturalization of diverse, always idealized, and sometimes conflicting images of the city. Before delving into these specific representations, it

benefits us to trace the philosophical roots of this hegemony of vision and how this occulocentrism affects representations of Barcelona.

For Heraclitus of Ephesus, sensorial perception, even while it had a low level of reliability, was still the most dependable path to knowledge. In what he considered a world moved by a constant flux, Heraclitus decided to rely on the senses as a way to understand the intelligible through the sensible world. In the quotation that opens this chapter, among the senses that Heraclitus mentioned as reliable paths to knowledge, sight is privileged over hearing. In order to confirm this theory, Heraclitus asserted that the eyes were “more exact witnesses than the ears” (Patrick 87). According to Levin, Heraclitus’s standpoint inaugurates what can be described as the occularcentric paradigm of Western philosophy (1). A vast number of western philosophers like Heraclitus, Plato, Descartes, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Gadamer, Habermas, Dewey, Derrida and Foucault have analyzed the role of vision in our apprehension of the world. In the twentieth-century, Martin Heidegger, Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida maintain that modern thought and culture have increased and intensified the role of the visual in our perception of the world. As Levin summarizes, in modernity, the hegemony of vision takes a turn towards what Foucault identified as panopticism: “The hegemony of vision at work in modernity is [...] historically distinctive, and functions in a very different way, for it is allied with all the forces of our advanced technologies. The power to see, the power to make visible, is the power to control. [...] Only in modernity does the occularcentrism of our culture make its appearance in, and as, panopticism” (5-7).

Vision is undeniably a key factor in the representation of the city. As Garcia Espuche points out, Ptolemy was the first to differentiate between two major types of representations of the city (“Per una història de la dissimilitud” 16). He introduced the cartographic representations

of the urban space that, based on mathematical precision, tried to convey an “objective” account of the city, and he also offered a “more subjective” depiction of the city that relied on the visual apprehension of the urban space was aimed to create a “portrait of the city” (16). According to Ptolemy, division of labor was necessary in order to grasp the city in all its aspects. The architect, the urban planner, the technician was in charge of objectifying urban space with mathematical precision. The artist was responsible for the interpretation of the city through the use of vision and the technique of perspective. This approach would generate the urban portraitist who, according to Garcia Espuche, “vehicula ideas i interessos diversos a través de la seva manera de veure la ciutat. O, senzillament, com a creador, inventa la imatge de la ciutat i, de fet, una determinada ciutat que li és pròpia” (“Per una història de la dissimilitud” 16). This particular approach to the representation of the city would derive in what is known as *veduta*, from the Italian term “view”: a realistic representation of a city or a particular landscape that allows for the actual identification of the geographical space (“Veduta” n.p.). This chapter will focus this representation of the city, the tradition of the *vedutisti*, and the way in which these artists helped to shape specific projections of the city through their particular vision. More specifically, I will focus on the way these representations created a precise construction of the city, which worked within an intertextual network that helped to consolidate a global projection of Barcelona between 1854 and 1888.

Undoubtedly, vision also becomes the key to the perception of some of the main traits of modernity: the material changes around us that appear to pave the way to progress. Urban transformations—as Baudelaire stressed in “Le cygne”—make those urban realities we are familiar with disappear in order to create a new material environment that puzzles us. As we know, this process of transformation may produce an almost hypnotic attraction to those idle,

and mostly male, ramblers who occupy their time watching the emergence of a new building or the ongoing public works that will inevitably change the face of the city. However, not all those who are witnessing these transformations can share the same point of view. Their own visual perspective on any potential change and on the material space, which is being transformed in front of their eyes, certainly differs. As Josep Ramoneda reminds us, the vantage point from which we perceive and choose to represent the urban space is not unbiased (13). In particular, the artists' preferred point of view to represent a specific panorama literally shapes the object. In order to represent the multifaceted complexity of the city, the artist chooses a single vantage point that irreversibly affects the object represented. His/her choice of this position erases part of the convoluted and unreadable shape of the city to render it simplified and readable to the eyes of the public. However, as Ortega y Gasset suggests, this apparent simplification does not imply that any of these particular renditions of the urban reality is false:

Desde distintos puntos de vista, dos hombres miran el mismo paisaje. Sin embargo, no ven lo mismo. La distinta situación hace que el paisaje se organice ante ambos de distinta manera. Lo que para uno ocupa el primer término y acusa con vigor todos sus detalles, para el otro se halla en el último y queda oscuro y borroso. Además, como las cosas puestas unas detrás de otras se ocultan en todo o en parte, cada uno de ellos percibirá porciones del paisaje que al otro no llegan. ¿Tendría sentido que cada cual declarase falso el paisaje ajeno? Evidentemente, no; tan real es el uno como el otro. (199)

Ortega argues that the search for an imagined archetype hidden behind these individual representations is useless as “ese paisaje arquetipo no existe ni puede existir” (199). Each and everyone of these particular perspectives are what really matter in our perception of reality as

“[I]a perspectiva es uno de los componentes de la realidad. Lejos de ser su deformación, es su organización” (200). Ortega’s perspectivism is central to my approach to the analysis of representations of the city. In this chapter I will try to answer a series of questions that help clarify how the image of Barcelona in the second half of the nineteenth-century was constructed: What viewpoint does the artist chose? Why does he choose this particular angle? Which spaces are represented? What lies beyond the line of vision? What “dark and blurry” spaces remain hidden? The answer to these questions will show us that, in nineteenth-century Barcelona just like today, artists privilege certain perspectives of the city. A certain number of artists shared a common, and maybe even formulaic, perspective and others introduced new ways of looking at the city driven by the new needs of the observers, citizens, and/or the city in certain historical periods. Furthermore, Ortega’s perspectivism will also shed light on the way certain critical discourses also privileged specific representations of the city without questioning their own positionality. This attitude of privileging certain canonical authors and artists that rendered the city as the exclusive playground of the emerging local bourgeoisie simplifies the city by erasing conflicting perspectives. We have to keep in mind that, as Ortega suggested, the only false perspective is that which pretends to be the only one (201).

My analysis of a series of representations of the city of Barcelona shows that certain vantage points recurr up to the nineteenth century and some new ones emerge along with the urban transformation that took place between 1854 and 1888. The plurality of vantage points also coincides with what Albert Garcia Espuche and Teresa Navas have identified as a boom in the number of urban visual representations of Barcelona in the second half of the nineteenth century, coinciding with the appearance of photography (*Retrat de Barcelona* 63). While all the visual representations of Barcelona made before this period are perfectly identifiable and

traceable, the vast number of paintings, drawings, engravings, and photographs that take Barcelona as its subject matter after the 1850s are unfeasible to even catalogue. According to Francesc Fontbona, particularly in painting, Barcelona was not an interesting subject for local artists until the turn of the century (57). As an early exception, Fontbona mentions a panorama of Barcelona signed by Bonaventura Planella in 1826—“Vista de Barcelona des d’Esplugues”—which was presented in an exhibition in the local art school of Llotja but that seems to be unfortunately lost (57). In the second half of the nineteenth century, painters like Achille Battistuzzi, Onofre Alsamora, and Ramon Martí Alsina helped change this tendency through the progressive introduction of the realist French school led by Courbert and the demise of the romantic inclination quartered in the Llotja school (Fontbona 58). This initial lack of interest in the city as a subject for painting contrasts with the interest of both local and international artists in portraying the city for other media such as engravings and lithographs, which would be consumed in the emerging European market through books and magazines. In the next section I will analyze some of the most representative of these works in connection with other literary representations of the urban panorama of Barcelona. But in order to understand the changes in perspective and vantage points that occurred between 1854 and 1888 I will first provide some historical context.

2.1 THE MILITARY PANOPTICON

The hand of Jan Cornelius Vermeyen created the first accountable panorama of Barcelona in 1535 (Fig. 2.1). However, a first look at Vermeyen’s work makes it hard to identify the place and even the actual city within the picture.

In Vermeyen’s original drawing, the city of Barcelona remains in the mere background

for the military parade that displayed the power of Emperor Charles V before leaving for the conquest of Tunisia. Here, the city is unrecognizable and serves glorify the action of this military parade. While this tapestry is only one more example of monarchic and military propaganda, it remains the first known panorama of Barcelona. But Vermeyen's painting does not only inaugurate the long list of panoramas of the city but also starts the vast inventory of panoramas of Barcelona in which the representation of the city remains subordinated to an overwhelming display of military power intended to depict the sovereignty of the state.

From the seventeenth to mid-nineteenth century, the vast majority of visual panoramic representations of Barcelona were crucially involved in the development of what we could call a panoptic database: a corpus of visual representations of the city directly or indirectly related to the need of achieving political control over the city by means of military intervention. In 1652, Petrus Miotte Burgundus produced one of the first examples of a panoramic representation of the city as the object of a military attack (Fig. 2.2). In this engraving, Burgundus chose to represent an aerial panorama of the city under siege by the Spanish troops commanded by Don Juan José de Austria. This particular historical event marked the end of the *Guerra dels Segadors* (1640-1652) in which Catalonia revolted against the Spanish monarchy of Philip IV. Burgundus's perspective shares the point of view of the Spanish fleet, which is bombing the city from the sea. In spite of its pretended "*vera descriptio*," as the title pretends to define the image, the engraving disregards any attempt at realistic portrayal and emphasizes the depiction of specific places that could be recognizable as landmarks not only of the city but also of the rest of Catalonia. According to Garcia Espuche, Burgundus's perspective marks the emergence of a particular constructed image of Barcelona guided by an explicit "*voluntat de simplificació i de valoració selectiva encaminada a crear un símbol que representi el cos social i polític de*

Barcelona" (43).

In this case, the silhouettes of the belfries of the Cathedral (right at the center of the image) and the church of Santa Maria del Mar (slightly to the right) exaggeratedly stand above the city skyline reminding the spectators of the Catholic identity of the city. These Catholic icons share the space of the Catalan territory in the horizon with the imposing mountainous mass of Montserrat in the upper left corner of the image. Montserrat is undoubtedly the most important Catalan religious icon. The mountain of Montserrat holds a monastery in which the homonym religious icon of the Virgin Mary is venerated. A destination for local pilgrimages since the eleventh century, Virgin, monastery and mountain are interchangeable as the epitome of Catalan piousness. Although Montserrat is actually located forty miles away from Barcelona and it is definitively not visible from the sea, Burgundus decided to include the iconic mountain in the Barcelona plain in order to stress the Catholic identity of Catalonia and its capital city. Thus, through this particularly simplified depiction, the social and political order of the Catalan capital is reduced to religious terms. This strategy seems to justify the attack of the fleet of Philip IV of Spain: for who should rule over such a pious territory but the genuine “Maesta Cattolica”?

As we have seen, Burgundus’s panorama of Barcelona shares the perspective of the aggressors and depicts the city as an objectified other susceptible of being bombed, besieged, and ultimately conquered. While the iconicity and lack of realism in this engraving do not make it an effective guide for military invasion, it certainly portrays the advantages of besieging and bombing the city from the sea. The Enlightenment, however, would bring new kind of panoramic representations of Barcelona that, relying on realistic fidelity, would become both an actual testimony and visual handbook of how to invade the city.

Between 1700 and 1714, Barcelona became one of the main military objectives of the

War of Spanish Succession. After the death of Charles II of Spain in 1700, the Bourbon Philip d'Anjou—with the support of Castile and his native France—and the Habsburg Archduke Charles of Austria—supported by the European alliance composed of Austria, England, Portugal, and the Netherlands—fought a war of European proportions that had not only continental but also colonial hegemony in mind. In the course of the war, most of Catalonia, Valencia and the Balearic Islands, which initially supported the French candidate to the throne, would progressively turn into the Austrian field after Archduke Charles promised to guarantee their traditional laws and liberties threatened by the centralizing French model imported by Philip d'Anjou. In fifteen years, the city of Barcelona was besieged twice: first by the Alliance that supported the Archduke Charles and later on by Philip d'Anjou's Franco-Castilian troops. Both events produced visual representations of the military campaign that would be reproduced and distributed across the continent as a testimony to the war. Curiously enough, all the representations retain the perspective of the assailants.

On August 22, 1705, the fleet of the Archduke Charles's Alliance arrived in Barcelona in order to seize the city under Bourbonian control. In their first strategic move, the Austrian, English, Portuguese, and Dutch troops of the Alliance joined the Catalan supporters of the Austrian cause, known as the *vigatans*, and took the fortress of Montjuïc located on top of the mountain that overlooks Barcelona from the south side of the shore. The Montjuïc mountain has been the most privileged position to perceive and represent the then walled city in its entirety. This viewpoint obviously facilitated not only the visual apprehension of the city subject to conquest but also served as a strategic military position from which the city could be bombed at will (as would repeatedly happen in the nineteenth century). From Montjuïc, the army of the Alliance besieged and bombed the city until October 9, 1705 when an inner rebellion overthrew

the Bourbonian Viceroy Velasco and opened the gates of the city to Archduke Charles. In 1706, the *Relationis Historicae Semestralis Vernalis Continuatio Jacobi Franci Historische* published an engraving by P. Defehrt that depicted the activity of the troops of the Alliance led by Georg von Hesse-Darmstadt (re-christened as Jordi by the Catalan population) in Montjuïc (Fig. 2.3). Aimed at documenting the military attack, Defehrt's engraving leaves the city in the background and foregrounds the troops of the Alliance camped on top of Montjuïc, stressing the presence of the military command and the action of the Austrian cannons on the city. Although from a different vantage point, Defehrt's image shares the iconicity of Burgundus's engraving. Once again pictorial realism is sacrificed for the sake of historical documentation. In this case a simple caption with the name of the city would suffice to recognize both the place and historical event being documented. A few years later, however, Jacques Rigaud would take the visual representation of the besieged city to a new stage.

Once again, between July 25, 1713 and September 11, 1714; Barcelona—now in control of Archduke Charles, who had been crowned as king Charles III of Aragon and València, Prince of Catalonia, and Count of Barcelona in 1706—was besieged by the French-Spanish coalition of Philip d'Anjou—crowned as king Philip V of Castile in 1700. By this time, Barcelona was the last stronghold that supported the Austrian candidate in a moment in which even the Archduke himself was not directly involved in the conflict. After the death of Joseph I in 1711, Archduke Charles inherited the Emperor's crown of the Sacred Roman Empire. This event drastically changed both the priorities of the Archduke and the balance of European alliances that had supported the Austrian candidate to the Spanish throne. England and the rest of the allies withdrew their support to the Archduke fearing that the addition of Spain to the already powerful territories of the Sacred Roman Empire would be as undesirable for their particular interests and

for the European balance of power as a French-Spanish alliance. On April 11, 1713, the warring parties signed the Treaty of Utrecht putting an official end to the War of Spanish Succession. However, Barcelona—as well as the vast majority of the Catalan and Balearic territories—did not accept the conditions negotiated in Utrecht and continued to resist recognizing Philip V as their legitimate monarch. At this point, the rest of the territories of the Crown of Aragon—Aragon and Valencia—had been conquered militarily after the battle of Almansa and annexed to the Crown of Castile. The military defeat and subsequent annexation of Aragon and Valencia to Castile materialized in the *Decretos de Nueva Planta*, which would impose a new political and linguistic status quo on the conquered territories. Meanwhile, their traditional legal system and their political administration and institutions were banished and replaced by a centralized political structure based on the political and legal system of Castile. Furthermore, Catalan was replaced by Castilian as the institutionalized hegemonic language of the new centralized state.

During the last stage of the siege of Barcelona—now officially considered in rebellion by Philip V—the Duke of Berwick commanded a force of 47,000 French and Castilian soldiers destined to seize the city, which after the retreat of the troops of the Alliance was defended by a local militia coordinated by the *Junta de Braços*.¹ Philip V considered Barcelona a seditious city and conceived the ultimate attack on the city as an act of discipline. Thus, the Catalan capital not only had to be controlled but it had to be punished for its defiance. As a forewarning sign, this act of discipline had to be documented and publicized. During September 1714, French artist Jacques Rigaud was in charge of this task.

Rigaud meticulously recorded the activities of the Franco-Castilian army, which had just received fresh reinforcement troops for the Bourbon side from Louis XIV. Rigaud produced a series of images that became the official record of the siege of Barcelona. Rigaud's engravings of

the conquest of Barcelona circulated all over Europe as a testimony to the military event. The popularity of these engravings lasted long enough to find reproductions of his depictions of Barcelona's conquest far beyond the realm of history books. Around 1740, while England was still an ally of the Austrian cause until the Treaty of Utrecht, Queen Alexandra of England acquired a fan illustrated with one of Rigaud's images of the Barcelona siege that is still in the Royal Collections of Queen Elizabeth II (Fig. 2.4).

In Rigaud's engravings the city skyline is depicted from an unusual location—neither from the sea nor from Montjuïc—but his engravings also share, like in the case of Burgundus's and Defehrt's, the point of view of the assailants (Fig. 2.5). Rigaud differs from his predecessors in that he engaged in a thoroughly detailed documentation of the siege and the posterior conquest of the city through a decidedly realist aesthetic. In encyclopedic fashion, Rigaud's series of engravings document the strategy of the military campaign recording every little detail of the movement of the troops and the effects of the bombs in the defensive structures of the city walls. If seen in order, Rigaud's series turn into a quasi-cinematic depiction of the military conquest. Similar images differ only in the slight advances of the troops or in the perceived effects of the bombs in the city's ramparts.

In Rigaud's project the hegemony of vision that characterizes modernity is mobilized as an advanced technology of warfare. In a similar way the United States Military documented Operation Desert Storm with high-tech night vision images of bombings of meticulously selected targets. Rigaud's images document the French led war machinery running like clockwork. The city is presented merely as the object towards which all their carefully calculated strategies are aimed. A subject of siege, bombing, and invasion, Barcelona appears always as an objectified other, as the mere background of the real action. Rigaud's engravings transmitted the successful

French led attack of the rebellious stronghold. The message was sent: any dissent against the emerging new world order would mean immediate destruction.

The engravings of Burgundus, Defehrt, and Rigaud became perfect examples of the need of producing a corpus of images to be used for military purposes. The military gaze shared in these engravings allowed for the inspection and control of the conquerable stronghold. All these engravings project the image of a disciplined city, a city constantly called to order by those in power. As history shows, Barcelona would play this role again during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In 1842, General Espartero, following orders of the Spanish crown and the central government in Madrid, bombed the city in order to extinguish a popular uprising. For the first time, however, this event was not documented from the perspective of the aggressors but from the viewpoint of the bombed city and the refugees sheltered in the city harbor (Fig. 2.6). Between 1937 and 1939, the Italian planes sent by Mussolini as support for Francisco Franco's rebels during the Spanish Civil War persistently bombed the city. Here again, the very same Italian planes that bombed the city took photographic snapshots of the effects of the bombs on the city.

This engraving seems to suggest that the nineteenth-century marked a turning point in the representation of the city at war. Here, the bombed city is not represented as the conquerable other but as a victimized space full of scars and refugees. Through the vantage point of the victims, the aggressor becomes the other in an illegitimate move against the people. Here, history is written from the bottom. Montjuïc is represented in the distance as an epitome of the military aggression on innocent civilians. At last, the city is not the other. It is the threatened home. This engraving reminds us of the possibility of self-representation, of taking control of the representations of a space that can be claimed as ours both by the artist and the audience. While,

as we have seen, earlier visual representations of Barcelona were limited and mainly used as a prop for military use, new approaches to the representation of the city appeared and consolidated after 1850. A new international market emerged for the consumption of visual representations of foreign cities, and local markets started to demand representations of their own space that helped naturalize a certain feeling of belonging.

2.2 AIRBORNE

The second half of the eighteenth century witnessed the emergence of a growing interest in the representation of the cities. As Corboz observes, a new market for the visual representations of cities consolidates in Europe with the appearance and consolidation of the first urban atlases (in France, the Netherlands, and England): the popularization of illustrated travel narratives and the birth of diorama in 1780 and the circular panoramas of Robert Baker in 1787 (33-34). In Spain, however, this tendency was somewhat delayed and, as Corboz claims, only local engravers exploited the market niche created by the mid-nineteenth-century emergent bourgeoisie (34).

However, by 1857 in Catalonia, even after the consolidation of an incipient local industrial revolution and the implementation of a new railroad network, urban perspectives were still not considered appealing. The eternal and fully-fledged dichotomy between town and country was pervasive. In an oppressive and still walled city crowded with industrial smokestacks, at the gates of a total urban transformation, the countryside served as the only viable escape. A romantic spirit summoned Barcelonans to leave the still walled city in order to enjoy the full privilege of vision. The Catalan historian, poet, playwright, and politician Víctor Balaguer i Cirera appealed in 1857 to this feeling of urban alienation in order to promote train

travel to greener pastures as the only the country and not the city could provide wider perspectives and romantic panoramas:

vosotros también, hombres de cálculo y de cifras, graves como vuestros libros de partida doble y lógicos como una suma, abandonad el hormiguero en que vivís, y aunque solo sea un día, id á respirar el aire del campo.

¿Os agradan deliciosas perspectivas, mágicos puntos de vista? ¿Os es grato tenderos á la fresca sombra de una alameda [...] para que, mientras hojéis el libro de vuestro autor favorito, las hojas con sus murmullos y los pájaros con sus trinos adormezcan en apacible música vuestros sentidos? ¿O preferís sentaros sobre las ruinas de un feudal castillo para recordar hechos pasados de esplendor y de gloria?

Subid entonces conmigo á un coche de ferro-carril que conduce á Granollers. (*Guia de Barcelona á Granollers por el Ferro-Carril* 19)

To Balaguer's eyes, the walled Barcelona appears like an anthill swarming with people. If we analyze Balaguer's perception of the city as an anthill to the light of Ildefons Cerdà's demographic report of 1855 we can recognize the accuracy of this metaphor. According to Cerdà, the ratio of square meters per inhabitant inside the city walls was of 13.5 square meters per inhabitant, while cities like London reached a ratio of 20.72 square meters per capita and Paris 32.62 square meters of living space per person (64). According to the Academia de Medicina and Cirugía de Barcelona, the city walls obliged the 160,000 inhabitants of the city² to live in "la quinta parte de terreno [necesario], y si les falta espacio, si se hacinan las unas sobre las otras, como las abejas en la colmena, si la Higiene y la moral se resienten de que, en estos hormigueros humanos, encuentren satisfacción todos los malos instintos y pábulo las pasiones

mas bastardas” (5-6). For Balaguer, the city is a threatening force, a “torbellino [...] que todo lo arrastra [...] [un] horno de movimiento y de agitacion que todo lo devora y lo abrasa” (19). The city is not only the place for trade, commerce, industry, accounting and bookkeeping, the nest of the emerging bourgeoisie as Balaguer suggested, but also, according to the Academia de Medicina, the cradle of moral vice and corruption directly derived by overpopulation. These two perspectives run parallel to the reading that the Catalan critic Jordi Castellanos has made of the recurrent trope of the anthill in nineteenth century narratives about the city of Barcelona. For Castellanos, the anthill would be the recurrent figure of the modern city in Western literature, which emphasizes the productivity and the excitement of modernity; while the trope of the anthill also activates negative connotations associated with the anonymous masses in which one’s identity is dissolved in the crowd (157). In Balaguer’s use of this trope, the city appears as the locus of the boring and monotonous life of clerks and bookkeepers caught in the daily frantic commercial and industrial toil in an overpopulated city. For those caught in the routine of a deeply bureaucratic white-collar job, these delightful perspectives and magical panoramas are presented as an indulgence for those able to pay the train fare to leave the anthill. Within the city, the exercise of vision is a luxury that can only be achieved escaping from its perimeter.

As the epitome of the romantic historian, Balaguer suggests that the best cure for the alienation created by the emerging industrial city is found in the decadent remnants of the Catalan past. The ruins of an old feudal castle deserve the attention—the exercise of vision—not the city. Only these ruins can remind the onlooker about those historical events surrounded by a halo of splendor and glory. For Balaguer, Catalan identity had to be explicitly rooted in a historical past covered with grandeur. But, as we can see, Balaguer’s romantic project is able to arrive at a certain compromise with modernity. As it is patent in this passage, the new railroad

system is perceived in a positive light precisely because it can help consolidate the relationship between the Catalan capital and the rest of Catalan territory. As Balaguer's series of guides on the new train lines that sprung from Barcelona (describing in detail the four routes that led to Arenys de Mar, Terrassa, Martorell, and Granollers) prove, the Catalan territory was no longer an entelechy—an imagined community, as Anderson would call it—but an integrated and concrete space that could be covered in a matter of hours. Balaguer's compromise between history and modernity, for the sake of nation building, will appear again in 1865 when he accepted the Barcelona City Hall commission in order to name the new streets of the city designed by Ildefons Cerdà.

In the opinion of Balaguer, the perspectives of the city of Barcelona in 1857 did not seem liable for observation. However concurrently, Spain saw the introduction of a European trend that commodified the image of the city for public consumption. Since the 1840s the French painter Alfred Guesdon had revitalized the tradition of aerial perspectives of cities in order to convey an optimistic image of the emerging capitals in the new industrial age. In 1856, Guesdon visited Barcelona bringing with him this particular standpoint on representing the city. The products of Guesdon's visit were two lithographs (Fig. 7 and 8) that carefully stressed the modernity of the city through the recurrent presence of the effects of industrialization.

While the presence of the Barcelona harbor is recurrent in both lithographs, the first image foregrounds it, turning it into the focal point of the scene (Fig. 2.7). Sharing the point of view of Burgundus engraving (Fig. 2.2), the city of Barcelona presented in the background is no longer the conquerable other but an active agent of industrial production and maritime trade.

The breakwater in the foreground was finished in 1772 after almost thirty years of construction. In 1787, as Sobrequés points out, foreign visitors like the English Arthur Young

found that the city harbor was one of its most amazing features: “el que hi ha de més remarcable a Barcelona és el moll: el pla, l’execució, tot és admirable. Té una milla de llarg aproximadament [...] i és prou gran per a rebre totes les mercaderies que arriben o que hom embarca [...] ara hi ha cent-quaranta vaixells al port, però a vegades hi ha molts més” (qtd. in Sobrequés 139).

Certainly, the liveliness of the Barcelona harbor that Young witnessed was intricately linked to the new role of Barcelona in the Spanish colonial trade. While first Seville and later Cadiz held the monopoly of the Spanish colonial map until the eighteenth century, after the progressive liberalization of the colonial market, Catalonia also embarked on the exploitation of the Spanish colonies and the transatlantic trade. Between 1739 and 1748, Barcelona increased exponentially its participation in the colonial trade, still filtered and controlled through the Cadiz monopoly (Sobrequés 152). By 1778, however, a Royal Decree finally liberalized the trade between Spanish and Latin American harbors ending thus with the Cadiz monopoly. With its resplendent new harbor inaugurated in 1772, Barcelona was ready to plunge in the colonial market. The new structure of the Barcelona harbor and a liberalization of the colonial trade still under Spanish protectionism fostered the first industrial expansion of the city through its *fàbriques d’indianes*. These factories—textile industries specialized in manufacturing low quality cotton fabrics printed on one of its sides—were first implanted in the city in 1736, and according to Garcia Espuche and Guardia i Bassols, by 1768 the city counted with twenty-two *fàbriques d’indianes*. But the new economic scene also called for some social transformations. A new series of industrial institutions—such as the *Companyia de Filats de Cotó* (1771) and the *Junta General de Comerç i Fàbriques* (1784)—appeared in the last third of the eighteenth century trying to promote a transition between the traditional local trade structure, based on medieval guild associations of merchants and craftsmen, and the new emerging capitalist economy. The city was

getting ready for a deeper industrial revolution that would take place in the next century with the appearance of the steam engine in the Barcelona factories.

In 1831, the Sociedad Bonaplata, Rull, Vilaregut y Cía. was born with the objective of importing and implementing the Keint and Damfort methods of weaving cotton into Spain. Originally destined to be located in Asturias or Galicia, the first steam powered textile industry in Spain was inaugurated in 1832 in Tallers street in Barcelona (Nadal 81). The factory, popularly known as *el Vapor Bonaplata*, was only the first of a long list of steam-powered textile industries founded in the Raval section of the walled city. During the first half of the nineteenth century, *el Raval* was still an outlying district of the city within the perimeter of the medieval walls. The abundance of urban orchards and vacant lots turned this neighborhood into an appealing location for the emerging local industry. Among others, between 1847 and 1855, the new industries of La España Industrial, the Batlló factory and La Maquinista Terrestre y Marítima (founded by Joan Güell) were established in *el Raval* and in the outskirts of town.³ By 1853, the mechanization of the local textile industry consolidated with the implementation of the British self-acting machines. The introduction of this new machinery, popularly known with the borrowed term *les selfactines*, caused a revolt of the working class who viewed the new machinery as threatening their traditional hand labor and signifying a future increase in unemployment rates.

In both of Guesdon's lithographies (Fig. 2.7 and 2.8) the smokestacks of these factories point out to the solid industrial network of the city as the source of local prosperity. By 1856, any panoramic representation of Barcelona—which had been rechristened by the French Jean-Charles Davillier as the Peninsular Manchester (qtd. in Sobrequés 193)—had to take into account the effects of the local industrial revolution.

While the previous panorama of the city created by Guesdon (Fig. 2.7) focused on the activity of the harbor and the presence of modern steam ships through a popular point of view used in earlier representations of the city (see Fig. 2.2), the second one (Fig. 2.8) employs a new vantage point that had not been used before. Placed close to the Citadel of Barcelona, Guesdon chose to represent the city from a new angle using a perspective bird's eye view. His images simulated the illusion that the view had been apprehended from a balloon—which was technically impossible for nineteenth-century artists—and tried to focus on the particular modernity of the city that was being represented (Corboz 34). These imaginary perspectives from a pretended balloon, according to Garcia Espuche, reconstruct the city with the help of a map and drawing techniques (*Ciudades: Del globo al satélite* 17). As Garcia Espuche points out,

Algunas de estas vistas se realizan desde lugares elevados próximos a la ciudad, pero otras se elaboran desde puntos de vista absolutamente imposibles si tenemos en cuenta la época y [...] se basan en la reconstrucción de la realidad a partir del conocimiento de la ciudad desde el suelo y, cuando sea posible, en el uso de la cartografía existente" (*Ciudades* 21)

This is the case of both of Guesdon's portraits of the city. But while the first of his lithographs used a familiar point of view overlooking the city harbor, with this innovative vantage point Guesdon inaugurated a new way to look at the city. If before him the Castle and the mountain of Montjuïc as well as the views from the sea had been the preferred location in order to grasp and represent the city, now a new gaze on Barcelona opened from the northeast (Fig. 2.9)

The second of Guesdon's images is probably the most popular perspective of the city in the nineteenth century right before the demolition of the city walls. As we will see, Guesdon's

choice of this point of view, and the particular framing of this composition, conveys a specific idea of nineteenth century Barcelona not only for what is depicted in this lithograph but also for what is calculatedly left out. To understand the implications of Guesdon's choice of this composition, it will be interesting to compare it with some of his other portraits of Spanish cities. During his travels in Spain, Guesdon painted not only Barcelona but also Madrid, Valencia, and Seville among other Spanish towns. In 1854, two years before his portraits of Barcelona, Guesdon signed a specific perspective of Madrid (Fig. 2.10).

In Madrid, Guesdon, like any good nineteenth-century French traveler in Spain, was immediately appealed by the old *plaza de toros* next to la Puerta de Alcalá. The attention to detail of the old Madrid de los Austrias is sacrificed in order to account for the most accurate detail of the bullfight taking place. The crowded bullring capitalizes this portrait of Madrid while a single factory in Recoletos, the Parque del Retiro and the Puerta de Alcalá share the foreground of this panorama. This precise position allowed Guesdon to fulfill the expectations of most of his European audience: the Spanish capital is presented as a place presided by leisure and by by one of the most stereotypical of Spanish leisure activities—bullfighting. Here the city seems to sleep in the distance while almost every productive activity is adjourned—except for the lonely smokestack—waiting for the fate of the last bull of the afternoon. On the arena, whipped and disemboweled horses ratify the cruelty of the spectacle. Here, Guesdon's gaze aligns him into just another member of the long list of French painters that like Édouard Manet—whose *Incident in a Bullfight* and *The Dead Toreador* were presented in the Paris Salon of 1864—were fascinated by the violence of bullfighting. Guesdon's gaze on Madrid perpetuates thus one of the most encroached Spanish stereotypes. Interestingly enough, this particular cliché does not appear in Guesdon's portrait of Barcelona.

In the case of Barcelona, was it impossible for Guesdon to correlate the city visually—as he did in Madrid—to bullfighting? Of course not. But we will have to concede that Barcelona has always had a problematic relationship with bullfighting. Some of the last chapters of this love-hate relationship include, just to list a few, the official declaration of the city council against bullfighting on April 4, 2004; the subsequent manifesto signed by some Catalan intellectuals and artists in support of bullfighting—which included Eduardo Mendoza, Félix de Azúa, Arcadi Espada, Albert Boadella, Àlex Rigola and Silvia Munt among others—; and the public tensions between supporters of animal rights and fans of bullfighting outside the Monumental bullring right before José Tomás’s return to the city on April 20, 2008.

Nineteenth-century Barcelona was no different. By 1856 (the date of Guesdon’s portraits of Barcelona) the city had an active bullring known as *el Toril*. As Coroleu’s *Memorias de un menestral de Barcelona*—a fictionalized memoir published periodically in *La Vanguardia* and collected for publication in 1888—explains, this thirteen-thousand seat bullring was built right by the neighborhood of la Barceloneta in 1834 (124-25). By 1863, Cayetano Cornet y Mas, in his *Guia y añalejo perpetuo de Barcelona*, confirmed that “en verano hay á veces corridas de toros en la plaza situada junto á la Barceloneta” but he clarified that bullfights were just one among a series of popular entertainments—including puppeteers, gymnastic demonstrations, shows with wild animals, etc.—offered in this arena (36-37). As we will see, both local authors and the local authorities perceived bullfighting as an imported trend that in some cases even collided with what they identified as traditional local character and Catalan national characteristics. According to an 1888 article of Josep Fiter e Inglés for *La Renaixensa*, the origin of bullfighting in Catalonia can be traced back to a series of official political events promoted by the Spanish Monarchy in the 16th and 17th centuries. Fiter points out that probably the first, though

undocumented, bullfight was offered in the first half of the 16th C on the occasion of a visit by Charles I and the Bey of Tunis (159). In 1601 one of the first recorded bullfights was celebrated in order to commemorate the birth of Princess Ana María Mauricia, the first offspring of Phillip III (158). In spite of this longstanding presence, by the 19th C. bullfighting seemed to be rootless in Catalonia. In 1857, this feeling was sanctioned and articulated as an overt rejection by the local authorities at the City Hall. In this sense, the *Ordenanzas Municipales* published by the Ayuntamiento Constitucional de Barcelona clarified that bullfighting was not an integral part of local traditions. According to the urban code, the official regulation of bullfighting was not a matter to be discussed in local urban regulations as “las diversiones de *Toros* [...] es espectáculo á duras penas introducido en Barcelona, y rechazado cuasi instintivamente por las Autoridades” (191). Sharing the same feeling of the local authorities, most Catalan authors of the period reject this tradition as a foreign custom.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, most Catalan writers ratified bullfighting as an imported fad that had little or nothing to do with Catalan traditional leisure activities. In 1868, the article “No es una aprensión,” signed by Joan Cortada with his pseudonym Benjamín, reflected on the amazing changes effected on the city of Barcelona in a short period of time. Among the transformations of the city the new local passion for bullfighting specially struck Cortada: “Á nadie le había ocurrido que en Barcelona hubiese plaza ni corridas de toros: consideraban ese espectáculo como peculiar de Madrid y de algunas ciudades de Andalucía, cual es muy ajeno al carácter de este país y hasta con cierta repugnancia y desprecio” (274-75). For Cortada, bullfighting was as contrary to Catalan national character to the point of causing repulsion. To Cortada’s eyes, Catalonia had nothing to do with Madrid and even less to do with Andalucía.

Other authors like Emili Vilanova also reflected on bullfighting as an imported fad, but in this case he made sure to emphasize the popular appeal of this new entertainment for the local masses. Vilanova reflected on the popularity of bullfighting in his short story “Als toros!” and in his article “Toros.” In 1878, in “Als toros!” Vilanova paints a portrait of les Rambles on the day of the bullfight as the local *aficionados* fight to find a seat in the omnibus for the bullring:

Un cop son a la Rambla ja troban los òmnibus mitx plens, y tots apressats, los uns saltan per la devantera, els altres pel pujador, y s'enquibexen com poden. Los cotxeros cridan [...] los cavalls arrencan a córrer com si es desboquessin, y una munió de carruatges van y venen, s'empaytan, s'avansan, corrent frech a frech com si se empessonessin; s'atrapan ò's guanyan la ventatja, y fujen disparats fent arrimar la gent cap a les aceres sense dexar en repòs al pobre municipal que no s'enten de feyna girant lo cap a un cantó y altre, no sabent ahont acudir, perseguint un òmnibus que li fuig, dirigintse a un altre que se li escapa, salvantse d'un que els cavalls ja se li venen a sobre, voltgentlos penyorar a tots, y no sapiguent per quin comensar, renya els cotxeros qu'ab lo puro a la boca, fent voleyar la vara, se'l miran ab mitx-riure desvergonyit y atían los cavalls que's llensan a tot escape sotraquejant lo cotxe y trayent espurnes de foch de les llambordes" (44-45).

Vilanova's upbeat portrait of the frenzy in the heart of Barcelona right before the bullfight—of the omnibuses loaded with bullfighting fans, setting the pavement on fire—paints a modern image in which the appeal of bullfighting in nineteenth-century Barcelona looks no different than the spectacle of contemporary spectator sports. In “Als Toros!,” once we cross the arena gates, the energetic modern portrait of the city vanishes. As we enter the *Toril*, a new alien panorama appears and the Catalan readership is introduced to a decadent scene inside the

bullring. In the Toril, time seems to stop as a local member of *la cuadrilla* and an Andalusian *maestro* languidly ruminate about the huge size of the Catalan arena (59).

While Vilanova's "Als Toros!" shares part of Cortada's perception of bullfighting as a foreign cultural custom, Vilanova's tableau clearly identifies bullfighting as an emerging fashion that is able to transform the face of the city on a Sunday afternoon. Moreover, according to Vilanova, the rising popularity of bullfighting in Barcelona was a clear sign that made him confess, not without irony: "Cada cop qu'a Barcelona hi hà corrides de toros m'aferro en la idea de que la unitat d'Espanya està ben assegurada" ("Toros" 47). Vilanova identified this custom as probably the only cultural practice shared among Spaniards of all origins; even when other local Barcelonans, like Cortada, perceived it as a cultural import that challenged local decorum. But bullfighting, both then and now, cannot be completely separated from Castilian cultural hegemony on Catalan territory. Vilanova's articles on bullfighting carefully identify this new entertainment with the linguistic imposition of the Spanish language. Because, as Vilanova remarks, the vast majority of "els aficionats a toros," as well as the Andalusian *maestro* of "Als Toros!," "parlen castellà amb accent andalús" ("Toros" 48). Apparently, for Vilanova, Catalan language and bullfighting do not mix well. The bullring becomes a particular site in the geography of the city in which the local linguistic and cultural identity is suddenly threatened if not temporarily erased. For the Catalan authors of this period, the arena, like a tiny black hole, seems to drain off all the distinctive traits of local culture. As Vilanova ironically remarked, the unity of Spain was not at risk, for the new whim of bullfighting managed to homogenize the country through the erasure of local customs and linguistic practices and replace it with those of Castile and Andalusia.

But beyond the Catalan debate on bullfighting as a cultural import, we cannot underestimate the popular impact of *toreo* in nineteenth-century Barcelona. Josep Coroleu i Inglada maybe the writer who best summarized the love-hate relationship between Barcelona and bullfighting during the second half of the nineteenth-century; in his Memorias de un menestral de Barcelona he writes: "Aquí se declama mucho contra los toros, espectáculo en el cual [...] no se aprende nada bueno; pero debemos tener la franqueza de confesar que los barceloneses son singularmente aficionados á él" (125). According to Coroleu the public abhorrence of bullfighting—voiced by Cortada and Vilanova, and sanctioned by the City Council—contrasted with its increasing popularity as spectator sport, which would make Barcelona comparable to cities like Madrid portrayed by Guesdon. In fact, besides the perception of these authors and the local authorities, in the first half of the nineteenth century bullfighting already had exerted enough influence to be the only identifiable cause of the general popular riot that ended up with the general setting ablaze local monasteries and the Bonaplata factory on July 25, 1835. Obviously, on a deeper level, the 1835 revolt was directly related to the compromise of the Catholic Church with the Carlist army (which had killed a series of loyalists in Reus just two days before) and to the inner tensions between local workers and the emerging industrial bourgeoisie. However, as a Catalan popular folk song suggests (Fig. 2.11), the actual spark that lit the flame of revolt flew from *el Toril* seems to be the poor quality of the bulls.⁴

So, would it have been impossible for Guesdon to portray Barcelona as stereotypically Spanish, as he did with Madrid? Once again, the answer is no: especially if we take into account that from the location from which Guesdon decided to represent the city, he decidedly chose to crop the Barcelona bullring out of the composition. As Antonio Castelucho's 1882 panorama of Barcelona testifies (Fig. 2.12), *el Toril* was actually located just a few feet away from the

railroad tracks that appear in Guesdon's painting in the working class neighborhood of la Barceloneta, which is also conveniently left out of the picture. From the same point of view with a wider angle of vision, Guesdon would have included the Barcelona bullring in the portrait of the city causing a similar effect to the one he achieved in his representation of Madrid (Fig. 2.9). Removing the Toril from the picture would certainly please Cortada, Vilanova, and members of the City Hall that considered bullfighting a new and inconvenient fad in the *Ordenanzas Municipales* of 1857.

Next to the Barcelona bullring stood another structure that Guesdon also cropped out of the picture: the Citadel. The Barcelona Citadel appeared on the surface of the city like a huge scar between 1716 and 1719. As a British account poses it, after the defeat of 1714, Catalonia, “a Nation famed for Liberty,” was “abandoned [...] to the Mercy of an enraged Prince, whose Person and Interests they had always opposed, and, whom not the least glimpse of Mercy could be hoped” (*The Deplorable History of the Catalans* 2). After the decree of abolition of the local laws and political liberties and the imposition of the language of Castile in all public life on October 9, 1715 (*Nueva Planta*), Philip V started a thorough repression on the conquered seditious city. He decreed the demolition of the majority of the neighborhood of la Ribera in which the fiercest resistance to the Bourbon conquest of the city in 1714 had taken place. Before 1714, *la Ribera*, as an eminently blue-collar neighborhood, concentrated most of the fishermen, sailors, muleteers, and artisans of the city and contained forty percent of the population of the city in only fifteen percent of the territory inside the city walls. Between the summers of 1715 and 1718, seventeen percent of the city was torn down: 1,015 buildings were demolished, 38 streets vanished from the map of Barcelona, and more than 5,000 people were evicted. Catalans themselves were obligated to carry out the destruction of this section of the city: “á todos los

habitantes de Barcelona y resto de Cataluña se les obligaba á trabajar con sus acémilas en la ciudadela dándoseles á lo mas de retribucion dos reales, y exigiendo que cada cabalgadura hiciese al menos 40 viajes de transporte" (Bofarull 187). The Ribera demolitions were to give way to an impressive military fortress that would be erected on the erased part of the city to prevent future rebellions against the newly imposed Bourbon order (Fig. 2.13 and 2.14). The Flemish military engineer Joris Prosper Van Verboom directed the construction of the largest Citadel in Europe, which would symbolize the Bourbon repression of the city. The new Citadel became the sentinel of a city perceived as a constant danger by the new Spanish order. Between the Citadel and the city, a vast esplanade emerged where the lively neighborhood of la Ribera stood. Turned into a no man's land, the esplanade would stand for the actual gap between the new imposed order and the reality of the city.

Since the revolts of 1841—popularly known as La Jamancia⁵—the city of Barcelona claimed the demolition of the Citadel for, as Coroleu's *Memorias de un menestral* reminds us, it was still perceived as a repressive structure: "[el] clamor popular [reclamaba] el derribo de la ciudadela, recordando la historia de su origen, tan ominosa para Cataluña y diciendo que "estos baluartes solo sirven para arrancarle al pueblo sus derechos"" (193). For Coroleu, when he published his *Memorias de un menestral* in 1888, the Citadel was nothing but a memory of the past. In 1868, General Prim had returned the ominous fortress to the city. By 1878, the Citadel had been demolished to be substituted by the public park designed by Josep Fontserè i Mestre in 1872. By the time of Guesdon's portrait of the city, however, the Citadel was still an imposing structure casting its shadow on the city. In 1855, Antoni de Bofarull, in his *Guía de Cicerone de Barcelona*, had precisely described the Citadel as a ghostly figure haunting the city—as the “presencia aterradora del teatro de nuestras desgracias” (174). Other guides, like the *Guía-*

almanaque de Barcelona para extranjeros y forasteros of 1856, directly decided to skip any direct description of the Citadel—"Nos abstendremos de hacer una descripción en obsequio de la brevedad" (11). Curiously enough, in Ildefons Cerdà's 1859 three volume proposal for the extension of the city, *Teoría de la construcción de las ciudades*—which I explore in chapter three—he decided to skip the Citadel in his otherwise meticulous analysis of the geographical and social conditions of the city. "En lo tocante á los fuertes, podrá observarse que no solo he prescindido por completo de sus zonas militares, sino que hasta he hecho caso omiso de la Ciudadela y del Fuerte-Pío," confessed Cerdà (422). The historical revisionism of the *Guía de Cicerone* and the polite omissions of the *Guía-almanaque* and Cerdà's *Teoría de la construcción de las ciudades* exemplify two general attitudes towards the representation of the Citadel: on the one hand, the need to relate the fear caused by this structure to the historical background of the fortress, and, on the other, the instinctive and defensive urge to deviate the gaze when one is facing threatening materiality—as a sign of the impossibility to confront it. Maybe Víctor Balaguer, in his *Guía de Barcelona á Granollers por el ferro-carril*, best synthesizes these two general attitudes. While passing by the walls of the Citadel in his trip to Granollers, Balaguer confronts the Citadel and reflects on its historical origin: "Lo primero en que pensó Felipe V al verse dueño de la ciudad [...] fué en dejar en ella no solo un recuerdo de su real indignacion, sino un medio preventivo de destruccion contra la ciudad que podia de nuevo hacerle vacilar en su trono" (21). The origin of the Citadel as "un medio preventivo de destruccion contra la ciudad" is still hauntingly present to Balaguer's traveling gaze when he rests his eyes on the imposing figure of the central tower that "destaca sobre el conjunto y recuerda el carácter represivo de la fortaleza" (22). As a historian, Balaguer was compelled to face the presence of the fortress in order to stress its repressive nature and remember the need to preserve the historical memory of

the city. Still, as the Barcelona traveler who is leaving the city by train heading for the countryside, Balaguer is also bound to turn his gaze away from the haunting figure of the Citadel: "Apartemos ya la vista de ese triste monumento de opresion y fuerza, y empecemos á recrear la mirada en el delicioso panorama que á nuestros ojos despliega la fertilísima llanura de los alrededores de Barcelona" (22). Once again, the "delicioso panorama" lies beyond the Citadel, beyond the city, beyond the anthill surrounded by the city walls and watched over by the fortress. The promise lies in the "fertilísima llanura de los alrededores de Barcelona" through which, once the walls have been demolished, the city will be able to expand in the years ahead. Balaguer invites his readership and fellow travelers in the train to Granollers to turn their gaze away from the "triste monumento de opresión y fuerza." Balaguer seems suggest Ludovico's closing remarks of *Othello*, "The object poisons sight. / Let it be hid" (V.ii.373–375). And thus the poisonous object is hidden from view. Guesdon's portrait of Barcelona seems to understand this particular local anxiety about the haunting presence of the Citadel and its evocative past. Guesdon does not force his audience to face this massive presence. The center of the stage is not given to the oppressive past of the city but to the emerging future. Guesdon hides the Citadel from sight in order to focus in those parts of Barcelona that are going to guarantee the impending modernization of the city and the potential overcoming of the repressive past.

In Guesdon's second lithograph, Barcelona foregrounds a train conveniently leaving the station. Not far from the train station—right behind it and to the left of the prominent church of Santa Maria del Mar—we can see a sunny square which, since 1865, has been officially known as *Plà de Palau* and previously as *Plaça de la Constitució*⁶—in which the façades of two prominent buildings stand from the rest: the building popularly known as *els porxos d'en Xifré* (recognizable by its characteristic porches) and the building of la Llotja (clearly identifiable, to

the right of the Xifré building, by its neoclassic colonnade). In Guesdon's image, both buildings appear clearly illuminated and show a great attention to detail. As we may imagine, this fact is not a mere coincidence as these two structures were two of the most relevant icons of the city.

El Pla de Palau emerged in the fourteenth century as a public open market in which importers and local merchants met. The consolidation of this public usage derived in the construction of la Hala de Draps open arcade devoted to trade. By 1514, the city hall decided to transform this arcade to turn it into one of the most important buildings of local civil engineering ("Hala de Draps" n.p.). The new Hala de Draps became the local center of wool trade until it was appropriated by the Spanish monarchy in 1668 as the Palau del Lloctinent. After its official transformation into palace, el Palau del Lloctinent was the traditional residence of the *Capitanes Generales*, who after the defeat of 1714 and the *Decreto de Nueva Planta* held the highest political power in Catalonia on behalf of the Spanish monarchy in Madrid. In the nineteenth century, however, the presence of Charles IV in the palace caused the change of the popular name of the building to Palau Reial. Right in front of the original Hala dels Draps, king Peter, the Ceremonious, ordered the construction of the a Gothic Llotja building that would replace the old hiring market for the merchants of Barcelona in 1380 ("Llotja de Barcelona" n.p.). The Llotja was the international hub of Catalan trade, which ruled the commercial relations between Barcelona and the *Consolats de Mar* during the Catalan expansion in the Mediterranean between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries. After 1714, the Llotja building was appropriated by the Bourbon monarchy as a military barrack. The Llotja, however, unlike the Hala dels Draps, was returned to the city in 1767 and refurbished with a new Neoclassical façade by Joan Soler i Faneca in 1772. Under this new Neoclassical outer shell, the old Gothic trade building became the center of operations of the local *Junta de Comerç* (the Trade Council founded in 1758) and of

the Barcelona stock exchange founded in 1851 (“Llotja de Barcelona” n.p.). The Gothic and Neoclassical architectural layers that form the Llotja building also mark the evolution of the local economy, which had evolved from a successful medieval economy based on expansion in the Mediterranean to an industry based on the new financial system anchored in the recently inaugurated stock exchange. In 1856, when Guesdon offered his perspectives of the city, he compared the Barcelona stock exchange, la Llotja, to a heart pumping out and distributing the capital necessary for the local industrial growth and the expansion of the railway system.

Guesdon’s second lithograph also focused on the Xifré building, located to the left of la Llotja. While, unlike la Llotja, the Xifré building was not at all the epitome of Catalan traditional economy, its construction in 1836 was the most notable event in the city. Josep Coroleu i Inglada (1839-1895), a Catalan historian and politician, documented the impact of the construction of *els porxos d’en Xifré* in *Memorias de un menestral de Barcelona (1792-1864)*. In its (if you’re going to refer to Inlada’s book, make sure you name the title in the previous sentence) pages Coroleu recalls how the construction of this building was the event of the year:

El año de 1836 fué notable entre otras cosas por un importante progreso realizado en pro del embellecimiento de Barcelona [...] Por Real orden de 15 de diciembre la Reina Gobernadora se dignó conceder que para el ensanche y ornato de [la plaza de Palacio] pudiesen enagenarse como libres á pública subasta por la junta establecida *ad hoc* los terrenos necesarios [...] Entonces fué cuando empezó á edificarse el grandioso edificio erigido frente á la Lonja por el opulento capitalista catalán don José Xifré, á la sazón recién llegado de la isla de Cuba. Esta edificación fue un verdadero acontecimiento. [...] Fué un capricho y un alarde verdadero de millonario que metió mucho ruido, sobre todo cuando sobre aquellos

cimientos empezó á levantarse el gallardo edificio con su grandioso frontispicio porticado.

Desde aquel día la opulencia de su dueño se hizo proverbial. Decíase en Barcelona: *más rico que Xifré*, como se dice en París: *más rico que Rotschild*.” (146-47).

Xifré’s building emerged in a highly symbolic space that epitomized both the traditional local economic power—through la Llotja—and the political control of the Bourbon monarchy over the city—through the Royal Palace. As the site of local economic power and Castilian political control, Josep Xifré’s choice for his building site made a real statement of his economic power in an urban core dominated by the current political power. The city witnessed the emergence of a new economic power deeply rooted in Spanish politics: the rising influence of a new breed of Catalan entrepreneurs enriched in the Spanish colonial market—the *americanos*. As Coroleu points out, “el opulento capitalista catalán don José Xifré [...] recién llegado de la isla de Cuba” modified the particular geography of this place. He introduced a new architectural element that can be described as the offspring of la Llotja and the Royal Palace. That is to say, the result of blending the Catalan trade tradition born in the Middle Ages and the Spanish colonial power. For, sheltered by the protectionism of the Spanish monarchy after the abolition of the Cadiz monopoly, Catalan *indianos* brought the Catalan tradition of maritime commercial expansion in the Middle Ages to the new Spanish colonial frontier that allowed them to exploit the last American colonies.

Xifré’s building commanded such allure it even attracted the representativeness of la Llotja, as these two buildings became the subjects of the first photographic test in the Iberian Peninsula. In 1839, the Acadèmia de Ciències i Arts de Barcelona commissioned Ramon

Alabern—a former Daguerre student and local engraver—the first photograph in Spain. This first daguerreotype needed an exposure of twenty minutes in order to immortalize both the Xifré building and the Llotja. Unfortunately now lost, we can only rely on Coroleu’s description of the effect this photograph had on the local population:

El domingo, 10 de noviembre [de 1839], á las once y media de la mañana, se sacó la vista de la Lonja y de la casa de Xifré por el método inventado por Mr. Daguerre [...] Hízose el experimento en el terradito de una casa de la plaza [...] en presencia de muchas personas de uno y otro sexo al efecto invitadas. [...] Excuso describir la sorpresa y entusiasmo de los circunstantes, que no se cansaban de encomiar el celo del Sr. Alabern, importador del aparato y el de los socios de la Academia de Ciencias Naturales y Artes, que lo habían adquirido.

La placha que tan extraordinario efecto había producido en el ánimo de los concurrentes, se rifó entre ellos por medio de billetes, que fueron en un santiamén despachados al precio de 6 reales. (163-64).

The choice of the Xifré and the Llotja buildings as the subject of this first photograph highlights the symbolic power of these spaces in the emergent industrial city. El Pla de Palau was the nerve center of local economy. Both la Llotja and the Xifré building symbolized the emerging and promising economic power of Catalonia and the local ability to adapt to new modes of production and different political circumstances. While Barcelona reached the peak of its economic power under a feudal mode of production during a period of Mediterranean expansion controlled by the local guilds and ruled ultimately by la Llotja, late eighteenth century Catalonia seized the opportunity of a new liberalized Atlantic trade in order to become an active agent in the colonial exploitation of the Americas. The capital accumulated from the Catalan

exploitation of the last Spanish colonies, epitomized by the Xifré building in Guesdon's portrait of Barcelona, would set the foundations for the successful implementation of a capitalist mode of production. Through the representation of these two particular buildings, el Pla de Palau can be perceived as the epitome of an accumulation of capital that, conversely to the traditional accumulation of wealth that characterized the Spanish monarchy, was able to foster a constantly expanding circuit of industrial production. Within the Barcelona city walls, this particular space offers the promise of progress, of turning surplus value into productive capital. Ultimately, the energy produced in this capitalist hub fostered the Catalan cultural renaissance of the period, the consolidation of a literary and artistic market, but also, the new liberal political trends of federalism and, later on, of Catalan nationalism.

This is the new bourgeois agora—the economic center in which the fate of the local bourgeoisie is decided. Important local writers like Narcís Oller or popular authors like Antoni Altadill readily recognized the demiurgic power of *la Llotja* as the site of the stock exchange. In this case, Guesdon's choice of this vantage point (Fig. 8) helps him emphasize *Pla de Palau's* function as the nerve center of Barcelona, an emerging industrial center. Through foregrounding the bourgeois agora, Guesdon's leaves the factories and industrial quarters of the city in the background of the image. Apparent only through the visible smokestacks, their presence becomes a metonymy not only of the factories themselves but also of the firm implementation of the new industrial capitalist order that fostered modernity. These two portraits of Barcelona present the city as the unproblematic outcome of modern industrialization. From this point of view, the factories smoke cannot taint the beauty of the new bourgeois order. The quarters in which the working class dwells are conveniently minimized beyond the tree line of *les Rambles* or purposely erased from the picture as the angle of the composition leaves the remaining

sections of the old neighborhood of *la Ribera* unrepresented out of the right side of Guesdon's lithograph. Humans are reduced to a series of ant-like figures close to the seaside: the stevedores toiling in the harbor and bringing the colonial goods into the city, the small crowd gathered in front of the stock exchange, and the leisure types that walk up and down the promenade on the *muralla de mar*.

In his second portrait of Barcelona, Guesdon's angle of view—narrowing the angle and focusing on the city's financial core while simultaneously casting out the city bullring and Citadel—deliberately represented the city as a modern industrial city that had nothing or little to do with foreign expectations of Spain. Spanish stereotypes like bullfighting and the still overwhelming presence of the Bourbon control over the city are willingly erased. Guesdon's portrait of Barcelona removes the city from the map of an imagined orientalized Spain and locates it in the emerging map of industrial Europe. For Guesdon, the city is not a provincial Spanish capital but “the Manchester of the Iberian Peninsula.” While for Balaguer the train was just a convenient transportation method to leave the city in order to enjoy the pleasant vistas of the countryside, for Guesdon the train appears as one of the main protagonists in the representation of the modern city. The train and industrial Barcelona are presented as a new enticing spectacle. The alienating city described by Balaguer is hardly recognizable in Guesdon's optimistic panoramas. Conversely, this sunny town caressed by the Mediterranean seems to enjoy the convenient products of modernity. The new railroad system, praised by Balaguer, connected the Catalan capital with the villages of Mataró (1848), Granollers (1853), Molins de Rei (1853), and Terrassa (1855)—a network that would shortly connect Barcelona with Zaragoza, Madrid, and Paris. The modern harbor allowed for the Catalan trade with the Americas under the convenient policies of Spanish protectionism. Through Guesdon's gaze we

witness the optimistic city of the *bienio progresista* (1854-1856): the city that had finally managed to obtain the benefit of the demolition of the city walls from the central government in Madrid (1854), whose city hall had opened the contest in order to choose the best city planning for the long awaited project of expansion (1855), and had seen the approval of Ildefons Cerdà's plans of expansion of the city through the Barcelona plain (1856).

While the two portraits of Barcelona signed by Guesdon are the most popular bird's eye view panoramas of the period, Onofre Alsamora, a local artist, signed a series of lithographs on the city among which another aerial perspective of the city, dated approximately between 1857 and 1859,⁷ emerged (Fig. 2.15). In this aerial perspective, Alsamora chose a new vantage point that focused on the promise of urban expansion granted after the demolition of the city walls.

Navas and Garcia Espuche stress that Alsamora's interest in urban portraits derives from the importance that the local art school of La Llotja—located also in the building of Pla de Palau—gave to the urban portrait in their syllabi, especially in the perspective and landscaping class taught by Pau Rigalt, in which Alsamora was enrolled ("La Ciutat Fragmentada (1803-1859): L'escenari Modern" 149). Onofre Alsamora created a large body of work that portrayed the most characteristic places of mid-nineteenth-century Barcelona—stressing specially, like in Guesdon, the Pla de Palau and the Llotja buildings. In this aerial panorama, however, Alsamora shows a different global perspective of the city. This particular panorama, according to Navas, is the product of the connection of Alsamora with European publishing houses that knew about the interest of this kind of bird's eye view images in foreign markets ("El nou mitjà fotogràfic" 9). Alsamora's panorama—less precise and detailed than Guesdon's, as Navas also remarks (10)—represents the city as a solid mass of stone facing the Mediterranean, which is watched over by the clearly identifiable Citadel on the left and the Castle of Montjuïc on the right. Unlike

Guesdon, Alsamora does not focus his view on the financial center of the city—which is just recognizable here as a wide square open to the harbor through the Portal de Mar—or on its industrial activity. Alsamora’s distant point of view forces him to sacrifice detail for the sake of trying to enclose the whole city. The scale of Alsamora’s lithograph does not allow the representation of human activity in small scale. On such a small scale, the human being becomes irrelevant. Human activity is only perceivable in the tiny details on the surface of the city. While at first glance Alsamora’s city seems to be completely idle enjoying the siesta on a sunny Sunday afternoon, a few small details suggest the new challenges of the city. As in Guesdon, though in a minuscule scale that makes it almost unperceivable, Alsamora foregrounds another train leaving the station of the *camino de hierro del Centro* on the lower right corner of the lithograph. Here the industrial and commercial phenomena seem to be idle, and we can notice the small but progressive changes on the geography of the city. Alsamora’s choice of this location helps him focus not on the industrial or financial activity of the city but on the promise of tomorrow embodied in the demolition of the city walls. Gazed from the distant hills that surround the Barcelona plain, the city of Alsamora is slowly demolishing the ancient walls to give way to the promised expansion of what had been a military safety zone. Alsamora focuses on the ongoing demolition of the city walls taking place clockwise in the image. Alsamora’s lithograph freezes time to document the last stages of an enclosed city with fixed limits. The artist and his contemporaries are aware that the clear-cut limits of this city will soon disappear. As Marshall Berman suggests regarding the experience of modernity, the local audience of Alsamora’s lithograph may have felt a double anxiety (15). On the one hand, they would have gone through the hope and the excitement of the citizens whose city has been freed of its spatial confinement, longing for all the changes that promise a new and better way of life; on the other hand, the

actual erasure of the known and familiar limits could have generated a certain nostalgia, a longing for the urban reality that will soon disappear, for the time and place when everything was stable and solid. At this point, between 1856 and 1859, the city is still debating the most suitable project of expansion for the city. When the Cerdà plan was approved on June 7, 1859, as I will discuss in chapter four, its materialization was full of promise and utopian idealism.

But Alsamora's lithograph also points out to a new way of gazing at the city from a new location. A point of view that would allow grasping the new city expanding along the Barcelona plain: the view of the city from the hills and mountains that surround the Barcelona plain. If Guesdon inaugurated the new perspective of the city from the northeast, Alsamora shows a new way of looking at the city from the surrounding mountains crowned by Tibidabo (Fig. 2.16).

2.3 GET THEE BEHIND ME SATAN

Along with the development of the expansion of the city designed by Cerdà, Alsamora's vantage point became extremely popular both for the city bourgeoisie, who built houses in this area in order to enjoy the panorama of Barcelona, and for Catalan authors like Manuel Angelón, Narcís Oller, and Robert Robert. Accordingly, painters, like the Italian expatriate Achille Battistuzzi, signed two panoramas of Barcelona painted from his house at the hill of Putxet in 1874 and 1876. As Garcia Espuche observes, the growth of the city beyond the former limit of the walls inaugurates "la pèrdua d'eficàcia de Montjuïc com apunt d'observació urbana" ("Imatges i imatge de Barcelona" 61). For Garcia Espuche, however, the rise of el Tibidabo as the privileged vantage point of the city coincides with the aggregation of the smaller municipalities of the Barcelona plain to Cerdà's Eixample on April 20 1897. For him, "en el moment en què l'Eixample de Cerdà està prou consolidat i ben lligat a les perifèries pre-existents és quan una mirada des del Tibidabo és factible" (62). As I will try to prove in these pages, the actual consolidation of el Tibidabo as a privileged location to gaze at the city is directly related to the consolidation of this area as a privileged destination for the villas of the local bourgeoisie. From then on, the vantage points located in this general area to the northwest of the city, on the slopes of the Collserola range, emerged as the perfect spot to grasp the changes in the growing city.

As the Catalan *costumista* writer Robert Robert pointed out, in the Barcelona of the second half of the nineteenth century, leaving the city on Sundays to enjoy the surrounding countryside had become a must. The hills surrounding the city, the slopes and Collserola, and the mountain of Montjuïc became a favorite destination for Barcelonans in order to enjoy their days of leisure. In his story "Diumenge... a fora!", published under his pseudonym X in the Catalan

weekly *Un tros de paper* in 1865, Robert identifies and mocks the custom of visiting the countryside as a mere social imposition:

—Vosté ¿com es que hi va?

—Home , jo veig que tothom fa lo mateix...

—Basta! M'ho havia figurat. Obeheix maquinalment á la pressió de la costum que no compren. (1)

On any given Sunday, Robert's narrator tries to find his acquaintances to no avail: "son á la torre [...] Son á la torre. [...] me'n vaig á la torre [...] Demá serém á la torre [...] !Es dir que tothom va á fora... y tothom te torre!" (1). Nobody is home. He surprisingly finds out that *everybody* has got a resort outside the city—what in Catalan is called a *torre* or a *quinta* in Spanish—so he decides to follow the crowd and visit his acquaintances in the *torre* just to find out about the limitations of such a *resort*:

la torre es un primer pis que reb tota la pols dels carruatges y per aixó es diu que es alegre; no's cab en lo menjador y per aixó es diu que es mono; no dona al camp y per aixó es diu que es en lo millor puesto, y tot explicantme la excelencia de la torre, m'acaba d'apesarar dihentme:

—!Es molt millor aquesta que la del Andreu!" (2)

As Robert clarifies, the actual conditions of most of the *torres* of the local middle class left a lot to be desired. Notwithstanding the evidence, as Robert's narrator sadly finds out, the mere ownership of a *torre* is reduced to a distinctive social factor, which is liable to being used in a public display of social status against other proprietors. Among the citizens of Barcelona who could afford having a house outside the perimeter of the city, only a few were privileged enough to enjoy a general perspective of the city. The image of the city was a luxury that could

only be afforded by a small elite. In 1854, the historian and writer Manuel Angelón perfectly summarized the interaction between real estate, location, and the exercise of vision in order to identify social hierarchies. In his *Guía satírica de Barcelona*, Angelón categorized the local middle and high classes according to the kind of perspective upon the city that they could ultimately afford. Angelón identified villas of first, second, and third class in terms of the visual perspective enjoyed from them:

Unas y otras e parecen en lo de tener muy buenas vistas; así, en la quinta A se ve por detrás el Tibidabo y San Pedro Mártir, y por delante Barcelona y Montjuich; en la quinta B se descubre por detrás un corral de puercos y el Tibidabo, y por delante Montjuich y Barcelona; en la quinta C se observa por detrás una colina que no deja ver nada, y por delante otra colina que impide descubrir el hermoso panorama de Barcelona y Montjuich; en la quinta D, por detrás se ve la riera y San Pedro Mártir, y por delante los faldones de otra quinta, maldecida por los propietarios de la casa D, porque les priva, nada menos, que de ver Montjuich, el mar y Barcelona.” (50)

In Angelón’s *Guía satírica de Barcelona* the privilege of vision is presented as a socially accepted convention that generates social distinction. A full perspective of Barcelona and Montjuïc clearly differentiates the members of the local elite. Others, not financially sound, should go along with their social status and accept partial views of the city or even adjust to the idea that the city is out there hidden beyond that hill or that more fortunate abode. Of course, the working class of the city had to accept that their only visual luxury would come from looking at the city from the public fountains and common areas of the mountain of Montjuïc. From fountains like *la font del gat*, *la Satalla*, *la Font-Trovada* or *Vista Alegre*, the local working class

could enjoy what the 1864 edition of Cornet y Mas's guide of the city called a "bello panorama de la ciudad y su llano, mirados casi á vista de pájaro" (203). In these commons on Montjuïc, the local masses would spend their Sundays and public holidays and enjoy a more open and egalitarian gaze toward the city. However, in nineteenth-century Barcelona, as Angelón confirms, the visual apprehension of the city had also become a commodity that, when attached to realty, only a few privileged Barcelonans could afford. Real estate became not only a matter of location but also a question of vision and particularly of vantage point (Fig. 2.17).

Narcís Oller, the most important Catalan novelist of the nineteenth-century, reflected accurately about the role of the city as spectacle for the new emerging bourgeoisie. As the critic Rosa Cabré has noted, Oller's *La febre d'or* recurrently describes the city as a spectacle from several locations among which we can find "una torre de Sarrià, que permet de contemplar amb tota l'amplitud el ventall amb què la ciutat s'obre des de la muntanya al mar i el Besòs al Llobregat" (32). Particularly in chapter XIII of the first part of *La febre d'or* we can perceive Oller's clear understanding of the close bond between the urban panorama and real estate in the Barcelona of this period. In this chapter, Oller takes us with the Foix family to the house warming party of the *torre* that "el senyor Giró" has just bought in Pedralbes. Giró, as a rising bourgeoisie member who has taken advantage of the profits granted by the stock exchange, bought the house—perceived as a "château" by the Frenchified Emília—from a local wealthy fishmonger, who had acquired it from the original owner, a local Marquis (415). In a conversation with the new owner, Delfina's parents suitably pointed out to the convenience of the new liberalized market in which the old possessions of the aristocracy can easily change hands. "¿No és més just, senyor Giró, aquest vaivé de la propietat actual, que no pas l'antic estancament?" they ask the new proprietor. According to Giró and his guests, the obliteration of

the old order opened a new field of possibilities for the local bourgeoisie. But in nineteenth-century Barcelona, those capable of seizing the opportunity changed with time. As Oller exemplifies with Giró's house, a bourgeoisie that sprung from the local menestrals, and ultimately by the new acquisitive power of the speculative capitalists, first replaced the decaying aristocracy. In the era of the stock exchange, the Girós and the Foixes arrive to replace the obsolete castes and to enjoy not only their traditional mansions but also their amazing panoramas.

Shortly after greeting his host, Gil Foix is left alone in the garden against a background of swarming guests just arriving to the manor. From there, ignoring the crowd, Foix discovers the city at his feet:

un tros de Barcelona, confosa ja amb sos suburbis, estenent-se al peu de Montjuic, blanca, nova, immensa com una gran metròpolis. Sos barris de Llevant, salpicats d'alteroses xemeneies, es perdien en una boirada de vapor que la brillantor del sol fonia amb les tintes de la costa, roses, nacrades, mig velades per un *vapor d'or* [...] Una gran cinta blava [...] faixava de cap a cap l'horitzó, arrossegant son *farbalà de blonda* per la sinuosa platja [...] Davant, al peu mateix de l'espectador, Sarrià i Les Corts, que amb llurs torratxes i colomars, relliscaven costa avall, llançant *lluïssors enlluernadores* [...] fins a topar-se amb el caseriu nou de Barcelona, que s'arraulia dessota un orgullós castell [...] Un cel de blau desmaiat, amb *llapissades de perla* aigualit, harmonitzava aquell conjunt de tons finíssims, que feia espurnejar els ulls d'en Foix i li travava la llengua. [My emphasis] (415-16)

Foix's gaze on the city, just like Guesdon's or Alsamora's, does not focus on any human figure in the distance. Human presence is understood as the engine behind the constant growth of the urban mass, behind the industrial activity suggested by the city smokestacks. Foix's eyes fall upon a city that is nothing but a promise of wealth. Among the city's neighborhoods, his gaze stops on the same chimneys of the textile factories that called Guesdon's attention. Here, the smokestacks, far from darkening the panorama of the city, are illuminated by the last rays of the sun in the evening, which gives them a coat of gold and turns them, to Foix's eyes, into gold vapor. In Oller's panorama, Barcelona is a city able to transform steam into gold. This is a city of affluence. But for Gil Foix, while this city promises endless profits for the emerging bourgeoisie, this panorama also reminds him of social and economic distance that separates him from figures like Giró. Giró literally owns this location, which entitles him to symbolically appropriate the image of the city at will. In contrast, Gil Foix, as the new small-scale parvenu, can only enjoy this panorama temporarily, as a guest, and dream of the day when he can enjoy the promise of wealth from the city.

The question remains, however: is Gil Foix's perception of the city an accurate portrait of Barcelona? Undoubtedly, Barcelona was the actual industrial city that lied behind Foix's projections. But here Foix's expectations take over the representation of the city. Unfortunately, some critics, trying to confirm the unquestionable modernity of the Barcelona of Oller, have shown the tendency to read these passages at face value. Often, critical analyses argue that Oller's narrative is an actual window into nineteenth-century Barcelona, but they neglect sufficient attention to either the Oller's literary mediation or the secondary mediation introduced through his novel's characters. For instance, for Rosa Cabré, Oller, as "un enamorat de la veritat," actually was a "testimony real i objectiu del seu temps" (53). Cabré's statement seems to forget

the author's mediation and forgets to consider to what extent Oller's Barcelona was the result of his specific vantage point, his particular focalizations, his voluntary elisions of certain urban aspects, and his narrative voices compromised with the local bourgeois project. When taking into consideration the relationship between nineteenth-century realist representations of the urban—contrasted with romantic or *costumbrista* portraits of the city—and the material and social reality of the city, we risk falling prey to the illusion of transparency on which realism depends. As this illusion is particularly enjoyable for us as readers of nineteenth-century fiction, it obviously becomes a danger for the literary and cultural critic. Every so often, literary critics like Cabré and geographers like Carreras fall victim to this illusion of transparency and mistake the urban reality of nineteenth-century Barcelona with the constructs of urban modernity generated by authors like Oller. As Guesdon's and Alsamora's feigned *vistas de pájaro*, Oller's Barcelona relies as much on a perception of its urban reality as on the conscious construction of an image of an unequivocally modern city based on the unquestioned tenets of the local bourgeoisie.

For the emerging bourgeois, the panorama of the city was an image liable to be appropriated. The image of the city was commodified, acquired, and displayed as probably the most important asset in order to validate social status. In a city marked by the social mobility fostered by the volatile fortunes of the stock exchange, the commodified panorama of the city from the recently acquired real estate was the definitive sign of social and economic success. Through Foix's gaze, Barcelona appears fully clad with lace trims—"farbalà de blonda"—, a smear of pearl—"llapissada de perla"—, covered with a blinding gleam—"lluïssors enlluernadores"—, and bathed in a steam of gold—"vapor d'or" (415-16). Foix's eyes are out on stalks. He is feasting his eyes on the promise of wealth that this panorama offers. This bird's eye view of Barcelona from the distant hills is manifestly coveted and becomes the ultimate

temptation. But, as we will see, the trope of the city's tempting gaze from the mountainous perspective was already codified in certain local mores as well as inscribed and memorialized in Barcelona geography.

The very name of the mountain of Tibidabo springs from the Christian tradition. The name is the result of the conjunction of the Latin words *tibi dabo*—I will give you—which was probably bestowed to the mountain by the monks of the Vall d'Hebron monastery in its vicinity (“El Tibidabo” n.p.). Traditional explanations of this name relate it to the New Testament episode of Satan's temptation of Jesus. The Gospels of Luke and Matthew alternatively appear as the most probable source.⁸ According to the *King James* Gospel of Matthew, “the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve” (Matthew 4.8-10). As we have seen in these passages, the name of the mountain of Tibidabo is intimately linked with the perspectives it offers. In this case, vision is related to falling prey to temptation and the consequent need to resist it. Besides these two popular explanations of the origin of the name, the Jewish Torah includes another key passage from which the name Tibidabo may have sprung. The Book of Genesis refers to the expression “*tibi dabo*” in relation to the visible territory from the highest mountain: “And the Lord said unto Abram [...] lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever” (*King James Bible*, Genesis 13.14-15). In this passage, the Judeo-Christian God utters the promise, turning the vast panorama into the proverbial Promised Land. Here, the concept of temptation disappears and the notion of property

arises. The view open to Abram turns into real estate, into the promise of a better future for him and his kin.

As we have seen in *La febre d'or*, Oller's description of the panorama perceived by Gil Foix from the villa of Giró seems to be charged with the two conflicting narratives embodied in the biblical passages I have discussed above. If we take into consideration the perspective of Gil Foix, his gaze from the villa seems to rest on the promised land. Barcelona appears in his eyes as a legitimate possession to be seized. As a member of the local emerging bourgeoisie building his fortune in the local stock exchange, taking over the city is only a matter of time. For Foix, as well as Giró, their gaze on the city below is completely legitimate: they are entitled to it. However, as the novelist's plot will demonstrate, the Foix's final fall will make us reconsider this particular chapter as an actual episode of temptation. As we know, at the moment Foix enjoys the panorama from Giró's villa, it is still impossible for him to afford the luxury of buying such a distinctive house. But in *La febre d'or*, Oller introduces the stock exchange through the eyes of Rodon, a provincial investor that has just arrived to the Catalan capital to verify "per quin art de encantament naixien aquelles deus de riquesa que, per corrents invisibles, anaven curullant les caixes del banquer i de l'home de renda, [...] obrint camins i canals, i prometent regenerar ben aviat la saba de la vella Europa amb transfusions d'or" (321). For Rodon the market works on magic. The power of the stock exchange is presented as a Mephistophelean power that nothing had to do with the actual commercial or industrial power of Catalonia. The figures of the banker and the man who lives off his investments are a new breed that certainly shock Rodon. As one could have anticipated, for Oller, the unrestrained freedom of speculation of the stock exchange is not a legitimate basis to claim the visual appropriation of the city. Foix's panorama of Barcelona becomes just a mirage, a mere temptation caused by the deceiving promises of the

market.

Years before the publication of Oller's *La febre d'or*, the Mephistophelian power of this gaze had been addressed within the milieu of the local floral games in predominantly religious terms. In 1862, Lluís Roca, a poet from Lleida, won the consolation prize of the Silver Quill of the Floral Games of Barcelona with a poem titled "La veu del Tibidabo." Roca's poem, like Jacint Verdaguer's "Oda a Barcelona" would do twenty six years later, privileged the vantage point of the city from the mountain of Tibidabo. However, if Verdaguer's poem was incorporated as part of the official image of the city by the Barcelona City Hall, —which published and distributed free copies of "Oda a Barcelona" around the city—Roca's poem elaborated, with less skill and certainly less success, on some of the same figures explored in Verdaguer's. In this poem Roca reflected on the myth from which the mountain received its name. From the mountain's vantage point, the poem's speaker ponders the promise that the perceived panorama holds. Like the Book of Genesis, this gaze points at the legitimate promise land but also, like the Gospels of Luke and Matthew, considers the possibility of using this panorama as a demonic temptation.

While for Verdaguer the mountain of Tibidabo is merely "la superba acròpolis que vetlla la Ciutat" (vv. 34), in Lluís Roca's poem, the poetic voice claims to have heard the mountain of Tibidabo whisper to the city of Barcelona in quiet nights. The voice of the mountain is presented as prophetic—"la veu de una Sibila" (v. 4). The mountain is able to advise the "industriosa vila" about her oncoming future (v. 5). The gaze of the prophetic mountain, from its privileged point of view, coincides with Gil Foix's perception and recognizes the city as an "empori de grandesa" (v. 6), whose wealth's glitter can be perceived from afar (vv. 8-10). As a pure product of the Catalan literary renaissance, Roca's poem goes on to recall the misfortune of the city: it's fall

from grace after the middle ages, and her subsequent economic, social, and cultural decadence. But the city is presented as a Phoenix able to regenerate from her own ashes (vv. 17-19). To the prophetic eyes of the mountain, Barcelona, symbol of the new Catalonia, emerges as the “Monarca del treball” (v. 39) who is destined to conquer “altras victorias per lograr may vistas” (v. 46). The city is pampered by fortune and is bound to reach the highest glory (vv. 65-69). However, the designs of providence can be at stake if the city drops her guard. A vermin afraid of light, hidden in its cave, threatens to spoil this brilliant promise of the time to come (vv. 70-74). Presented as a demonic figure, the invisible fiend “Voldrà tentarte ab malas / Promesas, com un día / Tentá á Jesus prop Jericó volía” (vv. 77-79). Just like the mountaintop was the location of Jesus’s temptaion, likewise the temptation falling on the city will be presented from the mountaintop:

Y á la mes alta serra
 Per ell portada, t'mostrará á las horas
 Dels regnes de la terra
 Riquesas seductoras
 "Tot te ho daré--diente--si m'adoras.⁹ (vv. 80-84)

In Roca’s poem, as we can anticipate, the city is able to resist this demonic temptation thanks to her Christian roots. But, curiously enough, here the salvation of the city arrives because of triumphal hymns sung by the city workers:

Pero esteril sa furia
 tu deixarás, pus sempre se agermana
 Ab la triunfal canturia
 De los obrers, l'hossanna

Que alsan los cors en oració cristiana.¹⁰ (vv. 85-89)

In this improbable scene of pious redemption, the threads of incense literally mix with the city smokestacks (vv. 90-91). This literal combination exemplifies a strategic blend of Catholicism and industrialization. According to some local bourgeoisie, only the traditional Catholic order can be presented as an antidote for social unrest in a city like Barcelona that is constantly exposed to local riots and revolts. The ultimate prosperity of the city depends upon the possibility of sustaining social stability keeping the labor force ascribed to local Catholic tradition. While in the actual poem the real identity of the hidden fiend is elided, it would not be far fetched to identify the “hidra del mal” (v. 96) as the workers movement embodied in the local socialist utopian trends of the period and in the ghost of anarchism that arrived in Barcelona in 1868. Roca’s answer to this threat is simple “allunyat Satanás; esta es ma filla”¹¹ (v. 99).

In “La veu del Tibidabo” the temptation capable of breaking the social order is, like in Foix’s gaze from Giró’s villa, desire. But, in this case, the sin does not lie on the means used to acquire the desired wealth, like the morally questionable ways that Oller identified with the stock exchange. Here, the nature of the beholder transgresses the established order. As Angelón suggested, the gaze from the mountain is not open to everyone. Its availability is determined by social status. The rising proletariat employed in the factories of the city is still looking at the city from the fountains and the commons in Montjuïc. They are excluded from the game of distinction based on the interaction between vision and real estate. In Roca’s poem, the promise of a prosperous city is presented to the local bourgeoisie by the mountain’s prophetic voice just like the promised land was presented to Abram: “Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever” (*King James Bible*, Genesis 13.14-15).

On the contrary, Roca presents the same image as a demonic temptation the very moment the working class enters the picture. The working class needs to respond to the demonic temptation with its hymns because the working class was the one tempted. But the promising, wealthy panorama of the city perceivable from Giró's villa or from the top of Tibidabo is still not for them. They shall not covet the bourgeois city.

2.4 THE DRIVE OF DESIRE

If we were to take for granted the series of representations of the panorama of Barcelona between 1854 and 1888, what kind of city would we be looking at? Maybe the first answer would be: one with openly modern geography—with train stations, a fitting harbor, trains, and steam boats conveniently communicating the city, factories at full production in a suitable distance, and a promising stock exchange. We would surely be looking at a well-suited geography for the eyes of the eminently bourgeois beholders to inscribe their projections of desire.

As I tried to show in the first section of this chapter, most of the representations of Barcelona before 1854 were particularly distinctive. In the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries Barcelona was predominantly portrayed as the conquerable other. The representation of the city was only justifiable by the military necessity to provide evidence of the bombing, attack, and the final conquest of Barcelona. These representations exemplify a particularly modern need to document military warfare, originally to satisfy an encyclopedic drive and hopefully to serve as effective military and political propaganda. Rigaud's detailed drawings of the siege of 1714 are an outstanding example of both tendencies: on the one hand, they carefully document all the military strategies and troop movements in the campaign and, on the other hand, they function as

popular propaganda devices when printed in the colorful fans of foreign queens. In this period, the general panoramas of the city privileged Montjuïc to the southeast and a perpendicular gaze at the city from the sea to the southeast. These two vantage points coincide precisely with the most relevant strategic points, the ones that facilitate the process of attack and siege of Barcelona, which is presented as the conquerable other.

Fostered by the rising market for bird's-eye-view images of European cities, the second half of the nineteenth century will witness the emergence of new ways of representing the panorama of Barcelona. Amidst the general disinterest of the majority of the local artists, Guesdon inaugurated and popularized a way to look at the city that takes advantage of visual perception in order to stress the Barcelona's modernity. Guesdon's portraits of Barcelona, with their emphasis on the modern harbor, the financial center of the city, and the vast industrial presence in the distance, shows that the French painter was completely in synch with the official image of the city that the local elites would have liked to convey. As a result, the opportune omission of the imposing Citadel and the controversial bullring shows a city that is politically and culturally distinct from the rest of the Spanish cities painted by Guesdon. Just a few years later, Alsamora focused on a different feature of the city, which certainly had preoccupied the local population for decades: the demolition of the city walls and the promise of expansion of the city. This new era resituates the general traditional panoramas of the city turning them away from the harbor and looking for a vantage point that can help testify to the constant urban expansion. The new location is located in the wide area of the hills crowned by the mountain of Tibidabo, the mountain that will progressively become the new privileged vantage point on the expanding city.

As authors like Angelón, Oller and Robert confirmed, the emergence of this vantage

point coincides with the consolidation of the local tradition of the middle and high classes to build a villa outside the old perimeter of the city. As Angelón pointed out, the perspectives enjoyed from these *torres* ultimately determined the social status of its owners. Taking this feature into account, Oller's *La febre d'or* further explored the intimate relationship between real estate and vantage point. Oller's chapter on the inauguration of the *torre* of Giró elaborates on the bourgeois gaze and its claim on the city. For Oller, both the creative and destructive traits of the stock exchange turn it into a Mephistophelian factor that would call into question, and in due course deny, Foix's right to the city. Roca's poem "La veu del Tibidabo" also explored the issue of the people's right to the city. This time Roca developed the biblical roots of the mountain's etymology in order to consider both the promise of industrial and commercial prosperity suggested by the panorama of Barcelona and the potential dangers that lie ahead in a city facing increasing social struggle.

As I have tried to prove, all these representations of Barcelona from a distant gaze created an unproblematic image of a metropolis that is apparently democratic, accessible, and unequivocally modern. The city is displayed as a comprehensible totality in which the threats, anxieties, and fears of modernity are practically non-existent. The scale of these representations help minimize the dark side of modernity—the daily practices and the counterspaces that question the bourgeois meta-narrative of urban modernity. From a bird's view or from the *torre* in the distance, poverty, social tensions, and working class neighborhoods are conveniently blurred. Furthermore, these apparently naïf testimonies of the metropolis can modify, put in the background, or directly elide any conflicting image of the city. Under the coat of realism, the illusion of transparency helps naturalize these images as plausible accounts of the city. But, as Corboz points out, "tota representació d'una ciutat [...] és sempre una *construcció*; en aquest

sentit, oscil·la necessàriament entre dos pols, [...] el pol verista (en el qual es tendeix a fer creure que la representació és idèntica a la realitat de la qual procedeix) i el pol fantàstic (en el qual s'estableix una distància perceptible entre allò que és designat i allò que és)" (23). In this chapter I have tried to point at the specific features of these representations of Barcelona that could help us to identify their “fictional pole” under their realist code. I have tried to show how these particular vantage points of the city—helped by their particular focalizations and erasures—irreversibly predetermine our perception of the object.

All the subtle strategies of representation used from Petrus Miote Burgundus to Oller’s *La febre d’or* fabricate and elaborate a specific object of desire. At first, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Barcelona is presented as the object of military and political desire: the conquerable other. In the nineteenth century, with the consolidation of the local industrial revolution and the emergence of the bourgeoisie, the panorama of Barcelona balances between the optimistic representation of the legitimately desired promised land and the unlawful gaze on the tempting and coveted sensual object. All these perceptions of the city, however, leave a whole world hidden beyond the line of vision: a daily lived and practiced urban geography that can only be grasped if we take a deeper look below the surface of these panoramas.

NOTES

¹ The *Junta de Braços* was one of the political institutions banished with the *Decreto de Nueva Planta*. It was a pre-democratic parliamentary institution coordinated by the Generalitat de Catalunya, which had a key role in the coordination of the defense of Catalonia both during the *Guerra dels Segadors* (1640-1652) and the war of Spanish succession (1701-1714).

² The estimate of the population of the city in 160,000 inhabitants according to the Academia de Medicina coincides with the demographical data used by Ildefons Cerdà in his preliminary works for the plan of extension of the city in 1855 (“*Ensanche de la ciudad de Barcelona*” 63). In 1854, however, the Barcelona City Hall projected it in 150,000 people (*Informe 7*). Five years later, Cerdà estimated the total population of the city for 1855—including foreign visitors—in 168,314 (*Teoría de la construcción de las ciudades* 184).

³ We should keep in mind that names such as Güell and Batlló will be directly involved in the patronization of the emerging local modernist movement after the 1880s and specially with an architect like Antoni Gaudí.

⁴ “Dia de Sant Jaume de l’any trenta cinc, van fer una gran festa dintre del turín. Van sortir uns toros, varen ser dolents i aquesta es la causa de cremar els convents.”

⁵ The term *Jamancia*, derives from the Spanish colloquial word “Jamar.”

⁶ The appearance of this square in this panorama can help us to date Guesdon’s perspective before either in 1855 or in the first half of 1856. On June 1, 1856 the city hall inaugurated a monument to the Catalan Genius devoted to the Marquis of Campo Sagrado in the center of this square. As we can see in Guesdon’s lithograph, this monument is absent which would date this perspective in an earlier time.

⁷ While Navas and Garcia Espuche date this image between 1857 and 1862, I consider that the absence of the Casa Gibert, inaugurated by Isabel II in 1860 as the first construction of the Eixample, in this representation suggests that the original date of the lithograph can be restricted to the period 1857-1859.

⁸ The Latin version of the Gospel of Luke includes the literal use of the expression *tibi dabo*, the origin of the name of Barcelona's hill. In this passage, Satan tempted Jesus showing him all the kingdoms of the world from the top of the highest mountain : "et duxit illum diabolus et ostendit illi omnia regna orbis terrae in momento temporis et ait ei *tibi dabo* potestatem hanc universam et gloriam illorum quia mihi tradita sunt et cui volo do illa tu ergo si adoraveris coram me erunt tua omnia et respondens Iesus dixit illi scriptum est Dominum Deum tuum adorabis et illi soli servies (*Latin Vulgate Bible*, Luke 4.5-8).

⁹ And from the highest range / to where he has led you, he will show you / all the seductive riches / of the kingdoms of the Earth.

¹⁰ But their rage will be useless / thanks to the sense of brotherhood /with the triumphant chant / of workers, hossanna / rising their hearts in a Christian prayer.

¹¹ Go away Satan! This is my daughter.

FIGURES, CHAPTER 2



Fig. 2. 1: Military parade of the troops of Emperor Charles V in the outskirts of Barcelona before leaving for the conquest of Tunisia in 1535. Tapestry. Drawing by Jan Cornelius Vermeyen (1500-1559). Tapestry by Willem Pannemaker. 1535.



Fig. 2. 2: *Nova e Vera Descrizione della Citta di Barcellona Assediata dell' Armata di S. Maesta Cattolica*. 1652. Petrus Miotte Burgundus. Calcographic engraving. 20.2 x 24.02 cm. *Arxiu Històric de la Ciutat de Barcelona*. Graphic Department No. 11541.



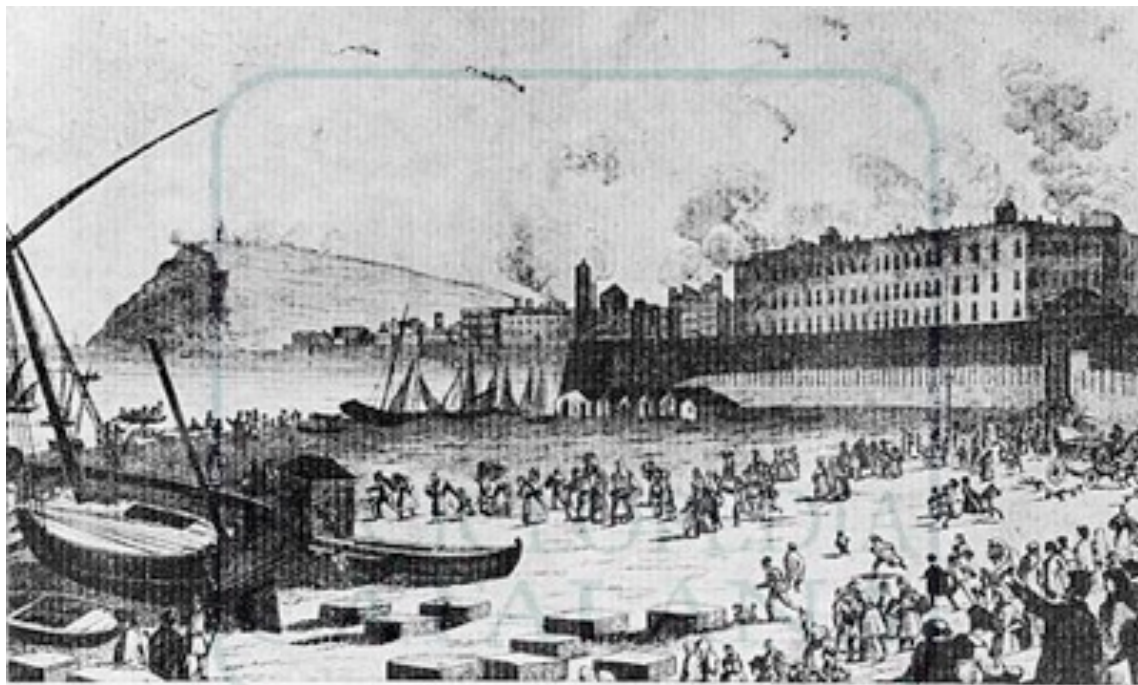
Fig. 2. 3: “Barcelona” by P. Defehrt, 1706. View of the siege of Barcelona by the Austrian Alliance in 1705. Calcographic engraving. 27.2 x 37.3 cm. Included in *Relationis Historicae Semestralis Vernalis Continuatio Jacobi Franci Historische*, 1706. *Museu d’Història de la Ciutat de Barcelona* Ref. No. 754-0.



Fig. 2. 4: Fan depicting the Siege of Barcelona, 1714. C. 1740. Belonged to Queen Alexandra. Currently in the Royal Collection of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. Ref. No. RCIN 25088.



Fig. 2. 5: “The Attack of Two Bastions”. Jacques Rigaud, 1714. Image reproduced in *The Large English Atlas* published in London 1763. *Institut Cartogràfic de Catalunya* Ref. No. RM.215792.



Bombardeo de Barcelona en 1842 por orden del General Espartero. La gente huyendo por la Puerta del Mar (Grabado de la época)

Fig. 2. 6: “Bombardeo de Barcelona en 1842 por orden del General Espartero. La gente huyendo por la Puerta del Mar.” Artist and engraver unknown. 1842. Calcographic engraving. *Institut Municipal d’Història de Barcelona (IMHB)*.



Fig. 2. 7: "Vista de Barcelona por encima de la entrada del puerto." Alfred Guesdon.

Lithography. Around 1856. From the series *España a vista de pájaro*.



Fig. 2. 8: “Barcelona. Vista tomada por encima de las estaciones de Mataró y del Nord.” Alfred Guesdon. Lithography. 1856. From the series *España a vista de pájaro*.



Fig. 2. 9: Satellite image of the old center of Barcelona with the three privileged vantage points for the representation of the city until the second half of the nineteenth century.

Image: Institut Cartogràfic de Catalunya 2008. Google Earth.



Fig. 2. 10: “Madrid. Vista tomada encima de la plaza de Toros” by Alfred Guesdon, 1854.

Included in the series *España a vista de pájaro*.

Dia de sant Jaume

Alegre

Di-a de sant Jau-me de l'any tren-ta cinc, van fer_u-na gran
fes-ta d'in-tre del tu - rin: van sor-tir uns to-ros, va-ren ser do-
lents i_a-ques-ta_és la cau-sa de cre-mar_els con - vents.

The image shows a musical score for a folk song. It consists of three staves of music written in treble clef. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one flat (B-flat), and a 3/4 time signature. The tempo/mood is marked 'Alegre'. The lyrics are in Catalan and describe the Feast of Saint James in Tortosa, where a bullfight was held. The music is a simple, rhythmic melody. The second staff continues the melody and lyrics. The third staff concludes the piece with a double bar line and repeat dots.

Fig. 2. 11: “Dia de Sant Jaume.” Popular Catalan folk song.



Fig. 2. 12: “Vista aérea del proyecto del Parc de la Ciutadella de J. Fontseré.” Antonio Castelucho. Lithography. Around 1882.



Fig. 2. 13: Contrastive maps of Barcelona before and after the demolition of the Ribera neighborhood and the construction of the Bourbon Citadel. The first map, “Plano de Barcelona,” is a copy—signed in 1891—of a pre-1714 map held at the Military Archives in Madrid. The second map on the right, “Plan de Barcelona,” was made in 1818 by Antoni Montfort. Both maps are held at the Arxiu Històric de la Ciutat de Barcelona (AHCB).



Fig. 2. 14: “Plano comparativo de la derruida Ciudadela de Barcelona con el destruido Barrio de Ribera” by Joaquin Borova. Dated after 1869. Ref. 3603. Arxiu Històric de la Ciutat de Barcelona. Notice the imposition of the new military structure and the defensive no man’s land in red on the map of the demolished streets in black.

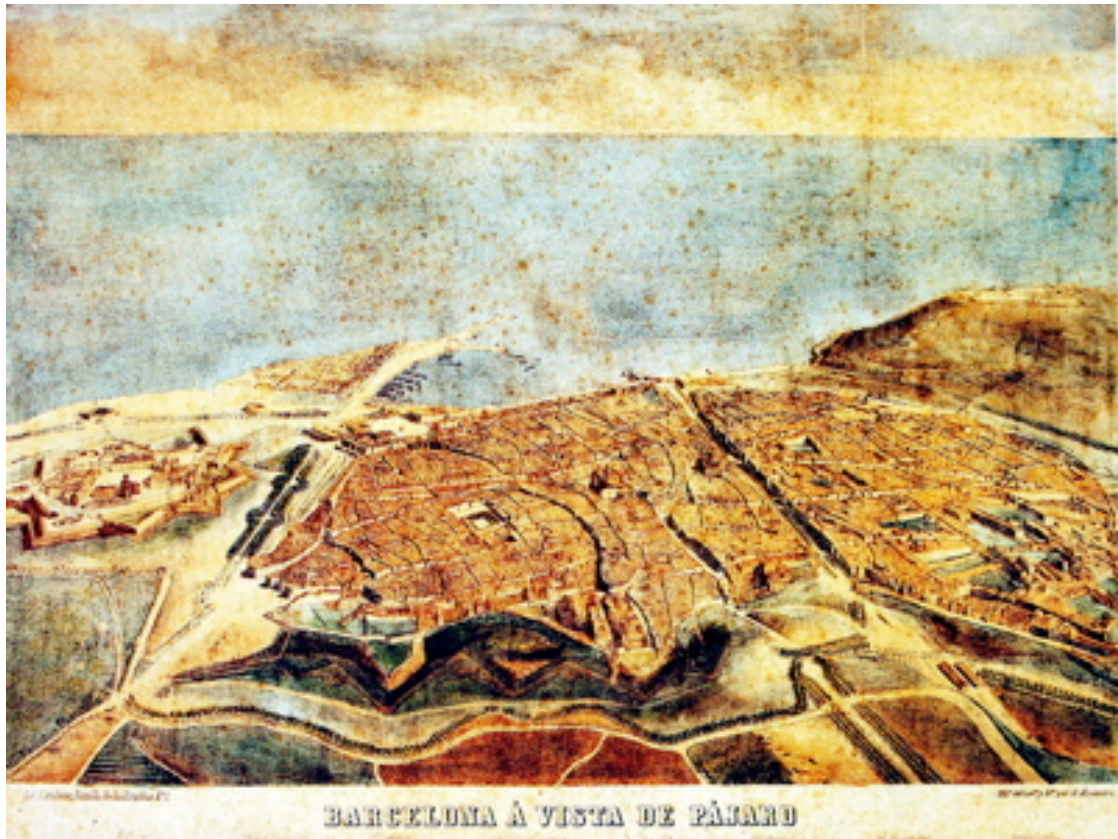


Fig. 2. 15: "Barcelona a vista de pájaro." Onofre Alsamora. Lithography. Around 1857-1859.



Fig. 2. 16: New area chosen by Alsamora as a vantage point of the city. This choice offers a new point of view of the city from the northwest from which both the old city and the new city of the Eixample will be visible. Satellite image of Barcelona by the Institut Cartogràfic de Catalunya, 2008. Google Earth.

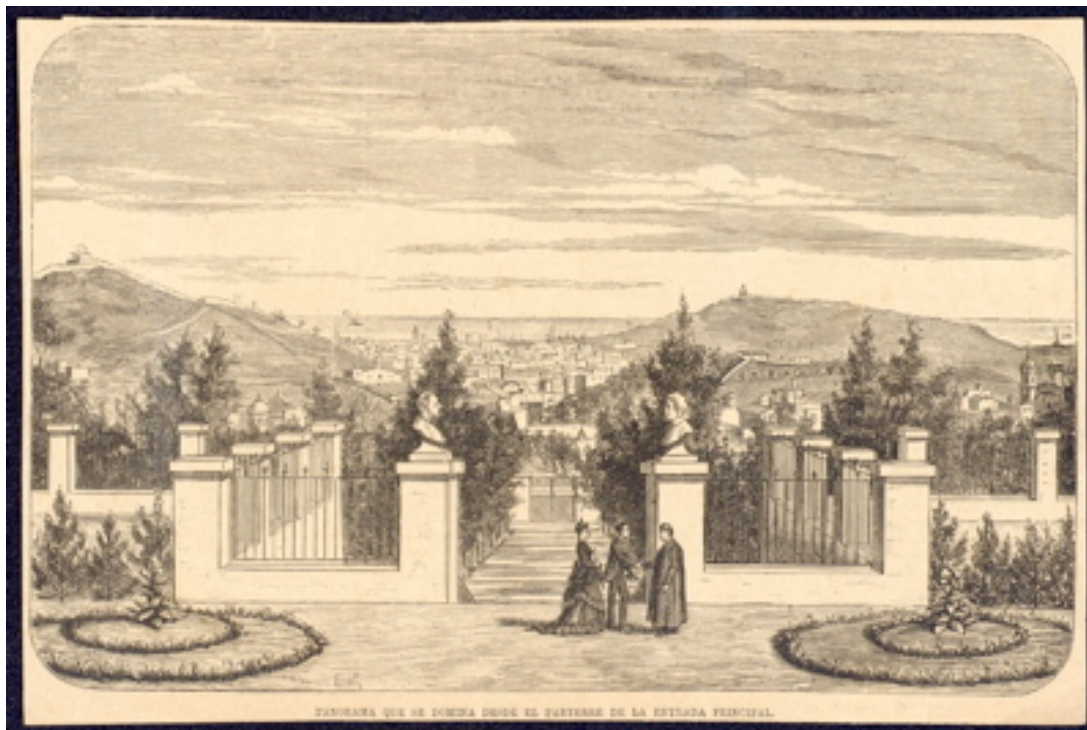


Fig. 2. 17: “Panorama que se divisa desde el parterre de la entrada principal.” Signed E.M. Date unknown. Ref. 5873. Arxiu Municipal d’Història de la Ciutat de Barcelona.

CHAPTER 3

ON MODERNITY, NORMALCY, AND THE CATALAN IMAGINARY: ARTICULATION AND EARLY RECEPTION OF THE CERDÀ PLAN

In 1854, Manuel Angelón started his ironic tour of the city in his *Guia satirica de Barcelona* inviting readers to stand in the shoes of a naïve traveler who, while on the way to Barcelona, stands in front of the Portal Nou—one of the main gates of the old city. The visitor, unacquainted with the city, would surely be under the impression he was going to "entrar en algún arruinado castillo feudal" while facing its daunting, but decaying, walls (16). But, as Angelón observed, in defense of his fellow Barcelonans, "nosotros de feudales ya no tenemos nada" (17). The Barcelona of 1854 had left behind its splendid medieval past. The new industrial city was bursting at the seams of the medieval walls, calling for an urgent reformulation of its urban model.

In the six years that followed Angelón's *Guia satirica de Barcelona*, the city demolished the walls and started a new urban adventure with the implementation of the expansion plan for the city designed by the Catalan engineer Ildefons Cerdà (1859-1867). Hygienic, demographic, and economic reasons had justified the urban transformation. The density of the city was constrained by a walled perimeter of 7,239 *varas lineales* or 6,273 meters.¹ In 1855, the estimate population inside Angelón's "feudal castle" ranged between 150,000 inhabitants according to City Hall and 168,314 according to Cerdà's *Teoría de la construcción de las ciudades* (184). As we saw in chapter two, the ratio of square meters per inhabitant inside the city was 13.5 m² per inhabitant, which made Barcelona a far denser city than London and Paris (Cerdà "Ensanche de la ciudad de Barcelona" 64). As the local City Hall tried to explain to the Madrid central government—from whom the 1854 decision to demolish the walls depended—the constant

densification of the constrained city had created an urban geography formed of “estrechas y tortuosas calles y careciendo de plazas y paseos interiores, con casas de elevadísima altura formando manzanas de numerosos edificios, y en las que en valde se buscarán los establecimientos que las necesidades de la misma población exigen y que reclama la civilización de nuestros tiempos” (Ajuntament, *Informe* 7-8). As Angelón pointed out, the urban geography of Barcelona was completely outdated. While the city was successfully trying to keep the pace of industrialization, its urban layout was anchored in a medieval past. But as the report of the City Hall pointed out, “la civilización de nuestros tiempos” was calling for drastic measures. The demolition of the ramparts and viable expansion plan seemed unavoidable.

In this chapter I will analyze the way in which the demolition of the ramparts and the proposal for the expansion were articulated and negotiated. While many historical works have acknowledged this particular moment, it is hard to find a cultural analysis of the articulation of Cerdà’s plan and its contemporaneous reception. Brad Epps and Joan Ramon Resina contributed to this debate with their respective article and book chapter “Modern Spaces: Building Barcelona” and “La ciutat burgesa” included in Resina’s recent book *La vocació de modernitat de Barcelona*. In these pages, my particular contribution tries to propose a closer look at Cerdà’s theoretical proposals that go beyond the implementation of what we know as the Eixample. In doing so, we will be able to identify how Cerdà proposed a compelling hypothesis on urban modernization that relied on the eradication of obsolete urban models. Also, a closer look at Cerdà’s theoretical proposals will show us that his project was based on a strict conceptualization of the normalcy of urban practices that permeated his urban policy proposals.

My analysis of the conception and early implementation of the Cerdà plan will focus on three different stages that coincide with three separate historical periods: First, the period of

constant tensions and negotiations that preceded the demolition of the city walls in 1854; second, the articulation of a viable model for expansion of Barcelona by the Catalan engineer Ildefons Cerdà; and third, the first stages of the implementation of Cerdà's plan on the Barcelona plain before 1870. Taking these three moments into account, in the first section of this chapter, I synthesize the long debate on the demolition of the city walls, unveiling the military considerations that regarded Barcelona as a military stronghold and the practical implications they had in the actual demolition of the walls. In the second section, I focus on the way the new city that was to emerge from the Barcelona plain was conceived. Through a detailed reading of the works of urban planner Ildefons Cerdà, I focus on the rhetoric of modernity underlying not only his particular project of expansion for Barcelona but also his general theory of urbanism. I'd like to consider the following questions: How did Cerdà understand urban planning? What was the role of urbanism in the societies that emerged from the industrial revolution? How did the urban planner envision modernity? The answers offered to these questions will give us an idea of the way Barcelona's urban expansion was conceived. Finally, in section three, I explore the way in which some Catalan authors and journalists reacted to the first stages of implementing the Cerdà plan, focusing especially on the potential alienation of the Barcelona inhabitants in front of Cerdà's rational urban grid and on some of the strategies they used to deal with the supposedly blank space of the new city.

3.1 ON LIGHT AND AIR

In spite of the proven need to demolish the city walls and expand the city, the citizens of Barcelona depended on the explicit consent of the Spanish government in order to proceed with the required urban transformations. For decades, the Spanish crown delayed the awaited

authorization, arguing that strategic military reasons necessitated preserving the stone belt that seemed to strangle the city. The walls still had a pragmatic function. They were still considered an integral part of the city's strategic military defense, and they marked the financial limits of the city and the site where all incoming goods were taxed. But, undoubtedly, the key factor in this persistent postponement was the official status of the Catalan capital as military stronghold or *plaza fuerte*. As such, Barcelona was regarded, at least officially, as a strategic defensive stronghold against a potential foreign invasion. In this state of affairs, the strategic relevance of the military structure of the city—conformed by the Citadel, the castle of Montjuïc, the garrison of the Shipyard, the Pío fortress, the numerous bulkwards, and the city walls and glassis—was privileged over the interests of the local economy and the general needs of the civilian city dwellers. The military restrictions imposed on the city hindered the expansion of the city. Arguing strategic military needs for the defense of the stronghold, building was not allowed in a restricted area of 1,500 *varas lineales* or 1,253 meters around the city—the stipulated range of a military cannon fired from the battlements (Cerdà “Ensanche de la ciudad de Barcelona” 57).

Nevertheless, as Josep Coroleu recalled in *Memorias de un menestral*, the question of the expansion of Barcelona was not only a matter of national defense for the Spanish government. For Coroleu, one of fiercest opponents to the urban transformation of Barcelona was the Field Marshal of the Spanish Army and former Prime Minister Ramón María Narváez y Campos.² As Coroleu recalls, Narváez conceived the problem of Barcelona's expansion as a military question: “don Ramón Ma. Narvaez [...] solía decir cuando le hablaban de este asunto: —Si se permitiese el ensanche de Barcelona se necesitarían cuarenta mil hombres para tenerla sujeta y España no es bastante rica para aumentar de este modo su ejército” (298). If we are to trust Coroleu's account of Narváez's position regarding the extension of Barcelona, then the real reasons behind the

nature of Barcelona as *plaza fuerte* are no longer exclusively defensive. Narváez's reactionary assertion—as an example of the diehard Spanish *moderado* thought—presents Barcelona not as a stronghold to be defended from foreign aggression but as a sort of colonial stronghold perceived as a potential enemy within the State. Barcelona's military structures, according to Coroleu's description of Narváez's view, were not designed to protect the Catalan capital but to “tenerla sujeta” (298). Little or nothing, then, had changed since the superposition of the Citadel on what had been part of the neighborhood of *La Ribera* after the Catalan defeat of 1714. For those like Narváez in the *moderado* faction, Barcelona was still considered as a potentially insurgent city that had to be controlled and disciplined regularly. In fact, the Spanish government had ordered the indiscriminate bombardment of the city twice in the past decade: once by Field Marshal Van Halen following General Espartero's orders on December 3, 1842; and a second bombardment ordered by General Prim on October 24, 1843.³ On both occasions the city was bombarded from the Castle of Montjuïc. As we can see, by mid-nineteenth-century neither the Citadel nor the Castle of Montjuïc had lost the repressive nature they acquired after the 1714 defeat. They were fully operational in order to repress the city at will.

Even with the overt opposition of the Spanish military, in the *bienio progresista* period (1854-1856), the demolition of the Barcelona walls was finally approved. At last, under the government of the Unión Liberal, presided by Leopoldo O'Donnell y Jorris, the military hegemony on the urban geography of Barcelona was officially withdrawn on December 9, 1858, when, in a Royal Decree, the Spanish Ministry of War conceded the possibility of expanding the city “en el sentido de su libre desarrollo, reservándose únicamente fijar los puntos donde considere conveniente establecer edificios militares” (qtd. in Cerdà *Teoría de la construcción de las ciudades* 453).

In spite of the military zeal to keep Barcelona as a *plaza fuerte*, the local City Council started pressing the Spanish Government to grant a limited expansion of the city as early as 1838. Between that moment and the beginning of the definitive demolition of the walls in 1854, the local authorities lead countless attempts to tear them down. After two unsuccessful tries in 1840, on December 31 of that same year, the Municipal corporation presented a public contest that would reward the best essay arguing the need for the suppression of the stone belt constraining the city. As Coroleu's *Memorias de un menestral* points out, the Barcelona City Council "anunciaba que premiaría con una medalla de oro de peso de tres onzas al sugeto [sic] que que presentase la mejor Memoria sobre el tema: "¿Qué ventajas reportaría á Barcelona y especialmente á su industria la demolición de las murallas que circuyen la ciudad?" (186). Curiously enough, even when the demolition of the walls appeared as a pressing Municipal issue, ultimately only one paper was presented to this contest: Pere Felip Monlau's *Abajo las murallas!* Monlau, a local politician and psychologist, argued that only the demolition of the ramparts accompanied by an unlimited urban expansion would benefit the quality of life of Barcelona citizens and especially the overall condition of public health (Fabre 33). In 1842, a local *Junta de Vigilancia* created a *Junta de Derribo*, which started the demolition of the Citadel without previous consent from the central government. Unfortunately, Field Marshal Antonio Van Halen, who held military control of Barcelona at the time, ordered the demolished section of the fortress to be rebuilt. These constant tensions between the inhabitants of Barcelona and the military power garrisoned in the *plaza fuerte*, along with the Catalan Carlist war of the Matiners (1846-1849),⁴ resulted in a ten year state of emergency in Catalonia (1844-1854). It seems likely that Narváez had this particular situation in mind when he stressed the need for the *moderados* to keep Barcelona "sujeta."

By 1853, the Barcelona City Council decided to create a public commission formed by members of the City Hall: local MPs appointed to the Parliament in Madrid, and members of the local civil society such as editors of the press and members of local institutions. This commission worked on a report that, titled *Informe sobre la solicitud de varios señores diputados de las provincias catalanas pidiendo el derribo total de las murallas de esta ciudad que miran a tierra*, was addressed to Field Marshal Ramón de la Rocha. This petition, as the title suggests, asked for official permission to proceed demolishing all city walls but those facing the sea in order to start an unlimited expansion along the Barcelona plain. The report justified the demand for the extension of the city due to hygienic, economic, and social needs. In the final conclusions of the report, presented to Ramón de la Rocha, the commission strategically argued the need to expand Barcelona as a matter of national interest: “el ensanche total de Barcelona no es solo de interés local, sino de interés general para el país” (15). But obviously, for the Spanish government to allow for the construction of the expansion, Madrid also needed to reconsider the status of the city as military stronghold. The commission did not fail to address this point:

¿qué es lo que debe mirar con preferencia el Gobierno, la existencia de la plaza fuerte, ó la existencia de la primera población de España por su importancia industrial, mercantil y social? La elección no puede ser dudosa: la ciudad comercial y fabril es el signo de la civilización del país, la plaza fuerte no es sino un punto militar; la primera realiza el fin de todas las sociedades humanas, la segunda solo es un medio que á veces [...] salvará la civilización nacional de los peligros que la amenacen (15).

The interdisciplinary commission appealed openly to the civilizing power of the industrial and commercial city and opposed the *plaza fuerte* as an archaic urban form doomed to

disappear. The new industrial city is the locus of progress, the trademark that identifies truly modern nations. Barcelona is presented as the first city in Spain for its industrial, commercial, and social vitality. According to the commission, in the new world that emerged after the industrial and bourgeois revolution, a city like Barcelona should be the pride of Spain “el signo de la civilización del país” and not merely a military stronghold. Regretably, Field Marshall Ramón de la Rocha was not persuaded by such arguments.

Beyond commercial and industrial reasons, the poor hygienic conditions of the old city were probably the strongest argument for the destruction of the walls compressing the town. As Ildefons Cerdà recognized in 1855, the zeal of the Spanish government had indirectly imposed an urban layout which created unsafe living conditions: “Nos han ajustado un cinto de piedra,” asserted Cerdà, “que limitando nuestro desarrollo nos ha precisado á reducir la anchura de nuestras calles y la holgura de nuestras habitaciones, haciendo desaparecer para nosotros el espacio, la luz, el aire y la ventilacion que son la vida” (“Ensanche de la ciudad de Barcelona” 70). Lack of ventilation and light were the most common justifications for the inadequate public health conditions in the old city. Since 1833, Barcelona had suffered a series of cholera outbreaks that traditional belief associated with lack of sunlight and fresh air. We have to take into account that, by mid-nineteenth-century, it was common to believe that any kind of stench could provoke a cholera outbreak. Manuel Angelón, in his *Guia satírica de Barcelona*, played with that popular speculation when he referred to the unpleasant odor of gas lightening at the Liceu as “un insoportable hedor capaz de asfixiar a un toro y muy bastante para desarrollar el cólera” (58). In 1854, in an attempt to refute popular misconceptions, the Academia de Medicina y Cirugía de Barcelona took care of analyzing the concrete hygienic conditions of the city in order to provide a new justification to the cause of the demolition of the walls. In the opening

remarks of their report, the local academics took charge of debunking the popular myth: “Las murallas [...] limitan el espacio, dificultan el acceso á la luz y pueden impurificar el ambiente, pero no bastan por si solas para comprometer la salud del vecindario” (4). Once the local false notion had been clarified, the Academy offered a detailed, gruesome account of what they considered to be the real effects of the walls in a city as dense as Barcelona:

Otra cosa sucede cuando ciñen y aprietan en un recinto escaso, á gran número de hombres. Si sus efectos aislados pueden despreciarse, unidos á otras causas morbosas duplican cuanto menos la malignidad de su influencia. La vida no es posible, sin que la respiración consuma gran parte del oxígeno, cediendo en cambio, á la atmósfera azoe y ácido carbónico; la superficie cutánea y mucosa de los seres animales exhalan constantemente sustancias ó miasmas dañosos y sus secrecciones todas se descomponen tan fácilmente que el aliento del hombre se hace mortal para quien lo respira. Si á esto se añade las emanaciones incesantes de objetos que utiliza para su industria ó necesidades, no debe extrañarse, cuando su número es considerable, que el aire inficionado mine por su base la existencia. (4-5)

While the walls, per se, do not present a clear and present danger, the growing densification inside the perimeter accentuates the effect of “otras causas morbosas.” In a city in which the Medical Academy suggests that under certain conditions of constriction inside a highly dense walled city, human breath becomes lethal, how would the local population react in the event of a cholera outbreak?

The city would find out the answer to that question later that year. That summer, a series of social, political, military, and medical conditions converged to cause the definitive collapse of the ramparts. On July 7, Antonio Cánovas del Castillo⁵ wrote the Manzanares Manifesto signed by General Leopoldo O’Donnell, which called on the mobilization of the civil population in

order to put an end to the *década moderada* and promote a liberal regeneration of the country. The city of Barcelona, after a short period of initial hesitation, was the first Spanish city to answer O'Donnell's call to arms on July 14. Shortly thereafter the Municipal corporation again demanded the demolition of the walls, which was again denied by Ramón de la Rocha. Coinciding with the uprising of July 14, a series of local textile workers revolted, attacked factories, and destroyed the new self-acting machines—known locally as *les selfactines*—in protest for the higher unemployment rates caused by this machinery. Amidst the local turmoil, rumors of a new cholera outbreak started to spread around the city. In a restless city, with the local workers on strike, the factories closed, and a health scare on the way, finally on August 7 the new Field Marshal Manuel de la Concha decided to proceed with the demolition of the city walls. After the de facto beginning of the demolition works, just one week later, a Royal Decree signed on August 14 legitimized de la Concha's decision.

With the definitive green light from Madrid, Barcelonans were slowly going to get rid of their medieval shell while the City Council and Spanish Government engaged in a new battle, this time for the election of the model that would create the layout for the new city. Meanwhile, in March 1857, a series of local investors founded the corporation *Ensanche y Mejoras de Barcelona*. With a capital of 30,000,000 reales, this corporation was devoted to the demolition of “toda la antigua fortificacion, nivelandola con el terreno desde el extremo de la calle de San Pablo hasta la antigua puerta Nueva” (qtd. in Cerdà *Teoría de la construcción de las ciudades* 270).

While private investors took charge of demolishing the old walls and leveling the ground for new construction, the approval of the definitive extension plan of Barcelona became another public battle between Barcelona City Hall and the Spanish Government in Madrid. Trained as a

Civil Engineer, Ildefons Cerdà was selected by the Spanish Government before the Catalan City Council even proposed the public competition in order to select the author of the project. The road for the election of Barcelona's expansion plan began as soon as the city walls were starting to be demolished in 1854. Shortly thereafter, on June 28, 1855, Ildefons Cerdà presented an official report justifying the need for expanding the city through the Barcelona plain and drafting the main characteristics of what would later become his *Eixample* plan. After analyzing this project, on January 23, 1856 a Royal Decree gave the green light for the creation of a commission to analyze Barcelona's urban extension. Almost three years later, on December 9, 1858, the potential extension of the city ceased to be controlled by the Spanish Military, as up to that point it had been considered a *Plaza Fuerte*. This radical and significant change implied that the fate of Barcelona was no longer in the hands of the Spanish Military. The military hindered the growth of the city, vetoing any construction outside the wall perimeter, up to a distance of 1,500 *varas lineales*. From then on, official control of the urban layout became the responsibility of the Junta Consultiva de Caminos, Canales y Puertos of the Ministerio de Fomento. This new Royal Decree limited the interference of military authorities and allowed them to choose the location of future military structures inside the new city (*Teoría de la construcción de las ciudades* 453). In 1859, Cerdà asked for the official approval in order to start his technical reports on the extension of Barcelona. On April 12 of that year, Cerdà presented his report in Madrid, obtaining a very warm reception (Gimeno 12). Three days later, the municipal corporation of Barcelona presented the norms for a public contest that made an effort to select an alternative project of expansion. Reluctant to accept the Cerdà plan, the City Hall believed that a local and democratically elected proposal could pose an alternative to the project endorsed by the Spanish Government. But the contest did not obtain the success the City Hall expected. From the

thirteen projects presented to the contest by October 31, 1859, only eight reached the minimum requirements to pass the first cut. From the eight finalists, the municipality chose the project of Antoni Rovira i Trias as the winner. Unfortunately, the expectations that the winner of the contest could in fact defeat the project sanctioned by the Royal Crown were soon over when, ultimately, the Spanish Government gave its final endorsement to Cerdà's plan with the Royal Decree of May 31, 1860.⁶

3.2 THE NEW CITY ACCORDING TO ILDEFONS CERDA

A close scrutiny of the social, economic, and medical issues that demanded the demolition of the ramparts and the implementation of the extension plan demonstrates that Barcelona's motivations were deeply rooted in necessity. The city was being strangled economically, socially, and militarily. Furthermore, dire health issues called for the demolition of the walls and the execution of an expansion plan. In no way can we perceive the expansion of Barcelona, as some historians have suggested, as the result of an overall plan destined to "fer de Barcelona una ciutat de primera fila, una capital moderna prou important per equiparar-se als nuclis urbans de més anomenada del moment: París i Londres" (Nicolau and Cubelles 20). In 1854 Barcelona needed to tear down the ramparts that had been smothering its growth as an industrial city, but at this point no Barcelonan was dreaming of actually becoming a metropolis like London or Paris. In 1859 the Cerdà plan was destined to answer the city's needs.

Ildefons Cerdà i Sunyer was a Catalan civil engineer whose professional trajectory can be characterized by his multiple endeavors. While his life evolved mainly around the planning and implementation of the Barcelona extension, Cerdà also left his mark as a progressive politician. Thanks to his family fortune, he left his position as a civil engineer for the Spanish government

in 1849 to devote the rest of his life to his vocational research on urban planning. Shortly thereafter, Cerdà entered politics and became a member of the Spanish parliament for Barcelona in 1851. He also served as an alderman for the Barcelona City Council between 1854 and 1856, and again between 1863 and 1866. Finally, with the First Spanish Republic, he became the vicepresident of the Diputació de Barcelona. According to some historians, Cerdà sympathized with early Spanish Republican Federalism and early socialism, which encouraged him to research the living conditions of the working class in Barcelona in 1856 (Fabre and Huertas 35). For others, like Carles Carreras, Cerdà's progressive values were not as rooted in left wing politics as in his blind faith in progress: "És [la seva] fe en el progrés el que permet de qualificar-lo de progressista [...] La seva fe en el progrés el mena, com a tants d'altres, a reaccionar amb força davant de la constatació que la difusió de la industrialització no havia fet sinó empitjorar les condicions de vida dels habitants de la ciutat" (150). Undoubtedly, Cerdà's faith in progress marked the theory that led to the implementation of his project.

3.2.1. Replete Terram—Replenish the Earth (Gen. 1.28)

The new plans for the urban reality that was to emerge in the Barcelona plain were, according to Brad Epps, the promise of a "more equitable, efficient, and hygienic society: not merely a continuation of the old order but also, and more importantly, a new beginning" (152). Actually, the belief of the extension of the city as a new beginning, as the foundation of a new society was inherent in Ildefons Cerdà's proposal. The opening motto of Cerdà's *Teoría general de la urbanización y aplicación de sus principios y doctrinas a la reforma y ensanche de Barcelona*—the ultimate theorization of the Catalan engineer on urbanism and the Barcelona plan—suggests the foundational nature of his project: "Independencia del individuo en el hogar:

independencia del hogar en la urbe: independencia de los diversos géneros de movimiento en la vía urbana. Rurizad lo urbano: urbanizad lo rural: *Replete terram*" (n.p.). Here Cerdà roots his project in the very same foundations of the Judeo-Christian tradition; specifically in Genesis 1.28, which according to the King James version of *The Bible* reads—"And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth"⁷ (Genesis 1.28). In Cerdà's project the religious precept "replenish the earth" is presented as the foundational base of all human endeavor and, as such, it also becomes the source for his theorization of urbanism. However, Cerdà's theory does not address explicitly all the implications of this particular verse. For, along with the idea "replenish the earth" (*replete terram*), this verse refers to the design to "subdue it" (*subicite*) and to "have dominion over" it (*dominamini*) (*King James Bible* Genesis 1:28). These three concepts were actually implicit in Cerdà's project of urban expansion. As we will see, Cerdà's *Eixample* will help Barcelona to *replete terram* through the urbanization of the land that had been rendered uninhabitable by previous military restrictions. As we have seen in his motto, Cerdà's project will also consist of the *submission* of this new territory through the urbanization of the rural. Rural landowners of the Barcelona plain saw an imposed new order consisting of the implementation of an even grid of theoretical parcels on formerly irregular rural plots (Fig. 3.1). In the third and ultimate stage of Cerdà's *Eixample* (a period unfortunately not covered in this dissertation), this new territory will also end up imposing the dominion of the Barcelona municipal corporation over the rest of the municipalities of the plain—Gràcia, Les Corts, Sant Andreu del Palomar, Sant Gervasi de Cassoles, Sant Martí de Provençals, and Sants—when they were absorbed by Barcelona in 1897.

The three aspects of the Torahnic and Biblical passage—replenish the earth, submit it, and dominate it—play a vital role in the way the the Barcelona plan of expansion was conceived and in the general theorization of urban planning designed by the Catalan engineer. These three factors can help us understand how Cerdà understood urban transformation as an essential agent of modernity.

3.2.2 On Modernity and Urban Transformation

Cerdà's awakening to the unstoppable advance of progress, as he explains in *Teoría general de la urbanización*, took place in his childhood. His first memory of perceiving the contrast between traditional society and the newly emerging order of modernity took place on his arrival to Barcelona from his native village of Centelles: "Nacido en el primer tercio de este siglo, en un tiempo en que la sociedad española se manifestaba todavía bastante apegada á sus antiguos hábitos de quietismo, recuerdo la profunda impresión que en mí causó la aplicación del vapor á la industria, que siendo yo todavía muy joven, ví, por vez primera, verificada en Barcelona" (5). As an adult, this early impression was exceeded when a new experience of modernity led to what Cerdà describes as a real epiphany on a trip to southern France in 1844:

Lo que aquí me sorprendió, á pesar de que mi mente lo había imaginado muchas veces, fué contemplar aquellos largos trenes en que [...] iban y venían multitud de viajeros de todos sexos, edades y condiciones, semejando poblaciones enteras ambulantes, cambiando precipitadamente de domicilio. Este espectáculo siempre grandioso, nuevo a la sazón para mí [...] elevó mi espíritu á las más altas consideraciones en el órden social, sobre todo al observar la dificultad con que aquel tropel de inesperados huéspedes penetraba por las estrechas puertas, se

desparramaba por las angostas calles, y buscaba su albergue en las mezquinas casas de las antiguas poblaciones" (6)

If, for a young boy from the Catalan countryside, Barcelona had been an amazing experience that opened his eyes to the power of modern industrialization, then the French railroad of 1844 became the exciting confirmation of the inexorable pace of progress for the grown man. As native of a country that would have to wait until 1848 to see the first railway, in his French trip Cerdà started to identify the series of contrasts that characterized his age. If he first coined a dichotomy between the “*hábitos de quietismo*” of Spain and the emerging use of steampower in the factories of Barcelona, in his French trip, Cerdà identified a conflict between the new means of transportation—as “*poblaciones enteras ambulantes*”—and the obsolescence of traditional housing—the “*mezquinas casas de las antiguas poblaciones*” (6). Through these examples, Cerdà articulates modernity as a literal struggle between the past, present, and future: “*la lucha que percibí comenzada ya entre lo pasado con sus tradiciones, lo presente con sus intereses creados, y lo porvenir con sus nobles aspiraciones y arranques*” (7). In Cerdà’s theory, the future and its righteous hopes lie ahead, but both the past and present are perceived as an actual impediment for human perfection. When, at a first glance, Cerdà’s perception of modernity may derive from a dialectical approach, which would negotiate modernity and tradition, a closer look clarifies this initial misjudgement. What one would have perceived as a dialectical negotiation, in Cerdà appears as an open battle. For the Catalan engineer no synthesis is possible: modernity depends on vanquishing the hegemony of tradition and its vested interests. For Cerdà, in this fight, modernity will surely prevail over the obsolete order:

El resultado de esta *lucha* [...] no puede ser dudoso. La nueva época, con sus elementos nuevos, cuyo uso y *predominio* se extiende todos los días con nuevas

aplicaciones, acabará por traernos una civilización nueva, vigorosa y fecunda, que vendrá á transformar radicalmente la manera de ser y de funcionar la humanidad [...] que acabará por *enseñorearse* del orbe entero. [my emphasis] (7)

Cerdà believes the messianic “nueva época” would destroy the old order with a clear final aim in mind, which is no other but world *domination*—“enseñorearse del orbe entero.” In Cerdà’s project the main obstacle in the way to modernity—presented here as human perfectibility—are those urban centers that respond exclusively to the needs of the past, to those of what he calls “otras civilizaciones casi meramente pasivas” (7). The active agency of modernity is contrasted with the immobilism of the past. For Cerdà, tradition and vested interests are enshrouded in the outdated shape of old cities and they will surely pose “dificultades y obstáculos y entorpecimientos al nuevo huésped que requiere y exige mayor espacio, mayor holgura, mayor libertad para la manifestación expansiva del inusitado movimiento y febril actividad que le distingue” (7). No doubt that Cerdà had in mind the history of the socio-political negotiation of the demolition of the Barcelona ramparts and the plan of expansion as the best example of the obstacles, difficulties, and hindrances faced by urban modernization.

If to be modern, according to Marshall Berman, “is to find ourselves in an environment that promises us adventure, power, joy, growth, transformation of ourselves and the world—and, at the same time, that threatens to destroy everything we have, everything we know, everything we are” (15), then Ildefons Cerdà was a very special modern man indeed. Cerdà’s theories openly advocate the sacrifice of the world as his readers knew it for the sake of progress. Cerdà presents himself as the spokesman of modernity pointing at the way of progress, a path marked by the destruction of the old order, which did not allow for any nostalgic gaze at what was left behind. In this respect, Cerdà’s attitude can be described as openly revolutionary. He is calling

for a direct revolution against those spaces, customs, and attitudes that hinder urban modernization. That being the case, as Fabre pointed out, Cerdà's theories would suggest his sympathy for early socialism. However, beyond Cerdà's revolutionary theorization lies a clear compromise that always privileges material conditions over social values. While it is true that the ultimate aim of Cerdà's theories is human perfectibility, in his quest material standards are the agents of modernity. Without a doubt, according to his definition in *The Communist Manifesto*, Karl Marx would have had no trouble identifying Cerdà as a clear product of the bourgeois epoch:

The bourgeoisie cannot exist without constantly revolutionising the instruments of production [...] and with them the whole relations of society. [...] Constant revolutionising of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social conditions, everlasting uncertainty and agitation distinguish the bourgeois epoch from all earlier ones. (n.p.)

Cerdà identified in the new instruments of labor the real agency of modernization. Social relations, as well as urban geography, had to conform to the new conditions determined by the new instruments of labor. Steam and electricity appear in the work of the urban planner as the determining factors with which we should measure the new urban landscapes. According to the Catalan engineer, the cities of the 1850s, "hechas por otra civilización, no sirven para la presente que tiene el vapor y la electricidad por agentes" (*Reforma y ensanche de Barcelona* 6). The agency of steam and electricity— especially through their implementation in the industry, transportation and communications—is what, according to Cerdà, should ultimately determine the urban layout of those contemporary cities kept in constant movement by commerce and industrial production.

Urban reform appears, along with steam and electricity, as a complementary agent of modernity capable of covering the gap between new urban needs created by the new instruments of labor and the old urban geographies arranged around ancient modes of production. As Cerdà posits in *Teoría de la construcción de las ciudades*, the general need of urban reforms is perceived as the most important problem of his age (115). We have to keep in mind that while Ildefons Cerdà was designing his urban extension of Barcelona and his general theory of urbanization Paris was implementing the inner reform designed by Baron Georges-Eugène Haussmann in 1852. As the Haussmannization of Paris operated on the traditional urban layout as a surgical procedure, Cerdà's theory of urbanism is also metaphorized in medical terms. In his introduction of urbanism as an agent of modernization—which would cover the gap between the needs of nineteenth-century cities and the archaic urban forms that stood in their way—Cerdà presented himself as the self-appointed surgeon able to cure this sickness:

después de haber dado á conocer la urbanización en su conjunto, me consagré al estudio de sus detalles, trabajo anatómico en que, introduciendo el escalpelo hasta lo mas íntimo y recóndito del organismo urbano y social, se consigue sorprender viva y en acción la causa originaria, el germen fecundo de la grave enfermedad que corroe las entrañas de la humanidad. (*Teoría general de la urbanización* 16-17)

Cerdà's task is conceived as a medical endeavor in which the doctor should identify the symptoms, the causes of the disease, and in due course intervene surgically to remove the tumor from the corrupted urban and social body. Cerdà's metaphor helps him explain the general outline of his *Teoría de la construcción de las ciudades*. Divided in three volumes, the first one was devoted to the analytic section, the second one to the synthetic section, and the last one to an

atlas of his urban projects. For Cerdà, the analytic section included in volume one represents the study of the symptoms of the urban malady, as the "estudio y conocimiento de una afección" (TCC 17). In the second volume, Cerdà imitates the surgeon after the final prognosis and proceeds to explain "el sistema ó teoria que deberia aplicarse con provecho para estirpar el mal" (TGU 17). Under the scientific and hygienic cloak of the doctor, Cerdà's project was ultimately aimed at the foundation of a new scientific discipline based on an empirical method: Urbanism. While countless other cities and urban planners had actually implemented urban transformations, Ildefons Cerdà decided to materialize the pragmatic needs of urban reform by defining a new discipline under the umbrella of his newly coined neologism, urbanism. According to Cerdà's definition, the term describes both the theory and the praxis of urban layout:

la urbanización es un conjunto de conocimientos, principios, doctrinas y reglas, encaminadas á enseñar de que manera debe estar ordenado todo agrupamiento de edificios, á fin de que corresponda á su objeto, que se reduce á que sus moradores puedan vivir cómodamente y puedan prestarse recíprocos servicios, contribuyendo así al común bienestar" (*Teoría general de la urbanización* 31).

In Cerdà's view, urbanism emerges like a new discipline. As such, the new field requires new words: "'voy á conducir al lector al estudio de una materia completamente nueva, intacta, vírgen, en que, para ser todo nuevo, han debido serlo hasta las palabras que he tenido que buscar é inventar, pues como tenia que emitir ideas nuevas, no podia encontrar su espresion en ningun panléxico" (*Teoría general de la urbanización* 27). Just like old urban structures, old lexicons are of no use for Cerdà. Just as old urban layouts are useless for the new society propelled by steam and electricity, for Cerdà traditional language becomes useless to express nineteenth-century theoretical and practical needs of urban reform. The new epistemology presented by

Cerdà extends over a new reality, a new need, which calls also for an ontological revision.

3.2.3. Rationalism and Empiricism of the Cerdà Plan

Cerdà's project has been defined as the epitome of nineteenth-century rationalism. For Brad Epps, "the *Eixample* [is] the great nineteenth-century monument to rationality and grid-like order" (148). In de Solà-Morales words, it is the epitome of the "racionalitat reguladora de la quadrícula" (335). For Carles Carreras, Cerdà's grid is still today like "una illa de racionalitat i de funcionalitat dintre del conjunt de la ciutat" (145). Ildefons Cerdà surely imposed a grid-like order on the new Barcelona, but this particular conception of urban regularity emerged precisely from its counterpart: Cerdà's perception of the old city as a chaotic irregularity, a perception shared by most of his contemporaries. Manuel Angelón's *Guía satírica de Barcelona* of 1854, referred sarcastically to the geometrical and mathematical precision with which the old city had been designed:

No hay *Guía* de nuestra condal ciudad [...] antigua o moderna, que no haga especial mención de la capital del principado por sus *calles tiradas a cordel* y magníficos empedrados. Reniego de quien tal dijo. Hay gentes a quienes la pasión les quita los ojos. [...] Por lo que hace a nuestras calles tiradas a cordel, bien puede ser que lleguen hasta tres. A juzgar por las restantes, quien quiera dibujar a poca costa el plano de Barcelona, siga el sistema que les vamos a decir, que sino es *geométrico* es cómodo y da un resultado casi *matemático*. Tome una madeja de hilo muy enmarañada, enmarañela más, mucho más, y el resultado dará por copia el plano de Barcelona, o lo que es lo mismo, un laberinto de líneas, formando ángulos, triángulos, círculos y semicírculos, pero nunca *paralelas*. [my emphasis]

(19)

Angelón's remark was accompanied by a small engraved drawing by Moliné i Ferran that tried to depict this particularly chaotic city (Fig. 3.2). Both Angelón's double-edged analysis of the old city and Moliné y Ferran's mock map outline the negative print of what should be perceived as the desirable modern city: an urban geography marked by *calles tiradas a cordel* based on parallelisms of geometrical and mathematical precision. If we understand the satirist as "a kind of self-appointed guardian of standards, ideals and truth; of moral as well as aesthetic values" (Cuddon 780), then, under the comic spirit in this passage, Angelón was certainly voicing the desirable standards of the urban rationalism that was surely expected from the future expansion of Barcelona. Curiously enough, Manuel Angelón's sardonic interest in urban planning would later evolve into a solid compromise with the expansion of the city that would put him literally on the same page with Ildefons Cerdà. But long before Cerdà and Angelón met, Cerdà's plan was going to materialize the expectations of urban rationalism voiced by the Catalan author (Fig. 3.3).

Coinciding with Angelón's look at the old city in his *Guía satírica de Barcelona*, the analytical part of Cerdà's project started with the study of the urban conditions inside the city ramparts in order to create his plan of expansion: "mi atención fué el estudio de la disposición geométrica de la ciudad actual, porque el conocimiento de sus inconvenientes habia de resultar el modo de evitarlos" (*Teoría de la construcción de las ciudades* 116). As a result of this analysis, and as an obvious rejection of that outdated model, Cerdà's 1859 project established that the streets of the new city had to be "rectas, largas y segun las direcciones normales entre sí que ofrezcan mas salubridad al vecindario" and they would form "un sistema de grandes cuadrículas, conocidas vulgarmente con el nombre de manzanas o islas" ("Ensanche" 77-78) (Fig. 3.4). In

this sense, Cerdà's proposal was actually responding to suggestions the City Hall had implemented for the public contest for reform plans. According to the *Memoria* or the City Council: "Las calles, respecto á su construccion, deben ser: Rectas con puntos de vista naturales, como el de alguna de las montañas vecinas; Rectas con puntos de vista artificiales, como el de algun paseo ó monumento público; Curvas, pero estas en corto número y solo como grandes vias de circunvalacion" (qtd. in *Teoría de la construcción de las ciudades* 261). In Cerdà's plan, the final grid would be a combination of a radial and quadrangular layout (*TCC* 421). But in this grid the definitive orientation of the streets does not take into account the panoramic approach suggested by the city council. Instead, Cerdà oriented the streets using four strictly pragmatic conditions: the directions of local winds, the usual route of imported and exported goods in the city, the gradient of the slopes of the Barcelona plain, and the convenience of the disposal of gravity powered sanitary sewers (*TCC* 374). The width of the streets was rigorously planned: 20 meters for the vast majority, 30 meters for those that surround the old perimeter, and 50 meters for the radial avenues (*TCC* 421). The inner blocks, the scrupulously measured "manzanas," are designed as irregular octagons 113 meters in their longer side (Fig. 3.5).

The rationalism of Cerdà's grid imposed a new reality on a preexistent space. Due to the overcrowding conditions of the old city and the impending need of tearing down the walls in order to allow for the desired expansion, many others dreamed of this new Barcelona. From the architect Rovira y Trias, winner of the city council's project contest, to the last of the inhabitant of the city, they all imagined how the new city should be. Cerdà's plan would offer the blueprint for this new reality, a layout based on mathematical coordinates that would have to be translated into the local language and inscribed in the local imagery.

3.2.4 Between Utopianism and a Pragmatic Regulation of Normalcy

Ildefons Cerdà's rationalism, epitomized by the regularity of his grid, was conceived as a new way to achieve human perfection. As the Catalan engineer envisioned it, within the overall project of modernity—led by its main agents, steam and electricity—his positivist theory of urbanization aimed, explicitly, at an extremely humanitarian goal: "producir algo que, en el terreno práctico de la aplicación, pueda ser útil á la humanidad [...] es lo que ha sido y es el blanco de todas mis aspiraciones" (*Teoría general de la urbanización* 10). For critics like Brad Epps, the social roots of Cerdà's theory "run most forcefully along the lines of utopian socialism, or communism, with such figures as Robert Owen, Charles Fourier, and Etienne Cabet looming large" (155). Epps goes one step beyond and considers that "Cabet's *Voyage en Icarie* (1842) is particularly significant, for it presents a rational society based on principles of equality and fraternity" (155). Etienne Cabet (1788-1856) was undoubtedly one of the French socialists that had a bigger impact in Catalonia. Cabet theorized his perspective of an ideal society in *Voyage in Icarie*, which became a blueprint for the actual praxis of Cabet's theories. In 1848, Cabet managed to convince several hundred followers to implement his utopian society in American soil. According to Víctor Balaguer, "el famoso Cabet volvía locos á muchos con sus planes icarianos" and he even managed to convince "algunos jóvenes barceloneses" to join his Icarian expedition of 1848 (25). The impact of this utopian migration in the local population of Barcelona was such that, rather ironically, after the Icarian expedition had sailed, one of the new working class neighborhoods outside the city walls—known today as Poble Nou—was given the new name Icaria (Balaguer 25). The Cabet's expedition of 1848 would take the Icarians through a hard pilgrimage through the United States—from New Orleans to Denton County, TX and ultimately to Nauvoo, IL where the Icarian community expelled Cabet himself before collapsing

in 1855. Just one year later, the outcast Cabet died in Saint Louis, MO. Certainly, as Epps documents and Balaguer confirms, “Cabet's utopianism [...] had a special pull on many Catalans” (155). However by 1859, Cabet’s appeal in Barcelona seemed to have somewhat diluted. If we are to trust Víctor Balaguer, by that time Cabet’s utopian project had become a matter of the past.

It is no difficult to imagine that after the failure of the Icarian settlements of Denton County, TX and Nauvoo, IL, the idea of Icaria as an actual model for urban reform may not have been so popular. Taking into account that Cabet’s *Travels in Icaria* is in fact a social romance and not a theoretical essay, in its pages Cabet only sketches Icara, the capital of Icaria, superficially in chapter four (17-27). While we can see certain parallels between the symmetry and wide perpendicular streets of Cabet’s Icara (19-20) and Cerdà’s project, it is hard to read Icara as an actual prefiguration of the *Eixample*, as Epps does, and not as a shadow of a structurally and socially reformed Paris (Epps 155).⁸ In any case, Cabet and Cerdà did share a certain level of social utopianism and both tried to establish the material conditions in order to foster a new social reality.

Cerdà’s utopianism, according to Margarit, lies between utopian socialism and pure egalitarianism (“La personalitat d’Ildefons Cerdà” 10). But Cerdà’s social compromise had also a very pragmatic component. On the one hand, besides his political responsibilities, Cerdà was a high ranked member of the National Militia—the popular military institution that was born in Cadiz in 1812 as warrantor of civil liberties (Margarit “Cerdà polifacètic” 15). On the other hand, his egalitarianism—based on “un sentimiento de amor al país y á la humanidad” (*TCC* 192)—led him to work on a detailed statistical report on the living conditions of the working class in Barcelona in 1856, which he included in his *Teoría de la construcción de las ciudades*.

Cerdà's egalitarianism permeated all his work on urbanism. The amelioration of the living and working conditions of the working class as well as their access to the educational system became some of the central concerns of Cerdà's theories. One year before the compilation of his report, in 1855, Cerdà's project for the "Ensanche de la ciudad de Barcelona" emphasized the "solicitud, verdaderamente cristiana, con que las naciones adelantadas en la carrera de la civilizacion, miran el mejoramiento de las viviendas de la clase obrera, como el principal medio de su regeneracion moral y material" (72). With this in mind, Cerdà initially discouraged the geographical separation of social classes inside the city. For him, the system of workers' colonies was certainly a "creacion impolítica é inconveniente bajo todos los conceptos [...] establece una linea de separacion de clases que fomenta, sostiene y acrecenta el antagonismo que debe procurarse desvanecer" (TCC 358). Knowledgeable of his audience and their fear to revolutionary uprisings, Cerdà's *Teoría de la construcción de las ciudades* also recognized the problem of the working class as a matter of law and order. Cerdà's approach was always to present the necessary amelioration of the living conditions of the working class as a mean to eradicate the sources for potential disorderly conduct:

Establezcase como medida preventiva la debida relacion entre el capital y el trabajo, las subsistencias, el vestuario y los alquileres, de cuyo indispensable equilibrio depende en gran parte el bien estar de la clase mas numerosa y mas productora de la sociedad; hagase tambien lo necesario para la instruccion de esta desgraciada clase sobre todo facilitensele los medios de vivir con mayor salubridad y baratura; aumentense los de locomocion para procurar así de una manera indirecta el enrarecimiento de los grandes centros manufactureros, y no hay que temer esas perturbaciones que preocupan la imaginacion de ciertas

personas. (258).

Ultimately, the statement that best summarizes Cerdà's egalitarianism can also be found in *Teoría de la construcción de las ciudades*: "que triunfe de una vez la causa de la humanidad sobre la del monopolio que bajo cualquier concepto trate de explotarla" (260). Nevertheless, the interest in social equality present in Cerdà's work always shows a balance between utopianism and the pragmatism necessary to maintain the bourgeois order. Cerdà's egalitarianism is always watered down with a high dose of compromise with the "monopolio," with the vested interests of the Spanish government, the municipal corporation, and the local bourgeoisie. According to Epps, "[t]he rhetoric of the *Teoría general de la urbanización* [...] is strategic, aimed at persuading military and governmental officials (in Madrid) as well as landed property owners (in Barcelona) who had a vested interest in maintaining the *status quo*" (155). In my reading of Cerdà, while he certainly tries to reach a rhetorical balance to put the military and the Spanish government at ease, he also shows a pragmatic compromise with the local bourgeoisie. Following Cerdà's medical metaphor, we could say that in Cerdà's surgical procedures both national and local interests are perceived as the vital organs of the urban and social body, whose vitality the surgeon must guarantee.

In his 1859 "Ensanche de la ciudad de Barcelona," Cerdà explicitly acknowledged that the creation of a new city or the expansion of an old one necessarily implied to ensure "las condiciones de salubridad, comodidad y economía de los habitantes cuidando muy particularmente de armonizarlas con los intereses creados" (68). In *Teoría de la construcción de las ciudades*, Cerdà was even more obliging with the particular interests of the local landowners of the Barcelona plain when he admits that he has had

el mas particular esmero en favorecer con este proyecto los respetables y

cuantiosos intereses creados dentro de la ciudad por medio de las tres grandes vías; los de las propiedades adyacentes á su perímetro, por medio de un boulevard de circunvalacion [...]; los de los propietarios lindantes con el paseo de Gracia que su conversion en calle ha venido, si asi puede decirse, á formar opinion general; y finalmente los de todos aquellos que tiene posesiones en los alrededores de Barcelona. (421)

As Cerdà recognized, while his project could be a vehicle to awake “Christian” kindness towards the working classes, at the end of the day the pragmatic implementation of the urban extension should be able to guarantee the perpetuation of the pre-existing social balance in the city. Thus, while Cerdà disapproves of the ghettoization of the working class, he also concedes that the proletariat must “habitar en las inmediaciones de los talleres donde trabajan” (*TCC* 358). With this accommodating attitude, Cerdà indirectly concedes the possibility of building separate urban districts for the working class: “solo en el caso que los talleres de las diversas industrias estuvieran agrupados todos en un punto formando barrio aparte del resto de la ciudad, es como se puede concebir que vivan agrupados en este mismo barrio los obreros” (358). Conceding the agrupation of industrial workers around their working place was, in fact, a clear invitation to expel the local proletariat from the center of the city. Since 1856, articles 102 and 104 of the *Ordenanzas municipales* (38-39) restricted the location of large industrial facilities inside the city. And as this municipal code anticipated, the future location of factories in the eventual expansion of the city had to be determined by the municipal council. Thus, according to article 106, in the Eixample

se determinarán los puntos en que puedan establecerse calderas de vapor que escedan [sic] la fuerza de tres caballos y entretanto la Municipalidad podrá

conceder permisos para plantearlos fuera del actual recinto, aunque imponiendo á sus dueños la condición de hacerlas desaparecer si estuvieren en zona donde se acordare dicho plan de ensanche que no pueda haberlas. (39-40)

Cerdà, certainly aware of the municipal regulations on industrial facilities, was in a way allowing for the possibility of leaving behind his egalitarian promises. Since every law has a loophole, the concentration of industrial facilities far from the gentrified sections of the city legitimizes, after all, the creation of proletarian slums far from the bourgeois districts.

Following this line of thought, Cerdà's plan also suggests the geographical segregation of both legal and medical deviations from the norm. First and foremost, Cerdà advocates the exclusion of both physical and mental illness from the core of the city. In this case, it is for the patients own sake that "[l]os hospitales ó casas de locos necesariamente han de estar distantes de la agitacion y del ruido de las grandes ciudades" (*TCC* 368). The ultimate goal here is to prevent that the "irritabilidad de los enfermos no pueda ser excitada por una vecindad turbulenta" (*TCC* 368). Interestingly enough, in this case the urban planner uses the potential hygienic benefits of the countryside to suggest the removal from medical and mental institutions from the city. Regarding penal institutions, while Cerdà does not suggest "que esté[n] alejado[s], al menos explícitamente, del centro de las ciudades," he surely encourages to "escoger su situación según las condiciones de salubridad y que el muro está alejado del resto de edificaciones" (*TCC* 371).

Beyond the exclusion of legal and medical deviation from the city, Cerdà's theory also attempts to regulate the daily practices of the urban space. In the engineer's rigorous analysis of what can and cannot be done in the public space, Cerdà tries to redefine normalcy. In "Ensanche de la ciudad de Barcelona," Cerdà's theorization and regulation of pedestrian street traffic is certainly meticulous:

Consideradas las calles como vías de circulación no pueden utilizarse por el público como puntos de parada ó de descanso, porque si bien tienen derecho á usarlas para trasladarse de uno á otro extremo de la ciudad no le asiste el de ocuparlas ú obstruirlas con perjuicio ó molestia de los demás á no ser por accidentes imprevistos. (81)

This strict control of what can be considered a legitimate spatial practice in an urban street may surely sound striking for a contemporary reader.⁹ Cerdà's theory rigorously monitors the potential uses of public space. As a concession to human weakness, he finally admits that "á una fatiga dada ha de corresponder un descanso mas ó menos largo, y sí las calles no pueden servir para ello, preciso será destinar otros sitios apropiados al objeto [sic], como por ejemplo las plazuelas, las plazas &. que debemos considerarlas para la circulación como los descansillos ó rellanos al subir una escalera" ("Ensanche" 81). But, curiously enough, Cerdà conceives the role of the public square also as an exclusionary—or even reclusionary—space. According to Cerdà, the existence of public squares implies that "corren menos riesgos los viejos y los niños, y la vía pública no se halla plagada con esta nube de muchachos que á todas horas la obstruyen con sus juegos y que con frecuencia causan ó sufren desgracias que una buena administración debe evitar" (*TCC* 412). Cerdà's public square thus emerges as a facility with a two-fold objective. On the one hand, squares are presented as a place of protection for those who can be perceived as the weakest members of society. But, on the other, they also help to consolidate an ultimate place of reclusion for those who have become a nuisance for traffic in the public space. Those that are not productive members of society occupy this space. Children and the elderly, in Cerdà's theory, should not actively use the public space, and, in lieu of being able to exercise their right to the city, they are openly considered patients, internees, or inmates. As such, they do not seem

entitled to choose the potential use this space at will as they are plainly sent in. In a city that, like the rest of nineteenth-century Spanish cities, actually differentiated between “vecinos”—those with all the legal rights of citizenship—and “almas”—those legally dependent on actual citizens—(Matas 11), the children and the elderly are labeled as subordinate subjects in the patriarchal order. According to Cerdà, “los gefes de las familias” are the ultimate beneficiaries of this temporary reclusion as they suffer “menos cuidados é inquietudes” (*TCC* 412).

In fact, if we take a look at Cerdà’s idea of urban policy, we will understand the centrality of the pater familias as a literal and a metaphoric figure inside and outside the private sphere. In Cerdà’s proposal for the “Ordenanzas municipales de construcción para la ciudad de Barcelona y los pueblos comprendidos en su ensanche,” the Catalan engineer outlined a synthesis of the most important urban policy regulations of Europe and the Americas, which should have served as a guideline for the building regulations of the new city (518). In his proposal, Cerdà conceives two rules that should govern the urban policies of the city: “Basta [...] sentar [...] dos principios que son [...] la base y fundamento de mi sistema: 1) El gefe de la familia manda en el interior del hogar domestico. 2) La autoridad interviene cuando las familias se ponen en contacto, y dirige y reglamenta sus relaciones y armoniza sus intereses, y sus derechos respectivos” (519). In this panorama, the municipal authority—and by extension the national government—take the role of the pater familias as the source of the social order. Hence, the family unit becomes the model for the municipal community. In this kind of community, as we have seen in his description of the utility of public squares, fathers are responsible for the welfare of their dependents—of the “almas” legally subordinated to the figure of the “vecino.” The urban community resulting from the model of the patriarchal family is then understood as a conglomeration of families solidly structured around the figure of the male. According to the urban planner, the ultimate authority

in charge of enforcing the rules of this phallogentric system will always be “omnímoda y absoluta” (521). The shadow of the male figure is then extended to the public sphere as the custodian of the public order. As such, Cerdà’s urban regulations reify the central male figure as both the regulator and the final enforcer of the public uses of the urban space. As we will see in chapter five, within this phallogentric system, women’s public spatial practices are certainly restricted.

Up to this point, this chapter has described and analyzed the social and demographic needs of the city that called for an urban expansion and addressed the way Ildefons Cerdà’s theory tried to answer to these particular needs. I have also examined the way in which Ildefons Cerdà’s rhetoric theorized the new city and the social implications that such a theorization would impose on the new urban reality. But, to Cerdà’s disappointment, the actual city that emerged from the plain was going to become something completely different than what he may have dreamed. Private speculation and the *laissez-faire* policy of the municipal corporation turned the actual *Eixample* into what we know today, the densely populated monotonous gray mass of buildings that extends on the Barcelona plain. From this moment on, we will examine the material emergence of the new city.

3.3 THE RISE OF THE NEW CITY

The Eixample we know today took a long time to consolidate. Between October 4, 1860—with the official commencement of the Eixample by the hand of Isabel II—and today, generations of Barcelonans experienced the promises and the disappointments this new city offered. Only a walk down Permanyer lane today can give us a hint of what the first *Eixample* would look like. But even Cerdà would have despised it because even this particular 1864

development did what the urban planner openly condemned—“juntar mas de dos casas unas á continuacion de otras y sobre todo venir á cerrar por completo el espacio de una manzana, son monstruosidades incompatibles con la cultura de nuestro siglo" (“Ensanche” 78). These “monstruosidades” ultimately monopolized the construction of the octagonal blocks in Cerdà’s grid and swapped the original two-story buildings for four- and five-story structures. According to de Riquer, by 1872 already 90% of the Eixample buildings did not comply with the original regulations (29). As Molet points out, the only thing left from the original project was the straight alignment of Cerdà’s streets (73). As de Riquer remembers, even the public parks and gardens disappeared from the original map, making some remarkable local investors—Manuel Girona, Antoni López, or the Marquis de Marianao—even richer (28). With the lenient cooperation of the city council, the construction in the *Eixample* grew steady, and by 1882 the number of houses outside of the old perimeter (15,487) already surpassed those in the old city (10,939) (de Riquer 29). With the progressive emergence of this new urban reality, Barcelonans started to witness how the old dreams of expansion were taking shape. A new reality emerged with the Eixample and with it, the need to denominate the new space.

3.3.1. And They Gave It a Name

With the implementation of the Cerdà plan a new geography started to impose on top of a rural landscape spotted with plots and rustic facilities. The Barcelona plain gave way to a new urban area that had been thoroughly theorized but which, at this point, was only an aspiration. Nevertheless, a new reality slowly started to emerge. At first it was the inauguration of Can Gibert by Isabel II in Plaça Catalunya in 1860. Shortly thereafter, the first stone of the building in the Borrell, Diputació, Viladomat and Consell de Cent streets was set in 1861. Subsequently,

between 1861 and 1864, the four corners of the Lluria and Consell de Cent crossing were built. With the materialization of this ambition, with the magical transformation of the rural area of the plain into the new urban space, came the obvious need of Barcelonans to name the new city.

But, didn't Cerdà's project and the political institutions that supported it give it a name? The answer, obviously, is yes—as we know the term they always used was the Spanish word *Ensanche*. As we know, by the 1860s Catalonia was still suffering the consequences of four centuries of progressive minorization of its native language. This constant decline had ultimately derived from the de facto substitution of Catalan for the Spanish language in the vast majority of local cultural production. According to the critic Joan-Lluís Marfany, the Renaixença period was marked by “la diglossia generalitzada de la societat catalana” (638). While Catalan citizens were still using their native tongue in daily interactions, Spanish had been politically imposed as the official language of politics, education, literature and the press. Trying to counteract the political imposition of Spanish since the 1830s, the cultural Renaixença tried to safeguard and promote the literary use of the Catalan language. But along with the attempts to revitalize Catalan, the Spanish government passed a series of decrees that strived to perpetuate the imposition of Spanish as the language of prestige. The decree Moscoso de Altamira of 1834, the Marquis of Vallgornera regulations of 1838, the Reglamento para las Escuelas Normales de Instrucción Pública del Reino of 1849, and the Moyano Bill of 1857 required the exclusive use of Spanish language both in the public and private educational systems. Caught between an attempt to consolidate Spanish as the official language of power and the emerging vindication of Catalan as the vehicular language for literature and the press, Barcelonans wandered for the first time in the new space that Cerdà, his political sponsors, and the local press published in Spanish had called “el Ensanche.” The local Catalan press would shortly speculate about the new place and its

name.

Between April 16, 1865 and September 16, 1866, the editor Innocenci Lopez published *Un tros de paper*, a biweekly satirical journal in Catalan. Originally created by Albert Llanas, *Un tros de paper* gathered the illustrator Tomàs Padró and a series of local authors that included Manuel Angelón, Conrad Roure, Robert Robert, Frederic Soler, and Eduard Vidal i Valenciano. From the pages of *Un tros de paper*, a group of authors started writing about the growth of the new city. Among them, Robert Robert became the trademark of this journal with twenty-eight articles published under the pseudonym X. On October 8, 1865, Robert published a remarkable article on el Passeig de Gràcia that would vindicate this boulevard over the traditional *Rambles*. The article “Lo Passeig de Gracia,” which I will analyze in depth further on, introduced for the first time any reference to the new space of the Eixample: “la Barcelona movedissa,” said Robert, “no la busquin sino al passeig de Gracia, y ara més que may de ensá del *ensanche* ¡malviatje la paraula!" [emphasis in the original] (1). Robert, in order to refer to the new urban space, rather reluctantly, has to rely on the Spanish borrowed term *ensanche*. Damned word! Cries Robert. But for Robert and his peers at Un tros de paper seemed to be no other viable option. The Spanish term *Ensanche*—used in all of Cerdà’s literature, on the Royal Decrees that ratified it, and on the local press like *El diario de Barcelona*—had already filtered into the Catalan language of Barcelonans. During the two years in which *Un tros de paper* was published, the use of the term *ensanche* is persistent, especially in Robert Robert’s articles with only one exception. On November 5, 1865, Robert—or perhaps just the typesetter—modified the term using a somewhat catalanized version of the word: *ensanxe* (“L’home de barri” 1). In the years to come, this will be the common Catalan term for the new urban reality.

A few years later, between 1867 and 1868, the Barcelonan popular weekly *La Rambla*:

Semmanari Catalá, published in Catalan by Innocenci Lopez, exclusively used the term *Ensanxe* to refer to what we know as the *Eixample*. In articles like Francesch Pous's "La Rambla y'ls seus noms" or the popular series "El Senyor Francesch," signed by Andreu Sala, the narrator recurrently used the term *Ensanxe* to refer to the extension of the city. Between May 5, 1867 and October 11, 1868, *La Rambla* was shutdown by a governmental order reacting to a weekly article that criticized a bullfight attended by the local authorities. During the period La Rambla was censored, the fellow weekly *La Pubilla: Semmanari Catalá*—published by Eudald Puig—took its place and continued using the term *Ensanxe* regularly. In *La Pubilla*, writers like Josep Servat in "La Rosa de tot l'any," Pep Monmart in "Un cop d'ull al Jardí del General," and Felip Casals in "Impressions de viatge: De Sant Gervasi á Barcelona" used the term as an accepted reference to the new area of the city. However, even when both journals used the term *Ensanxe* as everyday usage in Catalan, they also saw the term clearly as an import and always printed it in italics.

Overall, local Catalan writers continued using the word *ensanche* except for a few exceptions. On February 17, 1867, the first article of the series "El Senyor Francesch" published in *La Rambla* not only mocked the term *ensanche*, like Robert did in his first article in *Un tros de paper*, but also offered an alternative. According to the narrator, Senyor Francesch—as the epitome of the traditional Barcelonan and the repository of local customs—does not say "ensanche, perque troba la paraula massa bárbara" (1). Instead, he refers to it as "la ciutat nova" (1). But even after Sr. Francesch found the word extremely barbaric, other Catalan authors kept using the word *ensanche*. In 1872, Conrad Roure, under the pseudonym Pau Bunyegas, also referred to the new city as the *ensanxe* in his satirical guide of Barcelona, *Lo foraster*. Emili Vilanova used the term recurrently in his short fiction compiled in *Monolechs y quadros* (1887),

Pobrets y alegrets (1887), and *Gent de Casa* (1889). By 1891, Gaietà Cornet i Mas, author of a popular series of Barcelona city guides published between 1863 and 1876, still referred to the extension of the city as the *ensanxe* ("Una mirada retrospectiva: Transformació de Barcelona en mitx sigle (1830-1888)" 179). Curiously enough, in the twentieth century, the publishing house Il·lustració Catalana, still preserved the nineteenth-century term *ensanxe* in their 1906 reissues of Cornet i Mas's essay in the book *Barcelona Vella* and in Vilanova's collected works in *Obres Completes*. And last but not least, in 1974, the novelist Terenci Moix, in an almost revivalist fashion, revived the popular use of the term *ensanxe* in his only teatrical incursion: *Tartan dels micos contra l'estreta de l'Ensanxe*.

But as Senyor Francesch remarks, *ensanxe* seems too barbaric. In 1901, Antoni Careta i Vidal, a Catalan author known for his collected costume sketches collected in *Brosta* (1878), referred to the expression *ensanxe* exactly in these terms in his *Diccionari de barbrismes introduhits en la llengua catalana*. The *Diccionari de barbrismes*, Careta's incursion in linguistic prescriptivism, was an attempt to identify the "elements corruptors del ben parlar" in the Catalan language (xiii). In his task, Careta explicitly tried to cleanse Catalan from certain forms imported from other languages "netejanlo del llot de paraulas y altras formas d'expressió corruptas que hi agombolaren centurias de servilisme y deixadesa" (xiv). Just like the rest of "formas d'expressió corruptas" in his dictionary, Careta explains the current use of the Spanish borrowing as an "element corruptor del ben parlar":

De cap manera's pot admetre aquesta denominació que preval avuy per a indicar lo *engrandiment* de Barcelona. Un home de mólt seny, fill d'aquesta provincia, per instinct propri y sens cap mena de pretesa, ne deya *la ciutat nova*: a un treballador indocte, fill de Reus, li n'haviam sentit dir lo *aixample*. [Emphasis in

the original] (147)

In his denunciation of the incorrect use of the Spanish borrowing, Careta suggests three viable alternatives: “engrandiment,” “la ciutat nova,” and “lo aixample.” From these three options, curiously enough, the expression finally popularized was the one used by the unschooled worker from Reus. According to the dictionary of Catalan philologist Joan Coromines, *Diccionari etimològic i complementari de la llengua catalana*, none of Careta’s lexical suggestions became instantly popular. For Coromines, the use of the term *eixample* to refer to the extension of the Barcelona urban area did not become popular until 1925-1930 (290). Coromines traces the etymology of the term to the 1880s, suggesting its use by authors from the *Renaixença* movement in the earlier version *eixampla*.¹⁰

As we have seen, Catalan writers borrowed the original Spanish term *ensanche*, which was progressively Catalanized as *ensanxe*. Even when some authors, like Robert Robert, considered it an imported nuisance, the Spanish term was incorporated into the Catalan lexicon and, according to Coromines, remained in use until the 1920s. But why not incorporate a morphological derivation from the vernacular verb *eixamplar*—first documented by Coromines in Ramon Llull’s *Blanquerna*? There may be multiple answers to this question: from the simple, candid assimilation of an imported word to more intricate explanations. Taking into account that the Barcelona of the *Renaixença* was a diglossic society, we have to remember that all textual public debate on the expansion of the city had taken place in Spanish. From the pages of *El Diario de Barcelona* to the public statements of the municipal corporation and the communications of the Academia de Medicina y Cirugía, all textual production on the matter was produced in Spanish—the hegemonic language of politics, the press, and science. Therefore, from day one Barcelonans were exposed to this debate in Spanish and not in their native

language. While this reason would suffice to explain the assimilation of this borrowing, the use of the Catalanized form of *ensanche* could also suggest the will of local Catalan speakers to reify the original alienation they felt about the imposition of Cerdà's project. For, while a Catalan theorized the chosen project, the Spanish government in Madrid determined the actual implementation of the venture. The Spanish Government persistently ignored the will of Barcelonans, which was voiced through their municipal corporation. Thus, as we have seen, Madrid viewed Cerdà's project as an imposition. The use of *ensanxe* may suggest either a simple borrowing of the word after a systematic bombardment of textual material in Spanish, or a voluntary reification of the alienation caused by the imposition of Cerdà's project from Madrid. The local public debate on an adequate term to be used—*ensanche*, *ensanxe*, *eixample*, or *ciutat nova*—certainly illuminates the initial physical and symbolic distance that separated the local population from the emerging project imposed by the Spanish government.

3.3.2 Inscribing the Grid: The New City and Catalan Symbolic Imagery

Beyond the problematics involved in naming the new city, the rationality of Cerdà's project incorporated a new factor that further complicated the question of referentiality in the new grid of streets. Cerdà's project followed an American model in naming his streets. In his city, the streets would bear no names, only numbers and letters. Those streets that run parallel to the sea would be identified with a letter from the alphabet and the ones that run perpendicularly would bear a number. As we can see in the development that Cerdà designed for the corporation Fomento del Ensanche de Barcelona—in which he acted as Technical Director—these two blocks were located between streets M and N running from left to right and streets 31, 32 and 33 from top to bottom (Fig. 3.6). While this option testifies once again to Cerda's rationalism, it

became even more difficult to invest the grid coordinates with meaning.

The imposed grid, with its extremely rational coordinates, must have seemed too much to handle when the municipal corporation unanimously approved the division of the new “terreno del ensanche [...] en Distritos y Barrios, para la numeración de sus casas, la de manzanas y nomenclatura de calles” (*Acta del 19 de diciembre* 366). Three years after the Spanish Government imposed the new urban plan on the city, the Barcelona city hall took the first steps to take possession of the new space, to appropriate it and make it their own. On December 19, 1863, the municipal corporation approved the decision to substitute Cerdà’s original alphanumeric coordinates with a set of names selected by the local romantic historian, poet, and politician, Víctor Balaguer. Balaguer’s 1863 nomenclature, which derived from his major 1865 two-volume work, Las calles de Barcelona, erased Cerdà’s alphanumeric formal regularity and superimposed a romantic historical narrative that inscribed the new space in Catalan symbolic imagery. As the city hall minutes report, Balaguer presented the council with a list of names that included

una relación de los hechos y de las personas más notables en nuestra historia. Inútil cree recomendar al patriotismo de U.D. esta lista donde se confirman los sucesos mas gloriosos y los nombres más respetados y por lo mismo más dignos de que se les dedique una calle que construida hoy recordará muchos años, el hecho o la persona a que se hace memoria. (*Acta* 366).

With Balaguer’s nomenclature, the new urban plan that had been perceived as an imposition from the Madrid central government became inscribed in the Catalan romantic imaginery. As Jordi Castellanos sharply summarized, after Balaguer’s intervention the new city appeared as “el resultat d'una història—ordenada per una ment romàntica i renaixentista—que

assenyala un camí i, doncs, un objectiu a assolir més enllà del present: un futur que respon al present que es voldria" (137). Carles Carreras makes an excellent review of Balaguer's nomenclature and identifies the names of Catalan political institutions—Corts Catalanes, Diputació, and Consell de Cent—and former territories of the Crown of Aragon—Aragó, València, Mallorca, Provença, and Rosselló—in those streets that run parallel to the sea (72). The streets running from the sea to the mountains carry the names of Catalan historical personalities—Jaume Balmes, Bonaventura Carles Aribau, Ramon Muntaner, Rafel de Casanovas, Bernat de Villaroel, Comtes d'Urgell, Pau Claris, Roger de Llúria—, memorable battles—Bruc, Girona, and Bailén—, former territories of the Catalan medieval expansion—Còrsega, Sicília, and Sardenya—, and names of important cities of the time—Londres, París, and Buenos Aires (Carreras 72-73).

With these new historical coordinates imposed on the new city, Balaguer managed to bridge the gap between an old city charged with specific Catalan historical meaning and an emerging new space that, up to that point, represented the ultimate symbolic void. If urban modernization had covered the Barcelona plain with a meaningless aseptic grid, Balaguer reinscribed modernization in a local framework by carving into it a set of names that constructed a particular national concept of Catalan history, familiarizing the otherwise aseptic panorama of Cerdà's grid. Thus, the new inhabitants that had left the old town for the new one would surely feel at home in the familiar coordinates that Balaguer crafted.

The original anxieties and expectations Barcelona inhabitants felt about the desired extension of the city immediately crystallized in actual distrust right after the Spanish government imposed Cerdà's plan. The strict asepsy of the rational grid called for some

strategies to reappropriate the space that had once been the Barcelona plain and had now been magically transformed into the *ensanche*. The magic of modernity lies behind the almost supernatural transformation of the obsolete rural spaces of the plain into the triumphant urban developments of the *eixample*.

In Ildefons Cerdà's theorization about the new Barcelona, his particular perception of modernity prefigured the imposition of the new rationale in a ruthless battle between the new world emerging from the industrial revolution, with steam and electricity as its champions, and those obsolete rural or urban realities that stand in its way. For, in Cerdà's crude dialectics of modernity, there was almost no room for synthesis. In Cerdà's urbanism, building seems synonymous with destruction. For the new urban reality to appear, the old forms need to disappear. The urban planner ultimately believed in the destructive force of modernization. Ultimately modernization itself is the engine behind the need to replenish, submit, and dominate the earth. Modernity is presented as unstoppable. Cerdà's faith in the steam that powers the local industry and railway system and in the electricity that feeds the telegraphs seems to collide with the "antiguos ánimos de quietismo" that governed Spain (*TGU* 5). For the urban planner, modernity appeared as the radical energy that seemed able to ignite the lethargic body of the Spanish nation. Would it have been possible that nineteenth-century Spain had embraced Cerdà's ideal of "civilización nueva, vigorosa y fecunda"? (*TGU* 7). One cannot help but wonder, did the Spanish Ministerio de Fomento really read Cerdà's proposals? Cerdà's works certainly were radical, revolutionary. Like a good Catalan caught between *el seny i la rauxa*,¹¹ Cerdà's work is loaded with tensions between his pragmatism and his utopian egalitarianism. As I tried to demonstrate above, his egalitarian proposals always remained subsidiary to pragmatism while including the interests of the military, Spanish government, as well as the interests of the local

bourgeoisie. Nevertheless, his project is certainly revolutionary because his articulation of modernity proposed urbanism as the ultimate weapon of development and one of the most powerful agents of the bourgeois revolution. After its initial implementation, Cerdà's grid was implicitly recognized as a technology of power: as a project specifically sanctioned by the Spanish centralist order, but also as an instrument that was able to implement the desired bourgeois order in the city. This particular recognition provoked, as we have seen, a series of local anxieties. On the one hand, the unconscious identification of Cerdà's plan as an imposed and alien order generated the constant need to negotiate the name for the new space—balancing the imposed Spanish word with the recognition of a need to Catalanize the grid. Ultimately, the project of renaming the grid streets led by the City Hall and materialized by Víctor Balaguer, testifies to the explicit need to appropriate and familiarize the space by incorporating it into the Catalan symbolic imaginary of la Renaixença.

NOTES

¹ As we can see in Cerdà's projects, the use of *varas lineales* as a measure of length was still used after the 1849 *Ley de pesos y medidas* that implemented the metric system in Spain.

² María Narváez y Campos was Duke of Valencia, Field Marshal of the Spanish Army, member of the *moderado* party, President of the Council of Ministers between 1847 and 1851, and Spanish Prime Minister between 1844 and 1846 and once again between 1856 and 1857.

³ In November 1842, the increasing tensions between local workers and Spanish soldiers derived in a local rebellion. After an unsuccessful attempt of controlling the streets of the city, Field Marshal Van Halen bombed the city following Espartero's orders. Next year, General Prim bombed the city again in order to end with another popular revolt known as la Jamància.

⁴ The Second Carlist War, also known as the Guerra dels Matiners, broke in Catalonia right after the marriage of Isabel II with Francisco de Assís de Borbón. With this marriage, the Spanish liberals put to an end the attempt to reconcile the interests of Cristinos and Carlistas through the potential marriage of Isabel II and Carlos Luís de Borbón y de Braganza, Count of Montemlolín. Catalan Carlists responded to the actual marriage of Isabel II with a rebellion initiated by Benet Tristany in Solsona.

⁵ Cánovas del Castillo entered into the Spanish political scene with the Manzanares manifesto. Years later, he was appointed government minister between 1864 and 1866. Cánovas del Castillo became the Spanish Prime Minister in 1874 and stayed in office until 1881. Since 1881, he was appointed Prime Minister again in the alternating prime ministership shared with Práxedes Mateo Sagasta. In his fifth term, Cánovas del Castillo was shot dead by an Italian Anarchist on August 8, 1897.

⁶ Ironically enough, one hundred and fifty years after this harsh debate the former Mayor

of Barcelona and President of the Generalitat, Pasqual Maragall, confessed in the local newspaper *La Vanguardia* "¡bendito Eixample Cerdà! Fue impuesto desde Madrid. Quien iba a decir que desde la capital del Estado se nos harían favores como éste. Pero así fue. En este caso, la distancia y la ingeniería se impusieron a la proximidad y a la arquitectura, y el urbanismo resultante resultó positivo" (25).

⁷ Which in the *Latin Vulgate Bible*, as it was quoted by Cerdà, reads: “et creavit Deus hominem ad imaginem suam ad imaginem Dei creavit illum masculum et feminam creavit eos benedixitque illis Deus et ait crescite et multiplicamini et *replete terram* et *subicite* eam et *dominamini* piscibus maris et volatilibus caeli et universis animantibus quae moventur super terram” (Genesis 1.28)

⁸ “The city, almost circular in shape, is divided into two almost equal halves by the Tair (or Majestic) River [...] You can see that in the middle of the city, the river is divided into two branches that move apart, come closer, and join together once more in the original direction, so that a rather large island, circular in shape is formed. This island serves as the main square” (Cabet 19).

⁹ However, Cerdà was only explicitly stating a set of rules that most of Western urbanites have subconsciously internalized. For, in most Western major cities, can we really stand in the middle of the sidewalk? Do we really have the right to occupy the street? Of course, in most American towns we have even lost the right to walk so, why complain when the only thing we are not entitled to do is remain standing?

¹⁰ None of the primary sources published between 1854 and 1888 I have consulted in this dissertation use the term *eixample*.

¹¹ The dyad *seny* and *rauxa* has been identified as an essential distinctive trait of Catalan identity. *Seny*—or common sense—refers to the mental ability to ponder a certain situation in order to act according to a rational motivation. *Rauxa*—*rapture* or *fury*—refers to the radically opposed reaction of acting in a capricious and maybe unexpected way moved by a sudden urge.

FIGURES, CHAPTER 3



Fig. 3. 1: Detail of one of Cerdà's "planos particulares." Notice the imposition of the of the regular grid of the *Eixample* in red on top of the previous existing plots of the Barcelona plain in black. Ildefons Cerdà. "Plano particulario. Hoja XVI" 17 N/R 27 (Ref. 11224)" 1860-1865. 264 x 146 cm. Museu d'Història de la Ciutat de Barcelona.



Fig. 3. 2: “Plano de Barcelona” by Moliné i Ferran, engraving by Abadal. Illustration that accompanies Angelón’s commentary on the streets of Barcelona in 1854, before the approval and the implementation of the Cerdà plan (*Guía satírica de Barcelona* 19).



Fig. 3. 3: Detail of Ildefons Cerdà's "Proyecto de Ensanche de la Ciudad de Barcelona y su puerto aprobado por el Gobierno de S.M. la Reyna. Plano de Barcelona y sus alrededores" of 1859. Ref. 2947. Arxiu Històric de la Ciutat de Barcelona.

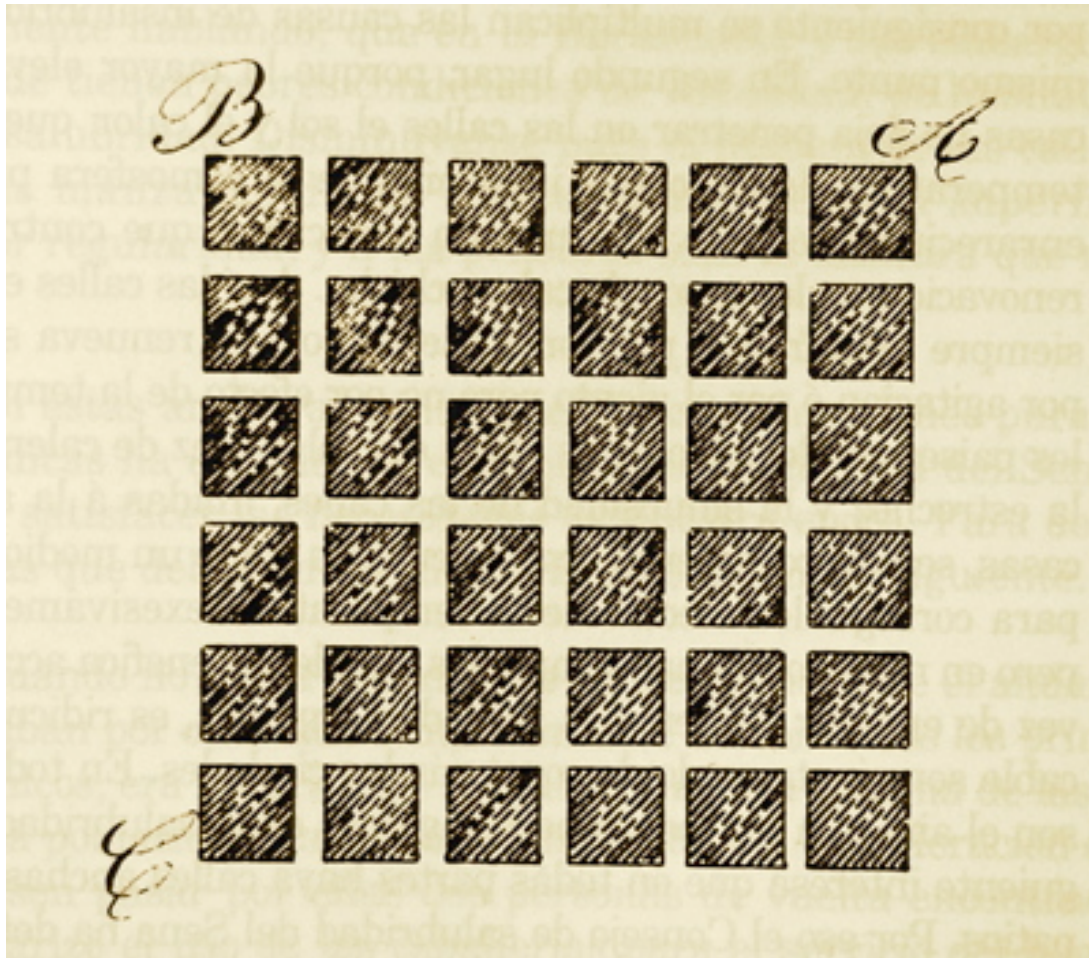


Fig. 3. 4: Cerdà's diagram of the "sistema de cuadrículas, muy conveniente siempre para la salubridad" (*Teoría de la construcción de las ciudades* 375).



Fig. 3. 5: Detail of Cerdà's plan with the octagonal "manzanas" superimposed on the rural area, as designed in the "Proyecto de Ensanche de la Ciudad de Barcelona" of 1859. Ref. 2947. Arxiu Històric de la Ciutat de Barcelona.

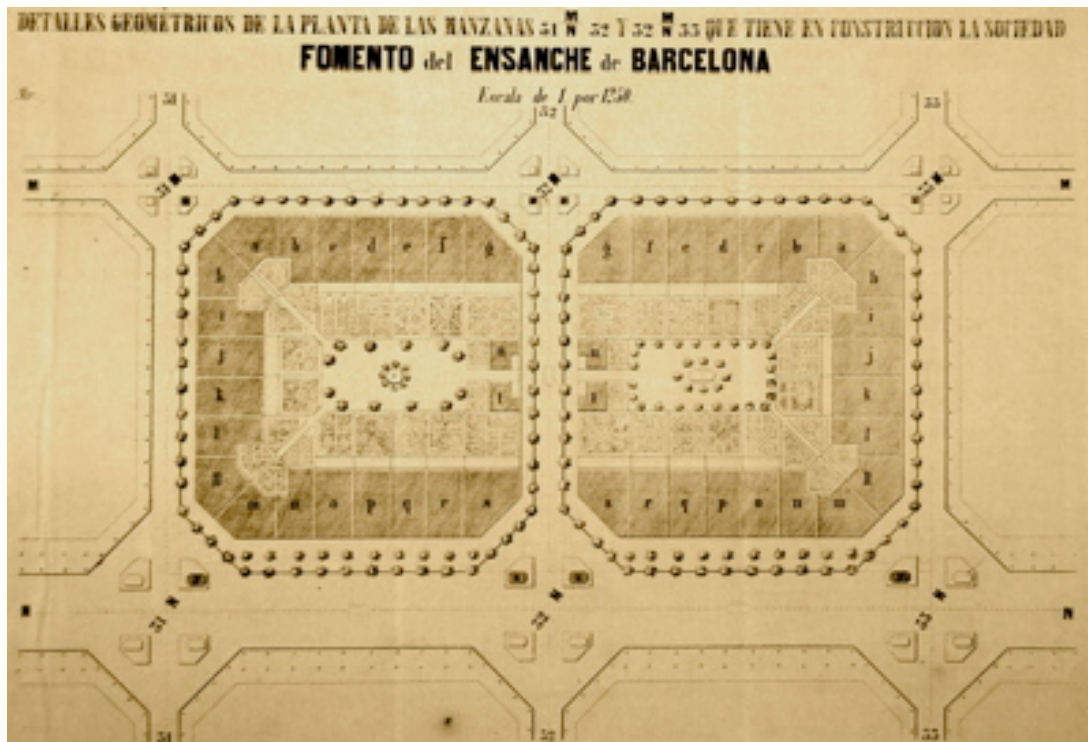


Fig. 3. 6: Ildefons Cerdà, "Detalles geométricos de la planta de las manzanas 31 M/N 32 y 32 M/N 33 que tiene en construcción la sociedad Fomento del Ensanche de Barcelona." 1863. (*Teoría de la construcción de las ciudades: Cerdà y Barcelona* 600).

CHAPTER 4

WHEN THE STREETS ARE NOT CREATED EQUAL: THE *PASSEIG DE GRÀCIA* AND THE EARLY EIXAMPLE, FROM LEISURE PLACE TO BURGEOIS SPACE

As Jordi Castellanos reveals, the urban transformation of Barcelona in the second half of the nineteenth century coincided with the local construction of modern literature: "els lligams entre la cultura de la Renaixença i Barcelona són tan explícits que no podem sinó llegir els carrers de la ciutat com una projecció de les "imatges del diseg" de què parlava Walter Benjamin referint-se al París baudelairià: "Chaque époque rêve la suivante", recollia de Michelet" (137). As I explained in the previous chapter, the spirit of the local cultural renaissance, synthesized by Víctor Balaguer, helped to turn Cerdà's apparently aseptic urban layout into a set of national coordinates based on local history. The conservative Renaixença tried to rationalize the new reality in order to preserve and consolidate a sense of national belonging through the superposition of carefully selected temporal coordinates on the new empty coordinates designed by Cerdà. But the literature of la Renaixença not only limited itself to consolidate the metanarrative of the Catalan nation on the emerging city. Local authors like Robert Robert, Emili Vilanova, and Narcís Oller reflected not only on urban spaces but, more importantly, on the uses that Barcelonans could make of the apparently aseptic maps of Cerdà and of the empty spaces portrayed in the photographs of Álvarez and Martí. In this sense, the best source to explore the early reception and representations of the development of the Eixample, and especially the Passeig de Gràcia, is not the canonical works created around the Renaixença of the Floral Games, but the local popular press that emerged in the 1860s—popular satirical journals such as *Un tros de paper* (1865-66), *Lo Noy de la Mare* (1866-67), *La Rambla* (1867-68), *La Pubilla*

(1867-68), *La Campana de Gràcia* and *L'Esquella de la Torratxa* (1870-1934). Contrasting with the publications of the official Renaixença, these popular journals questioned not only the way the city was being conceived but also the way the image of the city was being projected. These journals offer an excellent counterpoint to local and foreign photographers' visual projection of the city as an aseptic and monumental space.

4.1 ON THE PASSEIG DE GRACIA AS THE AXIS OF THE EIXAMPLE

With the implementation of the Cerdà plan, some local authors, artists, and photographers turned their gaze to the Barcelona plain in order to document its transformation. In this area, the Passeig de Gràcia was undoubtedly the most attractive space as it was a preexisting reference point for Barcelonans. This boulevard, born in 1821 as a way to facilitate the communication of the walled city with the then outlying neighborhood of Gràcia, was considered by many the most beautiful and enjoyable of Barcelona's promenades (Balaguer *Calles de Barcelona* 459). The original promenade started in the immediate outskirts of the city, right by the Àngel gate, and led to Major Street in Gràcia. This boulevard was 1,800 *varas* long and covered the 1,500 *varas* of uninhabited land that, according to military regulations, separated the city from one of its outlying districts. As a 50 meter wide tree-lined promenade, the Passeig de Gràcia was originally divided in five rows of parallel lanes—two roads for the traffic of omnibuses and horse-drawn carriages, carts and wagons, one central lane for pedestrians, and two exterior lanes with two rows of trees. As Saurí and Matas noted in their *Guía general de Barcelona*, by 1849, before the initial implementation of the *Eixample*, the Passeig de Gràcia was a consolidated area of local leisure with popular destinations like the parks of el Criadero, the Fuente de Jesús, and the cafés and theaters at Tívoli. As Víctor Balaguer points out, in 1853, right before the demolition of the

walls, the boulevard introduced gas lighting (459). By the 1860s, before the implementation of the Cerdà plan started to transform the boulevard, the Passeig de Gràcia was perceived as an alternative leisure destination to the central promenade of the old city—les Rambles. By then, public gardens like el Criadero, busy cafés like Jardín de las Delicias, attractions like the panoramas and cycloramas of el Prado Catalán, and summer theaters like the Euterpe, the Campos Elíseos, and the Tívoli attracted citizens of Barcelona especially during the summer nights.

Even though it was a peripheral space compared to the old city, by 1859 the Passeig de Gràcia had achieved and consolidated a central place in Barcelonans leisure experience. This boulevard was so significant that it became the only pre-existent space that forced the modification of the new order proposed by the Cerdà plan. According to Cerdà's theoretical approach to the construction of the new city, the rationalized map of Barcelona had to be completely democratic. In the new city, no street should be granted any privileged position with reference to others. In the words of the urban planner: "está fuera de toda duda que al fundar una poblacion no se puede determinar á priori el grado de importancia que tal vez tengan en el porvenir cada una de sus respectivas calles, porque eso dependerá de mil circunstancias" ("Ensanche de la ciudad de Barcelona" 77). The new city, according to Cerdà, had to start literally as a tabula rasa. For him, the eventual social status of a street or avenue would only take place after some time and according to determining factors like "la instalacion de una industria, la construccion de algun edificio público, la procsimidad de tales ó cuales establecimientos, la inmediatecion á ciertos sitios de recreo y el vivir en una calle determinadas personas" ("Ensanche de la ciudad de Barcelona 77). As Cerdà anticipates, the placement of factories, the leisure industry, and probable clustering of residential areas according to class would eventually grant

the new areas of the city a sense of character. But, at least in theory, the new space had to be created as an apparently aseptic area free from these social restrictive factors.

But, by the 1860s the Passeig de Gràcia had acquired such social prominence that Cerdà had to modify his original urban layout in order to accommodate the presence of this boulevard. The original layout of this avenue prevailed over the otherwise perfectly regular and seemingly sterile map of the new city. In order to accommodate the Passeig de Gràcia inside the Cerdà plan, the definitive layout of the Eixample had to sacrifice a certain amount of symmetry (Fig. 4.1). The definitive urban layout for the new geography of the city appeared in Cerdà's modified map of 1861. This time the original disposition of the streets is displaced about 30 meters to the northeast from the original placement in order to make it coincide with the preexisting position of the Passeig de Gràcia. In the 1861 version, the Cerdà plan implemented two important modifications. First, the accommodation of the original alignment and actual width of the Passeig de Gràcia in a grid that had to be modified accordingly. And secondly, a new promenade—which would eventually become the Rambla Catalunya—appeared as the continuation of the most important avenue in the old city, les Rambles (*Teoría de la construcción de las ciudades* 455). Thus, in Cerdà's plan, not all streets were created equal.

The geometric asymmetry of the Passeig de Gràcia in the new plan of Barcelona immediately suggests the difference between this boulevard and the rest of streets of the Eixample. The symbolic relevance of this promenade made it prevail over the Eixample's methodical regularity. Cerdà's project of creating the new city as a *tabula rasa*, as a blank page in which a new urban reality had to be inscribed, clashed with the solid reality of Passeig de Gràcia. With Cerdà's acknowledgement of this boulevard as an untouchable urban reality with unquestionable practical and symbolic value in the mind of Barcelonans, the Eixample ceased to

be a blank space in need of inscription. In fact, Cerdà's respect for Passeig de Gràcia increased the exchange value of this place. The inclusion of the original boulevard in the Cerdà plan offered the possibility of transforming a peripheral space into the core of the new city and, more importantly, the opportunity of transforming a leisure area into a residential development. From then on the new city was to emerge not at random or around the potential urban centers conceived by Cerdà—around squares like plaça Tetuan, which the urban planner conceived as a central space within the Eixample—but around the already familiar place of Passeig de Gràcia.

As Cerdà anticipated, beyond the Passeig de Gràcia the new Eixample grid appeared as an aseptic space in which, theoretically, each street had no intrinsic value. However, the relative position of the new residential areas in Cerdà's grid were going to be appraised according to their relative position to two central spaces that undoubtedly had an intrinsic value: the old city and the Passeig de Gràcia. In the new city, Passeig de Gràcia appeared as the only street with an actual history behind it. Accordingly, this boulevard did not need to be inscribed in the symbolic imaginary of Barcelonans, as the rest of the streets of Cerdà's grid did, because it was already there. Thus, besides keeping its original layout in the new Eixample, Víctor Balaguer also decided to preserve the original name of Passeig de Gràcia instead of trying to reinscribe it inside the Catalan nationalist historical paradigm that governed the new nomenclature of the city streets. Passeig de Gràcia's daily function in Barcelonans' lives guaranteed that it would maintain a central role in the future of both the city and its inhabitants.

In a short period of time, the Passeig de Gràcia would capitalize its symbolic value and become the axis of the central constructed area of the Eixample. As de Riquer states, the first section of the new city was built around the central area of Passeig de Gràcia, with a progressive growth to the northeast district of the Passeig de Sant Joan by the 1870s (29). This early

development, with a comprehensive implementation of utilities like water, gas and sewers, metamorphosed this district—originally formed by plots, rural structures and a leisure oriented promenade—into the “nova zona residencial de la burguesia barcelonina” (de Riquer 29).

As I anticipated in chapter four, the early growth of this neighborhood brought together the local author Manuel Angelón and Ildefons Cerdà in one of the first corporations that tried to implement new urban development. Manuel Angelón—director of a series of local journals like *La Gaceta del Comercio*, *La flaca* and *La Ilustración Artística*, as well as a playwright—became the secretary for the Sociedad de Fomento del Ensanche in which Ildefons Cerdà himself acted as technical director. The Sociedad de Fomento del Ensanche and other similar corporations, like Ensanche y Mejora de Barcelona, worked on the initial development of the *Eixample* by opening the actual streets of the new city, building some of the first constructions, and providing the basic utilities for the newly developed areas. As the 1862 promotional leaflet of the Sociedad de Fomento del Ensanche (written by Angelón himself) points out, this corporation was one of the privileged companies exploiting the most central and valuable section of the *Eixample*: “La Sociedad posee terrenos situados en los mejores puntos del Ensanche, como son: Paseo de Gracia, la Gran Vía, y en ella manzanas inmediatas al antedicho paseo; la Rambla, y en varias calles, muchas de ellas rodeadas de los mejores edificios que se han construido en las inmediaciones de Barcelona” (*Fomento del Ensanche* 4). In this area, the Sociedad de Fomento del Ensanche offered the simple middle class dwelling with all the “ventajas higiénicas que reúnen las habitaciones construidas en los terrenos del Ensanche” to the “suntuosos edificios ó casas de grande comodidad para las personas que quieren gozar de todas las recreaciones del hogar” (5). In their task as real estate promoters, Angelón and Cerdà’s company emphasized the area of *Passeig de Gràcia* as one of “los mejores puntos del Ensanche” in which new promotions

of “suntuosos edificios” were already emerging (4-5). As Angelón’s brochure indicates, the building contractors that created the new developments of the Eixample tried to capitalize the symbolic value of Passeig de Gràcia in order to transform it into economic, and more specifically, into real estate value. The well-known real estate sales policy of “location, location, location” clung to the only place in the new city that already had a symbolic value in the mind of Barcelonans: Passeig de Gràcia.

Thus, with the initial stages of development of the Eixample, the old promenade suffered a subtle symbolic transformation that would eventually derive from the ultimate demise of this place as a major leisure center. The key to this transformation was the progressive capitalization of the original use value of this space into an actual exchange value inscribed in the plots that surround it. Before the implementation of the Cerdà plan, the Passeig de Gràcia was appreciated mainly through a twofold explicit use value: firstly as a way of communication between the old city and the outlying district of Gràcia and ultimately as a space that fulfilled the local community’s social need for leisure. As we have seen, with the beginning of the development of the *Eixample*, the use value of the promenade became a referential measure to assign relative value to the otherwise blank spaces of the new city. Progressively, as Angelón pointed out, the demands of the bourgeoisie in the new residential market called for readily available “suntuosos edificios” in the “mejores puntos del ensanche” (4-5). Inevitably, Passeig de Gràcia ceased to be the referential axis, which assigned relative exchange value to the plots of the Eixample, to become the most coveted commodity in the Barcelona plain. Gradually, the original use value of the promenade as leisure area gave way to the highest exchange value in the real estate market of the city. The progressive urban development of the Passeig de Gràcia would in due course grant the local bourgeoisie the possibility of obtaining the private ownership of a highly symbolic and

formerly public place.

With the commodification of Passeig de Gràcia, real estate speculation arrived and its surrounding plots became one of the best assets of the Barcelona plain. In the 1880s, when the new residential Passeig de Gràcia had already been consolidated, Josep Coroleu's *Memorias de un menestral* recorded the initial expectations of some Barcelona landowners that, long before the demolition of the city walls, were already anticipating the rising in value of the formerly rural plots in this area. *Memorias de un menestral de Barcelona (1792-1864)* was published by Josep Coroleu as a fictionalized memoir of a pretended *menestral*, a "sujeto cargado de riquezas y más aún de experiencia [que] se aplicó á tomar nota de cuantas cosas veia ú oía que á su entender no eran para olvidarlas" (3). Presented as the unmediated notes of Eudaldo, the pretended *menestral*, this memoir records the social ascension of traditional merchants into the new urban bourgeoisie enriched not only by trade but also by real estate speculation. Coroleu's narrative was published in a serialized form in the local newspaper *La Vanguardia* starting on February 14, 1888. We must keep in mind that the publication of Coroleu's articles coincided with the excitement of the Universal Exhibition held in the city that very same year. Thus, for the readership of *La Vanguardia*, Coroleu's *Memorias de un menestral* was an archaeological voyage to discover the conditions of the city before the urban expansion and culmination of Barcelona's transformation with the first Universal exhibition. The success of these pretended memoirs¹ was such that they were collected and published in December of 1888 and subsequently reissued during the twentieth century as a first hand testimony to the urban and social reality of Barcelona before the expansion of the city. In fact, Coroleu's *Memorias de un menestral* was one of the two initial titles of the Biblioteca de La Vanguardia along with a collection of articles with the title *Recuerdos de la Exposición*. Both works, published simultaneously, would have offered readers

of *La Vanguardia* the possibility of witnessing the transformation of Barcelona and its new bourgeoisie during the 19th C. These two works would try to summarize not only the urban and social transformation of the city but also the agency of the local bourgeoisie in this process. Through these two publications, *La Vanguardia* tried to consolidate the role the local bourgeoisie of *Memorias de un menestral* had as the main agent of the social and economic foundations of the urban modernization that allowed for the Universal Exhibition of 1888. Thus, the emerging bourgeoisie is presented as the main agent not only of the economic vitality of the city but also of the urban transformation of Barcelona.

In this sense, Coroleu's work clarifies the interests of this *menestral* family in the urban expansion across the Barcelona plain. As Coroleu's Eudaldo initially recalls, right after getting married, his father suggested investing his wife's dowry "en la compra de unos huertos lindantes con el camino de Gracia" (112). While for Coroleu's narrator this does not sound like a financial decision, the patriarchal figure is able to foresee the future of this district:

—Escucha una profecía y no digas aquello de que siempre te hablé de cosas *que yo no veré*. Algún día te acordarás de mis palabras. Barcelona [...] progresa de tal manera que ya es angosto el recinto murado en donde se agitan sus habitantes como las abejas en la colmena. Yo no sé cuando será; pero tengo la completa seguridad de que algún día ha de romper esa cintura que oprime. Aquel día, estos vergeles [...] se convertirán como por ensalmo en calles y plazas, más anchas y lujosas que esas vías de la ciudad antigua, que parecen las galerías de un nido de hormigas. (112)

The patriarch, as the voice of financial wisdom, anticipates the demolition of the city walls, the expansion of the city, and, more importantly, the subsequent rise in value of the rural

plots around the Passeig de Gràcia. Accordingly, the father admonishes his son: “no vendas jamás esos huertos. Yo creo legarte con ellos una mina que ha de labrar la opulencia de mis nietos” (113). In this passage, Coroleu’s pater familias is presented as the perfect provider for the future welfare of his extended family. As the senior male, he is presented as the only wise figure able to foresee the future of the city and the financial implications of such an urban revolution. Years after his father death, Coroleu’s *menestral* takes charge of his family as a patriarchal unit. Coincidentally, with this new role, he also inherits his father’s financial wisdom. From then on, he goes on investing in the area of Passeig de Gràcia: “como tengo la íntima seguridad de que [Barcelona] acabará por imponer tan necesaria reforma, dedico mis ahorros a comprar terrenos en el paseo de Gracia [...] nuestro hijos venderán á palmos el terreno que hoy compramos nosotros á mojas” (285).

We have to take into account that, even when the title of Coroleu’s work indicates that the *Memorias de un menestral* begin in 1792 and end in 1863, the actual narrative ends in 1853. Coroleu’s *Memorias* stop right before the demolition of the city ramparts and long before the consolidation of the Eixample. While in the actual pages of *Memorias* the financial predictions on the price of the plots around Passeig de Gràcia are not confirmed, the 1888 readership of the serialized version of *La Vanguardia* would have surely smiled at the accuracy of these financial prophecies. It is the actual pragmatic knowledge of Coroleu’s 1888 readership that charges these passages with dramatic irony. By 1888, the totality of the rural plots around the promenade had vanished under the new urban development and these plots were in fact the ones that provided the highest economic turnout of the Barcelona plain. It was such real estate speculation that actually ended up vanquishing the old leisure business structure at the Passeig de Gràcia.

As Fabre points out, during the financial speculative movement of the 1870s—popularly

known as *la Febre d'Or*—the popular attractions, cafés, theaters, and parks of the Passeig de Gràcia fell prey to financial speculation and were bought off of the new bourgeois residential area (138). In this respect, the Barcelona city guides published by Cornet y Mas between 1864 and 1876 offer a detailed account of the progressive disappearance of the leisure activities of the boulevard and the unstoppable growth of urban development. In 1864, Cornet already announced that the “establecimientos de recreo” of the promenade were “próximos á desaparecer” victim of the pressure of the “hermosos edificios” that started to emerge in this area of the Eixample (182). For Cornet, with the disappearance of the leisure industry, the promenade “nada ofrece de particular como no sea su anchura y estension” (182). Just three years later, Enrique Doménech’s *Guía del viajero* preferred to emphasize the overall magnificence of the promenade precisely for its combination of the new constructions and the traditional theaters (10). As Carles Carreras confirms, by 1875 the vast majority of leisure industry around the boulevard was liquidated by the financial investment of the Andalusian José de Salamanca Mayol, Marquis of Salamanca, on the urban development of the Passeig de Gràcia (71).²

According to Cornet’s 1876 guide of Barcelona, however, the reduction of the leisure area had also accompanied a specialization of the remaining leisure industry towards theater. By then, Cornet counts up to seven theaters in the Passeig de Gràcia: The former leisure park of Campos Elíseos had been reduced to a single theater but it was still at work (180). The Prado Catalán founded in 1863, with a 1,800 seats auditorium and a popular café, remained also on duty (181). The Tívoli had also managed to survive by moving from its original site in 1874 and still offering zarzuelas in Catalan and Spanish for a reasonable price (183). Meanwhile, other new theaters had been founded in the area: the former park of Criadero had been transformed into the 2,000 seats Teatro Español by Miquel Gaset, manager of the Teatre Romea (181); the

1,200 seats Teatro Novedades, founded in 1869, offered drama, Italian opera, and ballet (182); and finally, the Teatro del Buen Retiro founded in 1876 as a summer theater right by the Plaça Catalunya (183). After this second stage of the Passeig de Gràcia's popularity as a leisure space capitalized exclusively by theaters, the urbanization of the boulevard continued.

According to Fabre, it was precisely the Universal Exhibition of 1888 that put the last nail in the coffin of the Passeig de Gràcia as a leisure area when the vast majority of remaining theaters finally shut down (138). By then the popular leisure place of old Barcelona had been progressively appropriated as an exclusively bourgeois district. Two-story houses and luxury mansions took the place of parks like el Criadero and the popular attractions of the Campos Eliseos. But, in a way, with this appropriation, the new bourgeois Barcelona of the Eixample was simply paving the way for the emergence of the new Barcelona of modernisme—with the *quadrat d'or* and its Amatller, Batlló, Lleó Morera, Milà houses by Domènech i Montaner, Gaudí and Puig i Cadafalch.

4.2 A PHARMACON AGAINST OBLIVION: LLUIS RIGALT AND THE BARCELONA PLAIN

As we have seen, with the implementation of the Cerdà plan on the Barcelona plain a new urban reality emerged. The already urbanized area of the Passeig de Gràcia was progressively transformed while the completely rural landscape of the rest of the Barcelona plain was getting ready to be transformed into the regular urban grid of Cerdà. Waiting for this slow but progressive transformation, the local population prepared to say goodbye to the familiar rural landscape that surrounded the old city. Right at this moment some local artists, aware of the radical transformation that was going to change the Barcelona plain forever, decided to

document the rural surroundings that were about to be swallowed by Cerdà's grid. The gaze of these artists seem to be caught between the excitement of facing the emergence of a new and exciting urban reality and the fear of losing the readily available countryside just beyond the old city walls. In most cases, nostalgia overtly took over the artists approach to the representation of the emergence of the Eixample.

Lluís Rigalt i Farriols (1814-1894) was the local artist that devoted more time to documenting the radical transformation of Barcelona at this time. Son of Pau Rigalt, teacher at the local art school of La Llotja,³ he replaced his father at the same school becoming a professor of perspective and landscaping in 1844. In 1850, Lluís Rigalt became a member of the Academy of Fine Arts of Barcelona, and in 1877 he was appointed director of the Llotja School of Art. Beyond his academic background, Lluís Rigalt was an illustrator—contributing his drawings, engravings and etchings to works like *España, obra pintoresca* by Francesc Pi i Margall (1842) and *Historia de Cataluña* by Víctor Balaguer (1860-63)—and an scenographer for the local theater scene since 1850. But, according to Fontbona and Durá, Lluís Rigalt's most important contribution was his work as a painter of the Catalan landscape: “A Lluís Rigalt se le considera como uno de los grandes descubridores de la geografía de Cataluña. El paisaje fue para él el principal y casi exclusivo medio de expresión para reivindicar la naturaleza geográfica e histórica del país” En este sentido, contiene un importante componente de modernidad, puesto que la reivindicación de la realidad física de Cataluña [...] entrará dentro de los presupuestos fundamentales de las grandes corrientes culturales posteriores, que proclaman la existencia de un arte propio de un país propio, el catalán, esencialmente diferentes y ricos” (36). In this sense, one could argue that Rigalt's sensibility as a landscape painter was not really concerned with modernity as it was anchored in mid-nineteenth-century Catalan the romantic aesthetics. Rigalt's

landscapes, like his 1865 *Ruïnes* (Fig. 4.2), run parallel to Víctor Balaguer's romantic idea of the nation,⁴ whose intimate character could only be found in those rural landscapes inextricably linked to the history of Catalonia. As we have seen, that connection between the Catalan romantic historian and the landscape professor at La Llotja is not the result of mere speculation: Rigalt was actually the illustrator for Balaguer's *Historia de Catalunya*.

But beyond his contributions as an illustrator, scenographer and landscape painter, the largest body of Lluís Rigalt's work corresponds to a series of almost one thousand three hundred drawings of which six hundred and ninety references are kept at the Reial Acadèmia Catalana de Belles Arts de Sant Jordi.⁵ Of this vast number of drawings around three hundred of them⁶ depict the city of Barcelona and the surrounding plain that was about to be transformed in Cerdà's Eixample (Durá 9). This large body of work is composed by small fast sketches taken with pencil and a touch of sepia on paper. When compared to his oil rural landscapes, Rigalt's drawings appear ephemeral and fragile. In these sketches, Rigalt's gaze seems to free itself from the romantic expectations that governed the local bourgeois market. Not conceived as a marketable product, most of Rigalt's drawings start as technical composition and perspective⁷ exercises, but they end up being much more than that. As Durá points out, Rigalt was much more conventional in his paintings than his drawings: his sketches—based on his technical accuracy as professor of perspective and landscaping—allow him to express “impressions immediates, lleugeres i vibrants” and they were “el mitjà ideal per experimentar fórmules d'expressió diverses” (“Els dibuixos de Lluís Rigalt i Farriols” 13). In this sense, Rigalt's drawings seem to respond to a more modern sensibility that allowed for impressionistic freedom beyond the academic restrictions of mid-nineteenth-century Catalan painting. But perhaps the most important difference between Rigalt's oil landscapes and drawings is the subject matter. While

Rigalt's landscapes were intricately connected with the romantic spirit of local intellectuals like Balaguer and with the European landscaping tradition led by artists like Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot, John Constable or Caspar David Friedrich, many of Rigalt's drawings exclusively focus on the representation of the city and its surrounding area. It is necessary to keep in mind that, according to Fontbona, while Rigalt's drawings on Barcelona abound, he never produced any oil paintings of an urban scene; he restricted his oil paintings to rural landscapes (57). According to Fontbona, Rigalt's split in production demonstrates that at this stage the city was not an interesting topic for local artists (57). After seeing Rigalt's major body of drawings, however, one may argue that perhaps the lack of interest was not the result of local artists but of the local art market's specific demands.⁸ As Fontbona and Durá suggest, Rigalt became increasingly more interested in capturing the surrounding real landscapes and leaving behind his romantic landscapes after an 1855 trip to Paris (37). But as Rigalt's dichotomous production between oil/rural and city/drawing suggests that while artists had a sincere interest in the urban space and its transformations maybe local art markets were not yet ready to accept and consume urban scenes.

Rigalt's gaze on the urban space and its still rural surrounding area shows much more beyond a technical interest in perspective and composition. Rigalt's drawings demonstrate an explicit interest in anchoring these images of the city in a specific place and a precise time period. Each one of his drawings includes a detailed record of the exact location and year it was created. Rigalt's careful cataloguing may be a response to Barcelona's period of radical transformation. Modernity was constantly changing the face of the city. Urban transformations were not only creating new spaces, like Cerdà's Eixample, but they were also modifying, and even erasing, many spaces inside and outside the old perimeter of the city. Amidst this urban

revolution, Rigalt becomes a self-appointed chronicler. He is the creator of a local visual archive, of a repository of elusive images that were about to disappear not only from the old city but also from the Barcelona plain. Each one of his drawings seems to cut a synchronic slice of the urban reality. As a collection, Rigalt's archive creates at least the illusion of contemplating a diachronic narrative of the inner city's evolution and the way Cerdà's transfigured the surrounding plain.

According to Garcia Espuche, Rigalt's corpus of drawings depict a particular restrictive understanding of Barcelona only as the city that had been confined inside the walls and especially the old medieval quarters ("Imatges i imatge de Barcelona" 46). For Garcia Espuche, Rigalt's nostalgic gaze of the city is even present when he faces the representation of spaces in the new area of the Eixample. When Rigalt portrays the area of the Eixample he focuses not on the emerging realities of the new city but on those bucolic traits remind us of the rural character of the Barcelona plain, which is soon to vanish in the new urban grid (46). As Navas points out, when Rigalt represented spaces outside of the old perimeter of the city he tended to focus on natural spaces that still preserved a rural character ("Ciutat fragmentada" 205). Before Cerdà's streets rationalized and urbanized it, the Barcelona plain, offered an excellent playground to explore the relationship and tensions between the country and city. The plain surrounding Barcelona granted the artist, as well as the rest of Barcelona citizens, the possibility to experience a rural environment that had been ironically measured and preserved by military restrictions on urban development.⁹ Just by crossing the old perimeter of the city, the plain offered a first hand experience of what seemed like a pastoral oasis. The plain was spotted with picturesque and ephemeral rural constructions, and it offered dramatic scenery that allowed Barcelonans to escape the extraordinary density of urban turmoil. For artists like Rigalt, the rural landscape about to disappear under Cerdà's grid was an excellent training ground to perfect skills

as a landscape painter.

Rigalt's activity as a draftsman intensified between 1860 and 1876, the period the Eixample was initially implemented. As a chronicler of urban space, Rigalt's increased production in this particular period may suggest an anxiety to preserve at least the image of particular spaces that threatened to be replaced by a new urban reality. Like rest of Barcelonans, Rigalt knew that the anticipated new city was going to emerge at the expense of the old rural landscape. The demiurgic power of the new urban modernity epitomized by the Cerdà plan could only be nourished by the disintegration of the old familiar and ephemeral spaces that, due to their temporary nature, were allowed to exist within an uninhabited land imposed by military regulations. Lluís Rigalt purposely recorded some of these condemned spaces, pointed at the impending pressure of the new emerging city on the old rural landscape, and even ironized explicitly about the overtly rational geometrical regularity of Cerdà's project.

It is important to keep in mind Rigalt's attitude towards representation. According to Durá, behind his apparent realism, "Rigalt reinterpreta la realitat dels paisatges, també als dibuixos, en un casos exagerant-los amb fantasia fins a fer-los a voltes difícilment recognoscibles, i en altres simplement fent-hi ressaltar només alguns elements de la realitat per prescindir d'allò que no li interessava, i fins i tot [...] modificant la col·locació real dels elements paisatgístics" ("Els dibuixos de Lluís Rigalt i Farriols" 14). As Durá explains, Rigalt's attitude takes advantage of the limitations of representing reality by consciously playing with focalization, point of view, foregrounding, framing, and depth of field. In this sense, Rigalt's gaze does not differ much from Alfred Guesdon's in the latter's 1856 aerial panoramas of Barcelona. However, while Guesdon's gaze focalized, foregrounded, and excluded from representation certain aspects of the urban layout in order to convey an unproblematic image of

Barcelona's modernity, Rigalt's sketches of the Barcelona plain focus on what Soja calls counterspaces, "spaces of resistance to the dominant order arising precisely from their subordinate, peripheral or marginalized positioning" (67). Rigalt's sketches focalize on aspects of the Barcelona plain that appear as remnants of the past, of a decadent rural reality about to be substituted by a new urban uniformity. Rigalt excluded or strategically left in the background aspects that may have been able to convey Barcelona's modernity: the aspects stressed by Guesdon in 1856 and focalized by most of the local photographers of the period—the vitality of the bourgeois city, the industrial activity, the railway system, and, by the 1870s, the regularity of the Cerdà plan, and the flamboyant buildings of the new Barcelona. Instead, in his walks around the area in which the new *Eixample* was being implemented, Rigalt selected and isolated specific spaces able to communicate an unquestionable rural image of the Barcelona plain. Among these spaces, Rigalt devoted at least thirteen drawings to the orchards of Sant Bertran¹⁰—all produced between 1869 and 1876. This section of the plain, unaffected by the Cerdà plan, was located on the western border of the city, by the sea, and it was bounded by the old perimeter of the city to the east and the mountain of Monjuïc to the west. As Durá points out, this district was also known as Terra Negra—Black Land—because of a increased factories and warehouses in the area that caused tremendous pollution (*Catàleg del Museu* 40). Despite this fact, Rigalt's gaze focuses exclusively on the rural aspects of this space and not on the industrial characteristics that gave it the name Black Land. In Rigalt's drawings, the Hortes de Sant Bertran are still an orchard (Fig. 4.3). Even in his last drawings of Sant Bertran, Rigalt carefully selects and represents agricultural constructions that project the rural aspect of this area. In four of these last drawings,¹¹ the sheds and typically Catalan rural houses—les Masies—scattered on the plain are carefully focused and isolated from any element that may have an urban or modern connotation.

For Catalan romanticism, the representation of a masia implies much more than a mere rural reference. As many of the Renaixença poets carefully explained, this rural construction was perceived as the steppingstone of Catalan national identity.¹² This position responds to what is known as Catalan *pairalisme*: the articulation of a traditionalist perception of Catalan nationalism anchored on the old Casa Pairal—or homestead—and on its legal and familial long-established practices.¹³ In “La Masia” Francesc Casas i Amigó reflects on his emotional return to his family estate, which he abandoned to move to the big city. His arrival is posed not only as a homecoming to personal roots but also as a return to the essence of Catalonia when he emphatically cries: “¡Ja veig á Catalunya! ¡Ja tinc sanch catalana! / ¡Ja soch lo qu’era abans!” (117). His Catalan identity is anchored in the rural unit of la Masia. This particular space characterizes Catalanness because it was the physical repository of local traditions and because it was “marcada per la petja de cent generacions, / hont les virtuts arrelan, [...] / y fins als llunyans segles s’allarga la cadena / de nostres tradicions!” (117). In the Masia one finds Catalan icons such as the hereu and the pubilla—the male or female heirs of the family estate. Here emblematic props like the red barretina and espadenya find their real meaning and tales, old legends, and stories of heroic deeds against French invaders are told by bonfire (117-19). For Casas, the Masia becomes the repository of Catalan nationhood because in this place “[e]l seu tronch arrela la *Patria* catalana” (120). Of course, Rigalt’s representation of this masia of the Hortes de Sant Bertran does not explicitly convey the nationalist implications of Casas’ poem; however, he was certainly aware of the symbolic value of such an icon. Furthermore, he knew that a representation of the iconic masia had a considerable exchange value in the local bourgeois market. A place like a masia right beside the growing city effused an aura of Catalan tradition—anchored in an idealized image of the local rural experience—which certainly contrasted with the

new modern spaces.

Whether Rigalt focused on these spaces as the most practical and available spots in order to practice his skills as a landscape artist or because he simply wanted to document the last rural remnants of Barcelona, he nevertheless decided to exclude any urban connotations from such a composition. Among the rural portraits of the Barcelona plain, only one of the last drawings of the orchards of Sant Bertran represents the relationship of this space and the expanding city (Fig. 4.4). In this case, Rigalt's impressionistic pencil strokes for the first time suggest the character of Sant Bertran as Black Land and its particular relationship with the growing city.

The somber tones of this drawing, with the obscure shack and the dark figure with its elongated shadow, communicate a feeling of decadence from this rural area about to be devoured by the city in expansion, whose new skyline appears in the background. In Rigalt's representation of this area, the contrast between urban and rural reality in the Hortes de Sant Bertran confront each other for the first time. Two years before, however, Rigalt had already posed a similar distinction in a drawing from the mountain of Montjuïc in which he contrasted the unkempt shrubberies of the wilderness in the mountain with the skyline of the city (Fig. 4.5).

This time the profile of the mountain obscures the still rural section of the Hortes de Sant Bertran, located right between Montjuïc and the first line of buildings of the city. In these two drawings, Rigalt conveys the illusion of an abrupt break in the depth of field where the wilderness appears sharp and the city skyline looks blurred in the distance. In both cases, the city is not adequately sharp. In his drawing from Monjuïc, Rigalt's attitude seems to explicitly renounce the actual role the mountain of Montjuïc has played for centuries in the representation of Barcelona. As I explained in chapter three, Montjuïc has traditionally offered the most popular angle to represent the city. Here, however, Rigalt decides to focus on the ordinary wild shrubs of

the mountain and resists giving the city the focus it conventionally received from this place. In this case, Montjuïc explicitly ceases to merely be the vantage point from which Barcelona is apprehended in order to become a rather mundane subject in its own right, which is able to eclipse the urban reality of the city. In most of his works, Rigalt's particular visual acuity tends to leave the new city out of focus. His selective myopia focalizes on customary spaces of the old city and the plain, the places that were anchored in local traditions, which had been part of the everyday experience of Barcelonans for decades or even centuries.

In his drawing from Montjuïc, Rigalt's selectively narrow depth of field contrasts with other representations of the city that gazed at the city from the same place at the same time. Also in 1874, the local editor Pere Vives published a collection of fifty photographs of Barcelona by Joan Martí i Centelles under the title *Bellezas de Barcelona: Relación fotografiada de sus principales monumentos, edificios, calles, paseos y todo lo mejor que encierra la antigua capital del Principado*. As the title indicates, this work presented Martí's photographs as the visual canon of Barcelona's "best" spaces. The fifty albumen photographs of this collection tried to emphasize Barcelona's "beauty" through a selection of what were considered the most relevant places of the city—spaces like the Pla de Palau, the Rambles, as well as the most relevant political and religious buildings—and a general panorama that introduced the city at a glance (Fig. 4.6).

This "Vista de Barcelona" was taken roughly from the same vantage point of Rigalt's drawing of Montjuïc. Focusing on the urban reality of the old city, Martí's photograph also presents some of the rural remnants of the Hortes de Sant Bertran—which appeared isolated in Rigalt's drawings—on the bottom right corner. As most of the nineteenth-century audience would have expected, Martí's gaze looks well beyond the mountain to try to grasp the city. In

order to represent the city at a glance, Martí, like all of his contemporaries, had to struggle with two primary technical restrictions. On the one hand, as Garcia Espuche points out, at this point photography could not compete with lithographies in representing the whole city because photographic lenses did not allow for an angle of view wide enough to apprehend its totality (*Ciudades: Del globo al satellite* 95). This limitation forced Martí to present this particular slice of the city as the most comprehensive representation of its totality. Thus with these photographic representations of the city, scope is sacrificed for precision. But on the other hand, accuracy was technically limited because of the impossibility of obtaining an infinite depth of field. As we can see in Martí's "Vista," the city starts losing focus while we penetrate the urban complexity and leave the sharply focused first buildings on the foreground. These specific technical limitations of photography explain Rigalt's choice, while drawing, to blur out the city in the background that could have offered an infinite depth of field. While Martí's "Vista" focuses on the city as accurately as these technical limitations allow, Rigalt's "Montjuïc" reflects the personal choice to not represent the new urban reality and blur it as an indistinct mass beyond the mountain.

This stance is not only present in his representations of this section of the city, but it turns even more patent in his drawings of the section of the plain in which the new urban rationale was being implemented. Of all the drawings of Rigalt at the RACBASJ archive, only one portrays what can be described as a modern avenue (Fig. 4.7). While this image may invite us to think that it is the representation of one of the new avenues of Cerdà's Eixample, the irregular alignment of the streets perceived at the intersection on the upper left corner of the drawing questions whether it belongs to the regular quadrangular grid of Cerdà. Furthermore, by 1876, most of the Eixample was not developed enough to offer such dense urbanization. At this stage, only the Rambles, at the old city and the Passeig de Gràcia, could offer such a perspective.

However, we can discard the possibility of the Passeig de Gràcia because at this point the promenade counted with four lines of trees instead of the two that appear in this drawing. While the irregular alignment of the upper left corner of the image invites us to identify it as Pelai St. and the opening in the background as the Plaça de Catalunya, a comparison of the buildings in the drawing with those on the Rambles dismisses any correlation.¹⁴ This drawing is one of the few in which Rigalt does not specify the name and location of the space represented. It only states the time it was taken: February 1876. The fact that Rigalt's drawing does not refer to a specific location may suggest that it is, in fact, a free interpretation of a space like the Rambles.

Rigalt's interest in the area of the *Eixample* did not rely on the regularity of the Cerdà grid or on the character of the new buildings. Like his drawings of the Hortes de Sant Bertran and Montjuïc (Fig. 4.4 and 4.5), he always focused on the new space from a distance. The emergence of the new urban reality is presented as a distant phenomenon from which both the artist and silhouettes that populate Rigalt's drawings seem completely detached. From 1870, at the initial stages of the implementation of the *Eixample*, the artist regularly explores the territory of the Barcelona plain. He records some of the panoramas of the area. Once again, he labels these drawings with the time and location in which they were taken (Fig. 4.8).

This time Rigalt focuses again on the rural outlook of the plain and contrasts it with the industrial buildings in the background. This sketch, taken in what would later become the left section of the *Eixample*, shows very little details that may help the spectator to locate the scene. As Durá explains, today we can only identify this location because of the profile of the Sant Pere Martir hill on the distant horizon (*Catàleg del Museu* 47). Due to this particular reference point, we can also speculate that the large industrial complex that appears in this sketch could be the factory of Batlló Hermanos, which was built by Rafael Gustavino shortly before Rigalt's

drawing, between 1868 and 1869.¹⁵ The rural environment and imposing profile of the factory dominate a landscape with a solitary countrywoman. In this 1870 drawing, the geometric regularity of Cerdà's alignments is nowhere to be found. Still, conscious of the ephemeral nature of the scene he's representing, Rigalt decides to label this sketch with the Spanish term "Ensanche" in order to dialectically contrast the old reality with the new urban paradigm that is going to emerge in this area.

As architecture professor Magda Saura i Carulla states, the emergence of the Eixample provoked a reaction against the privatization of public property and the impending destruction of the rural reality of the Barcelona plain (*Història de l'Eixample* 63). Rigalt's attitude in the representation of the emerging urban reality in relation to the rural environment of the plain suggests that he was taking part in this debate. Rigalt's drawings reflect the impact of urbanization on rural landscapes, which was an integral part of the Cerdà plan. As recounted in chapter four, Cerdà's opening motto for his *Teoría General de la Urbanización* was "Rurizad lo urbano: urbanizad lo rural... *Replete terram*" (n.p.). With this totalizing scope, the Catalan engineer aimed at a total transformation and reconceptualization of the spaces in which human activity takes place. Not only did the rural have to acquire urban traits but also the city had to open itself to the notion of the rural—or perhaps to the possibility of fashioning a new Arcadia that allowed for the experience of an implausible urban harmony with nature. But, as we know, Cerdà's utopianism soon surrendered to the pragmatism of urban development. The particular interests of real estate developers soon left Cerdà's notion of ruralizing the city aside in order to focus exclusively in the task of urbanizing the rural environment of the plain. The development of the Eixample seemed to rely on the perception of the rural environments of the city as a *tabula rasa*. The land in which the new city had to emerge was conceived as a *terra nullius*, an empty

desolate land that belonged only to real estate speculators.¹⁶ But Rigalt's gaze tried to expose the deceit of such an assumption. His drawings focalized not only the spatial reality that was about to disappear but also the human activity that was linked to these spaces. According to Teresa Navas, Rigalt's approach to the representation of the Barcelona plain responds to "una visió personal de to nostàlgic respecte a una realitat urbana en plena transformació, la qual està acabant amb uns entorns naturals i rurals tal i com es trobaven abans de 1860" ("La ciutat fragmentada" 205).

Maybe the best examples of this attitude—beyond the drawings of the Hortes de Sant Bertran—were two sketches Rigalt made of the buildings located on the Riera d'en Malla, a brook that collected the torrential waters from the mountain of Tibidabo and flowed to the Mediterranean in Bogatell, circling the perimeter of the old city. According to Durá, the rivulet was spotted with small rural cabins and sheds that allowed for the coexistence of the rural and urban environments (*Catàleg del Museu* 41). According to Saurí's *Guía general de Barcelona* of 1849, la Riera d'en Malla was actually the origin of the popular Rambles of Barcelona until the brook was deviated outside of the walls and the Rambles became the central boulevard of the old city (220). In the area of the *Eixample*, the Riera d'en Malla followed the alignment of what would become the Rambla Catalunya in the final revision of the Cerdà plan. The City Hall planned to bury the creek and turn it into an underground culvert around the 1870s, shortly after Rigalt's drawings (Tous and Fargas 50-51). The plan, however, was not implemented until 1884, and it was finished in 1888. In his drawings of la Riera d'en Malla, like in his sketches of the Hortes de Sant Bertran, Rigalt again focuses on the rural structures of the area (Fig. 4.9 and 4.10). The artist focalizes and foregrounds the rural constructions while the new buildings of the modern city emerge in the distant and soft focused background.

In both of these drawings the rural life of the plain seems to continue indifferent to the new urban reality rising in the distance. This space, as Rigalt's title confirms, is still the "Riera de Malla." With a character of its own, this title impedes the possibility of reinscribing this place as the *Eixample* even when it was located at the core of the new city. Shortly, the Riera d'en Malla will become the Rambla Catalunya, one of the most distinctive streets in the new city. But in these two drawings the new urban reality is not named; it is represented as a kind of odd addendum to these huts. Curiously, Rigalt paid special attention to the second of these drawings (Fig. 4.10), as it was not simply sketched on paper with pencil and sepia but a more elaborate work that deserved to be crafted in watercolors. In both sketches, Rigalt chooses vantage points that allow him to contrast these ephemeral, rural constructions with the new central building of the University of Barcelona. The architect Elies Rogent designed the new University whose tower appears in the background. This was one of the earliest and most prominent buildings that appeared in the *Eixample* section after walls were demolished. Construction began in 1863, and classes started in 1871, but the project was not completed until 1882. In this drawing, Luis Rigalt captured the emergence of one of the most prominent buildings of the city. Curiously enough, Rigalt decided to subordinate the representation of this prominent construction to the ephemeral rural structures of the Riera d'en Malla. Wittily, in both of these drawings, Rigalt's provocative choice of vantage points may create the amusing illusion of incorporating the proud tower of the new building as a gaudy appendix of the hut and shed. In 1869, the new urban order is subordinated to the ephemeral rural reality of the Riera d'en Malla.

Rigalt's fine irony exposes the tensions between the urban and rural spheres and defends the ephemeral spaces of the Barcelona plain. But his subtle irony can transform into malicious satire. Just one year after his sketches of the Riera d'en Malla, Rigalt explored the territory of the

new city in a roughly outlined sketch entitled, once again, “Ensanche” (Fig. 4.11). Here, Rigalt’s pencil tries to reproduce the ephemerality of certain rural shacks that have no relationship to the newly emergent urban reality. This time, he focuses on a scene that describes the harshest aspects of a rural environment, leaving aside any potential bucolic gaze. A series of figures populate this space: everyone is minding their own business while a young boy seems to urinate carelessly on a wall. This trivial, even vulgar, may seem inconsequential but a closer examination can unveil Rigalt’s humorous invitation to think about the contrasts between the impending rationality of the Cerdà plan and the rural ephemera of the Barcelona plain. In what seems like a practical joke, the vantage point of these drawings invites us to contemplate two sheds suspiciously arranged at a ninety-degree angle and placed a short distance from one another. The distance separating them creates a gap that erases the potential right angle at the corner of the building. Following Rigalt’s invitation, we perceive these huts displayed at a forty-five-degree angle. The composition of this drawing is carefully planned to convey a geometric regularity that can instinctively be compared with the most distinctive geometric rationalization of the Eixample: the geometrical regularity of the blocks of houses designed in the Cerdà plan (Fig. 4.12). The characteristic blocks of Cerdà’s regular grid—of 133 by 133 meters—are clearly distinguishable by their chamfers. In each corner of the *Eixample*, the ninety-degree angles of the regular blocks are cut by a beveled edge that transforms the usual right angle into two forty-five-degree angles that connect the chamfer with the longer facades on each side.

Rigalt’s sketch of the two sheds (Fig. 4.11) reproduces the formal logic of an Eixample city block (Fig. 4.12). The gap between the huts creates the illusion of a chamfer, and the two long shacks suggest a laughable and poor imitation of the new facades of the future city. This drawing is a satirical invitation to reflect on the “racionalitat reguladora de la quadricula” of the

Cerdà plan (Solà-Morales 335). Here, the regulatory geometrical order of the new city is questioned not only through the ephemeral nature of these rachitic structures but also by the uncivil and irreverent attitude of the boy peeing on the parody of Cerdà's alignment.

Furthermore, the inscription "Ensanche" seems to gesture a sympathetic wink of the eye to this farcical drawing.

Rigalt's gaze on the Eixample, however, was not always that sardonic. In 1872, he focalized on one of the most important spaces of the plain that was being transformed by the new urban development—the Camps Elisis. Coroleu's *Memorias de un menestral* records the opening of the Camps Elisis on April 10, 1853 as an authentic event in the city. In Coroleu's words, this particular resort was the core of the human vitality of the Passeig de Gràcia before the Eixample because its "jardines, restaurant, montañas rusas, bailes campestres y castillos de fuegos artificiales, atraían mucha gente dando extraordinaria animación al paseo de Gracia" (322). Besides being an important leisure center, the Camps Elisis (see Fig. 1) was also a cultural icon of the Catalan Renaixença movement. In the Camps Elisis the local composer Josep Anselm Clavé i Camps (1824-1874) consolidated the tradition of the Euterpe Choirs, which are known today as the Clavé Choirs and one of the feats of nineteenth-century Catalan civic society. A self-taught musician from the working class, Anselm Clavé showed an interest in mid-nineteenth-century utopian socialism by joining the party led by Abdó Terrades and by contributing to the Icarian cause in Barcelona led by his friend Narcís Monturiol. His left-wing political affiliations merged with his musical trade when he conceived the possibility of liberating the working class from their social and cultural alienation through music. Clavé founded several working-class choirs with a decidedly socialist profile—like La Fraternitat in 1846—which would later be depoliticized and transformed in the Euterpe Choirs in 1857. In the

1850s, Clavé's choirs moved to various stable locations on the Passeig de Gràcia. First located in the gardens of La Ninfa (1853), they moved to the gardens of Euterpe, which were inaugurated on July 5, 1857, causing the rechristening of the choirs. Taking the name of Euterpe, the muse of music and lyric poetry, the former project of La Fraternidad renounced their overtly political profile to conform to the classic conventions of musical and poetic aesthetics. While the gardens of Euterpe were originally an independent venue located in front of the Camps Elisis on the Passeig de Gracia, as described in Cornet's *Guia completa del viajero de Barcelona*, by 1864 the original gardens had disappeared and the Euterpe Hall had become a new section of the Camps Elisis (183). In this new location, the performances of Clavé's Choirs were precisely the most important events of this venue:

En la parte baja del establecimiento hay el magnífico salon de Euterpe donde da sus conciertos y sus bailes coreados la Sociedad del mismo nombre que dirige el Sr. Clavé. Las funciones mas notables de estos jardines son los grandes festivales en los que toman parte casi todas las sociedades corales de Cataluña que se presentan con sus estandartes. A veces se reunen mas de 60 sociedades y mas de 2000 coristas. (184)

Between May 15, 1859 and August 21, 1887, the activities of the summer concerts of the Euterpe Choirs—which took place between the months of May and October—were publicized in the weekly bilingual journal *Eco de Euterpe*, which was handed to the audiences along with the program of the Choir's activities in the Camps Elisis. Along with the musical program, the Euterpe journal regularly published poems, articles, and short stories in Spanish and Catalan. The journal published works from a variety of contributors among which we can count the poetry of Clavé himself; other publications included miscellaneous works by locals Antonio Altadill,

Victor Balaguer and Narcís Monturiol, as well as pieces by more renowned authors like Pedro Antonio de Alarcón, José de Espronceda, Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda, and translations of George Sand. Some of the articles of the *Eco de Euterpe* manifest the strong bond between the Euterpe Choirs and the leisure space of Passeig de Gràcia. For instance, in a series of four articles published with the title “El paseo de Gracia” in the summer of 1859,¹⁷ an unknown Ceferino Tresserra tries to describe the Passeig de Gràcia to a woman from Granada in an open letter. Each one of these articles focalizes on a different aspect of the boulevard, while the first one introduces the general aspect of the boulevard in 1859, each one of the following letters focuses on a specific venue in the Passeig de Gràcia: the Tívoli, the Camps Elisis, and the Euterpe. In the first installment, Tresserra is unable to verbalize the splendor of a space like Passeig de Gràcia, which by 1859 was charged with social and poetic connotations: “al tratar de describirte el *Paseo de Gracia*, que tantas bellezas encierra, que es, además de uno de los paisajes mas poéticos de nuestra campiña una pintura del carácter de un gran pueblo, ya sé yo que no podré transmitirte mas que un oscuro bosquejo del cuadro de la realidad” (34). Still before the implementation of the Cerdà plan, Tresserra stresses the constant transformation of a boulevard that is characterized by its rural surroundings: “á cada lado se extiende una vasta llanura, cubierta de sembrados, arboledas y risueños caserios, cuyos límites se pierden en la vista” (34). Amidst this bucolic setting, Tresserra describes the frantic activity of the Barcelona leisure industry in the Passeig de Gràcia:

los bailes son estrepitosos y grandes; los paseos son bosques frondosos y estensas alamedas iluminados por millares de luces de colores [...] aquí se disparan fuegos artificiales de un mérito sorprendente; hay lagos y gondolas, cafés y restaurants [...] Hay momentos, sobre todo en los domingos por la noche, que parece que un

vértigo agita todas las gentes, que un fantasma evoca todas las armonías y que el cielo destila sobre el *paseo de Gracia* sus estrellas de colores entre torrentes de oro y púrpura. (35)

In the third installment of his letters, Tresserra describes the Camps Elisis as “el primero en importancia y en grandiosidad de los sitios de recreo del *paseo de Gracia*” (71). Focusing on its gardens, he describes its stylish park as a link between the urban reality of the old city and the rural surroundings of the Barcelona plain: “Anchos caminales que se pierden al fondo de sombrías enramadas, estanques y surtidores, cabañas suizas, casitas elegantes, edificios hermosísimos, la ciudad y el monte dándose la mano por medio de una doble cinta de verde hoja, y todo esto debajo de un cielo azul y transparente tachonado de estrellas” (71). But Euterpe’s relevance in the geography of the Passeig de Gràcia—both in its original location and in its new place inside the Camps Elisis—goes beyond the magnificence of its gardens or the public success of its events. The choirs of Clavé had granted this space with a social and cultural relevance that inscribed this place in the imaginary of the Catalan civil society during the period of cultural renaissance known as *la Renaixença*. As Tresserra expresses in 1859, Euterpe was no longer simply “un sitio de recreo donde se cante, baile, refresque y pasee solamente” in order to become “un testimonio de la vida propia de nuestros cantos y de nuestra literatura” (“El Paseo de Gracia. IV” 90). Anselm Clavé’s magical ability to transform the musical instruction of the working classes into a matter of national identity helped convey the symbolic significance of this place. Through Tresserra’s eyes, under the canopy of the Euterpe a certain magical ceremony of mystical communion takes place everytime Clavé’s choir sings: “cincuenta jóvenes, casi todos obreros, de *raza pura*, la mayoría sin otra instrucción musical que la imbuida por su director, su atento oído y sus fáciles disposiciones, son, si así puede decirse, los drúidas encargados de

transmitirnos la llama sagrada del génio de nuestras montañas, del sentimiento de nuestros abuelos y del espíritu de nuestros lares” [emphasis in the original] (90). For Tresserra, the Catalan worker becomes the link to the local rural traditions that—according to *pairalisme*—lie at the core of Catalan national identity. For him, the apparently distant rural roots of Catalan nationalism can be reactivated in a new urban and industrialized environment. For Tresserra, the singing workers reify the national spirit and are able to revive the eternal flame of the Catalan inner self through their song: “toda la magnitud del sentimiento, y del alma catalana en sus versos y en sus ritmos” (91).

Furthermore, besides the ceremonial magic of the choir’s performance, the roof of the Euterpe also allowed for another kind of enchantment—working class access to a space reserved for the local bourgeoisie. In Clavé’s words, beyond the social task of advancing the local working class through music, the choir’s performances at the Camps Elisis also offered the possibility of breaking down class barriers as their performances welcomed a “galante público, sin distinción de clases” (1). In order to do so, the Euterpe diversified its leisure proposal by offering traditional dances “de buen tono” on Wednesdays and a popular dance for the working class of Sunday nights. The magic of the Euterpe allowed the industrial bourgeoisie and local proletariat to share the same place but, of course, not at the same time. On Sunday nights, the Euterpe was the only affordable and tolerable place for popular leisure. As Tresserra explains, the Euterpe offered the working class the first alternative to morally problematic venues like gambling joints, brothels, and taverns. As an option governed by “el orden y la compostura,” the Euterpe offered the first dances “en que generalmente solo toman parte activa las clases populares [...] son [...] la sencilla y modesta expansion del trabajador despues de sus largas y pesadas horas de taller; [...] los mas potentes enemigos de los lupanares, del garito, de la

taberna...” (91). Of course, on Wednesday nights, the Euterpe was utterly transformed to welcome the local elites in an amazing spectacle in which “las bellas, la elegancia y el gran tono se dan [...] cita” (91). Through all these traits, Tresserra identified in the Euterpe “la expresión gráfica del carácter de nuestros naturales” because this particular space proved “el espíritu de sociabilidad que nos anima, [...] de esa sociabilidad hija del progreso, hermana de la economía y madre de la dignidad” (92). The Clavé Choirs are one of the most important examples of the vitality of the civil society of Barcelona during *la Renaixença*. Of course, the progressive decadence of the Passeig de Gracia as a leisure district and the impending pressure of real estate speculation ended with this iconic place. Around 1875, just three years after Rigalt’s drawings of its gardens, the whole venue area was urbanized through a development plan led by José de Salamanca Mayol, Marquis of Salamanca (Carreras 71). As Saura points out, the implementation of Cerdà’s plan ended up sacrificing Clavé’s educational endeavor for financial profit derived from the Eixample’s real estate development (44).

By 1876, Cornet i Mas’s *Guia de Barcelona* documented the transformation of the Camps Elisis, the bucolic place drawn by Rigalt in 1872, into a common theater in Valencia St. surrounded by Cerdà’s streets in the new “distrito segundo.” In Cornet’s words, “lo único que queda del espacioso sitio de recreo denominado Campos Eliseos, es el teatro. Todo lo demás ha desaparecido para abrir calles y construir manzanas de casas” (180). As this guide to Barcelona explains, the urban development of the neighborhood affected the Camps Elisis beyond the demolition of its gardens. Once the theater had lost its gardens, Cornet did not hesitate to confirm the decadence of this once popular resort: “durante el invierno está cerrado, y desde que falta el sitio de recreo para el cual se construyó, no se abre todos los veranos” (181). With the decadence of the Camps Elisis, and after Clavé’s death in 1874, the impact of the Euterpe choirs started to

disappear from the Eixample. Today the memory of Josep Anselm Clavé's impact on mid-nineteenth-century Passeig de Gràcia is nowhere to be found. Eight years after Clavé's death, in 1883, the first stone of a commemorative monument to his memory—designed by the architect Josep Vilaseca and the sculptor Manuel Fuxà—was placed in the convergence of Rambla Catalunya and València St., by the original site of the gardens of La Ninfa and Euterpe. The monument was finished and inaugurated on November 24, 1888, just in time for the Universal Exhibition being held in Barcelona. According to Eusebi Corominas, a Federal Republican like Clavé and editor of the local newspaper, *La Publicitat*, the installation of Clavé's monument was perceived as an adulteration of Clavé's project and as a public appropriation of his figure by the local bourgeoisie (Fabre and Huertas n.p.). The placement of this monument at the core of the Eixample, however, was temporary. On May 6, 1956, allegedly due to the progressive incrementation of local traffic, Clavé's monument became a nuisance for the city council, and it was moved to the upper section of the Passeig de Sant Joan. Of course, one may argue that the decision to move Clavé's monument from its central location in the *Eixample* could also have been motivated by the symbolism of Clavé's figure—that of a Federal Republican, musician, and politician who played a central role in the Catalan imaginary—which would be problematic for a city hall that had to conform to the *nacional catolicismo* of Francoism.¹⁸

But when Rigalt drew the Camps Elisis in 1872, his drawings did not aim at reflecting the former cultural and social vitality of the venue or the relevance of Clavé's project. When he drew its gardens, he focused on the more bucolic aspects of its plots and the limited human presence of lonely couples and scattered ramblers strolling through the park (Fig. 4.13 and 4.14). Taken in the fall, these sketches pretend to capture the garden before the vitality and exuberance of the foliage give way to the bleak panorama of the naked deciduous trees. Likewise, Rigalt's gaze

anticipates the complete disappearance of this aspect of the Camps Elisis.

As Navas reminds us, even when Rigalt decided to reproduce non-rural facilities like the Camps Elisis (Fig. 4.13 and 4.14), known for its diverse leisure venues located at the core of the Passeig de Gràcia, he chose to leave all human construction in the background while sketching the most bucolic landscapes of its garden (“Ciutat fragmentada” 205). Rigalt’s choice, however, seems motivated more by his archival endeavor—which tried to document all those spaces that were to disappear under Cerdà’s grid—than by a purely romantic search of bucolic spaces. In Rigalt’s representation, the Camps Elisis of Barcelona is presented more like the mythical Elisian Fields found in Homer’s *Odyssey* than the leisure venue it actually was. In Rigalt’s view, the park reminds us of the bucolic resting place chosen by the Greek gods, where eternal spring reigns to please the just and where the waters of the river Lethe (Oblivion) had the property to wipe away the trials and tribulations of everyday life (Bastús 86). This was precisely the role the park played for Barcelonans until the development of the Eixample. The Camps Elisis allowed the local population to escape the overcrowded city during the summer nights in order to enjoy their leisure and forget about their daily preoccupations. But unfortunately, this particular version of the mythical Elysium was going to disappear under the real estate pressure of the new urbanized Passeig de Gràcia. However, Rigalt’s task to represent this space threatened by urban development acts, if not as a remedy against the implacable passing of time that will cause the ultimate disappearance of this place, then as a pharmacon to prevent oblivion.

As I have tried to prove, Rigalt’s gaze on the Eixample area focalized exclusively on those spaces whose nature did not conform to the new urban rationality of the Cerdà plan. Rigalt confronts the still rural character of the Barcelona plain—present in his representations of the Hortes de Sant Bertran and the Eixample—and the bucolic charm of the Camps Elisis with the

new geometric rationalization of the area. In his sketches, the emergence of the new city has practically no place but in the distant background as a new reality that will eventually take over the plain. Deviance from the new urban order interests Rigalt. He is attracted by those ephemeral spaces that Henri Lefebvre and Edward Soja call “counter-spaces,” those “spaces of resistance to the dominant order arising precisely from their subordinate, peripheral or marginalized positioning” (Soja 67). As Rigalt seems to recognize, the marginal character of these places made them liable not only to an imminent extinction but also to the inevitable neglect and exclusion from the collective memory of the city. While Rigalt’s task was certainly not to vindicate the centrality of these spaces, he certainly succeeded in translating their marginal and ephemeral nature into an equally fragile but more lasting archive. The ephemeral constructions of the plain were represented in a series of small and fragile sketches that preserved the artist’s impressions of a disappearing reality. Now, only Rigalt’s ephemeral archive of drawings gave way to Cerdà’s Eixample of the Barcelona plain.

Rigalt’s drawings function as a device liable to preserve a collective memory of those spaces that were about to be erased from the Barcelona plain due to their inadequacy in the new totalizing plan of urban modernity. Rigalt’s sketches record those ephemeral spaces and help perpetuate their memory. In this sense, these snapshots of the plain’s ephemeral spaces function like the Platonic concept of writing as a remedy against oblivion. As Socrates explains in *Phaedrus*, in ancient Egypt, the old god Theuth was the inventor of numerous arts, which included arithmetic, geometry, and the use of letters (484). For Plato, among his inventions, writing was certainly the most important (484). But when Theuth presented his discoveries to king Thamus, who decided on the usefulness of his creations, a controversy arose over their divergent perceptions of the utility of writing. While for Theuth the use of letters would help to

increase memory and wit, Thamus argued that the invention was “an aid not to memory, but to reminiscence, and you give your disciples not truth, but only the semblance of truth” (484). Rigalt’s sketches certainly provide the illusion of which Thamus warned Theuth. These ephemeral drawings, like any representation reality, only as an illusion, seem to preserv a certain temporal truth. Even contemporary critics have fallen prey to such an ilusion. In fact, this was the premise behind the exhibition of Rigalt’s archive that the Reial Acadèmia Catalana de Belles Arts de Sant Jordi and Autopistas C.E.S.A. coorganized with the title “Vistes de la Barcelona Antiga, 1867-1884” in 1998. In the catalogue, Francesc Fontbona presents Rigalt’s drawings as “una oportunitat única para reencontrar nuestra ciudad tal como era hace más de un siglo” (“Lluís Rigalt y su visión de Barcelona” 8). However, what Rigalt actually grants is not immediate access to nineteenth-century Barcelona but the possibility of reminiscing, through an idealized romantic lense, about a long forgotten reality that is completely lost. Rigalt’s gaze consciously focalizes and foregrounds certain aspects of the Barcelona plain while, at the same time, he elides other aspects that could have served as an epitome of the new urban reality. His particular approach to the representation of city uncovers, still today, the tensions between the emerging rationalization of the urban space—as articulated by Ildefons Cerdà and, later on, by Àngel Baixeras—and a traditional perception and experience of urban space that felt threatened by it. Conscious of the transient nature of certain spaces, Rigalt focused on spaces of the Barcelona plain before Cerdà’s grid vanquished them. But while Rigalt explicitly looked away from the new urban reality, other artists, through other technical means, were certainly interested in the emergence of the new modern city.

4.3 THROUGH CAMERA LENSES

According to Teresa Navas, 1860 inaugurates not only the commencement of the *Eixample* but also the practice of photographic reports of the city (“*Ciutat nova*” 9). The use of photography, conceived then as an accurate, scientific, and “objective” method to apprehend reality, is perceived as the most adequate means to record the urban expansion (9). As soon as photography was consolidated, it focused on the urban landscape not only to reproduce it meticulously but also to record its transformations (Corboz 36). By 1860, this interest moved Samuel W. King to take the first aerial photograph of the city of Boston. Eight years later, Félix Tournachon, under the pseudonym Nadar, became popular for the first aerial photographs taken in Europe. Barcelona would not be photographed from the air until the Universal Exhibition of 1888 when Antoni Esplugas captured the city from the captive balloon of the Exhibition. Until then, a series of foreign and local photographers gazed at the city, carefully selecting spaces that were considered more representative. They would reproduce traditional places with political, economic, or religious relevance—such as the city hall, the stock exchange, or the cathedral—but they would also pay attention to the new spaces of the *Eixample* as they marked the new modern outlook of the city. The attention that photography paid to the urban layout contrasts with the lack of interest traditional arts showed on the representation of the new urban reality. As we have seen, local painting was not especially interested in representing the city, and it was clearly reluctant to portray the new city. The introduction and consolidation of photography in Spain coincides with the Barcelona’s period of urban transformation. As Publio López Mondejar explains, the birth of photography was intimately linked to the industrial revolution and the evolution of science, which required a new mode of representing reality (15-16). In the case of Barcelona, the new socio-economic milieu generated after the local effects of

the industrial revolution generated both the urgent transformation of the urban reality itself and the need to represent this reality in a new way. These two phenomena coincided and fostered one another, elevating photography as the ideal medium to represent the new urban reality.

According to Juan Naranjo, in 1839, the same year Daguerre presented his invention, three translations of his manual were published in Spain (12). The impact of the new technique in Barcelona was almost instantaneous. *El Diario de Barcelona* was the first Spanish media to record Daguerre's invention on January 26 of 1839 and, only one day later, the news arrived in the *Semanario Pintoresco Español*. According to the local *Diario de Barcelona*, Daguerre had managed to “fijar sobre el papel este dibujo tan exacto, esta representación tan fiel de los objetos de la naturaleza y de las artes con toda la gradación de las tintas, la delicadeza de las líneas y la rigurosa exactitud de las formas, de la perspectiva y de los diferentes tonos de la luz” (qtd. in López Mondejar 15). As we can see from the first news report about photography in Spain, before the first Spanish photograph was actually taken the new invention was already being praised because of the accuracy and exactitude with which it represented reality. Shortly thereafter, Pere Felip Monlau i Roca—who was also instrumental in the demolition of the city walls as the author of the pamphlet *¡Abajo las murallas!* in 1841—became the apostle of daguerreotype in Catalonia. Monlau, who was at that time a correspondent of the Academia de Ciencias y Artes de Barcelona in Paris, presented the invention to the local Academy on February 24, encouraging the acquisition of the first Spanish daguerreotype (Naranjo 12). Wittingly, in that meeting Monlau played devil's advocate when he presented the daguerreotype as the best discovery of the century while, at the same time, lamenting that the peripheral position of Spain in science and industrial development may put the new invention out of reach: “lástima que en este grandioso drama de la vida y del progreso industrial y científico se vean los

españoles, por circunstancias independientes de su capacidad, condenados al oscuro papel de espectadores” (qtd. in López Mondéjar 16). The immediate reaction of the Academia de Ciencias y Artes de Barcelona was to acquire the daguerreotype that Monlau had brought from Paris and to commission Ramon Alabern to produce the first photographic test in the Iberian Peninsula on November 10, 1839. Unfortunately, the first Spanish photograph, which needed an exposure of 22 minutes, was raffled among the event audience and is considered lost. Six days after the first photograph was taken in Barcelona, the Catalans Mariano de la Paz Graells, José Camps and Juan María Pou y Camps made a second Spanish experiment in Madrid (López Mondejar 16). We should bear in mind that these initial experiments focused on spaces that were considered the most representative of their respective cities. In the case of Barcelona, as I explained in chapter two, the object of the photograph was the Xifré building, the most modern building of the city at the time, and the Llotja, site of the local stock exchange. The photograph was taken from the opposite side of the square, where two official buildings were located: the local customhouse and the Royal Palace. While Barcelona’s first photograph focused on the stock exchange as the city’s core of the economic vitality and the Xifré house as a symbol of the local bourgeoisie’s power, Madrid’s first photograph focused on the Royal Palace, perpetuating the image of Madrid as power center of the Spanish Monarchy.

After the first tests in 1839, photography slowly consolidated not only in Barcelona but also in the rest of Spain. From then on, according to Navas, photography was the only medium interested in the representation of urban reality (“Ciutat Nova” 13). However, it seems that photography was not merely the predominant medium representing urban reality but, more specifically, the emergence of the *new* urban reality. As we will explore in the pages ahead, photography was used especially to represent the spaces created by the new urban rationale while

eliding the old reality that was left aside. Photography, as a modern technique, is used to portray the new modern spaces of the city. In this sense, the gaze of nineteenth-century Barcelona photographers is antithetical to Rigalt's—as we have seen in the divergent images taken from Montjuïc by Rigalt (Fig. 5) and Martí (Fig. 6). While the draughtsman focalized on the ephemeral spaces that were about to disappear, local photographers focused predominantly on the new reality emerging after the marginal spaces that interested Rigalt had disappeared.

The only major exception was French photographer Franck, who, according to Garcia Espuche, exercised photography as urban journalism in order to document all aspects of the city's transformation (“Imatges i imatge de Barcelona” 47). He focused on both the emergence of new urban reality and the disappearance of the old one. López Mondéjar explains the presence of foreign photographers as a response to the potential of exploiting Spain's virgin photographic market. As he clarifies, the pioneers of Spanish photography did not become professional photographers, and the consolidation of photography was reached by French, German, English and Swiss photographers that, like Franck, moved to the Iberian Peninsula to exploit its market (López Mondéjar 19). As López Mondéjar also points out, Barcelona was the Spanish city in which more and improved daguerreotypists established their businesses (24). Among them was François-Marie-Louis-Alexandre Gobinet de Villecholes, under the pseudonym Franck. A well-established Parisian photographer, he arrived in Barcelona as a political refugee after the advent of the Second French Republic, around 1848, to open a studio with his partner Wigle. As Juan Naranjo notes, beyond his commercial business as a portraitist¹⁹ Franck's photographs of Barcelona tried to show “una ciudad moderna, abierta, en expansión” (17). But in order to show the vitality of the emerging city, Franck also decided to portray the destruction necessary to modernize the city. The best example of this is Franck's photograph after the demolition of the

bulwark of Tallers, one of the defensive strongholds of the medieval city wall (Fig. 4.15).

Franck's photograph distills the enthusiasm and eagerness of a city that finally, after decades of struggling for the demolition of the walls, managed to burst out the seams that hindered her growth. Probably taken from a still-standing rampart, Franck's camera looks down on the destroyed walls that seem to have exploded from inner pressure. A solitary man moves toward the open space of the Barcelona plain. Given the technical limitations of photography in 1856, we must understand that this apparently spontaneous prompt to move towards the open space was carefully planned and staged. The necessarily long exposure times of mid-nineteenth-century photography would not have been able to capture movement with such detailed sharpness.²⁰ Franck's photograph managed to condense all the expectations Barcelona citizens had about the new city that was going to occupy the plain. The destruction of the walls is portrayed as a necessary means to obtain the goals of the expanding industrial city. In fact, the dark, solitary man appears like a conqueror who has been able to demolish the old belt that strangled the city. Frank did not choose to represent the actual process of demolishing the ramparts, with the squads of invisible men who did the hard work. Instead, he presents a man wearing a top hat surrounded by the industrial background of el Raval. This top-hatted man represents the epitome of the local industrial bourgeoisie who had been fighting for the demolition of the walls and who would claim responsibility for the unlimited expansion of the city. Shortly before the approval of the Cerdà plan, Franck's representation of the demolition of the walls condenses the new world of possibilities for the new city. In this regard, Franck's photograph separates itself from those of his contemporaries. While most of the urban photography of this period pretends to document the city objectively, Franck's image incorporates a certain narrative that differentiates this epic image from the contemporaneous

images produced in Barcelona.

The slow implementation of the Cerdà plan during the 1860s set the new conditions for the emergence of a new photographic approach to Eixample. According to Garcia Espuche, it was in the 1870s when the new city became a constant subject for local photographers who decided to systematically document the urban reality through the commercialization of photograph albums (“Imatges i imatge de Barcelona” 47). According to López Mondéjar, before processed engraving allowed for an accurate reproduction of photography in the press, the works of mid-nineteenth-century photographers were commercialized through albums or numbered serialized vistas (85).

F. J. Álvarez was one of the first photographers that compiled a series of urban panoramas of Barcelona, which were commercialized in his *Álbum fotográfico de los monumentos y edificios más notables que existen en Barcelona* published in 1872.²¹ As Navas explains, Álvarez’s gaze on the city catalogues what he perceives as the most noteworthy architecture of the city, both in the old and new city, but he paid special attention to the new mansions that the local bourgeoisie were constructing in the Eixample (“Ciutat nova” 14).²² Of all the photographs that compose Álvarez’s album, as Garcia Espuche points out, two of them (Fig. 4.16 and 4.17) particularly focus on the dissolution of the formerly clear city limits through the slow development of the *Eixample* (“Imatge i imatges de Barcelona” 48).

These particular photographs reproduce a panorama of the city taken from the towers of the new building of the University of Barcelona. Álvarez’s photographs—taken three years after Lluís Rigalt’s drawings of the Riera d’en Malla, which reproduced a section of the new University building in the background—aimed at documenting the new panorama of the city from a new vantage point offered by one of its most prominent new buildings. Still in 1872,

Álvarez's conception of the city is intimately linked with the central area that had been delimited by the walls. The photographer takes advantage of the new vantage point offered by the University building, but he is still compelled to look at the main urban concentration of the old city. In both images, the gaze includes mostly the old section of the city, which can be identified right beyond the new avenue of la Gran Via—recognizable as the tree-lined avenue on the bottom of the first photograph and as the street that crosses the center of the image in the second one. In the first photograph (Fig. 4.16), the old city and the mountain of Montjuïc in the background occupy most of the Álvarez's attention. Here, the city projects the illusion of being an area still clearly limited by the Gran Via. In the second one (Fig. 4.17), however, the city appears as a more open, hardly limited object. The two buildings to the left of the Gran Via and the open plots in between suggest the potential growth of the city in the *Eixample*. The old city appears to spread to the horizon without a clear limit in sight. This new vantage point from one of the towers of the new University building offers, for the first time, an original perspective of a city which, as I have mentioned in chapter two, was usually grasped either from the sea, from the mountain of Montjuïc, or from Guesdon's fictional and original vantage point at the north-west section by the Citadel. These two photographs by Álvarez are one example of how photography attempted to apprehend the city in its totality given its technical limitations regarding the limited availability of nineteenth-century wide-angle photographic lenses. Álvarez, just like Martí in his photograph from Montjuïc (Fig. 4.6), has to resign himself to present these sections of the city as the widest possible apprehension of the city from this particular vantage point.

As mentioned above, one of the best examples of the photographic albums of Barcelona in the 1870s was the work of Joan Martí i Centelles, *Bellezas de Barcelona: Relación fotografiada de sus principales monumentos, edificios, calles, paseos y todo lo mejor que*

encierra la antigua capital del Principado of 1874. Like Álvarez, Martí's collection was presented as a visual canon of Barcelona's emerging splendor. Photographers like Álvarez and Martí conceived the possibility of commercially exploiting the image of the city. While, as we have seen, the urban reality did not seem to be an appealing subject for local artists—most likely because of the lack of a potential market in which they could sell paintings with an urban subject—by the 1870s, there was certainly a market for the consumption of photographic representations of the city. In 1877, Martí announced his photographic studio in Escudillers St. and emphasized that beyond his “retratos inalterables” he also put up for sale “vistas de Barcelona” (Martí and Barril 68).²³ The task of photographers like Álvarez and Martí consisted not only in portraying the city but also in carefully selecting those spaces that were liable to be reproduced and sold as representative of the city. In a way, their project started to construct a controlled trademark image of Barcelona. These photographers decided which images were going to represent Barcelona not only for local market but also for the entire Spanish market. According to André Corboz, these photographers created an *inventory* of the monuments of the city (36). But the metaphor of the inventory suggests a quite innocent activity of recording a complete list of items. Their task included not only counting and representing what was there but also eliding from their selection those spaces that questioned or problematized the image of the city they wanted to convey. The illusion of transparency is such that critics like Garcia Espuche described Martí's book as a “recoregut ordenat per la ciutat, com una obra coherent, acabada i completa,” which even projected an illusion of equanimity by projecting an “equiparació entre el vell i el nou [...] ja que emmarca totes les obres per igual amb una orla artística que situa en el mateix nivell d'importància la Catedral o un fragment suburbial sota Montjuïc” (“Imatge i Imatges de Barcelona” 48). Of course, taking into account Garcia Espuche's comments, Martí's

selection seems to have succeeded in his creation of a cohesive and comprehensive image of the city.

Martí's selective inventory tries to summarize the incommensurability of the city in a round figure: fifty photographs in order liable to be considered representative of Barcelona. As I mentioned above, Martí's book opens with "Vista de Barcelona" (Fig. 6) and, from then on, reproduces specific spaces. He starts with an image of the Padró square right at the core of the working class neighborhood of el Raval but only to focus on the monument devoted to Santa Eulalia—the patron saint of the city.²⁴ This image starts the list of eleven photographs of the album that focused on religious buildings or icons—among which we can find the Cathedral, the Church of Santa Maria del Mar, the Church of Santa Ana, and the Monastery of Sant Pere de les Puelles. Overall, the photographs of Martí devoted to the old section of the city or to spaces that are not included in the area of the Eixample comprise the vast majority of the collection. Of the album's fifty photographs, only six represent spaces of the new city while another one, portraying the garden of the General, allows us to glimpse the new city emerging at a distance. The rest of the spaces selected by Martí are either what he identifies as traditional central spaces of the old city—which includes images of the local theaters Liceu and Principal, the Rambla dels estudis, and the Palau square—; political, social or economic centers of power the city—like the City Hall, the Royal Palace, the Audience (today's Palau de la Generalitat), the Bank of Barcelona, and the stock exchange of la Llotja—; or the relatively new urban realities constructed in the first half of the nineteenth century which opened the mostly claustrophobic space granted the old city with new spaces of socialization—which include the Plaça Reial, the Plaça de Medinaceli and the garden of the General.

But, as we can see, the presence of the new city is still overwhelmingly undersized if we

compare it with the number of representations of the spaces originally confined by the city walls. Outside the old perimeter, Martí chose to include in his collection two images of the new building of the University of Barcelona, and one of the Plaça de Catalunya, the Gran Via, the Passeig de Sant Joan, and, of course, the Passeig de Gràcia. Martí's gaze on the new city emerges from the confines of the old one. His first interest is in the building of the University and the new area of the Catalonia Square, right by the old perimeter of the city walls.

In his representation of the Catalonia Square (Fig. 4.18), Martí introduced the first urbanized area of the new city. Martí chose to represent one of the most prominent buildings of the early *Eixample*, the first building that inaugurated the development of the expansion of the city beyond the limits of the demolished walls: the Gibert House.

In 1860, Manuel Gibert i Sans—president of the first peninsular railway line Barcelona-Mataró (1848), of the railway Barcelona-France (1862), and founder and first president of the local opera theater of el Liceu (1837-1877)—comissioned the construction of the first building of the *Eixample*. That very same year, Queen Isabel II was in charge of inaugurating the construction of the Gibert House as the starting signal of the development of the *Eixample*.²⁵ By 1888, the local magazine *La Ilustració Catalana*, which actually paid very little attention to the emergent new city between 1881—the first year of its publication—and 1888, also recognized the Gibert house as a landmark in the urban modernization of Barcelona by devoting one of its covers to this building (Fig. 4.19). According to the local magazine, by the time it was built “aqueixa morada alsada á la fayssó Anglo saxona atragué totes las miradas per son elegant estil” (98).

Originally, in spite of the flattery of the *Ilustració Catalana*, the Anglo-Saxon style of the Gibert house was not welcome by everybody in the city. Some of the local satirical journals of

the time, like *Un Tros de Paper* and *El Tiburón*, made sure to distil the popular feeling about Gibert's House on their pages. As the local author Robert Robert mentioned in one of his articles, by 1865, the new revivalist mansion received the misnomer of Gibert's Castle ("Lo Passeig de Gracia" 1). As soon as December 1862, two years after queen Isabel II had inaugurated the construction of the building, *El Tiburón* published a cartoon of the building in its *Almanaque Humorístico Ilustrado para 1863*. The cartoon of the Gibert house appears in a section called "Barcelona Monumental," which of course recognized, rather ironically, the building's impact on the city (Fig. 4.20). "Un palacio en el ensanche" emphasizes the fortress-like nature of the Gibert house. Curiously enough, after the city had managed to demolish her ancient ramparts, the first new building of the new city is presented as an armored structure, a menacing stronghold.

In keeping with the sentiment of *El Tiburón*, in 1865, *Un Tros de Paper* devoted an article on Gibert's House with the title "Arquitectura Anglo-Sarrianesca," a title that played with the pretended Anglo-Saxon style of the mansion and the name of the neighbouring village of Sarrià, which railway station was located close to the new building of the Eixample. In this ironic article of Lo Sarraceno—pseudonym of the scholar and usual contributor to the several Catalan journals, Josep Maria Torres i Belda—describes the new landmark of the city as a "casa ó fortí, ó cripta, ó castell, ó panteó" (3). For this satirical journal, the ostentatious style of the mansion responded to the total ignorance about patron's architecture and the freedom of an architect that chose a "mezcla de gotich flamant y de anglo-sarrianesca, que es el que mes se presta a la decoració exterior, ab aspilleras, minarets, troneras y torretas voladas que surtin sobre la fatxada" (3). According to Torres, the motivations of Mr. Gibert for building such a mansion were clear: "cansat ja de veurerse en lo pinácul de las grandesas políticas, industrials y mercantils,

ambicionaba un puesto en las arts. Al efecte, despues de [...] haberse posat de acort ab un arquitecto dels de upa, va quedá resolta la edificació de aquesta octava maravilla” (3). Torres’s description of Gibert’s intentions as a clear attempt to boast the local community through architecture, after having achieved every other social feat imaginable, may remind us of the development of the Passeig de Gràcia at the turn of the century. According to Torres’s comments, Gibert was the forerunner of figures like Ametller, Batlló, and Lleó Morera, who between 1898 and 1906 patronized the work of the best local architects—Domènech i Montaner, Gaudí, and Puig i Cadafalch—in order to compete for the most astounding construction of the so called *illa de la discòrdia* or *manzana de la discordia* in Passeig de Gràcia. Ultimately, for Torres, Gibert House was the ultimate ironical synthesis of the spirit of the moment:

Si en l’ordre artístich representa la barreja arquitectònica del fortí y de la fàbrica, del castell feudal y de la estació del ferro-carril, en l’ordre social representa la confusió de las clases impulsada per la especulació; es ea di, simbolisa’l gust supeditat pe’l diné, la transformació de lo passat ab lo present. En lo primé concepte, li escau molt bé la tintura de feudalisme que en tot ell resalta, porque’l capitalisme se pot dí que es lo *senyó feudal* del treball. [Emphasis in the original]

(3)

Certainly Torres’s irony voices one of the preoccupations of the time: the emergence of a new urban reality shaped and controlled by the emerging capitalism rooted in the local textile industry, the railway development, and the stock exchange speculation. People like Gibert are the rulers in this new order, the *feudal lords* of capitalism, who are reclaiming the new urban reality from their imponent new castles. Lo Sarraceno’s article was accompanied by a drawing by Tomàs Padró i Pedret—a usual contributor of *Un Tros de Paper* and other popular satirical

journals like *La Campana de Gràcia*—which portrayed the archaic nature of the mansion through an overcrowded panorama populated with renaissance courtiers, medieval knights, wardens, and ladies (Fig. 4.21).

Even through their critical prism, both *El Tiburón* and *Un Tros de Paper*, recognized the nature of the Gibert House as a landmark in the new urban expansion of the city. Their critical attitude, however, typical of the satirical magazines of the period, offers a more thoughtful impression of the impact of such a space for nineteenth-century Barcelonans. In their quest for humor, these journals dared to question not only the aesthetics of the new city but also the socio-economic structures behind them and even the emergence of a questionable image of a “Barcelona Monumental.” Furthermore, the visual manipulation of these cartoons seem antithetical to the apparent asepsia of Martí’s photography.

Martí’s *Bellezas de Barcelona* continues its incursion in the Eixample by gazing at the two main avenues of the Cerdà plan: the Gran Via (Fig. 4.22) and the Passeig de Gràcia (Fig. 4.23). In both of these photographs, Martí aimed at representing the new urban alignments of these boulevards, which contrasted with the narrowness of the old city. Martí chose slightly elevated vantage points for both images in order to obtain a better angle for these central perspectives. In his shot of the Gran Via (Fig. 22), he chose to include a man standing, looking at the camera as a device to show the scale of the avenue. Martí’s Passeig de Gràcia, taken from a higher ground, tries to grasp the new layout of the boulevard and the extense development of the area up to its limits with the village of Gràcia, perceptible at the vanishing point of this perspective. Both panoramas stress the linear regularity of the new city, which, as I discussed in the previous chapter, for people like Manuel Angelón and, of course, Ildefons Cerdà was a synonym for urban modernity.

By 1888, the local market of photographic representations of the city, inaugurated by Álvarez and Martí, was fully consolidated. By the year of the first Universal Exhibition of Barcelona, photographic albums like the ones produced by Álvarez and Martí in the 1870s were still being produced. Coinciding with the Exhibition, J.E. Puig published a small format booklet with the title *Plano y vistas de Barcelona*. J.E. Puig was in fact Josep Esplugas i Puig, brother to Antoni Esplugas i Puig, who was another well-established photographer in Barcelona. Since 1876, Antoni Esplugas had his studio at Teatre Square, right at the core of les Rambles, where he became one of the most important portraitists of the Catalan bourgeoisie (López Mondejar 85). By 1888 he had been appointed Caballero de la Real Orden de Isabel la Católica, and he was granted the sole right to photograph the visitors of the captive balloon of the Universal Exhibition. This exclusive allowed Antoni Esplugas to become the first Spanish aerial photographer. Due to the popularity of his brother Antoni, Josep decided to use the professional name J.E. Puig in order to open his own photographic studio in Barcelona.

In his *Plano y vistas de Barcelona*, J.E. Puig produced a limited selection of monumental vistas of the city. From the twelve images of his book, none of them venture outside the core of the old city. Furthermore, ten of them are located in the minuscule perimeter of the ancient Roman walls, while the other two are only a couple of blocks away from the limits. Puig's map reproduces only a few blocks of the old city in which not even the popular Rambles appear. In Puig's project, monumental Barcelona is circumscribed in the religious Gothic architecture of the Cathedral and the church of Santa Anna, to the political centers of power of the Audiencia (today's Generalitat) and the City Hall, and the Gothic buildings of the Plaça del Rei and Canuda St. But beyond the location of these specific images, Puig's book helps us assess the situation of the production and consumption of photographic representations of the city by 1888. *Plano y*

vistas de Barcelona includes the photographic representations of the city on the odd pages while even pages print commercial ads that included those of local editors, and bookstores (Fig. XX). These ads help us understand the consolidation of the local market of urban photography. The first one of these ads, from the Librería y Estampería Artística la Universitaria de S. Durán y Bori, announces its stock of “fotografías de Barcelona de todos los tamaños y precios” and “fotografías de todos los sitios más notables de España y del extranjero” (n.p.). La Artística bookstore had a clear notion about the kind of audience of these urban photographs: “Los turistas nacionales y extranjeros, artistas, arquitectos, ingenieros; todos los aficionados á las Bellas Artes” (n.p.). For these customers, La Artística offered its “albumitos de recuerdos (souvenirs), mapas, planos y guías” (n.p.). These albums or serialized vistas can be perceived as an antecedent to the postcard, which was patented by John P. Carlton in Philadelphia by 1861 but did not secure its position in the Spanish market until the beginning of the twentieth century (López Mondéjar 138). J.E. Puig’s *Plano y vistas de Barcelona* was the perfect example of this kind of product as it offered a small map of the historic center of the city and a dozen photographs that tourists could keep as a souvenir. Other bookstores, like Eudaldo Puig’s—the editor of *Ilustración Española y Americana* and *La Moda Elegante*—also offered “guías, planos y vistas panorámicas de Barcelona, de distintos precios y tamaños” (n.p.). These advertisements emphasize the nature of urban photography as a commodity. While until 1888 a local painting market dominated by romantic landscaping did not find a niche for urban vistas, photography found a clear market segment that helped complement the strong demand for *carte de visite* photography.

The commercialization of urban vistas as a souvenir required, on the one hand, a careful selection of those images, of those spaces, which could be projected as representative of the city.

As we have seen between 1839 and 1888, the gaze of the photographers continued paying attention to those spaces that were considered monumental enough to be presented as an epitome of the city. The religious gothic architecture of the old city—like the Cathedral, Santa Maria del Mar or Santa Anna—and the main economic and political centers of power—like the Llotja, the Xifré House, the City Hall or the Audiencia—remain the most marketable products. But photographers reproduced the new urban reality. The new city appeared as a modern complement to traditional local spaces and signaled the new direction of a city that wanted to compare to other European metropolises. In both cases—either through their representation of traditional trademark spaces or new urban layouts—the photographers’ selection of vistas manage to reduce the complexity of the city through a careful articulation of presences and absences. The urban experience is simplified and condensed in a few easily apprehensible vistas in which human activity, the local practices of space, are nowhere to be found. In a city polarized by an emerging bourgeoisie—which ranged from extreme conservatism to Republican Federalism that allowed for the articulation of Catalan nationalism—and a large working class—appealed by early socialism and, after 1868, also by anarchism—, the representation of these empty spaces simplified, not only the apprehension of the city, but also the underlying social tensions within it.

4.4 PAGES ON NEW SPACE

As we have seen through the gaze of nineteenth-century artists and photographers, the visual arts between 1854 and 1888 recorded the spaces of the Barcelona plain either through the nostalgic lense of Lluís Rigalt—who documented the spaces that were about to disappear under Cerdà’s grid—or through the supposedly aseptic and objective new camera lenses that focalized

on the new urban regularity of the plain. None of them, though, paid special attention to how Barcelonans used these spaces. In order to understand how local artists understood the potential practices of these spaces and how they confirmed or debunked the expectations of urban modernization of the city, one may need to resort to the literature of the *Renaixença*. In order to do so we will have to take into account the inner tensions. I understand the *Renaixença* movement not as the exclusive product of the elite group organized around the rebirth of the Jocs Florals and magazines like *La Renaixensa* and *La Il·lustració Catalana*, but, more importantly, as the more complex result of the interaction between the cultural production of the first group and the popular cultural production of the period represented by journals like *Un tros de paper*, *La Rambla*, *La Pubilla*, and *La Campana de Gràcia*. Only by taking into account both perspectives will we be able to reach a more comprehensive understanding of the way the modernizing city was being experienced by the widest group of citizens: by those that were agents of urban modernization, by those that were excluded from the decision process in the urban transformation, and by those that could become the scapegoats of progress.

The story of this long tradition of Catalan satirical journals starts with *Un tros de paper*—published between April 16, 1865 and September 16, 1866. This was the pioneer of a long list of satirical magazines that were the first to regularly use Catalan in the press. Curiously enough, the Catalan tradition of satirical journals owes a lot to Innocenci López i Bernagossí and his *Librería Española* publishing house. López, a native of Girona, was not only the man behind *Un tros de paper* (Fig. 4.24). The *Librería Española* of López became the publishing company behind almost every single satirical journal of this period in Barcelona. López was behind *El Noy de la Mare*, *La Rambla*, *La Pubilla*, *El Tiburón*, *La Campana de Gràcia*, and *L'Esquella de la Torratxa* among others.²⁶ Certainly, López's Republicanism, which led him to participate in the

Junta Revolucionària de Barcelona, was one of the main factors that helped him cohere all his publications.

The Librería Española de López, from its central office of la Rambla del Mig, managed to attract a long list of contributors that would become the core of what can be identified as the popular Renaixença. López's first publishing success was *Un tros de paper*. The journal was created around the project designed by Albert Llanas, who managed to attract a long list of contributors that included Manuel Angelón, Josep Feliu i Codina, Robert Robert, Conrad Roure, Frederc Soler, and Eduard Vidal i Valenciano among others.²⁷ One of the most important contributions of the Librería Española, starting with *Un tros de paper*, was that it became instrumental in the consolidation of Catalan *costumisme* during the 1860s. As I mentioned above, the Catalan *tableaux* published in the Catalan press were obviously influenced by the Spanish tradition of costumbrismo, led by Mariano José de Larra and Ramón de Mesonero Romanos, who took the pulse of Madrilenian society since 1828. But they were also rooted in the local tradition started by Rafael d'Amat i de Cortada, the Baron of Maldà, who, from 1769 until 1819, recorded his miscellaneous prose on Barcelona life in his *Calaix de Sastre*. Though strongly rooted in the Romantic spirit of mid-nineteenth-century Barcelona, *costumisme* certainly shares some traits that anticipate the local Realism of authors like Narcís Oller, who particularly started publishing his *tableaux* before venturing into long fiction. Catalan *costumisme* focuses on specific typified aspects of urban and rural experience without the need of a plot. It pays special attention to the distinctive external traits of the characters and setting but lacks the more profound character development found in Realism. *Costumisme* emphasizes the visual apprehension of a reality that is perceived as distinctively local, and it invites its audience to gape at these scenes and the characters that populate them without having access to their internal

reasoning or motives. Furthermore, *costumisme* tends to pay special attention to the vitality of local popular language as it is articulated in the dialogues of its characters. Contrary to the archaistic tendency of the poetry of the Jocs Florals, local *tableaux* try to record the every day use of Catalan language in the streets. The particular dialects of every social group are carefully imitated in order to convey each group's distinctive vitality. Catalan *costumisme* of the 1860s and 1870s is usually more interested in *tableaux* than in the taxonomy of types. In particular, Barcelonan *costumisme* pays special attention to the transformation of a city whose popular classes have been traditionally *menestrals* in a moment in which industrialization and financial speculation are transforming the city into a purely capitalist society. Local craftworkers are caught amidst a progressive polarization that will lead to the emergence and consolidation of an industrial and financial bourgeoisie and the growing presence of a proletariat progressively attracted to socialism and anarchism. Two names stand out from the long list of Catalan *costumistes*: Robert Robert and Emili Vilanova.²⁸ After its initial appearance in the satirical journals sponsored by Innocenci López, the tradition of local *tableaux* was also incorporated successfully in other magazines like *La Renaixensa* and *La Il·lustració Catalana*.

The pages of *Un tros de paper* witnessed the emergence of Robert Robert as a Catalan *costumista* author. Born in Barcelona in 1830 amidst a working class family, Robert himself was an artisan jeweler until he left his job and moved to Madrid where he founded the *Diario Madrileño*. In 1855 he was imprisoned and accused of belonging to the revolutionary secret society of Carbonari—an Italian organization similar to Freemasonry. After two years in prison, he became a political correspondent at the Spanish Parliament for *La Discusión* until 1864, when he returned to his native Barcelona. On his arrival he joined the *tertulia* of Frederic Soler—known as *la rebotiga de Pitarra*, as it was held in the office of Frederic Soler's watchmaker

shop. As Alfonso Roure explains, the vitality of mid nineteenth century Catalan comedy was due to the energetic convergence of three factors: first, the local tradition of countless informal organizations of students that regularly met in their apartments to perform satiric plays written by them; second, the energy of the *tertulia* held at Frederic Soler *Pitarra*'s shop; and lastly, the work of the group of authors that regularly populated the bookstore of Innocenci López (20). The initial welcoming of Robert to the *tertulia* of *Pitarra*—where he joined other fellow group members like Valentí Almirall, Antoni Altadill, Manuel Angelon, and Conrad Roure—opened him the doors of Innocenci López's publishing house. With his twenty-seven contributions to *Un tros de paper* Robert inaugurated the Catalan tradition of picturesque tableaux, consolidated shortly thereafter by Emili Vilanova.

From all the articles Robert published in *Un tros de paper* under his pseudonym X, two of them especially address the urban reality of 1865 Barcelona. On July 16, 1865, Robert Robert published "Las Quatre Ramblas" where he provided a detailed account of the vitality of the central boulevard of the old city and identified it as "lo centro de la cultura barcelonesa," where one could find "mes refinament del gust" (1). In this article, Robert paid homage to what was still the axis of local society but four months later—on October 8, 1865—published another article that pointed to the emergence of another boulevard that was presented as an alternative to the traditional promenade of the Rambles: the Passeig de Gràcia. For Robert, the development of the Eixample had granted a new relevance to the already existing boulevard. With its incorporation into the new urban grid designed by Cerdà, the Passeig de Gràcia had turned into something more than an alternative leisure destination. It was the place to be: "La Barcelona alegre, ociosa, la Barcelona movedissa, no la busquin sino al passeig de Gracia, y ara mès que may de ensá del ensanche ¡malviatje la paraula!" (1). As I discussed in the previous chapter,

Robert recognizes the positive transformation that Cerdà's Eixample had exercised in the promenade but still abhors the Spanish word that is being used even in Catalan. For Robert, the Passeig de Gràcia offers many more advantages than the Rambles he praised four months earlier:

Lo passeig de Gracia es més passeig que la Rambla, perque es mòlt mes ample; perque tè vistas més dilatadas y amenas; perque los edificis que ara comènsan á borejarla no recordan com los de la Rambla lo cástich del treball y la codicia de la industria, sino lo grat descans, lo benestar, la riqueza, lo luxo. [...] Per allí se esplaya lo cor vejent las tentativas artísticas de las fatxadas, sisquera no sempre lo bon gust hagi inspirat á lo arquitecto. (1)

For Robert, the Passeig de Gràcia, clearly defeats the Rambles because of its width and spectacular landscape. For Robert, the early development of the boulevard appears as an attractive fantasy that seems totally unrelated to the economic sources that allowed the growth of this new development. The Passeig de Gràcia seems to be a paradise of luxury and wellbeing that is *able to hide the necessary conditions of its own existence*: the emergence of a local industrial bourgeoisie that relies on an endless supply of affordable laborforce. For Robert's eyes the new boulevard is even more impressive because it radically contrasts with the reality of certain areas of the old city. Because in the Eixample "los ulls no s'hi tròban may traidorament ofesos per lo carreró asquerós com lo de detrás del correu ni lo arch de Trentaclus" (1). In this new and spotless place—which seems to have been formed, of course, by immaculate conception—one can find all the convenient sophistication of modern fashion: hairdressers, tailors, dressmakers, milliners, and coffee merchants who add more excitement to the panorama through their large shop signs, shop lighting, and flashy showcases (1). The Passeig de Gràcia is presented as a treat to our senses where all the excitement and culture of leisure that a modern city can offer are at

hand. The crowds of Passeig de Gràcia, however, seem to be radically different from those of the old city. The activity of the boulevard is frantic: "tot se torna ómnibus, centrals, cotxos, crits de calessers, snrriacadas [sic], pols y gatzara de los jóvens ferms" (1). But even in this panorama dominated by coaches and omnibuses, there seems to be no confusion, no stress, no mayhem: "Gent que va, gent que ve, gent que va y ve, ningú porta en son aspecte las senyals de la agitació forsosa que regna en la ciutat. Lo corredor va tan a poch á poch com lo hisendat; lo estudiant no se recorda de los llibres, lo malalt se sent aliviat per lo sa del aire y lo panorama que'l rodeija..." (1). Amidst this urban experience, Robert is able to conceive the Passeig de Gràcia as an unprobable urban Arcadia where happiness and peace reign over this idyllic space. This utopian gaze on the core of the Eixample appears even more accentuated when Robert describes the way the local proletariat uses the Passeig de Gràcia in their way to the core of the old city. The workers, "ágils de camas y sans de calor" cross this idyllic place swiftly on their way to work (1). They are the only ones that do not seem to enjoy this urban utopia; they only use it on their way to work. Some others, the *menestrals* who are lucky enough to spend their hard earned money. As Robert explains, "[h]i ha familias de menestrals que guanyant poch diners, no poden gosar de cap diversió; mes se resignan ab la sua sort, no així cada diumenje poden anar á primer hora á prendre xocolate al passeig de Gracia" (1).

Robert's article seems an encomiastic celebration of the perfect social harmony of the Passeig de Gràcia: while the emerging bourgeoisie use this space to display their social status, the middle classes go there to shop. Those that can hardly afford to spend their money on hot chocolate, while the working classes have to pass by this mecca of consumerism with their gaze fixed on the horizon. But what really is Robert's attitude regarding this immaculate space? Can we take this description at face value coming from an article in a satirical journal? Of course

not.

Robert soon problematizes this immaculate space, its luxury and the multiple options for consumption it offers, and the apparent peace that fills the air. The apparent democratization of this space is just a strategy that enables the perpetuation of class differences: “Aixís se explica en part, com en una nació se eternisan las tiranías. ¿Cóm no ha de ser esclau un poble ahont la majoría se creu casi felis si los diumenjes pot beurer vi ó prendrer xocolate?” (1). The access of the working classes to this elite and apparently idyllic space is perceived as a strategy that permits the perpetuation of the capitalist system, the condition of possibility of this space hidden under its pretended immaculate conception. As Robert explains, under its deceptive, democratic aspect, the Passeig de Gràcia is actually the place of the “Barcelona elegant y culta,” the ones that reflect on the “ventatxas y desventatxas de lo ensanche” (1-2). With all its external allure and internal contradictions, Robert still confirms the Passeig de Gràcia as the newest and most modern attraction of 1865 Barcelona. This is the place that foreigners have to visit to understand the new Barcelona.²⁹ This is the pride and joy of the city. As Robert recognizes, by 1865 there is a new saying in town: If I ever win the lottery, I will build myself a house in the Passeig de Gràcia (2).

After the disappearance of *Un tros de paper* and its spin-off *El Noy de la Mare* in 1866, Innocenci López decided to proceed with the publication of the new satirical journals in Catalan, which had just proved a commercial success. That very same year, López put in the hands of his friend and original contributor Conrad Roure—who had published his work in *Un tros de paper* under the pseudonym Pau Bunyegues—the new publishing project: *La Rambla: Setmanari Català*. The new journal, born only one week after the last number of *El Noy de la Mare*, offered a new lineup of contributors that included Antoni Feliu i Codina, Andreu Sala, Francesc Pous,

and Anton Sala.

The initial success of *La Rambla* was suddenly broken when it was suspended for publishing a satirical article on a bullfight that offended the local military commandment. Just one month later, the same team of *La Rambla* was publishing *La Pubilla* and substituted the suspended journal between June 9, 1867 and October 4, 1868 when *La Rambla* was restituted. As one may imagine, the city of Barcelona was an important preoccupation for a journal that carried the name of its most traditional boulevard. At a first glance, the banner used in *La Rambla* (Fig. 4.25), designed by Tomàs Padró—a contributor to *Un tros de paper*, *El Noy de la Mare*, and *La Campana de Gracia*—, brings us to the core of the boulevard, showing the vitality of the street in the center while the two small images to its sides present the most important theaters of the city, the Liceu and the Principal, which were both located in the Ramblas. But its companion journal *La Pubilla* was no stranger to its predecessor's urban roots (Fig. 4.26). As an article by Anton Reixach explains, the name *pubilla*—given to the first-born daughter in the absence of a male heir, according to Catalan law will become the universal heiress of the family estate—was also a popular nickname for Barcelona: “caigueren alguns en que Barcelona era una ciutat bonica y rica com la que mès, y com que la boniquesa y las mils lliuras son cosas que solen ó deuen tenir las bonas pubillas, comensaren á dir pubilla á Barcelona” (2).

Besides their obvious preoccupation with the old city of Barcelona, both *La Rambla* and *La Pubilla* paid constant attention to the development of the Eixample. This interest was shown periodically in a series of articles that, with the title “El Senyor Francesch,” were signed by an unknown Andreu Sala.³⁰ In the first installment of the series on “El Senyor Francesch,” the narrator introduces us to the main character: “un home del sigle passat, [...] catalá fins al moll dels ossos” (1). The narrator, a young man from Barcelona, enjoys the company of this older

gentleman through their walks around the city. El Senyor Francesch is presented as an actual repository of local customs who serves to illuminate his naïve friend by judging the urban transformations appealing at the local traditions and customs. According to our narrator,

[l]o senyor Francesch es un home del sigle passat, [...] catalá fins al moll dels ossos y dels que diuhen Roda'l món y torna al Born [...] el senyor Francesch ha viatjat y ha vist la Ceca y la Meca [...] ha estat en París y en Lóndres y en altrás ciutats de importáncia. Per ell es una veritat que no tèt retop alló d'aquella cansó que diu: A Dèu noble Barcelona / la millor ciutat del món./ Encara que no está del tot content, perque creu que Barcelona, si bè es bona, podria ser millor, y diu que's lлена á pérdrer fent las cosas á la francesa. ¿Veu? 'm deya fa poch, ¿no troba ridícul aquest afrancesament que va ficantse per tot? (1)

El Senyor Francesch becomes the perfect judge for this transformation. He has seen the world and is able to judge the city by comparing it to other cities. Like most Barcelonans, he naively thinks Barcelona is the best city in the world but that it could always use a little improvement. But, as it seems, the necessary changes should not be imposed as an uncritical adoption of the French models. For el Senyor Francesch, the best thing Barcelona has to offer is the emergence of the Eixample:

Una de las cosas que mes agradan al Sr. Francesch, perque diu que pot dar importancia á Barcelona, es la ciutat nova, ell no diu *ensanche*, perque troba la paraula massa bárbara [...] Aixís es que cada semmana va á véurer com avansan las obras de la universitat de las que está molt content [...] Ell está enterat de tots los projectes, que no son poch, que han de dar vida á la ciutat nova; pero no passa dia que no tinga un desengany. (1)

Once again, the most important alienation that el Senyor Francesch feels over the new city designed by Cerdà is the need to refer to it as the “ensanche.” The Eixample, however, is at the center of his expectations. He wants to constantly verify that the modernization of the city is going according to plan.³¹ What bothers him most is the uneven development around the Barcelona plain that makes it impossible to perceive the area of the new city as a completed neighborhood (1).

In the eighth episode of the Senyor Francesch series, we learn that the young narrator does not share the expectations of Francesch regarding the Eixample. In fact he believes that it is simply an unfeasible project: "hem tornat [...] á donar un vol per fora y recorrent tots los punts principals de lo que'l senyor Francesch ne diu ciutat nova, lo públich ensanxe y jo projecte irrealisable d'una gran població que no t'è rahó de ser, si es veritat, que en un any lo cens de Barcelona ha baixat, com diuhen, de trenta mil ánimas" (1). For the first time, we see that this dissident voice questions the feasibility of the Cerdà plan. Under the negative growth of the city, the Cerdà plan seems pointless and utopian.

The sudden suspension of *La Rambla* brings the series of el Senyor Francesch to a temporary halt, but its fellow journal *La Pubilla* continued with the series. Under a different name, the Catalan weekly continued to publish new installments of the popular series of Senyor Francesch. On August 4, 1867, *La Pubilla* reinitiates this series of articles. This time, however, the authorship that appeared in *La Rambla* as Andreu Sala is transformed here and attributed initially to Andreu Serra in the first instalment of the series in *La Pubilla* and to A. S. in the rest of the series.

In the last article of the Senyor Francesch series published in *La Pubilla*, signed by A. S., the young narrator talks with his fellow neighbor about problems faced during the

implementation of the Cerdà plan: the alteration of the plan originally designed because of the impending real estate speculation. The individual interest of the developers of the Barcelona plain are endangering the proper implementation of the Cerdà plan, and as el Sr. Francesch reminds us, "[s]e necessita una voluntat de ferro pera combátrer contra los intereses particulars, perque aquestos no deixan pedra per móurer, fan oposicions directas é indirectas, procuran desencaminar la opinió pública" (1). According to el Senyor Francesch, the potential distortion of the Cerdà plan can be prevented through strong control over each of the new developments of the area (1). The new city needs to be built fast and with all the necessary comfort of a modern city:

buscaria las milloras per medi de la competencia. Faria perque s'edifiqués depressa en la ciutat nova, procuraria que aquesta tingués totas las comoditats, senyalaria premis á los que edificuessin mes y ab millors condicions, y si la gent trobava allí inconveniencias, ja veuria com los propietaris de dins farian lo diable á quatre pera obtenir milloras y reformas. Desenganyis, l'interés particular pot mòlt, mentres aquet estiga en contra, será casi impossible millorar la població; mes si li convé n'hi haurá cosa mes facil" (1).

With the series of el Sr. Francesch *La Rambla* and *La Pubilla* offered punctual reflections on the new development of the city. With the formal appearance of a Platonic dialogue, the young narrator contrasts his perceptions of the emerging Eixample with those of the older, wiser Sr. Francesch who offers the insights of a more experienced worldly man. The long conversations of these two characters regarding the new urban reality of Barcelona in the pages of *La Rambla* and *La Pubilla* suggest it was one of the most popular topics of the magazine. Against these articles, readers could compare their own preconceptions and expectations about the urban

transformation.

Curiously enough, the preoccupations of el Sr. Francesch had many things in common with one of the most renowned authors of la Renaixença, who, years later, inaugurated the Catalan Realist movement: Narcís Oller. Catalan critic Rosa Cabré recognized Oller as the best chronicler of this urban transformation: “Oller és el poeta modern que documenta des d’un primer moment les transformacions de Barcelona, el seu paisatge urbà [...] passa d’estar vinculat a la ciutat antiga i menestral a viure els canvis que la converteixen en metròpoli moderna” (15). For Cabré, Oller becomes a turning point in understanding the local urban experience:

De l’evocació elegíaca de la ciutat antiga i de les seves formes de vida que havien fet els romàntics i costumistes de mitjans de segle, passava a representar la nova ciutat plena de força, desmesurada, incoherent, incerta, amenaçadora, capaç de provocar la inquietud i el desconcert de l’individu que s’hi sent, sempre estrany, pasava a ser un objecte de desig per a tots aquells joves ambiciosos, que hi arribaren amb el somni de conquerir el món. (52)

An adoptive son of the city himself, Oller’s work tries to communicate the new world of possibilities offered by a city in constant transformation. Oller is the first one to explore the progressive shift of the local bourgeoisie from the old city to the new Eixample. A native of Valls (Tarragona, Spain), Oller moved to Barcelona as a student in 1863 and initially experienced the Catalan capital from a local hostel in Lleona St. at the core of the old city. His initial experience at the hostel, which he shared with his cousin, literary critic Josep Yxart, marked the setting of his first novel *La Papallona*. Years later, after the consolidation of the first areas of the Eixample, Narcís Oller definitely moved to the Eixample on April 5, 1876 and settled in the third floor of 38 Rambla Catalunya. Just a week after moving to the Eixample, Oller summarized the benefits of moving from the old to the new city in a letter to his cousin

Josep Yxart:

se observa una diferencia parecida a la que se nota entre una ciudad de 3er orden y una capital moderna. Todo responde a las necesidades actuales, nada ni sus más insignificantes detalles recuerda al pasado [...] Si te asomas a los balcones ves ir y venir trenes continuamente y si sales a la galleria dominas jardines a la moderna o ves el Paseo de Gracia con su movimiento de coches lujosos y tranvías. [...] Una cosa singular existe junto a todos estos perfiles de la construcción moderna y es que, a pocos pasos de la anchurosa acera, corre todavía el cauce de una *riera* y poco más abajo hay echado un puente de Madera con todo el carácter de provisional: contraste raro por demás pero armónico también con la idea sintética de nuestra época de transición. (qtd. in Cabré 37)

Oller's letter radiates with the excitement of having left an old city and moved to what feels like a modern capital. The Eixample is a new space able to cover all one's modern needs. The Passeig de Gràcia, with its luxury coaches and frequent streetcars, is the quintessence of the progress of the city. But curiously enough, Oller's awareness of the unquestionable modernity of the Rambla Catalunya—a promenade that runs parallel to Passeig de Gràcia—seems to rely on the prerequisite of having nothing that reminds him of the past. Like in Cerdà's project of urban modernity, Oller's perception of the modern city depends on the erasure of all aspects that are not unequivocally modern.

But, as he concedes, there is still one thing that may endanger the genuine modernity of the Rambla Catalunya: a recalcitrant rivulet that has not surrendered to the designs of development. Needless to say, we can recognize Oller's embarrassing "riera" in Lluís Rigalt's drawings of the Riera d'en Malla (Fig. 9 and 10). This brook collected the torrential waters of the

surrounding mountains and led them to the sea by circling the old walls of the city. As we saw in his drawings, by 1869, Rigalt still projected the rivulet as an eminently rural landscape that was only menaced by the emerging new city in the background. In 1876, when Oller moved to the new city, the Riera d'en Malla had already been renamed and incorporated as a street on the Eixample and named Rambla Catalunya, a desirable boulevard for the local bourgeoisie. But still then, the urban development had not been able to solve the problem of a canal for the brook. In fact, just eight months before Oller moved to the Rambla de Catalunya, the local satirical journal *La Campana de Gràcia* devoted its cover to the floodings that the uncontrolled Riera d'en Malla had provoked in the city (Fig. 4.27).

In this cartoon, three characters—the personification of the Riera d'en Malla, the Bogatell, and the Torrent del Pecat—appear as the culprits of the flooding right at the point where the old and new city meet in Plaça Catalunya.³² As the caption explains, by 1875, the Barcelona City Hall was trying to “*encausar* á aquestos tres individus, pera á que no tornin a violar lo domicili dels vehins de la ciutat” [Emphasis in the original] (1). The three felons had to be *put on the right track* in order to preserve the privacy and security of Barcelonans. As *La Campana de Gracia* showed in its next issue, the floods caused by the Riera d'en Malla had ruined the local festivities of la Mercè (“Jerusalem, Jerusalem, com mes anem menos valem” 1). By 1877, the problem had not been solved and the journal still recognized the threat Riera posed for the city (“Firas y festas” 1). Unfortunately for Oller, the plans of turning the creek into an underground culvert was not implemented until 1884 and was finished in 1888, coinciding with the Universal Exhibition.

But beyond his preoccupation with his new neighborhood, Narcís Oller’s interest in the city’s urban transformation is specifically present in his contributions for the local press. Since

1876, right after moving to the Eixample, Oller commented on local urbanism in a long series of contributions: an article for *Miscelánea Científica y Literaria*, four articles for the local journal *La Bomba*—with the pseudonym Espoleta—, eight articles for *La Renaixensa* (1878-1888), two for *L’Avens* (1882-83), two articles on the Universal Exhibition for the *Il·lustració Catalana* and *L’Esquella de la Torratxa* (1892), and a long series of articles on urbanism for *La Vanguardia* (1889-1890). Years later, in his *Memòries literàries*, Oller confessed that the attraction he felt for the material transformation of the city was essentially visual. He acknowledged that during the emergence of the site that was going to hold the Universal Exhibition of 1888, he enjoyed watching the actual construction process:

Les grans obres de l’Exposició Universal, que aleshores es feien, m’oferien el que més podia desitjar; car vostè no sap el que a mi m’entreté veure construir un mur gruixut, bastir un arc atrevit, hissar una jàssera o una columna ben pesant, contemplar, en una paraula, com creix i pren forma sòlida en l’espai la concepció ideal que abans m’han explicat o que he vist delineada en una vitel·la. (774)

For Oller, it was a real pleasure to witness the materialization of all those new spaces conceived only in theory and designed on the aseptic surface of a blueprint. Oller’s attitude seems motivated by a desire to register the urban transformation as a notary public.

As I mentioned above, Oller left quite a long list of articles that testify to interest in the city’s urban transformation. In 1878, he published “Quatre mots sobre la policia urbana i l’ornat public de Barcelona” on the pages of *La Renaixensa*, which summarizes Oller’s attitude towards urban planning and the monumentalization of the city. In this article, his first published work in the Catalan language, Oller addresses three of his main concerns regarding Barcelona: the necessary reform of the old city,³³ the correction of the main defects of the urbanization of the

Eixample, and the lack of monuments that embellish the city. As he articulates, Oller's preoccupation emerges from comparing Barcelona to other European cities. After doing so, he simply recognizes that his adoptive city pales in comparison to other cities of analogous importance and that Spain is at the end of "la cua dels països que, com en un altre temps nosaltres, avui porten el penó del progrés i de l'avenç" (615). In order to solve these problems, Oller appeals to the local power of the City Hall, which should be taking care not only of "la comoditat i la higiene del ciutadà" but also of the "bon nom i fama de la ciutat que administra" (615). The good name of Barcelona is the argument that Oller repeatedly uses in this article, and the City Council should be its guardian. After devoting some time to reforms that he considers necessary for the inner city, Oller points out the scarcity of public monuments in the city and articulates what he identifies as three beneficial aspects of monuments: their ornamental nature, their potential to commemorate and glorify local historical events, and their instrumental character in the aesthetic education of the masses (619). Without monuments, Barcelona would only be "un simple poblat gran" with no single attraction for the foreigner (619). Regarding the Eixample, Oller explores the defects and required intervention of the municipality in the new city. The author does not seem to resolutely advocate the Cerdà plan, but he concedes that "el pla de la ciutat nova, si no altres qualitats desitjables, té almenys la de donar molta més amplitud i vitalitat a ses llargues vies, cosa que ara fa encara més remarcable l'estretor i tortuositat malsanes de sos vells carrers" (617). Curiously enough, one of the main problems Oller perceives in Cerdà's grid is its neverending monotony: "Ocupem-nos ara de la part nova burocràticament anomenada *Ensanche*. No parlarem de corregir el pla d'ella, com ho reclamarien sens dubte sa fatigant simetria, la necessitat d'artístiques perspectives per a donar visualitat als monuments i edificis públics i per una pila més de raons d'altra mena. És espaiós, sufficient, harmonic, i això

fa perdonar aquells defectes” (620). But, as he states, the Cerdà plan can still be perceived as a useful scheme on top of which the desired modern city can be built. The Cerdà plan is spacious, sufficient, and harmonious, and that seems to be more than reasonable for Oller. The necessary steps to consolidate its potential were in the direction of “complir assenyadament el pensament d’en Cerdà, completant-lo amb detalls d’execució dignes de l’obra que no [...] deixa d’honorar molt el nom de son autor i de la ciutat que ve realitzant-la” (620). After the local controversy on the acceptance of Cerdà’s plan over the desired plan of Rovira i Trias, Oller appears as a firmly pragmatic supporter of Cerdà’s plan as a rather monotonous grid but which offers the city endless opportunities for growth. But as a neighbor of the Eixample, Oller calls for the City Hall to hear the complaints of the new proprietors who believe the basic needs of urbanization are not covered in this new area: “Els propietaris de la part nova tenen, com a contribuents que són ahora, perfecte dret a exigir la comoditat d’una urbanització com cal” (621). Oller’s main complaint is the poor condition of the streets, which mean the new dwellers of the Eixample have to live surrounded by dust and mud (621).³⁴ Overall, Oller’s preoccupations with urbanism are related to the reform of the old city and with fixing the technical problems caused by the rapid development of the Eixample. His ultimate goal is not only to improve the everyday life of his fellow Barcelonans—especially defending the rights of his neighbors at the Eixample—but also to place Barcelona on the map “entre les que li pertoca figurar per sa importància històrica, per sa nombrosa població i per sa puixança i riquesa” (619). Oller perceives urbanization and monumentalization as one of the key elements of modernization. Only through the consolidation of the new standards of urbanism that Oller perceived in other European cities could Spain consider itself among the modern nations. As the critic Rosa Cabré explains in *La Barcelona de Narcís Oller: Realitat i somni de la ciutat*, through imitating the Parisian model, Oller perceived

the urban transformation of the city as the path to transform Barcelona into a great modern and cosmopolitan city (9-10).

Oller's fiction also pays special attention to Barcelona's urban environment. From his early short fiction collected in *Croquis del natural* (1878), *Notes de color* (1884), and *De tots colors* (1888)—all of which connect Oller to the local tradition of picturesque sketches—to his first novel *La papallona* (1882), and his Barcelonan epic *La febre d'or* (1890-93), Oller offers a detailed account of the vitality of Barcelona's urban geography before the 1888 Universal Exhibition. In all these works, Barcelona's traditional working class neighborhoods are contrasted with the emergence of the modern city that, as expressed in his 1878 article, he was eager to see materialized.

In 1879, Oller published *Croquis del natural*, a collection of short fiction previously published in local papers. As Oller explains in his *Memòries literàries*, by 1879, while the local Catalan press was successful able to consolidate a strong market niche, Catalan book publishing was not so fortunate (702-3). In effort to remedy this gap, a group of young authors and avid readers created a private society of "Protecció Literària" (702). This society guaranteed to publish the Catalan works that other local publishers would not risk publishing. Through member fees, the society of literary protection guaranteed the publication of four hundred copies of each of the selected books, which were distributed through members' public subscription.³⁵ Oller was lucky enough to see that *Croquis del natural*, a collection of short fiction previously published in the press, had been selected for publication by the literary society. Àngel Guimerà, the acclaimed playwright of la Renaixença, Josep Yxart, literary critic and Oller's cousin, and Emili Vilanova, the popular author of *quadres de costums*, were members of the literary commission that chose to publish *Croquis del natural*. This first collection of short fiction was critically acclaimed not

only at the journal *La Renaixensa*, for which Oller was a regular contributor, but also in rival publications *Lo Gay Saber* and *La Revista de España* (*Memòries literàries* 703). Two particular stories received special critical attention: “Lo vailet del pa” and “El transplantat.” For a critic like Joan Sardà, who would later become one of Oller’s best friends, the publication of this collection and high quality of stories like “Lo vailet del pa”³⁶ marked a turning point for Catalan fiction that would open local production to “un gènere més senyorívol que els que fins llavors havien figurat en la moderna literatura catalana” (qtd. in *Memòries literàries* 704). For Sardà, the distinction of Oller’s prose opened a new direction for local authors that would help consolidate la Renaixença’s novelistic tradition.

The story “El transplantat” also received excellent critical reception. Oller was touched when during a public reading of this work the chief local *costumista* author Emili Vilanova was moved to tears over the story (*Memòries literàries* 709). A story based on a real event, “El transplantat” uses the metaphor of the unsuccessful transplant of an old tree into new soil to explain the story of an old baker, Daniel, who leaves his village and moves to Barcelona to follow his son, a successful hairdresser in the city. Daniel’s story epitomizes the attraction that Barcelona exercised on the rest of Catalonia. Young people moved to the city to pursue higher education—like Oller himself—or to start a career like Daniel’s son. The city offered young people the possibility of making a better future for themselves. They feel attracted to the energy of an increasingly modern city with a social and economic power that opened a whole new world of possibilities. The city, however, also offered a dark side. For older people like Daniel, initially attracted by city lights and crowded streets, Barcelona provoked an increasing feeling of alienation that, as an old tree transplanted in foreign soil, led him to wither away until his untimely death. Oller’s short story emphasizes the difficulty in negotiating the old traditional

spirit of Daniel and the modern vitality of a city made for young and daring people. Daniel withers away because he is unable to adapt to the Barcelona's new urban reality. Oller's story dramatizes modern urban experience's dehumanizing and alienating effect. Oller, however, does not mourn the disappearance of the old spirit—like his friend Emili Vilanova would have done. Instead, he praises the vitality of modernity and welcomes the spirit of renewal and adaptation necessary to survive and make one's mark in the new modern world.

In his first novel, however, the city is not depicted as the alienating force of this short story. The Barcelona of 1867, the year in which Oller situates the action of *La papallona* (1882), is still a romantic and harmonious place in which social structures are clearly anchored in an identifiable urban reality. The urban vitality of *La papallona*—based on an apparent harmony between the working classes and the local bourgeoisie—takes place inside the perimeter of the old city and has its core in les Rambles. Its characters dwell and make their living in the old city and, only occasionally, explore the new slowly developing area of the Eixample. The opening scene of the novel is located in the heart of the Rambles, by the market of Boqueria. From Rambles, Oller moves to the working class neighborhood of el Raval where we will be introduced to Toneta. Oller develops a narrative about deception that takes place across class lines in which the modest orphan seamstress Toneta is betrayed by Lluís Oliveras, the young and wealthy student from the provinces. Even when *La papallona* focuses almost exclusively on the old city, from the very first chapter Barcelona is presented as a city in constant transformation in which the characters see their familiar geography disappear and are “tot es transmuda” with the emergence of the new neighborhoods of the Rondes—located on the perimeter of the old city walls (40).

Throughout the whole novel, Oller brings his characters into the new city only once. In

the last chapter, the novel's climax arise in a confusing mist of alcoholic intoxication and urban exhilaration that initiates with Lluís's incursion into the core of the Eixample: the Passeig de Gràcia. After a banquet with his friends where he binges on champagne, an inebriated Lluís leave the old city through the Portal de l'Àngel: "Els fums del xampany li havien pujat al cap i se'l sentia pesant i tèrbol. Caminà una estona, i s'assegué en un pedrís davant el primitiu Tívoli, avui carrer d'Aragó, posseït de sensual peresa" (113). While inebriated, Lluís sits at the hub of the Eixample in the new confluence of Passeig de Gràcia and the new Aragó St. As the narrator points out, this was the former location of the gardens of Tívoli that was replaced by Cerda's new grid. Sitting on the most popular boulevard of the new city, Lluís became overtaken by alcoholic sensualism and the suggestive warm colors of the sunset. With nothing to do, he decided to follow "amb la mirada alegre les dones guapes que passaven, o contemplava embadalit les pintoresques transformacions d'aquella posta de sol" (113). As the twilight embraced the Eixample, Lluís walked down the Passeig de Gràcia and returned to the old city while his dizziness transformed into joy. Upon arrival at the Catalunya Square, the axis that joined the old and new city, Lluís witness the frantic activity of a "devessall de gent i cotxes que venien de la Rambla; i, quan embocà aquesta via, la trobà plena de marejador moviment" (113). In this scene, Lluís, acting as an intoxicated flâneur, brings his readers to the Eixample. His presence in the new city is marked by having lost his self-control to alcoholism and by his movements in a space dominated by the sea breeze and the setting sun. In the new Lluís can only watch the young ladies walking up and down the boulevard. The real vitality of the modern city only appears when Lluís returns to the old city, les Rambles, where the excitement of the multitude and the inviting shadows cast by the gaslight only increase his sensual appetites. In *La papallona*, thus, the role that Oller reserved for the new city was not the promising core of the

modern city that he enjoyed from his window in his Rambla de Catalunya home. The Eixample is still a grid whose activity pales in comparison to the old city and, of course, the Rambles. We would have to wait for his Barcelonan epic, *La febre d'or*, to witness the emergence of the new city.

Years later, Oller's *La febre d'or* (1890-93) focused on the Barcelona of 1874-1881.³⁷ The text follows the fate of Gil Foix, a local craftworker who ascends socially because of successful stocks. The novel explores the financial roots of the economic boom initiated in 1874—known as “la febre d'or”—and the subsequent collapse of the stock exchange in 1881. Oller reflects on the relationship between the bourgeoisie and the local stock market—perceived as “el temple de la transformació social i el progrés” (Cabré 23)—and the new mobility of the local elites that leave the old city to find their place in the Eixample, far from the crowded inner city. For Cabré, *La febre d'or* is

la novel·la que mitifica la realitat i l'ideal de tot el que al 1881 suposava el progrés: l'urbanisme i el cosmopolitisme, la indústria i la tècnica, la banca i la Borsa, el comerç dels productes de luxe i de l'art, el realisme i el positivisme, el lliure pensament i la tolerància, el dret dels homes i de les dones a la cultura, la superioritat de la societat per damunt dels individus i la força dels més coratjosos per tirar endavant parcel·les de la societat amb les seves grandeses i les seves miseries. (83)

The novel follows Gil Foix in a period in which, thanks to credit, “l'època s'havia metalitzat; la Borsa era la reina del món” (323). Throughout the novel, Foix, who dreams of being a millionaire and having a strongbox full of gold in order to furnish his family with all the conveniences that modernity has to offer (331), we witness the economic and social rise and fall

of the former craftsman. Along with Foix's, Oller invites us to behold "les mudances del temps" (346) and the transformation of the formerly humble urban layout surrounded by walls and populated by *menestrals* into the large city that was becoming modern. Between 1874 and 1881, amidst the urban expansion of the Eixample, as Oller's narrator explains "no era gens difícil trobar un filó i omplir-se les butxaques [...] Era ja innombrable la pobrissallaque en poques setmanes s'havia enriquit. Tothom citava noms obscures que, enlairats de cop i volta a la categoria de potentates, gastaven ja molt més luxe que la noblesa, l'alta banca i el comerç antic" (353). The rise of Gil Foix symbolizes all those anonymous people who took advantage of the boom of the stock exchange and suffered the subsequent crash.

The economic excitement of the period fuels the urban transformation of Barcelona. In two particular scenes, Oller invites us to gaze at the distant panorama of the urban expansion. The eyes of the Foix family, with all their expectations as a rising bourgeois family, serve as lenses to represent the city. Through their eyes, we see Barcelona expanding through the plain and the blurred boundaries of the old city and those that separated Barcelona from the neighbouring villages. Barcelona has burst its 1854 limits and colonized the plain.

In chapter thirteen of the first part of *La febre d'or*, Gil Foix gazes at the public space of the city from a private place, the mansion that his friend Giró has bought in Pedralbes, overlooking the city. Foix's gaze becomes an exercise appropriating urban reality, an urban reality that promises to perpetuate the riches and power of the rising bourgeoisie. From the hills that surround Barcelona, where the wealthiest members of the local bourgeoisie escape from the turmoil of the old city, an enthralled Gil Foix observes a city that he never saw from this vantage point:

un tros de Barcelona, confosa ja amb sos suburbis, estenent-se al peu de Montjuic, blanca, nova, immensa com una gran metròpolis. Sos barris de Llevant, salpicats d'alteroses xemeneies, es perdien en una boirada de vapor que la brillantor del sol fonia amb les tintes de la costa, roses, nacrades, mig velades per un vapor d'or [...] aquell conjunt de tons finíssims, que feia espurnejar els ulls d'en Foix i li travava la llengua. (415-16)

The city that Foix observes is not realistic in its promise of neverending riches, productivity, and profit. Protruding amidst the working class neighborhoods, the chimneys of the local factories call Foix's attention while their smoke turns into a golden vapor that symbolizes the promise of prosperity that this city offers to the local bourgeoisie who is willing and able to risk their credit in the stock exchange. For Gil Foix, the parvenu invited to Giró's house, his gaze acquires a deeper complexity when he notices that it implies something more than the simple promise of neverending wealth. Foix's gaze reminds him of the social, economic, and geographic distance that separate him and the old city from the local bourgeoisie who are able to commodify this panorama of the city for their own consumption.

In chapter sixteen Oller again depicts Foix's gaze upon the expanding city. This time, we are invited along with the Foixes to the opening of the Barcelona racetrack. The Hippodrome is presented as the best example of how "Barcelona, la Barcelona rica, es modernitzava" (445). In this chapter Oller shows once again the vitality of the local bourgeoisie and the excitement that this new culture of leisure brought to the city. Like in the local opera house of el Liceu, people have come to see and be seen (448). Here Delfineta Foix stops to contemplate the panorama for the first time:

Des d'aquelles altures la Delfina ho veia tot: l'extensa pista, l'ample *turf*, [...] la negror del public de peseta, tot aquell panorama fresc i serè pel canto de mitjorn, amb la faixa blavíssima del mar, un bosc de pals daurats ratllant suaument les blancors de la Barceloneta [...] on les serralades del Llobregat i Collcerola engalzaven *dins d'una encesa boira d'or* [...] al mig de la ufanosa verdor de la plana [...] fent ressaltar amb viu contrast les lluïssors espurnejants de la llum enlluernadora [...] dant major potència als tocs brilliants de les xemeneies i edificis escampats entre la gran massa verdosa del pla. Era bell, grandió, brillantíssim, digne d'una ciutat poderosa. [My emphasis] (454)

Under Delfina's eyes, Barcelona projects herself as a powerful city. Here Oller makes sure that the Foix daughter perceives the city through the same filter as his father. For Delfina, like Foix's gaze from Giró's mansion, Barcelona appears covered by a golden mist that grants the city a certain iridescence. In the two panoramic scenes in which Oller presents the city, he explicitly connects the gold fever of the title and the urban material reality of Barcelona. The promise of the stock market is reified in the city, and the city itself adopts the properties of the gold rush.

The Barcelona of *La febre d'or* is far from being the perfect model of urban modernity. The Barcelona of Oller is caught between two urban reference points: the first is Madrid—as a political center which was able to facilitate business through political influences—and the second one, and more important, is Paris—which governs not only the fate of the local stock exchange but also the models of modernity that the local bourgeoisie wanted to follow in fashion, arts, and matters of urbanism. Feeling attracted by the Parisian model, the narrator of *La febre d'or* voiced the same complaints about the imperfect urbanization of Barcelona that Oller had published in his “Quatre mots sobre la policia urbana” of 1878:

començava el barceloní a condoldre's de l'estretor de la ciutat antiga, de la imperfecta urbanització de la nova, de l'aspecte vilatà i la deixadesa que regnaven per sos carrers, de la manca de comoditats modernes, grans monuments, *squares* i estàtues: la febrada d'or congriava projectes per a reformar-ho tot. Els cossos populars i les autoritats rebien cada dia plans i més plans de projectes nous, acompanyats de memories, l'hipòcrita mòbil d'especulació dels quals es disfressava de patriotisme ardent, de previsor i paternal sol.licitud. (354)

As Oller explains, the desired urban transformation went far beyond the simple implementation of the Cerdà plan. According to Oller, the new city had to be developed guaranteeing the minimum requirements of modern urbanization—as he reclaimed in “Quatre mots sobre policia urbana” regarding the poor state of the streets of the old city—, and the old city needed to be reformed and embellished through a careful process of monumentalization. But as Oller points out, these plans were often taken as mere excuses for financial speculation with the new real estate of the Eixample.³⁸ Gil Foix himself proposes several projects to modernize the city, more specifically moving the old Hospital of Santa Creu from the old city to a more spacious area in the new city in order to demolish the old Gothic building and have it transformed into a modern “square.”³⁹ As we can see, Foix’s urbanism seems to rely on the politics of haussmannization or creative destruction that governed most of the reform projects of the old city, but, as Oller’s narrator confesses, it was only an excuse to facilitate real estate speculation.

As Foix’s wife, Catarina, explains, the way of real estate speculation that her husband wants to exploit is quite contrary not only to her personal beliefs but also to the traditional Catalan perception of landowning: “la propietat era per a aquella dona, condensació de treballs i

afanys de l'home previsor, amb la qual assegura i consolida l'esdevenidor de sos hereus; producte de l'esforç, no instrument per a conseguir-ho" (358). As I explained regarding Rigalt's gaze on the Hortes de Sant Bertran, Catarina's attitude towards landowning demonstrates her personal understanding of traditional *pairalisme*, according to which

The house was a symbolic reservoir that allowed individuals to remain rooted in the past as well as active in the present and to imagine the Catalan community as nothing better than the ancestral home (*casa pairal*); the house was seen as the first circle of belonging upon which the nation was built; the house maintained the language and culture, a particularly important thing in a country where the state was alien. (Llobera 56)

In keeping with *pairalisme*, the real estate speculation conceived by Foix, and actually implemented in the development of the Eixample, was not only morally questionable but also contrary to traditional Catalan beliefs. In the Eixample development, as we have seen above, real estate speculation, both by local and foreign investors, was the engine of its growth.

In the pages of *La febre d'or*, Oller identifies the Eixample as the new dwelling place of the bourgeoisie that has been able to rise because of the stock exchange. This is the case of Rodon, the former left-winger turned wealthy stock market speculator after whom Gil Foix mirrors himself. The Rodon family, attracted by the economic prosperity and social milieu of the city, left their native Vilaniu—Oller's literary recreation of his native Valls, which was the main setting of his homonym novel—and bought a condominium in the area of the Cerdà plan. The Rodons live on the right side of the Eixample, on Llúria St., between Consell de Cent St. and the limits of the old city (406). From their new home in Barcelona, Mrs. Montserrat, Rodon's wife, only needs to walk a few blocks to get to Passeig de Gràcia (407). Some other times, before

visiting Rodon, Gil Foix rides up and down the boulevard before visiting Rodon (460-61). The new wide avenues of the Eixample are perceived as the natural location for the new emerging bourgeoisie: “aquelles avingudes presentaven un aspecte alegre, net i aristocratic” (460). In the Passeig de Gràcia, the Foixes perform their social status from their coach with their proper audience: “El flamant landó dels Foix s’internà per les fileres de cotxes, rebent a desdir barretades i mirades, que si encongien no poc xic la Catarina, estarrufaven no poc el banquer” (461). Gil Foix enjoys this particular performativity of social distinction—which fills him with vanity—while the public attention made the more unpretentious Catarina shrink. The Passeig de Gràcia of *La febre d’or* is the counterpart of les Rambles of *La papallona*. In his first novel, Oller focalized on a smaller and harmonious city that revolved around its central avenue, les Rambles. This axis is presented as a democratic place in which all social classes are liable to converge and where everybody feels at home. Conversely, in *La febre d’or*, the gilded Barcelona that Oller depicts does not allow any social harmony by literally erasing the working class of the urban panorama. The industrial network of the city is sublime in the panoramic scene as the chimney steam becomes a golden vapor that does nothing but cover the city with a halo of gold. The menestrals of the city are only present as a remainder of Gil Foix’s social origin to which he will ultimately return after his downfall. The lower middle class and working class appear only as the extras of those scenes that finally require a mass in the background. In this panorama, the Passeig de Gràcia, the core of the Eixample, is occupied entirely by the emerging bourgeoisie and is where they play their games of social performativity.

The Eixample is also the neighborhood of another kind of pretentious bourgeoisie evidenced by the Llopis family, a well-off family who made its fortune in Paris after the father, a former Carlista, made his money in a cheap restaurant. The humble, and rather curious, origins

of the family contrast with the conceit the young daughters Rachel and Emilia exhibit.⁴⁰ Knowledgeable of the symbolic value of French culture in Catalan territory, the Llopis daughters claim their French “roots” as key to their distinction. Upon their return to Barcelona, where Mr. Llopis decided to return after the death of his wife, the Llopis family settled in “un *petit hotel* voltat de jardins a un extrem del carrer de València” [Emphasis in the original] (400).⁴¹ Emilia, as the oldest daughter, took care of the furnishing the family home in the latest fashion, brought from France, of course: “Mestressa de sa voluntat, ho muntà tot *à la dernière*, donà a tota la casa el to perfectament convencional del *demi-monde* descrit per certs novel·listes i dramaturgs francesos” [Emphasis in the original] (400). As one may have expected, Emilia, when she had to identify the locus of fashion and good taste, had no problem praising Paris over Madrid. Paris was the “idol de ses aficions, meta de ses aspiracions i desigs; perquè *ella* era, o així ho assegurava, “una *boulevardière* transplantada” (401). Through Emilia’s pretentious attitude, Oller creates an explicit intertextual connection with his short story “El transplantat.” Here, however the transplant to a foreign or supposedly alien soil takes another direction. While Daniel, the rural baker, withered away after being transplanted from his rural and quiet country life to the impersonal and hectic life of what he perceived as a modern city, according to Emilia she is like a flower transplanted to a smaller pot. Brought up in the boulevards of Paris, Emilia finds herself in what she perceives as a vulgar city. Because “a Barcelona no hi vivia bé: “la ciutat dels terrats plans, dels campanars escapçats no es podia fer amb res que sobresortís de la mida vulgar” (401). For Emilia, when compared to Paris, Barcelona is defined by its lack: flat roofs that lack the gables and mansards of their Parisian counterparts and beheaded belfries without the characteristic pinnacles of French churches.

Curiously enough, even when Oller presents the Llopis daughters as ridiculous laughable

characters, the Catalan author and Emilia may have something in common: their constant need to compare Barcelona's reality with that of other European cities, especially Paris. Both for Emilia and Narcís Oller, Barcelona's urban reality is defined by what it lacks. As we saw in "Quatre mots sobre policia urbana," Oller regrets the lack of monuments that embellish other European cities—a lack that demotes Barcelona to being "un simple poblat gran [que] mai podrà oferir-se als ulls dels pocs viatgers que la visiten com una gran ciutat" (619). Through the passage in which Emilia enumerates the differences between Paris and Barcelona, Oller rephrases his repeated arguments for the modernization of his adoptive city: Barcelona's absent characteristics of urban modernity that are present in other European cities.

If we understand lack in the Lacanian sense as the main cause of desire, Oller's pursuit of modernity is characterized by the recognition that *being* modern depends on *having* certain traits of modernity. Of course, these traits are not inherent in an abstract modernity but recognized in other spaces that are perceived as unequivocally modern. Through Emilia's eyes, these traits are reduced to an openly phallic symbol as the difference is epitomized in Barcelona's beheaded belfries. Oller's quest for modernity is a quest for the phallic power of urban modernization. But the elusiveness of this pursuit will never allow him to have his desired moment of fulfillment, of recognition of having achieved the status of modern metropolis that Oller desired for Barcelona. The ultimate fulfillment can only be symbolically achieved through a fictional representation of a specific moment, a specific panorama, which, like Guesdon's gaze on 1856 Barcelona, manages to erase and elude the representation of those aspects that radically collide with the expectations the audience may have about modernity. But even these moments are ephemeral, as we saw through Gil Foix's gaze from the mansion of Giró when the temporary appropriation of the panorama of the city suddenly vanishes under the recognition that Giró is the actual owner of

that vantage point.

As we have seen in this chapter, all the visual and textual representations of the early development of the Eixample are also governed by lack: by the need to negotiate the distance between the attempted objectivism of photography and the desired subjectivism of drawing and narrative. But as Laclau and Mouffe explain, both objectivism and subjectivism are identical in their attempt to obtain the fullness that is forever elusive (13). But the ultimate attempt to erase this lack, the difference that separates Barcelona with the rational cities of modernity, may be one of the paintings that decorate the Gentleman's Room at the private club of the Liceu Opera House. As Magda Saura Carulla explains, the walls of the most elite club of nineteenth-century Catalan bourgeoisie are festooned with a completely fictional panorama of Barcelona (*Història de l'Eixample* 68). In this painting, the rationality of the Cerdà grid covers the entire Barcelona plain and erases the old city, which is completely engulfed by the regulating power of the parallelogram. As we will see in the last chapter of this dissertation, this was, and still is, the ultimate frontier in the quest for Barcelona's modernity.

NOTES

¹ The fact that Josep Coroleu was, in fact, the author of these notes was expressly stated in *La Vanguardia*, which in December, 14, 1888 confirmed that *Memorias de un menestral* was being written by the “notabilísimo historiador, nuestro colaborador D. José Coroleu” (1).

² Interestingly, it was an Andalusian investor with political and economic interests in Madrid, the Marquis of Salamanca and Count of Los Llanos, and not a member of the Catalan bourgeoisie who became one of the first developers of the *Eixample*. A former Regent during the minority of age of Isabel II, José de Salamanca was the promoter of the Madrilenian homonymous neighborhood of Salamanca, which was a part of the extension of the Spanish capital projected in the plan of Carlos María de Castro and Carlos Ibáñez de Íbero of 1860. Like he did in Madrid, the Andalusian investor was the promoter of some of the first buildings of the *Eixample*: a group of five villas located on the upper section of Passeig de Gràcia, which belonged to the municipality of Gràcia, in 1860.

³ The Escola de la Llotja, popularly known as La Llotja, was founded in 1775 by the Trade Guild of Barcelona (Junta de Comerç de Barcelona) as the Escuela gratuita de diseño. As I explained in the second chapter, the local art school received its popular name of La Llotja from its original location at old medieval building originally commissioned by king Peter the Ceremonious and refurbished as a neoclassical building by Joan Soler Faneca, which held the Barcelona stock exchange. Originally conceived as an applied arts school, the Escola de la Llotja was the most important art school in Catalonia. Artists like Marià Fortuny, the Vallmitjana brothers, Damià Campeny, Pere Guinovart and Pablo Picasso were among its most renowned students.

⁴ See chapter two with regards to Balaguer’s travel guides.

⁵ Beyond the collection held at the Reial Acadèmia Catalana de Belles Arts de Sant Jordi, 260 of them are held at the Museu d'Art de Catalunya, 200 at the Biblioteca-Museu Víctor Balaguer in Vilanova i la Geltrú, 72 at the Arxiu Històric de la Ciutat de Barcelona, 62 at the Museu d'Història de la Ciutat de Barcelona. All the drawings by Rigalt analyzed in this dissertation belong to the collection of the Reial Acadèmia Catalana de Belles Arts de Sant Jordi to which I had access thanks to the invaluable help of Victoria Durá.

⁶ This is the estimate number of drawings that can be ultimately ascribed to the city of Barcelona. As Victoria Durá explains, a small number of his drawings do not include the actual location and cannot be identified otherwise as representations of Barcelona or its surrounding area (9).

⁷ As I discussed with Victoria Durá, the curator of the Rigalt archive at the RACBASJ, it is quite likely that Rigalt used these drawings as a teaching resource in his perspective and landscaping classes at La Llotja or that they were conceived as preliminary sketches for sceneries to be used in local theaters. Furthermore, after Rigalt bequeathed part of his collection of drawings to La Llotja, some of them were permanently exhibited in one of the conference rooms at the school.

⁸ Of course, this theory would deserve further detailed research on the Barcelona art market of this period. However, this task goes beyond the scope of this dissertation.

⁹ As I explained in the previous chapter, before the demolition of the city walls and the approval of the Cerdà plan, construction on the Barcelona plain was restricted according to military regulations. According to strategic needs for the defense of the stronghold, permanent buildings were not allowed in a restricted area of 1,500 *varas lineales* or 1,253 meters around the

city—the stipulated range of a military cannon fired from its battlements (Cerdà “Ensanche de la ciudad de Barcelona” 57).

¹⁰ References 47, 218, 219, 304, 322, 401, 426, 431, 432, 433, 434, 435 and 436 of the collection held at the Reial Acadèmia Catalana de Belles Arts de Sant Jordi.

¹¹ References 431, 433, 434 and 435 of Rigalt’s archive at the RACBASJ.

¹² Literary *pairalisme* was a recurrent figure “La casa payral” by Agustí Valls i Vicents (1888),

¹³ Josep R. Llobera summarizes the articulation of *pairalisme* as follows: “The house was a symbolic reservoir that allowed individuals to remain rooted in the past as well as active in the present and to imagine the Catalan community as nothing better than the ancestral home (*casa pairal*); the house was seen as the first circle of belonging upon which the nation was built; the house maintained the language and culture, a particularly important thing in a country where the state was alien” (56).

¹⁴ Regarding the identification of this space, I have to thank the priceless collaboration of my friends and fellow amateur photographers Carlos Iglesias and Julio Mas, who have helped me to try to identify the location of Rigalt’s drawings with the help of their images and other nineteenth-century references.

¹⁵ Later on, the Batlló family, one of the most important ones of the local industrial bourgeoisie, had an important role in the development of the Passeig de Gràcia. In 1875, they contributed to the urban development of the boulevard when they commissioned the construction of the family residence in Passeig de Gràcia to Emili Sala Cortés. Between 1904 and 1906, Josep Batlló i Casanovas also contributed to transform the aesthetics of the avenue when he commissioned Antoni Gaudí the remodeling of the original building by Sala Cortés. Today,

thanks to Gaudí's work, the Casa Batlló is known as one of the most important landmarks of Catalan *Modernisme* located in the *illa de la discòrdia*, where it competes aesthetically with buildings by Puig i Cadafalch and Domènech i Montaner.

¹⁶ As Saura points out most of the real estate speculation involved in the development of the *Eixample* was not in charge of the local bourgeoisie: " el negoci no el va fer la pretesa classe burgesa catalana. Els fabricants tèxtils catalans compraven finques per edificar-hi ells i les seves famílies. Però les compraren, en la majoria dels casos, les societats immobiliàries amb membres com M. Cruz Rodríguez, no catalans, que en un període de cinc o sis anys van fer realment el negoci" (44).

¹⁷ The articles with the title "El paseo de Gracia" were published June 22, July 7, July 20, and August 3, 1859.

¹⁸ As Fabre and Huertas also explain, the monument suffered then a second appropriation when the new location of the monument was inaugurated with an open-air mass celebrated by Monsignor Antoniutti, the apostolic delegate of the Vatican, in front of the Civil Governor of Barcelona, Felipe Acedo Colunga (n.p.).

¹⁹ Just like many of his contemporaries, Franck and Wigle incorporated the new technology of wet collodion that allowed for multiple reproductibility of the original (Naranjo 21). This technical development facilitated the democratization of photography through a price reduction and the popularization the small format portraits used in *cartes de visite*, which marked a radical turning point in the separation between the private and the public image (Naranjo 22). Curiously enough, the Narcís Oller archive at the Arxiu Històric de la Ciutat de Barcelona keeps a portrait of the Catalan author's great-grandmother, Nicolasa Pastor, taken at the studio of Franck and Wigle in Barcelona.

²⁰ Depending on the quantity of light and the sensitivity of the negative material, early daguerreotypes needed an exposure of five minutes minimum but they could be as long as thirty minutes. In the 1840s, with the introduction of gallic acid to silver nitrate, exposure times were considerably reduced to a few minutes. With the introduction of wet collodion processes in 1851, exposure times were reduced to a few seconds but even this process limited the possibility of capturing figures in movement (Hannavy 515-16).

²¹ Unfortunately, I have not been able to locate an available copy of Álvarez's photographic album in order to discuss it in detail in this dissertation.

²² The geographer Carles Carreras explains that the initial stage of development of the new city did not conform to the aspect it has today. Along with the traditional blocks of the *Eixample* (Fig.12), it was characterized by the presence of single-family houses with a garden, and some mansions and small palaces with what could be considered "exotic" architectural styles (73).

²³ The historian of Spanish photography Públio López Mondéjar does not pay any special attention to Martí but he counts a Juan Martí in a list of Madrilenian photographers (24). It could have been the case that he moved to Madrid—as one more case of what López Mondéjar calls "ambulancia fotográfica" (65)—or that he opened another studio in the Spanish capital.

²⁴ In this second image, the gaze of the photographer looks up, probably from a first floor window, at the sculpture of the patron saint located at the top of a pilar. This angle allows only imagining the life that happens below it, under the fragile roofs of the popular market of the square. The Padró square is chosen as the second photograph of the series because of its religious symbolism. As, according to local lore, this was the place in which Praetor Dacian ordered the young local martyr to be crucified and where, in 1673, the local government erected a monument

to her name. From the beginning of Martí's book, Barcelona is strongly grounded in the local Christian beliefs.

²⁵ This neogothic mansion was aligned according the initial project of Cerdà but, due to the later modifications of the planning of the Plaça Catalunya, the Gibert house had to be demolished because it was right in the center of the new square (Carreras 69).

²⁶ In fact, López success relied on offering new humoristic journals in Catalan following the path initiated by other local journals in Spanish like *El Hongo* (1841), *El Papagayo* (1842), and *El Sapo y el Mico* (1842).

²⁷ All of them published their works under pseudonym.

²⁸ While I will discuss the work of Robert Robert in this pages, I will analyze the work of Emili Vilanova in the next and last chapter of this dissertation.

²⁹ "A tot foraster se li pregunta: ¿ja ha vist lo passeig de Gracia?" (Robert 1).

³⁰ Unfortunately I have not found any relevant information about this author. Given the nature of these satirical journals, it is quite likely that this was actually a pseudonym but, as of today, I have not been able to identify the actual name of this contributor.

³¹ As we will see, the sentiment of el Senyor Francesch was present in many Barcelonans. As we will see below, the Realist author Narcís Oller actually confessed that he felt the drive to see with his own eyes the constant transformations of the city and the works of the Universal Exhibition of 1888.

³² The location of this scene is identifiable by the profile of the Gibert House that appears on the upper left corner of the cartoon.

³³ I will address Oller's attitude regarding the inner reform of the city in the next chapter.

³⁴ The muddy nature of the streets of Barcelona was in fact the origin of one of the most popular Catalan misnomers of the city. The mud on its streets motivated the moniker “Can Fanga”—derived from the Catalan contraction “Can” (Ca[sa] + en: “the house of”) and a derivation of “fang,” mud. Can Fanga—or the Mud House—was used by Catalan visitors from the provinces to refer to the city.

³⁵ As the local newspaper *La Vanguardia* announced on July 23, 1882, the aim of the new publishing was to “dar á luz libros catalanes en una forma elegante y lujosa, y al mismo tiempo verdaderamente económica [...] el ejemplar que tenemos á la vista «Novelas» de don Martín Genis y Aguilar, cumple perfectamente dicho objetivo, máxime reuniendo la bondad literaria á la artística manera con que dichos tomos son presentados. Esta biblioteca publicará un tomo cada mes, al ínfimo precio de 10 reales y tiene en preparación el “Llibre de la fé”; “Novela de customs” de Narciso Oller, “Llibre del amor” y “Quadros á la tinta” de Federico Soler” (4702).

³⁶ “El vailet del pa” was translated to Russian, Swedish, Czech, and three times into Spanish (*Memòries literàries* 705).

³⁷ We should note that, even when *La febre d’or* was published in two volumes—in 1890 and 1893—the composition and initial exposure of the local audience to Oller’s novel coincided with the preparation of the Universal Exhibition of 1888. According to *La Vanguardia*, Oller read the first and the third chapters of the novel at the Círculo Artístico on March 10, 1888 (“La vida barcelonesa” 2).

³⁸ As I explored in the previous chapter, this attitude brought the ultimate perversion of the Cerdà plan through sheer real estate speculation and the tacit acquiescence of the City Council.

³⁹ The final project of moving the old Hospital de la Santa Creu was actually implemented between 1905 and 1930 with the construction of the Hospital de Sant Pau designed by Lluís Domènech i Montaner, which became a trademark of Catalan *modernisme*. The old building, however, was not demolished, as Gil Foix suggested in fiction, and today the old Gothic building of the hospital holds the Biblioteca de Catalunya.

⁴⁰ Curiously enough, Oller—following the well-known custom of Pérez Galdós and Dickens—brings back the character of Lluís Oliveras, seducer of Toneta in *La papallona*, as a gentleman caller of Emilia. The Llopis daughter immediately turns him down when she learns that he had had an illegitimate child as a consequence of his seduction of Toneta.

⁴¹ According to Carles Carreras, this kind of construction was distinctive of the initial development of the Eixample (71).

FIGURES, CHAPTER 4

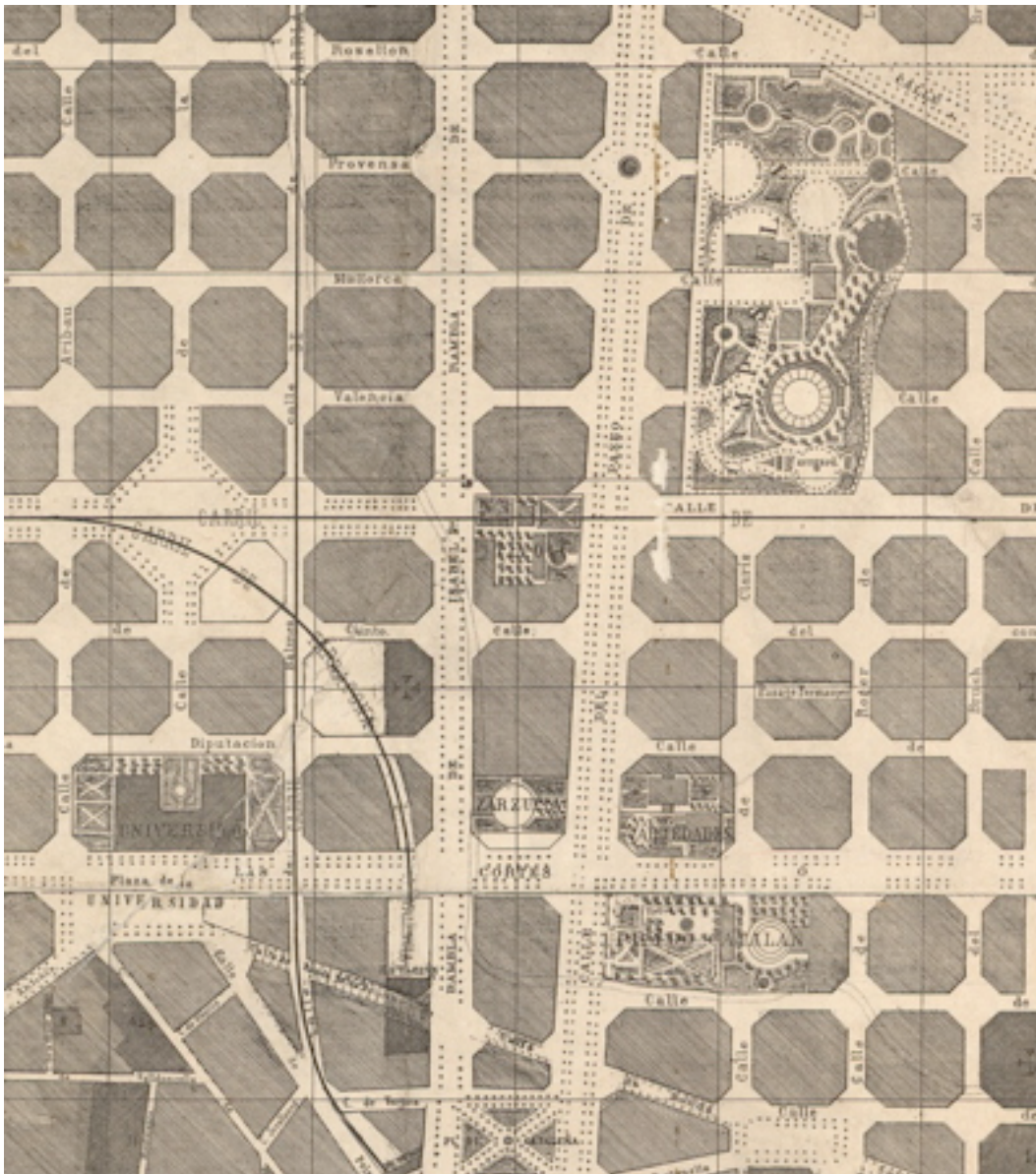


Fig. 4. 1: Detail of the new asymmetrical appearance of the *Eixample* after the original layout of Passeig de Gràcia was incorporated in the 1861 modifications of the Cerdà plan. Please note the presence of the original structure of the Camps Elisis on the top right corner of the image. *Plano de Barcelona con la parte de Ensanche que se está edificando en la actualidad*. 1866. Ref. 2926. Arxiu Històric de la Ciutat de Barcelona.



Fig. 4. 2: Detail of Lluís Rigalt's *Ruïnes*, 1865. Oil on canvas 102 x 155. Held at the MNAC Collections (MNAC/MAM 10559). Included in Mendoza's *Cien años de paisajismo catalán* (52-53).



Fig. 4. 3: Lluís Rigalt i Farriols, *S. Beltrán*, Mayo 1876. Pencil and sepia on paper, 12 x 18 cm.

Held at the collections of the Reial Acadèmia Catalana de Belles Arts de Sant Jordi #434.



Fig. 4. 4: Lluís Rigalt i Farriols, *S. Beltrán, Abril 1876*. Pencil and sepia on paper, 11.5 x 15.6 cm. Held at the collections of the Reial Acadèmia Catalana de Belles Arts de Sant Jordi #426.



Fig. 4. 5: Lluís Rigalt i Farriols, *Montjuïc, Mayo 1874*. Pencil and sepia on paper, 13.2 x 19.2 cm. Held at the collections of the Reial Acadèmia Catalana de Belles Arts de Sant Jordi #248.



Fig. 4. 6: Joan Martí i Centelles, “Vista de Barcelona”. Albumen photograph. 16 x 22.5 cm. Included as the first image in the collection published in *Bellezas de Barcelona*, 1874. N.p.



Fig. 4. 7: Lluís Rigalt i Farriols, *F[ebrero]* '76. Pencil and sepia on paper, 13.2 x 19.2 cm. Held at the collections of the Reial Acadèmia Catalana de Belles Arts de Sant Jordi #396.



Fig. 4. 8: Lluís Rigalt i Farriols, *Ensanche, Junio '70*. Pencil and sepia on paper, 10.7 x 17.5 cm.

Held at the collections of the Reial Acadèmia Catalana de Belles Arts de Sant Jordi #75.



Fig. 4. 9: Lluís Rigalt i Farriols, *Riera de Malla, Junio de '69*. Pencil and sepia, 12.5 x 20 cm.

Held at the collections of the Reial Acadèmia Catalana de Belles Arts de Sant Jordi #51.



Fig. 4. 10: Lluís Rigalt i Farriols, *Riera de Malla, Junio '69*. Pencil and watercolor on paper. 12.5 x 18.7 cm. Held at the collections of the Reial Acadèmia Catalana de Belles Arts de Sant Jordi #52.



Fig. 4. 11: Lluís Rigalt i Farriols, *Ensanche*, Junio 1870. Pencil and sepia, 11 x 19.3 cm. Held at the collections of the Reial Acadèmia Catalana de Belles Arts de Sant Jordi #76.



Fig. 4. 12: Basic layout of the blocs of the Eixample designed by Cerdà as they appear in *Plano de Barcelona con la parte del Ensanche que se está edificando en la actualidad* (1866) and a characteristic perspective of one of the first condominiums building of the *Eixample* in a photograph by Carlos Iglesias. This building was erected in 1862 at the confluence of Lluria and Consell de Cent streets.



Fig. 4. 13: Lluís Rigalt i Farriols, *Campos Eliseos, Octubre 1872*. Pencil and sepia. Held at the collections of the Reial Acadèmia Catalana de Belles Arts de Sant Jordi.



Fig. 4. 14: Lluís Rigalt i Farriols, *Campos Eliseos, Otoño 1872*. Pencil and sepia. Held at the collections of the Reial Acadèmia Catalana de Belles Arts de Sant Jordi.



Fig. 4. 15: Franck [François-Marie-Louis-Alexandre Gobinet de Villecholes]. Panorama of the demolition of the bulwark of Tallers, c. 1856. Bibliothèque Nationale de France. Included in *Introducción a la historia de la fotografía en Cataluña* (14).



Fig. 4. 16: F.J. Álvarez, 1872. Panorama of a section of the Gran Via, the old city, and Montjuïc taken from one of the towers of the new University building. Included in *Album fotográfico de los monumentos y edificios más notables que existen en Barcelona con su correspondiente descripción*. 1872. Image included in *Retrat de Barcelona*, Vol. 2. Pag. 12.



Fig. 4. 17: F.J. Álvarez, 1872. Panorama of a section of the old city, the Gran Via, and the new *Eixample* taken from one of the towers of the new University building. Included in *Album fotográfico de los monumentos y edificios más notables que existen en Barcelona con su correspondiente descripción*. 1872. Image included in *Retrat de Barcelona*, Vol. 2. Pag. 12.



Fig. 4. 18: Joan Martí i Centelles, “Plaza de Cataluña”, 1874. The Gibert House, first building of the *Eixample*, appears on the foreground of the emerging city. Included in *Bellezas de Barcelona: Relación fotografiada de sus principales monumentos, edificios, calles, paseos y todo lo mejor que encierra la antigua capital del Principado*.



Fig. 4. 19: "A Ca'n Gibert," *La Ilustració Catalana* April 15, 1888. Drawing by A. Ross. Pag.

97.

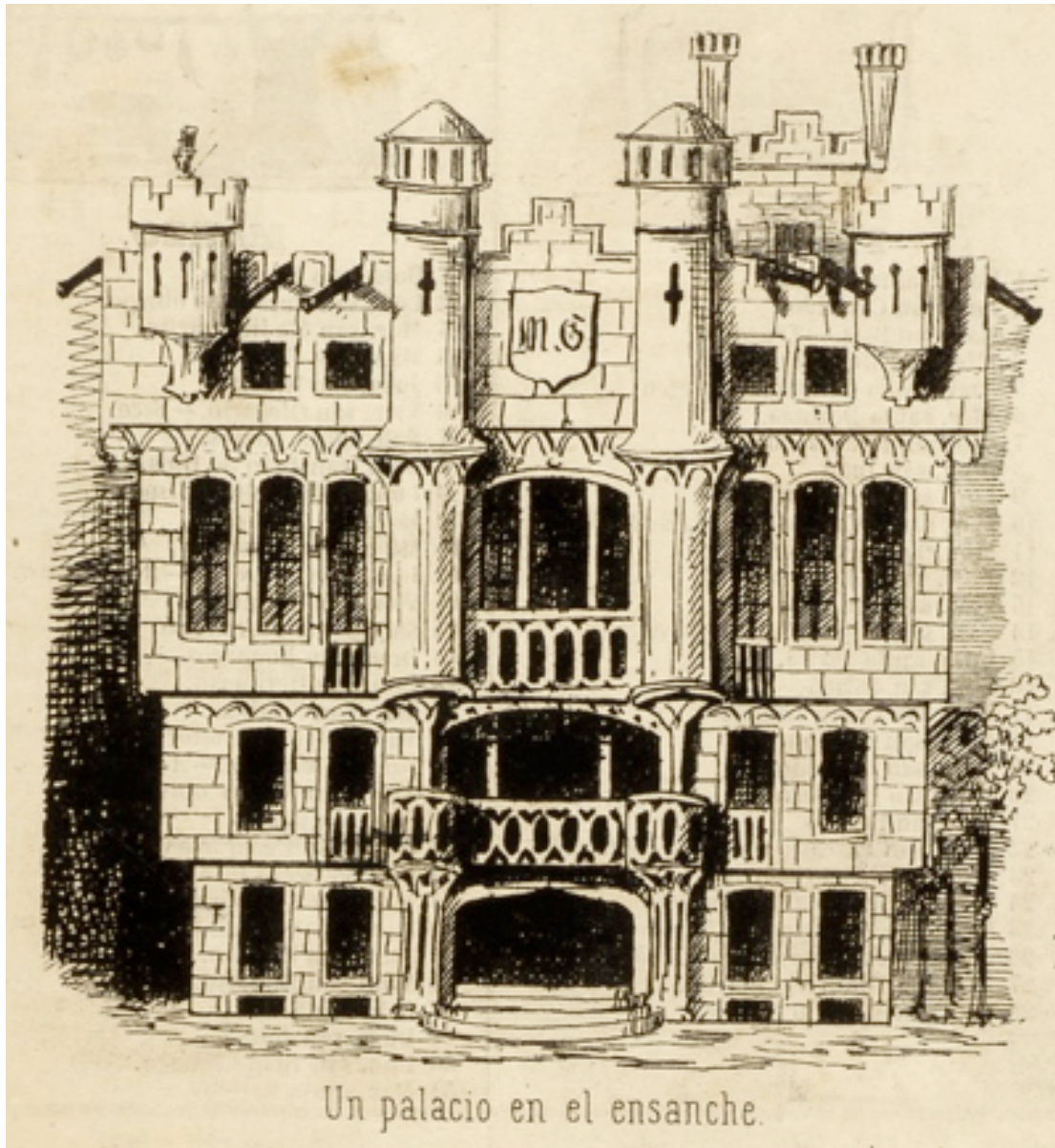


Fig. 4. 20: "Barcelona Monumental: Un palacio en el ensanche." Unsigned cartoon of the Gibert House published in *El Tiburón: Almanaque Humorístico para 1863*.



Fig. 4. 21: Tomàs Padró's rendering of the Gibert House in "Arquitectura Anglo-Sarrianesca," 1865. Published in *Un Tros de Paper*.



Fig. 4. 22: Joan Martí i Centelles, “Gran-Vía”, 1874. Included in *Bellezas de Barcelona: Relación fotografiada de sus principales monumentos, edificios, calles, paseos y todo lo mejor que encierra la antigua capital del Principado.*



Fig. 4. 23: Joan Martí i Centelles, “Paseo de Gracia”, 1874. Included in *Bellezas de Barcelona: Relación fotografiada de sus principales monumentos, edificios, calles, paseos y todo lo mejor que encierra la antigua capital del Principado.*



Fig. 4. 24: Advertiser of López’s Librería Española from the pages of *El Tiburón* (n.p.) and cover of issue No. 53 of *Un tros de paper* published on May 27, 1866.



Fig. 4. 25: Banner designed by Tomàs Padró for *La Rambla: Semmanari Catalá*.



Fig. 4. 26: Banner of *La Pubilla: Semmanari Catalá* by Tomàs Padró. This image focuses again on an exclusively Barcelonan topic: a general panorama of the city escorted by the traditional folkloric giants of the city on the left and the City Hall on the right.

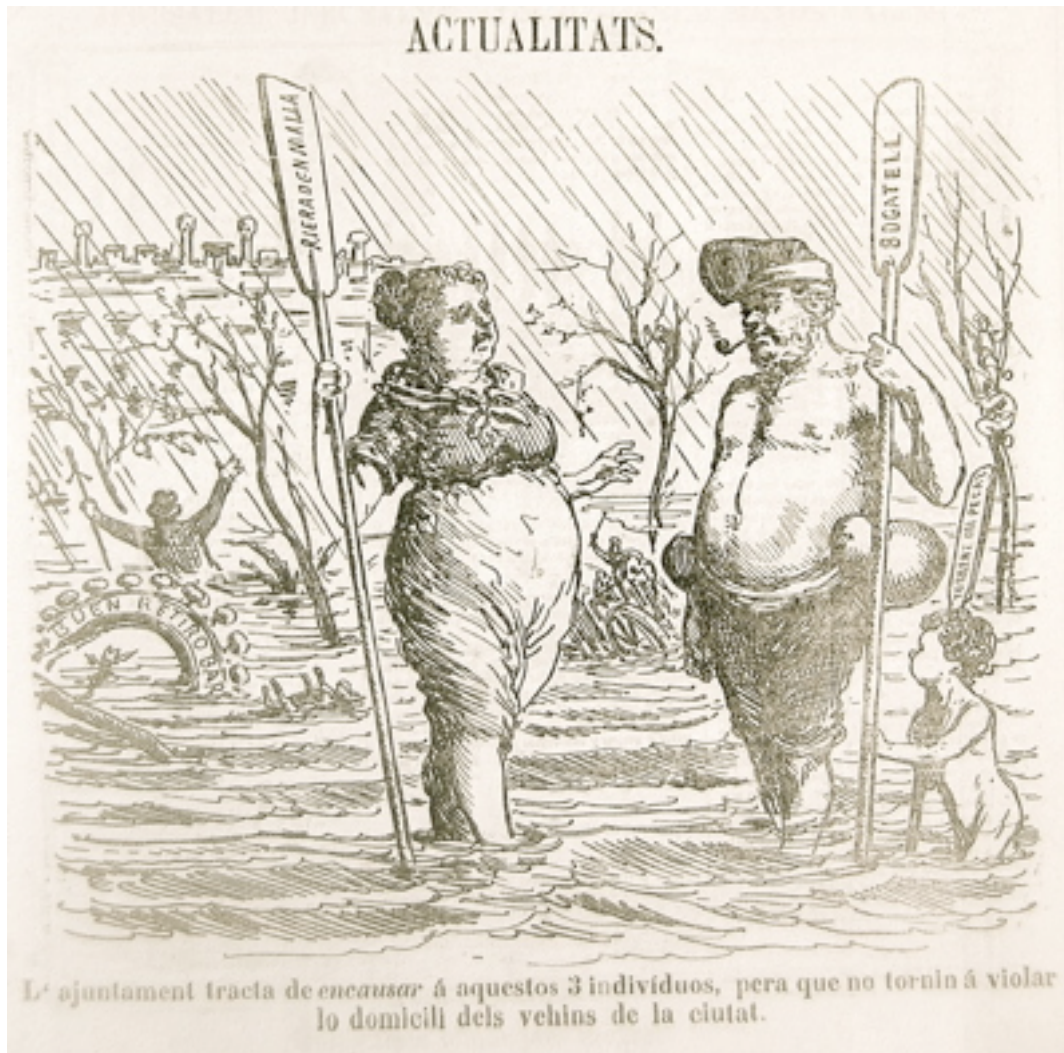


Fig. 4. 27: "Actualitats," *La Campana de Gràcia*, September 19, 1875. Unsigned cartoon attributable to Tomàs Padró, the traditional illustrator of the journal until his death in 1877.

CHAPTER 5

INNER CITY RUPTURES: URBAN PLANNING, RESISTANCE, AND SOCIAL CAPITAL IN EMILI VILANOVA'S BARCELONA

You will live to see the city grown desolate and bleak.

Your glory will be great in the eyes of future archaeologists,

But your last days will be sad and bitter. [...]

And the heart of the city will slowly freeze.

—*Paris désert: Lamentations d'un Jérémie haussmannisé* (1868)

As we have seen, the 1870s was a decade that consolidated a particular way of representing and reproducing the city's image for public consumption. Photographers like F. J. Álvarez, Joan Martí, and J. E. Puig were rendering the complex reality of the city through a series of fragmented images of monumental spaces that were representative of urban reality. Carefully selecting specific spaces of urban layout simplified the city and made it easily apprehensible. The result was a commodified image of the city that intended to project a specific message. The city of Álvarez, Martí, and especially of J. E. Puig, in his *Plano y vistas de Barcelona*, was deeply rooted in the traditional power structures of Catalonia reminiscent of Catalan home rule during the middle ages (Fig. 5.1). Buildings like the City Hall—the cradle of local institutions like the Consell de Cent¹—, the Audiencia—the former palace of la Generalitat and an icon of the lost self-government²—, and the Llotja—site of the modern stock exchange, the trade council, and former hub of Catalan trade in the Mediterranean³—along with religious buildings—like the Cathedral, Santa Maria del Mar or the church of Santa Anna—composed these scrapbooks of the old city. In these edifices, the halo of the traditional power structures of the city appeared intact in the material presence of old institutions even after one and a half

centuries of centralized government from Madrid.

In the photographs of Álvarez, Puig, and Martí, the city is recorded as a collection of snapshots that try to document as accurately as possible both the traditional and, in the case of Martí and Álvarez, the new urban reality. When possible, they also tried to represent the way Barcelonans used some of these spaces. The long exposures of mid-nineteenth-century photography, however, posed a technical difficulty that impeded the representation of the vitality of the city. In the best-case scenario, photographers like Martí managed to reproduce the clear silhouettes of figures in the Pla de Palau (Fig. 5.2). Martí's photograph introduces us to a phantasmagoric city. In this image there is far more than what the camera can grasp. Standing in the center of the square, we can see a sharply defined man staring at the camera. This immobile figure is the only one clearly identified in this otherwise populated space. Closer to the camera, we can perceive the slightly blurred and duplicated profile of a man that appears cropped in the foreground. But besides these two apparently solitary figures, Martí's photograph gives us a hint not only of photography's technical limitations but also of the vitality this space seems to hide. Besides these men, we can perceive a multiplicity of blurred shadows that seem like phantoms that inhabit the city. These specters are, in fact, traces left by other individuals that populate the public space. They, unlike the man staring at the camera, cannot afford stopping to look at the camera. They are unnoticed.

In this chapter, I will explore representations of the old city that explicitly foreground the urban reality that photographers could not represent because of technical limitations or did not want to portray because of the apparent non-distinctness of those spaces. I will point out the tensions generated between the way the city is conceived through urban planning and certain representations of the urban experience that contest or question the basic premises of the

attempts to impose a rationalized order on space.

5.1 ON THE RATIONALIZATION OF THE INNER CITY

As I explained in chapter three, by 1854 the new industrial city was bursting at the seams of its medieval walls and asking for a reformulation of its urban model marked by a predominantly medieval layout of narrow streets and alleys compressed by the obsolete city walls. After years of political and civil struggle, the city managed not only to demolish the stone belt that hindered her growth but also to approve a plan of unlimited expansion. The Cerdà plan rescued the city by offering a wide horizon of possibilities that would eventually allow Barcelona to expand and remove smaller villages of the plain. As we know, Cerdà's plan imposed a new geometrical rationale based on an extensive grid that was presented as the blueprint for the Barcelona of the future. However, it is important to keep in mind that his particular conception of urban regularity emerged precisely as a reaction to what he perceived as the defects of the inner city. As the Catalan engineer suggested, in order to create a new urban rational it was "[n]ecesario [...] desentenderse completamente de la ciudad antigua y no tenerla presente mas que para conocer sus defectos y evitarlos" (*Teoría de la construcción de las ciudades* 407). Cerdà, like some of his contemporaries, despised the old city precisely because of its chaotic irregularity.

Manuel Angelón—the local author associated with the comic writers that emerged from the meetings held in Frederic Soler's watchmaker store—joked about the ridiculously complex urban layout of the old city in his *Guía satírica de Barcelona* of 1854. According to Angelón, the city was composed of “un laberinto de líneas, formando ángulos, triángulos, círculos y semicírculos pero nunca *paralelas*” [My emphasis] (19). In the drawing by Moliné i Ferran that

accompanied Angelón's words, the city was reduced to an uncomprehensible confusion of apparently accidental and illogically patterned circles. Cerdà responded to the deceptive chaos of the inner city's urban layout by presenting a proposal of expansion based on a strict geometric rationalization of space. Moliné i Ferran's satirical cartoon and some of Cerdà's basic sketches of the ideal urban layout are radically opposed, urban geometrical realities. (Fig. 5.3). The satirical gaze of both Angelón's comments and Moliné's cartoon seems to be calling for some form of urban rationalization that erases at least part of old Barcelona's ultimate chaos. With a more serious and technical disposition, Ildefons Cerdà also qualified the old urban layout of the city as an intricate maze composed by "esas sinuosidades y culebreos tan inmotivados, esas tortuosidades tan infundadas, esas vueltas y revueltas que no se explican, esos codos y recodos que no tienen razon de ser, y, finalmente, esos zic-zacs tan absurdos, que juntos y por separado constituyen un verdadero padron de ignominia" (*Teoría general de la urbanización* 278-79). Unmistakably, both Angelón and Cerdà believed something had to be done about the intricacy of the inner city.⁴ For Cerdà, the formal complexity of the inner city responded to an utter lack of "ley racional" that contributed to "aumentar considerablemente la anarquía del trazado general " (*Teoría general de la urbanización* 280).

The apparent chaos of the traditional urban structure—in which "todo es estrecho y mezquino" (*Teoría general de la urbanización* 9)—had to be called to order, rationalized, systematized, and conformed to new standards of urban modernity. In this sense, Cerdà's preliminary sketch plan for urban expansion suggest not only the possibility of applying the grid to the new emerging city on the plain but also to the space where the convolutions of narrow streets, alleys, and cul-de-sacs converged (Fig. 5.4). As this preliminary sketch suggests, the geometrical and mathematical precision of the Eixample could also be applied to the old

perimeter of the city. Of course, the logic of Cerdà's plan did not go as far to suggest erasing the old city for the new quadrangular grid; however, Cerdà's sketch suggests the possibility of making the anarchy of the old city submit to the geometrical and mathematical precision of the new order.

The problems that Cerdà and some of his contemporaries experienced in certain sections of the old city went far beyond geometrical irregularity. In order to explain the problematics of some of the old neighborhoods of Barcelona, In 1867 Cerda took the poetic license of inviting his readers to a fictional trip to the inner city in his *Teoría general de la urbanización*. Taking for granted the mistrust these spaces may provoke for his learned audience, Cerdà invites his readers to leave their fears behind in order to explore this particular realm: "Penetremos ya sin recelo en esas *callejas* y *callejuelas* [...] En estas vias es donde se encuentran con mas abundancia y mas salientes los *vicios, defectos e irregularidades* de todo género [...] destinadas al servicio de pocas personas, han sido miradas con cierto desden é indiferencia por la colectividad" (344). For Cerdà, as for many of his contemporaries, the old network of narrow streets, backstreets, and alleys was not only problematic for its lack of geometrical coherence but also because the convolutions of this urban layout were perceived as an ideal place for moral corruption in which all kinds of vices could flourish. Cerda considered it extremely difficult to standardize the urban layout of the inner city; he thought that the only possible solution was to impose a new kind of urbanization on top of the old structure (345). As Brad Epps surmises, "something destructive [...] hounds Cerdà's endeavor" (153). Following the approach of Baron Haussmann's reform of Paris, Cerdà advocated for the creative destruction of part of old Barcelona.

Even when Cerdà's plan is remembered for its rational alignment of the Eixample,⁵ his overarching proposal also includes the reform of the inner city. Cerdà designed three boulevards

that crossed the old city and made it possible for traffic from the new city—the Eixample—to penetrate the old city. These boulevards—avenues A, B, and C—cut the old body in several sections and introduce part of the geometrical regularity of the Eixample into the inner city (Fig. 5.5 and 5.6). As we can see in the details of Cerdà's plans, the urban intervention implied the demolition of large sections of the old city and the disappearance of many streets, backstreets and alleys (see detail of Fig. 5.6). In an attempt to gentrify the old city, the new boulevards would be lined-up with new modern blocks that would transform the otherwise vicious spaces into an attractive neighborhood for the emerging bourgeoisie.

As Brad Epps points out, "Cerdà cannot quite shake the legacy of Baron Georges Eugène Haussmann" (154). Cerdà's reform plan for the inner city can be traced back to the urban reforms Baron Haussmann had been implementing in Paris since 1853. In that year, Georges-Eugène Haussmann was appointed Prefect of the Seine Département. According to a legend, which Haussmann supported in his autobiography, one day when he came into the office, Napoleon III handed him a map of Paris that detailed, in four different colors indicating the urgency of the interventions, the specific reform plans for the French capital (Harvey *Paris, Capital of Modernity* 8). Harvey argues that this mythical scene, in which the Emperor provides the Baron with instructions for the city's reform, never took place. Although first discussed during revolutionary times, between 1833 and 1848, Claude-Philibert Barthelot de Rambuteau initiated Parisian reform and continued with commissioned projects under Count Simeon in 1853 (Harvey *Paris* 8-9). Haussmann's reform of Paris relied on an overarching project of creative destruction: a new urban layout of rational, wide, and uniform boulevards was to be imposed on the old intricate network of streets, alleys, and cul-de-sacs. According to Harvey, Haussmann's project took many liberties from the original instructions of the Emperor as he "had instructed

him to be sensitive to existing structures of quality and to avoid the straight line [but] Haussmann ignored him on both counts” (*Paris* 9). These two transgressions have come to characterize Haussmannization: a carefree approach to the destruction of the previous urban reality and the implementation of broad straight-line boulevards that facilitate the exercise of vision.

As Walter Benjamin records in *The Arcades Project*, people like the French revolutionary Louis Auguste Blanqui did not doubt to characterize Haussmann’s project of urban reform as “one of the great plagues of the Second Empire” (qtd. in Benjamin 144). As Blanqui pointed out, the effect of Haussmannization on Parisians was such that it had become a matter of life and death: “No one will ever know how many thousands of unfortunates have lost their lives as a consequence of deprivation occasioned by these senseless constructions” (qtd. in Benjamin 144). As the French revolutionary suggested, the main problem was that the urban transformations may have been motivated only by the desire to foster construction to activate the local economy in a time of peace: “When building goes well, everything goes well” reminded Blanqui (qtd. in Benjamin 144). Haussmann’s urban reforms are perceived as an excuse for financial speculation that would have devastating effects for Paris’s poor community. Blanqui’s rejection of Haussmannization was voicing what most local working classes felt. As Michelle Perrot explains, mid-nineteenth-century Parisian weavers contested Haussmann’s plan of urban reform because “[a]long with their habitat, it was their mode of existence, their very identity that was at stake” (85). As Perrot clarifies, Parisian workers were aware that this transformation was more than a proposal of gentrification and beautification of the old city. This urban revolution brought together a new rationalization of the urban space that imposed new forms of control on the city that threatened the “spatial independence” of the working class (Perrot 85). Ultimately, under Haussmann’s project, the working class quarters of the medieval city were erased to give way to

wide boulevards for the local bourgeoisie. According to Lennard Davis, the aim “of this decoding and recoding was to turn ideology into physical, public signs” (33). The new Paris boulevards reified the bourgeois ideology of the Second Empire.

In Barcelona, Cerdà’s proposal borrowed Haussmann’s basic concept—urban reform based on the creative destruction of the old layout—in order to cut the Gordian knot of the inner city maze. As I explained in chapter three, the task of the new discipline of urbanization for the Catalan engineer was to bring urban reality up to date with what he perceived as the needs of modern civilization. In a long passage of his *Teoría General de la Urbanización*, Cerdà summarized his perception of how the drive of modernization called for urgent reforms in the organization of cities:

En la época presente nos hemos encontrado con una civilización moderna, hija del vapor y la electricidad, civilización toda de movimiento, activa, predominante, exigente, que lleva por delante todos cuantos obstáculos se oponen a su impetuoso curso; y nos hemos encontrado al propio tiempo con una urbanización anticuada, inmóvil y estrecha como la civilización á cuyo servicio había estado durante algunos siglos. (318)

For Cerdà, the new material conditions generated by the industrial and scientific revolutions of the nineteenth century—epitomized by steam power and electricity—called for a transformation of the world as he knew it. The new steam powered society was an unstoppable driving force that was able to tear down any obstacle in the way of progress. According to Cerdà, the traditional urban layout of old cities is obsolete as it only responded to the material needs of ancient civilizations that had nothing to do with the demands of modern society. As Cerdà anticipates, the inexorable path of progress inevitably had to run through the worn-out urban reality that

composed elemental urban centers like inner city Barcelona. The clash between the speed of progress symbolized by steam power and the unmovable mass of the traditional core of the city could only have one winner: “En la lucha que se ha entablado entre la civilización joven y vigorosa y la urbanización decrepita y gastada, el triunfo no podía ser dudoso. La civilización ha llevado su mejor parte, y la urbanización ha tenido que ceder á sus exigencias, abrirle paso y satisfacer sus necesidades” (*Teoría General de la Urbanización* 138-39). As Cerdà notes earlier in this this volume, this battle was between those that posed “una resistencia absoluta” to urban transformations and those that advocated for “la destrucción omnímada y completa de lo existente para fundar un nuevo mundo donde pudiese holgadamente funcionar la civilización nueva” (*Teoría General de la Urbanización* 15). Cerdà presents himself as a champion in the battle for progress, and his project is featured as a mighty weapon able to achieve the final transformation of urban reality according to the demands of inexorable modernity. In this hard-set crusade no prisoners must be taken:

En todas las construcciones nuevas ha debido preponderar, y ha preponderado el espíritu moderno, salvo algunas excepciones, [...] en la edificación antigua el respecto [sic] exagerado é injustificable a lo existente, ha arrastrado á las administraciones á consentir repugnantes amalgamas entre lo antiguo y lo moderno, amalgamas que, si hoy se toleran, porque todavía estamos en un estado de transición. (*Teoría General de la Urbanización* 319)

As stated by the urban planner, the main problem of contemporary urbanization has been what he perceives to be an exaggerated and unpardonable respect for the ancient forms of urbanization. This deference towards the past has derived in the coexistence of modern and ancient forms, which Cerdà perceives as a nauseating concoction of the ancient and the modern. For the

engineer, coexistence gives birth to a certain hybridity between the past and the present, which is conceivable only as a sign of the inevitable transition towards modernity and not as a viable, permanent model of urbanization. Curiously presented in religious language the ultimate goal is to “restablecer entre la urbanización y la civilización la santa armonía que entre ellas siempre debe reinar” (319). The new industrial society called for an urban revolution—or a quasi-religious crusade—in which old urban models were to be definitively substituted by a new urban rational at the service of the “espíritu del siglo,” which will reign at last (319).

As Cerdà explains in his *Teoría general de la urbanización*, he did not want his project of urban expansion and reform to reach the ultimate frontier in this battle. His reform of the inner city was perceived as the minimal intervention necessary to bring the ancient urban layout to modern standards. However, as he asserts, after his plan of inner reform had been implemented "en un periodo no muy remoto se sentirá la viva necesidad de derribar ó modificar sino por completo al menos en su mayor parte todas esas viejas, mal sanas y laberínticas ciudades" (407). As I mentioned above, Cerdà's reform of the inner city was based on the conclusion of the transversal axis established by Unió, Ferran, and Princesa St., which had been initiated in 1835, and the implementation of a new perpendicular axis—parallel to the line Unió-Ferran-Princesa—composed by the three boulevards A, B, and C (*Teoría de la construcción de las ciudades* 406). The immediate implementation of the Cerdà plan was based on the development of the Eixample chamfered grid, and no time or energy was devoted to the inner reform included in the engineer's project. After the initial development of the Eixample had been consolidated the inner reform of the city again became the center of attention.

By the mid 1870s, with the Eixample under construction, the debate about the need to reform the old urban layout of the inner city arose again. The proposals of reform of the Cerdà

plan were being considered while a new agent entered the public debate. Ángel José Baixeras, a practically unknown “comendador de la Real Orden Americana de Isabel la Católica” with no formal training in architecture, engineering, or urban planning, started to design a new plan of urban reform that took even one step beyond Cerdà’s proposal of opening three boulevards across the old town (Baixeras *Colección de los artículos* n.p.).

According to the *Diccionario biográfico* of Antonio Elias de Molins,⁶ Ángel José Baixeras—a plain “jefe honorario de la administración civil”—started to work on his project for Barcelona’s urban reform in 1873 (194). Six years later, the City Council accepted his proposal for further study on December 3, 1879. By 1881, the local corporation encouraged Baixeras to present a revised version of the preliminary project in order to formally present it to the Spanish government. From that moment on, the Baixeras project was publicly debated among local officials. Between 1881 and 1889 the Baixeras project fought a long list of neverending battles in which the mouthpieces for the major vested interests of the city revised, questioned, slandered, and praised the project in equal shares.

The nature of the Baixeras project was completely indebted to Cerdà’s plan. In order to cover his technical limitations, Baixeras hired a small team of experts to draw a new map of the inner reform that introduced several modifications to Cerdà’s original plan. As we can see here, the boulevards do not follow the previous alignment; the main modification was the scope of the demolitions and the introduction of a new quadrangular grid inside the old perimeter of the city (Fig. 5.7). As evident in his map of proposal, Baixeras proposed to demolish larger areas of the inner city in order to realize a geometric rationalization of space that introduced the quadrangular pattern of the Eixample into the old city. Baixeras’ initial proposal took to the extreme Cerdà’s proposal of “derribar ó modificar sino por completo al menos en su mayor parte todas esas

viejas, mal sanas y laberínticas ciudades" (*Teoría general de la urbanización* 407).

Baixeras presented his plan of urban reform as a humanitarian idea that was based on three main concepts: the improvement of public hygiene, the facilitation of through traffic, and the embellishment of the city (*Colección de artículos* 6-9). In Baixeras's words, these three factors were essential to guarantee Barcelona's status as a modern city: "Es [...] urgentísimo sanearla, embellecerla y dotarla de todos los elementos de vida, si se quiere que ocupe dignamente el puesto que entre las grandes poblaciones modernas le corresponde" (42). As we saw in chapter three, hygiene was the main argument used in order to achieve the demolition of the city walls and the demands for the urban expansion. Baixeras, like Cerdà, brings this argument into play once again associating the epidemics of 1834, 1854, 1865, and 1870 with the unsanitary conditions provoked by the intricate urban layout of the old city (*Colección de artículos* 44). The local medical authorities shared Baixeras's line of reasoning and sanctioned the full extent of his plan of urban reform. In 1894, years before any step of the Baixeras plan had been implemented, the *Gaceta médica catalana* reported that a commission of the Academia de Higiene de Cataluña had presented the City Mayor an official report on the hygienic justification for the implementation of Baixeras' plan (518-19). The medical commission advocated the "realización total" of the project, claiming that reducing the scope of the reform to the three avenues included in the Cerdà plan "no satisface las necesidades de la Higiene" (519). In his proposal, Baixeras explicitly assessed these "necesidades de la Higiene" and created a specific link between the deficient sanitary conditions and urban spaces where there was lack of sunlight and clean air:

Existen, por desgracia, en su casco antiguo algunos barrios que son in intrincado laberinto de callejones estrechos, tortuosos, inmundos, con edificios y casuchas de

grande altura aglomerados, varios de ellos unidos por arcos, donde apenas penetra la luz del sol, ni puede circular el aire puro tan esencial á la vida; y unido esto á la poca limpieza que por lo general hay en dichos barrios, habitados en gran parte por *gente de escasos recursos*, y á los mismos que se desprenden de una serie de cloacas abiertas sin orden ni concierto alguno [...] se aspira constantemente una *atmósfera viciada* que convierte aquellos centros en *focos permanentes de corrupcion*, atmósfera que altera y enerva la existencia de sus infelices moradores hasta el extremo de robarles, por lo menos, la cuarta parte de su vitalidad, constituyendo, además, una *amenaza constante para la salud pública*. [My emphasis] (*Colección de artículos* 44)

As Baixeras explains, the deficient urban layout and lack of proper sanitation in certain working class neighborhoods were perceived as a constant threat for the community. The lack of air and light are attributed to the intricate layout of these neighborhoods, and the “gente de escasos recursos” are apparently presented as the victims of such deficient conditions. But as Baixeras’s phrasing suggests, hygienic deficiencies are easily transposable as the main source of moral corruption. Perceived as mere product of their deficient urban environment, the working class that populates these neighborhoods is also stigmatized as a source of immoral and wicked behaviour that has a terrible influence on the rest of the community. The hygienic justification is translated into a moral justification. Baixeras transfers the hygienic threat posed by the deficient urban layout onto the social menace that these spaces pose as the stronghold of the working class: “Aquellos centros [...] por su estructura son asimismo un peligro social, porque se utilizan siempre para baluarte seguro en cualquier motin, y tambien prestan secreto á los garitos donde anida el vicio ó el crimen” (45). Poor hygienic conditions, crime and the possibility of a

revolution⁷ are perceived as the main threats to the health of the urban body. These urban spaces are presented as the locus of literal and symbolic disease in the form of social disruption caused by crime and revolutions. Baixeras plan is presented as a preventive remedy against all evil—against all those iniquities caused not only by the nature of the urban space in itself but also by the potential usage of that maze by the working class. The aim of the plan is “sanear la ciudad” (44) in order to bring Barcelona up to par with other modern cities: “Es, pues, de todo punto indispensable que si Barcelona quiere colocarse á la altura de su importancia, haga desaparecer de una vez para siempre de su centro tantas irregularidades y fealdad, y estos focos de corrupcion fisica y moral que son un baldon para toda ciudad culta” (45). Baixeras’s objective is to achieve a preemptive material and symbolic sanitation through the erasure of the actual spaces that are perceived as the locus of the hygienic, moral, and political problems.

After this false hygienic argument, Baixeras’ project justified the need to erase the most intricate sections of the old city as a way to facilitate the opening of new streets and boulevards. As we can see in the map of this proposal, (Fig. 4.7) the quadrangular rationale of Cerdà’s grid invades the old city far beyond the three boulevards designed in the 1859 project:

entendemos nosotros que la reforma que debe realizarse en el casco antiguo de Barcelona, no puede ser simplemente la apertura de algunas calles de más ó ménos extension y latitud, sino que ha de ser general y grandiosa, transformando por completo los barrios que sea necesario; y por respecto á los demás, [...] abrirles al ménos buenas comunicaciones á fin de que la ciudad quede bien saneada, libre y expedita su circulacion interior, y unido su casco antiguo al ensanche para que desaparezca este divorcio que hoy existe entre ambas partes. (48-49)

Through this unifying rational, the old city is handed over to the logical principles of Cerdà's plan through an almost complete erasure of the pre-existing urban reality (Fig. 5.8). Baixeras's plan intended to take Haussmann's teachings verbatim by aggressively implementing the concept of creative destruction. Through the ultimate Haussmannization of the old city, the ancient center would become a tabula rasa in which the new modern city could be built. According to Baixeras, the new city—justified by hygienic and logistical reasons—had to emerge with a new aesthetics. Barcelona had to become not only a safe city but also a visually attractive place. In Baixeras theorization of the reform, one could argue that the embellishment of the city is presented as even more important than his other two rationalizations.

In a rather innovative move, Baixeras foresaw the potential of tourism for the local economy of a Mediterranean city like Barcelona: “cuanto más bella y cómoda se haga la ciudad, tanto más afluirán á ella estos ricos extranjeros nómadas que buscan su bienestar en benigno clima: venero de riqueza que tenemos desatendido” (*Colección de artículos* 53). The striking city imagined by Baixeras is already conceived as a commodity that can be visually consumed in the new market of international tourism. But in order to achieve a niche in the competitive international market the city had to increase the power of its visual appeal. As Baixeras recognized, the traditional cluster of the city had a limited but certainly interesting potential in monumental Gothic architecture. Unfortunately, the materialization of this potential was hindered by the lack of visibility of the most relevant monuments in the city. According to Baixeras, “[e]n Barcelona son escasas las obras de arte arquitectónico, y las pocas que existen [...] están mal emplazadas, ó medio tapiadas, tan escondidas que parece que se avergüenzan” (*Colección de artículos* 49-50). Baixeras' project was presented as a way to solve this limitation. The proposed constructive destruction of the old city was going to provide Barcelona with the

added value of monumental vistas. “Importa, pues,” suggested Baixeras, “que al verificarse la reforma se procure, en cuanto sea posible, que los monumentos arquitectónicos existentes queden bien emplazados para que sus bellezas puedan cómodamente verse y estudiarse” (50). Baixeras project of beautification was mainly preoccupied with the reform of the oldest sections of the city, those that had the most important and representative religious and political buildings, the area of the city that was going to be covered in J. E. Puig’s *Plano y vistas de Barcelona* of 1888. For Baixeras, the monumental potential of this area was limited by “un verdadero laberinto de calles y callejones estrechos y tortuosos, que rodean manzanas del todo irregulares y de dimensiones enteramente reducidas,” which made strictly necessary that “la piqueta trabaje mucho y sea manejada por mano robusta” (*Colección de artículos* 47-48). The intention of the project was to provide the new Barcelona with an open visual access to monuments like the Cathedral, churches like Santa Maria del Mar, Santa Maria del Pi, Sant Just i Pastor, Sant Pau del Camp, and the chapel of Santa Àgueda (*Colección de artículos* 60-62).

Baixeras’s attitude towards vision in his project of urban reform is deeply rooted in the hegemony of vision inherent in modernity. As David Michael Levin explains,

The hegemony of vision at work in modernity is [...] historically distinctive, [...] it is allied with all the forces of our advanced technologies. The power to see, the power to make visible, is the power to control. Panopticism is the political display of the “enframing,” the *Gestell* that Heidegger sees ruling our time: it is the universal imposition of technologies of control. (Levin 5-7)

As Levin proposes, modernity allowed for the transformation of the traditional occulocentrism of Western culture into a disciplinary system based on the visual control that Foucault calls “the panoptic modality of power”: “a power that insiduously objectifies those on whom it is applied;

to form a body of knowledge about these individuals, rather than to deploy the ostentatious signs of sovereignty” (221). In Baixeras’s project the role of vision had a component of panopticism because, as I discussed above, the narrow streets and alleys were perceived as a “baluarte seguro en cualquier motin, y tambien prestan secreto á los garitos donde anida el vicio ó el crimen” (45). These spaces had the faculty to hide from view those criminal or revolutionary activities that needed to be controlled in order to guarantee the integrity of the social hegemony of the bourgeoisie. Erasing these places and imposing a new geography of open spaces where the exercise of vision prevails, the new city was transformed into an easily controllable space in which both crime and social dissent could be quickly identified and removed.

On the other hand, Baixeras’s project of allowing visual access to what he considered the most relevant religious Gothic buildings of the city also mobilized the hegemony of vision in another direction. The visual hegemony governing the new city was attuned to the wish to simplify the increasingly complex urban reality in order to make it apprehensible through a limited number of images. In this sense, Baixeras’s undertaking coincides with the photographers and their albums of vistas of the city for public consumption. The new urban space is conceived as an apparently aseptic open space regimented by vision, which prioritizes the visual aspect of urban reality over the actual practices of space by their legitimate users.

Furthermore, Baixeras turned these monumental panoramas into a constant aesthetic, historical and ideological prompt. As Alois Reigl indicated, a historical monument will add to the artistic value of a work of art a certain historical value that he defined as “everything that has been considered an irreplaceable and irremovable link in a chain of development” (56). In this sense, the religious monuments Baixeras decided to choose as the focal points of the new urban reality entailed an aura of artistic value on accounts of being representative of the Catalan Gothic

style that flourished between the 13th and the 16th centuries. But beyond their aesthetic qualities, these monuments also shared a significant charge of historical value. Because Catalan Gothic was the architectural style that flourished during the Catalan expansion in the Mediterranean, it is also the most significant period of political, economical, and cultural splendour of Catalonia. As such, these monuments become the site of historical memory of the lost splendour of the middle ages, a period of homerule and political and military hegemony in the Mediterranean under the Crown of Aragon. Of course, we must not forget that all the monuments that Baixeras chose to focalize on were in fact religious buildings. As such, they still preserved the use value of the faith practiced by the majority of Barcelonans. However, the hegemony of Catholic institutions in Barcelona has had its ups and downs since the beginning of the nineteenth century. As Fabre reminds us, it was the space of religious institutions expropriated during the disenfranchisement propoted by Mendizabal in 1836 or violently burnt to ashes during local revolts that provided with the public space of the new squares of Barcelona during the nineteenth century (43). Later in the century, the increasing influence of the working class movement, especially after the increasing presence of the Anarchist movement brought to Spain by Giuseppe Fanelli, would challenge the Barcelona Catholic Church state of affairs. Baixeras focalization of the most relevant religious buildings implied a symbolic vindication of the hegemony of the Catholic Church, an emblematic recovery of the central place of the church in the new Barcelona.

As one may have expected, the impact of the grandiose proposal of Baixeras on the public opinion was inevitably immense. His proposal was constantly debated in the press before and after its official approval by Real Decreto on July 16, 1889. The extent of the reforms as proposed in the initial plan was such that it was perceived as “una amenaza constante para las calles secundarias que con evidente perjuicio de propietarios é industriales, produciría la

aceptación lisa y llana del plano del señor Baixeras” (“Crónica.” *La Vanguardia* 15 July 1881: 4622). The tensions were increasing exponentially, and, by July 1883, the Baixeras plan was falling into disgrace. His project had not been officially approved yet, and the Mayor of Barcelona, Francisco de Paula Rius i Taulet, was still considering implementing Cerdà’s plan of reform. Furthermore, Barcelona government officials were mobilized against Baixeras’s project. On July 28, a commission of landowners of the city—composed by “propietarios, artesanos, industriales, comercio, prensa, Bancos, ferrocarriles, clases facultativas y senadores y diputados”—met with the Civil Governor of Barcelona communicating him “la expresión unánime de Barcelona que desecha el proyecto Baixeras” (“Crónica” *La Vanguardia* 29 July 1883: 4946). At the petition of the local committee, the Civil Governor wrote a telegram to the Spanish President of the Council of Ministers and to the Minister of the Interior, demanding the rejection of “el proyecto de reforma de de esta ciudad presentado pro don Angel J. Baixeras” because it was “quimérico, irrealizable y perjudicial” for the city of Barcelona (4946). Instead, the local commission demanded the restitution of the original Cerdà plan—which already had been sanctioned with the approval of the Cerdà project in the summer of 1859—because it was “lo verdaderamente práctico, posible y útil á Barcelona” (4946-47). According to the reporter of *La Vanguardia* the public display of vindication of the Cerdà project against the Baixeras plan was in fact “el entierro del proyecto Baixeras” (4947). But this event was only a skirmish in the long battle for urban reform. By then Baixeras still enjoyed the favor of the conservative political forces of City Hall, and while newspapers like *La Vanguardia* openly rooted for the Cerdà plan, others, like *La Gaceta de Cataluña*, still supported Baixeras (“Crónica.” *La Vanguardia* 4 August 1883: 5085). Amidst this public dispute, even the City Mayor decided to respond publicly to express the level of implication of the City Council with regards the proposals of

Baixeras. After reading Baixeras's leaflet titled *Reforma de Barcelona: La verdad sobre el proyecto Baixeras*, on October 6, 1883, Francesc de Paula Rius i Taulet responded publicly to the inexactness of implicating City Hall, and the Mayor in particular, in Baixeras project. As stated by the Mayor, Baixeras plan was only considered viable with regards to the "ejecución de las tres vías que acepta del proyecto del inolvidable ingeniero Ildefonso Cerdà" (Rius i Taulet 6568). Rius i Taulet's response to Baixeras reduced the scope of the project to little more than a plan of alignment of the three new avenues designed by Cerdà in 1859.

Rius i Taulet's response to Baixeras expectations helped pacify the passionate opposition that the plan of reform had awakened in several sectors of the local civil society. Amidst accusations of being simply a covert plan of real estate speculation, the most important criticism came from local landowners who felt threatened by the potential expropriation of their real estate. The major issues of debate about Baixeras project revolved around its legal grounds. Baixeras conceived his plan of reform on a legal basis that depended on the modification of the legal terms for the expropriation of private property on accounts of public interest. His totalizing plan of urban reform was elaborated under the precept that the legality of expropriation should be extended beyond the traditional legal terms of the period. For Baixeras, the properties that were included within the alignment of the new streets should be liable to be expropriated. For the public interest, all those bordering properties were also liable to expropriation in order to promote the desired development of the new streets both on sanitary and aesthetic grounds. With the intention of facilitating this legal condition, Baixeras himself presented a new government bill to the Spanish Senate in 1878. The aim of his proposal was to make possible a wider legal freedom for expropriation that would ease the future urban reform of Spanish cities. On January 10, 1879, Baixeras proposal was incorporated in section five of the new "Ley de expropiación

forzosa” (Elias 194).

Feeling threatened by the extent of the demolitions and the conditions of the potential expropriations, a large number of civil associations were moved to respond to Baixeras’s communication with their own leaflets. For instance, local industries formed a commission that met in the Romea Theater in order to obtain an official modification to the “ley de expropiación forzosa,” associated with the Baixeras plan, “en el sentido de que se indemnice al industrial expropiado por causa de utilidad pública” (“Crónica.” *La Vanguardia* 25 October 1883: 6981). Other landowners’ associations like the Comisión de propietarios del Ensanche de San Antonio⁸ and the Asociación de Propietarios de Barcelona y su zona de Ensanche⁹ claimed that the Baixeras plan was overruled and requested that the Cerdà plan be restored. These voices testify to the open conflict that the reform project caused with the local officials, especially with capitalists and landowners. But these voices only convey the economic conflict over the reform. The interests of the traditional landowners collided with those of the real estate speculators, and in their open dispute they managed to hide the human side of the conflict.

Amidst this battle, *La Vanguardia* responded to *La Gaceta de Cataluña* and rejected the Baixeras plan on three main points: the new plan was nothing but a copy of Cerdà’s original idea, the wider scope of the Baixeras plan was “quimérico é irrealizable,” and, more importantly, it would have an unpredictable effect on the local lives of many Barcelonans. As *La Vanguardia* explained, the implementation of the Baixeras plan would cause “una perturbación en esta capital, toda vez que más de 25,000 personas se verían á un tiempo obligadas á buscar albergue, siendo así que aún contando con los pisos del Ensanche no hay número suficiente de habitaciones para la cuarta parte de las personas indicadas” (“Crónica.” *La Vanguardia* 4 August 1883: 5085). Baixeras’s project was then perceived as an unfeasible project that implied the

eviction of 25,000 people from the inner city. This fact uncovers the human impact of such an intervention. Baixeras plan of “urban sanitation” implied not only the erasure of the curlicues of the ancient urban layout of the city but also the eviction of the “gente de escasos recursos” who were the traditional inhabitants and practitioners of those spaces (*Colección de artículos* 44). This proposal entailed gentrifying the traditional center of the city. The substitution of the traditional urban layout for a new geometrically and visually ordered one was conceived as the creation of a new scenario for other spatial practices. With the new spaces, new transit, commercial, and social interactions would take the place instead of traditional ones.

While the local journalism of the period seemed mainly concerned with the economic implications of the debate on the urban reforms—which confronted the interest of the traditional landowners of Barcelona and those that wanted to obtain a rapid benefit from Baixeras’s project of Haussmannization—a number of local authors publicly reflected about the impact this transformation would have not only on the urban fabric but also on the traditional practices of space and social interactions.

As I articulated in the previous chapter, Narcís Oller was one of the Catalan authors who was most interested in the urban transformation of the city. In fact, as Rosa Cabré discusses in *La Barcelona de Narcís Oller: Realitat i somni de ciutat*, Oller’s interest in the modernization of Barcelona was manifest both in his fiction and in his journalistic contributions. In Oller’s compromise with the modernization of Barcelona, his works helped consolidate an image of the emerging modern city. His epic *La febre d’or* was the first attempt to create the great novel of Barcelona. On its pages, the parvenus that had managed to climb the social ladder, thanks to their speculation in the stock exchange, played their games of distinction in public and semi-public spaces—like the Passeig de Gràcia and the Liceu Opera House—trying to find themselves a

place in the bourgeois city. *La febre d'or* portrays a universe exclusively composed by spaces populated by the respectable folk of Barcelona. From the initial scene at the stock exchange of la Llotja, Narcís Oller, in order to portray a city made out of bourgeois landmarks, leads in a visual journey through the respectable neighborhood of Ample St., the new dwellings of the Eixample, the Passeig de Gràcia, the impressive mansions on the hills, the opera house, the new art galleries, and the hippodrome. In this sense, Oller's novel is governed—like the gaze of photographers such as Martí, Álvarez, and Puig and the occulocentric articulation of Baixeras's project—by a careful exercise of geographic delimitation based on the focalization of certain urban realities and the careful exclusion of others. It is one more example of the will to manufacture a publicly consumable and unproblematic image of Barcelona as a modern city. Yet the success of such a project always depends on the erasure or the romantic manipulation of those spaces that may be liable to neutralize such a discourse.

While Oller's *La febre d'or* does not venture outside the bourgeois realm, his first novel, *La papallona*, certainly did. In his 1882 novel, Narcís Oller opens the action in the Boqueria market located in the central section of the popular Rambles. From there Oller takes us to the vitality of the working class quarters of el Raval, where we witness Lluís' seduction of the young Toneta. The action of the novel is entirely located in the core of 1867 Barcelona, where the Rambla—characterized by its “formigeix de gent” (*La papallona* 42)—works as the axis of a city that is carefully but harmoniously separated according to class. According to Cabré, in *La papallona* “encara es presenten els rics convivint en harmonia amb els menestrals en els mateixos barris del casc antic i la Rambla és encara l'eix de la vida social barcelonina” (21). But as expected, the working class and the local elites do not live in the same neighborhoods. Toneta, the working class woman, moves freely up and down les Rambles, but also around the popular

neighborhood of el Raval crossing “el carrer de l’Hospital, i, trencant pel passatge d’En Bernardino, [...] fent dreuera cap el carrer de Montserrat [...] procurant salvar amb constants giragonses les empentes de la munió d’obriers que, en aquella hora de plegar inundava tot aquell barri” (47). Oller stresses the vivacity of a neighborhood that is rarely visited by the local elites. The counterpoint to the working class spaces of el Raval appear right at the other side of les Rambles, around the home of the Castellforts. Miquel and Mercè Castellfort are presented as members of a virtuous bourgeoisie who decide to invest in charity rather than luxury. Miquel and Mercè Castellfort—whose surname can appropriately be translated as “Strongcastle”—act as the benefactors of the young protagonist and support Toneta after she falls for Lluís’s seduction. The Castellforts live on a five-story building that exudes comfort but is quite lacking in luxury, and it is located in Portaferriça St. just across the Rambles (52-53). In *La papallona*, Barcelona appears clearly demarcated by the Rambles, a boulevard that serves more like a linking point than as dividing line. Overall, Oller’s description of Barcelona’s urban geography and the social divisions it entails projects a romantized vision of the social hierarchies of the city. Oller creates the romantic illusion of a harmonious equilibrium across class barriers, which is ultimately facilitated by the crucial role of the virtuous members of the bourgeoisie, the Castellforts, the pillar on which the local social harmony relies. Oller’s pervasive idealization of the social milieu positions *La papallona* as a liminal work located on the fringe of the emerging Realist movement and the traditionally Romantic gaze of local *tableaux* writers like Emili Vilanova.

Oller’s romantic vision of the city in *La papallona* contrasts violently with his earlier pragmatic writings on urban planning. As we remember, in 1878, just one year before the Baixeras project was considered by the City Hall, Oller published an article summarizing his

perspective on urban planning in the journal *La Renaixensa*. “Quatre mots sobre la policia urbana i l’ornat public de Barcelona” addresses the need for an urgent inner reform of the old city. Anticipating Baixeras proposal, Oller addresses the reform of the old city and the necessary embellishment of the city. Coinciding with many of his contemporaries, Oller saw the old city as lacking the modern conditions the new Eixample offered: “La ciutat vella és estreta, irregular, lletja, malsana; condicions que ressalten cada dia més als ulls de sos habitants que sens moure’s d’aquí visiten la part nova. Al tornar a dins, el contrast els fereix i comencen a sentir la necessitat de reformes que els proveeixin de la llum i el aire que els manca” (“Quatre mots sobre la policia urbana” 616). For Oller, the old city had to be put up to standards with the new regular city designed by Cerdà. The inner reform should imply the disappearance of those spaces that challenged the desired image of modernity to which Barcelona should conform:

El primer, doncs, que, tant per son embelliment com per la comoditat i salut dels habitants, deu fer-se en la ciutat antiga, és eixamplar sos carrers i places, abolint els carrerons i obrint grans vies transversals que tot d’una afavoreixin la circulació dels aires i del transit i posin en deguda consonància aquesta part de la ciutat i la part nova. (“Quatre mots sobre la policia urbana” 617)

For him, the homogeneization of the old and new city could only be conceived through a “reforma general de Barcelona” that went far beyond the three simple avenues designed by Ildefons Cerdà (“Quatre mots sobre la policia urbana” 616-17). Like Baixeras did shortly thereafter, Oller justified the urban intervention in order to “satisfer les necessitats actuals i futures de la higiene, de la comoditat i la bellesa de la ciutat” (“Quatre mots sobre la policia urbana” 617). As we can see, in his works on urban reform Oller distanced himself from the romanticized conception of daily experience of the urban reality that characterizes *La papallona*.

The Catalan author shares a common approach to the problem of urban condition with urban planners: For all of them, the theorization of urbanism depends on the elision of the human factor.

Josep Yxart, one of the most important Catalan literary critics of the period, shared with his cousin, Narcís Oller, his enthusiasm for the urban modernization of Barcelona, but he was able to recognize the importance of the human factor in this process. Yxart, like Oller, wanted to see his adoptive city rise to the level of their admired European models of modernity. In 1887, Yxart praised the amazing progress of the city that was getting ready to hold the first Universal Exhibition in Spanish territory the following year. Thanks to its willingness to adopt modern influences from abroad, Barcelona suffered a great transformation but there was still much to be done:

Abierta de par en par a todas las influencias, el aire de fuera se le lleva la cascarilla de su ya antiguo y desconchado panorama. En todo esto no cabe duda. Pero, en cambio, tampoco la tiene, que la Barcelona tradicional no se resigna a morir tan pronto, y se defiende y persiste, se agarra a la vida a la menor ocasion. Como en todas las poblaciones que se convierten en grandes capitales, aquí el barcelonés neto y castizo, de viejo abolengo, deja hacer, y deja pasar; huye del tumulto de la multitud exótica; pero no cede en la conservación de sus genuinas, de sus rancias tradiciones. (“Una sesión académica” 125)

As Yxart’s article explains, beyond the material difficulties, beyond the vested interests of the local landowners, the reform of the inner city was also facing a more modern daily resistance from “el barcelonés neto y castizo” who silently wanted to preserve a series of local customs profoundly anchored in the ancient geography of the inner city.

But apparently unconcerned about this potential resistance, the proposals of Cerdà, Baixeras, and even Oller, insist on representing the urban reality as an abstract space whose geometrical and logical irregularity brought forward a fundamental threat to public health. For all of them, the modernization of the city is presented as a hygienic procedure that proposes to erase the existing reality in order to implement a new sanitary model governed by vision. In their understanding of urban planning, this rationalization depends on being able to limit the conception of space only to its material reality. But, as geographers like Henri Lefebvre and Edward W. Soja propose, the concept of space goes far beyond the illusion of transparency created by a shallow understanding of physical space (Soja 65). If we imagine the potential understanding of space, following the advice of Lefebvre (*The Production of Space*) and Soja (*Thirdspace*), as a trialectical negotiation between the space perceived,¹⁰ the space conceived,¹¹ and the space lived¹² we will see that Cerdà, Baixeras, and Oller based their rationalization of urbanism exclusively on the first two aspects of this trialectics. As Soja reminds us, an all-embracing tradition of dualism that understood space exclusively as the sum of the space perceived and the space conceived has dominated the epistemological foundations of geography until very recently (11). The traditional exclusion of this third understanding of space elided the human factor from these proposals of urban reform. Undoubtedly, if we consider the space of the inner city also as a livable reality, with a series of codes that go far deeper than the mere geometry of the urban layout, we will be able to understand how the public debate about the inner reform was also fought in other grounds beyond the medical, the economical, and aesthetic domains. What happens when we conceive that one of the basic conditions of the urban experience is the actual practice of space?

5.2 AGAINST ERASURE: LLUIS RIGALT AND THE INNER CITY

When Barcelona was debating the proper method and scope of the reforms of the old city, the effects of haussmannization—of the creative destruction of urban spaces—were not new to Barcelonans. In 1853, right before the demolition of the city walls, the new Princesa St. was opened as a continuation of the axis composed by Ferran and Jaume I St. As Josep Coroleu explains in *Memorias de un Menestral*, the new axis Unió-Ferran-Jaume I-Princesa transformed the core of the old city:

La grande y concurrida arteria que forman hoy las calles de Fernando, de Jaime I y de la Princesa, enlazadas por las dos plazas de San Jaime y del Angel, era entonces un intricado laberinto de estrechas y sinuosas callejas. Si se tiene en cuenta lo descuidado en que estaba entonces el ramo de la policia urbana y la escasísima cantidad de aire respirable que á cada vecino le tocaba, morando hacinados todos ellos en lóbregas y mal ventiladas viviendas, calcúlese con qué derecho puede hoy quejarse aquella generación de una reforma que tanto ha mejorado las condiciones higiénicas y el aspecto exterior de esos populosos barrios. (37)

As Cerdà explained in his *Teoría de la construcción de las ciudades*, this significant reform of the old city was seen as a model for all future interventions in the inner city. For the engineer, this axis was understood as a key element in the new transit system of the city center that had to be complemented with three new avenues (406). In Cerdà's words, this haussmannization *avant la lettre* was comparable to the Parisian urban interventions of "los nuevos bulevares de Rivoli Strasbourg y Sebastopol [...] de Paris" (407). As Fabre and Huertas explain, the section of the axis integrated by Ferran, Jaume I, and Princesa St. was implemented between 1835 and 1860

and allowed the possibility of crossing the majority of the body of the old city in a straight line that runs from Rambles to the northern edge of town at the La Ribera neighborhood (19).

Besides the new construction of this new central axis of the old city that runs perpendicular to the Rambles, the Barcelona of the first half of the nineteenth century was also transformed by a progressive demolition of religious buildings that gave way to new public spaces for the community. During the eighteenth century, the Catholic Church owned approximately twenty per cent of the urban layout of Barcelona, which added a further pressure to the cramped walled city (Fabre and Huertas 43). According to Fabre and Huertas, the progressive suppression of religious spaces was the product of several historical events that weakened the pervasive presence of the Church in the city space: the suppression of religious orders during French occupation between 1808 and 1814 (43), the urban reforms of the Constitutional Triennium between 1820 and 1823 (45), the public sales of religious buildings promoted by the *desamortización* led by Mendizabal between 1835 and 1836 (46), the destruction by fire of numerous religious buildings during the uprising of 1835 (46), and the demolitions promoted after the Spanish Revolution of September 1868 (49).

The Benedictine Convent of Santa Maria de Jonqueres¹³ was the most relevant religious structure that disappeared from the old city after *la Setembrina*. The imminent destruction of the historical convent brought forward a compromise that salvaged part of its original structure—namely the cloister and church—in order to have it transported and incorporated into the Convent of la Concepció, located in the core of the Eixample (Saura 53). The removal of the Convent from the core of the old city allowed for the opening of a section of the new Bilbao St. The new street was designed by the local architect Miquel Garriga i Roca—who had contributed with a project to the controversial contest that had to decide on the design of the Eixample—in a

plan of urban reforms for the old city approved in 1861 (Fabre and Huertas 19). In his plan, Garriga i Roca proposed Bilbao St. as the implementation of one of the avenues included in the Cerdà project of reform. But, with the articulation of the Baixeras plan, his project was subsequently replaced, and the development of Bilbao St. was limited to the small section formerly occupied by the Convent of Jonqueres.

Even when the first photograph of Barcelona was taken in 1839—no photographic record exists of the constructive destruction carried by these two interventions—the development of Princesa St. and the demolition of the Convent of Jonqueres to give way to Bilbao St. On the visual aspect, only one artist appeared methodically preoccupied by the effects of this process: once again, Lluís Rigalt i Farriols (1814-1894). In both cases the new urban reality was emerging in front of the eyes of the painter by means of a systematic destruction of the preceding urban spaces. The “intricado laberinto de estrechas y sinuosas callejas” (Coroleu 37) and the religious buildings that had exercised a characteristic hegemony over the urban reality of Barcelona were disappearing and being replaced by new rational modern spaces. As we have seen in the previous chapter, Rigalt was the local artist that devoted more time to documenting the radical transformation of Barcelona at this time. As the director of the Llotja, Rigalt was not interested in *painting* the city. In his oil paintings, he persisted on focusing on the romantic panoramas of the Catalan countryside and the idealized medieval remains of a long lost splendor. However, he certainly felt the drive to represent the urban transformation of the city. These drawings, ephemeral sketches of the urban transformation, are the perfect counterpart to his romantic landscapes of rural Catalonia.

Rigalt’s interest in recording the disappearance of traditional spaces that were going to be transformed for new uses can be traced back to 1841. It was then when the Junta de Comerç—

the local trade council that founded the art school of la Llotja—comissioned Pau Rigalt, Lluís’s father, to document the architecture of the Gothic Convent of Santa Caterina that was about to be demolished (Fontbona and Durá (41). Lluís Rigalt executed this project of archival preservation. His drawings of the cloister details that were going to be torn down were just the first of a long list of drawings that recorded the demolition of spaces affected by urban reforms. Among them, Rigalt paid a special attention to the decline and demolition of the Convent of Jonqueres, which was going to be replaced by the new Bilbao St. (Fig. 5.9).

As Walter Benjamin suggested, nineteenth-century demolition sites were the perfect “sources for teaching the theory of construction” (95) In a period in which urban planning was totally invested in the project of constructive destruction, Rigalt’s representations of demolition sites help us uncover the policies that rendered certain spaces not only expendable but also questionable according to the new plan of urban modernity. Along with his interest in demolition sites, as a negative print on the emerging city, Rigalt also focused on the emergence of the new rationalization of space in the inner city. In one of his most interesting sketches, Lluís Rigalt focuses on the new Princesa St. The new alignments of the street allow Rigalt to create a perfect exercise of linear perspective (Fig. 5.10).

The urban space is here dominated by width, depth, and height—like our friend Antonio Atar suggested in José Luis Guerín’s *En construcción*. The straight lines on the left building and the lines of the pavement still clearly visible suggest that this was a technical exercise in pictorial perspective. This is the kind of streets that Angelón longed for in his *Guía satírica* and that Cerdà designed for his Eixample and the three avenues that had to cross the old city. The rationality of the new urban reality allowed Rigalt to practice a clear open perspective, which could have been used as a model in his class of perspective and landscape painting. It seems

possible that Rigalt wanted to convey the urban experience with the “objectivity” and mathematical precision claimed by Ptolemy.

As this sketch shows, however, beyond its technical characteristics, Rigalt was also interested in the cost of the new urban developments. Apparently untouched by the new perspective of the street, right in the center of the sketch, Rigalt reveals three structures that break the otherwise perfect perspective of the street. These three buildings are the remnants of the old urban layout, which, even when they had been spared by the initial constructive destruction of the street, had to disappear in order to complete the perfect modern alignment of the new street. In another sketch, Rigalt faces the reality of these three particular constructions that questioned the new regular modernity of Princesa St. (Fig. 5.11).

Rigalt’s gaze, like it did in his sketches of the Hortes de Sant Bertran and the Riera d’en Malla, focuses again on those spaces questioned the new urban rationale based on a mathematical regulation of space. Rigalt was interested in the representation of those places that epitomized the extinction of a spatial reality—the product of a pre-capitalist mode of production—that was being substituted by a new positivist rationalization of space. As we have seen in Cerdà, Baixeras, and Oller’s attitudes toward the inner reforms, the new rationale pretended to erase all those spaces that did not conform to the new logic of modernity, while, at the same time, decided to preserve and promote the visual apprehension of a few ancient spaces that could be elevated to the realm of the symbolic. This task certainly responded to a premeditated procedure of appraisal. The question was to choose what spaces were considered characteristic of the local historical gradeur and which ones were not only banal but radically opposed to the image of the modern city that the local elites wanted to convey. In Henri Lefebvre’s words, the spaces represented by Rigalt can be labeled as counter-spaces.

Undoubtedly, these are not “utopian alternative[s] to actually existing ‘real’ space[s]” as Lefebvre characterizes counter-spaces (Lefebvre 349). However, Rigalt’s representations certainly reveal those spaces that want to be erased by the new urban rationale at the service of the local bourgeoisie. These spaces are certainly “real” but they are about to be banished because they are in the way of urban modernization. In this sense, they are presented as the counter-spaces that oppose to the new urban rationale that embodies the hegemonic strategies of power (Lefebvre 381). The mere existences of the spaces that interest Rigalt oppose the new urban “homogeneity” and proudly stands “against power and the arrogance of power” (Lefebvre 382). Overall, Rigalt’s task as a sketcher of the old city recurrently revolves around the identification and archival reproduction of counter-spaces.

Rigalt’s sketches of the old city can be categorized in three main interests: the open perspectives of the urban panorama allow him to prove his technical prowess (Fig. 4.10); the representations of buildings that are about to disappear with the urban reforms (Fig. 4.11); and depicting the process of demolishing those buildings (Fig. 4.9). Here more than elsewhere, we can see the similarity between Rigalt’s and José Luis Guerín’s gaze in *En construcción*. Both are working to chronicle of a city that is about to disappear, but while Guerín spent almost three years documenting these changes, Rigalt spent most of his life creating an ephemeral archive that would carefully document the urban transformations including the specific location and the year in which these sketches were made. Certainly, even considering his reticence to portray the city in a canvas, he was surely aware of the relevance of the archive he had created. After donating the totality of these sketches to the art school in which he had worked all his life, they were not exhibited publicly until the twentieth century as a document of a part of Barcelona that was long gone.

As Teresa Navas explains, Rigalt's work influenced other artists like Francesc Soler Rovirosa and Dionís Baixeras ("Ciutat fragmentada" 206). Between the 1860s and the 1890s, Francesc Soler Rovirosa "es dedica a captar preferentment carrers i edificacions antigues però [...] concentra una part del seu interès a recollir els elements importants que desapareixen [...], i les construccions més o menys anònimes, en les quals especifica amb un petit text que seran enderrocades" ("Ciutat fragmentada" 206). Coincidentally, Rigalt's task as a chronicler of urban transformations is continued by Dionís Baixeras, who, according to Fontbona, attended Lluís Rigalt's class at La Llotja (34). In 1907, the Barcelona City Hall appointed Dionís Baixeras to graphically document the urban panorama of the streets of the old city that were about to be demolished in order to build the Via Laietana. The opening of Via Laietana was in fact the only materialized urban intervention of the plan of reforms of the old city presented by Angel José Baixeras—no relationship with the artist—in 1879.

5.3 EMILI VILANOVA, SOCIAL CAPITAL, AND THE VALUE OF SPACE

Barcelona's urban geography explored by Rigalt was in fact surprisingly small. In a moment in which the city was expanding, as we have seen in the previous chapter, he ventured outside the old perimeter of the city, but the largest number of his urban sketches coincides with the neighborhoods of Santa Caterina and la Ribera, especially around Argenteria, Princesa, Boria and Mill streets (Fig. 5.12). This area was one of the sections threatened by Cerdà's and Baixeras's reform proposals for the old city (Fig. 5.13 and 5.14).

This very same area is the central stage in the works of Emili Vilanova, a local *costumbrista* author who was particularly concerned about seeing his neighborhood disappear under Baixeras's plan. Vilanova was the most prominent Catalan *costumbrista* author. As Emili

Vilanova explains in his article “Confidències,” published in the collection *Plorant i rient* in 1891, he published his first tableaux in the Catalan weekly *La Barretina* thanks to his friend Antoni Feiu i Codina (13). Years later, he became a contributor for the Innocenci López publishing house where he took part in the satirical journal *La Rambla* with his friend Conrad Roure (“Confidències” 13). As a member of the group of comic authors gathered around López’s publishing house, Emili Vilanova was also introduced to the more elite group of the *Renaixença*, congregated around the restoration of the Jocs Florals. His entrance in this selected group of Catalan authors granted him the friendship of poet Jacint Verdaguer and playwright Àngel Guimerà, among others, but also the possibility of publishing his work in the most prestigious journal of the period, *La Renaixença* (“Confidències” 16). In Vilanova’s words, his tableaux focused almost exclusively on the urban experience of “menestrals y gent pobra”—on workers and the poor (“Confidències” 15). His working class walks the streets of Barcelona late at night and early in the morning. At those times, they are the owners of the public space at night, when the bourgeoisie is nowhere to be seen. His particular geography is the old city. La rambla, as one may have expected, is the most recurrent scene, but the neighborhood of Argenteria, around his house in Basea St., receives the main focus. Streets like d’en Malla, Corribia, Plassa del Angel, Riera de Sant Joan become the epitome of Vilanova’s Barcelona. Far from believing that these narrow streets hide nothing but vices, Vilanova loves the sense of community that these narrow streets foster.

In his short fiction, Emili Vilanova’s gaze goes beyond the material reality of space—the center of attention of Rigalt’s counter-spaces—in order to stress the human vitality that these places foster. In Vilanova’s *tableaux* the materiality of the urban layout seems to hide behind a veil of human activity to the extent that critics like Jordi Castellanos consider that in his literature

“el marc ciutadà, físic, de la vella Barcelona, hi té poc relleu, és el teló de fons—concret, una mica difuminat—per a grups i figures” (144-45). Castellanos’s claim discloses the problem of understanding the complexity of space. In Vilanova’s works, the actual materiality of space is overridden with the everyday practices of its characters. As I argue in these pages, the city of Vilanova is much more than a mere backdrop for his characters. The old Barcelona of Vilanova unveils the space as it was being directly lived. In Lefebvre’s words Vilanova’s sketches unveil the “representational spaces” of the city, “the space of “inhabitants” and “users”” that “overlays physical space, making symbolic use of its objects” (39). Focusing on the lives and spatial practices of the Barcelona *Menestral*—the city of the traditional artisan neighborhoods—Vilanova unfolds a mosaic of characters that inhabit the core of the city marked by the way pre-capitalist modes of production codified the urban layout.

Like Rigalt, Vilanova’s works compose an archive of a vanishing urban reality. In his case, however, Vilanova does not identify the transformation in the materiality of space but in the way these urban spaces facilitate a particular understanding of living the city. In Antoni Vilanova’s words, Emili Vilanova was born at a historical turning point between “dos mons dissemblants i antagònics: el de la petita menestralia provinciana que ell ha de veure morir i el de la gran ciutat industrial que ha nascut en extingir-se aquella” (16). This situation was much more than a coincidence: the material transformations of the mode of production brought forth both the emergence of the modern bourgeoisie and the reification of the characteristic ideology of this class in the geography of the city. The material spaces threatened by the inner city reform are presented not only as the product but also as the condition of possibility for certain customs and spatial practices. As Ildefons Cerdà pointed out in his draft for the “Ordenanzas municipales de construcción para la ciudad de Barcelona,” the transition towards a more modern urban layout

had to be accompanied by a social transition. Beyond the materiality of the urban transformation, the modern city also required the progressive substitution of the traditional mores that governed the use of the public space:

El estado actual de la mayor parte de nuestras grandes ciudades es el de transición entre los usos y costumbres que ya fueron, y los que rápidamente van introduciéndose todos los días, y que todos por otra parte anhelamos, y sin cesar empujamos. A la Autoridad toca ponerse al frente de la reforma, dirigirla y conducirla con acierto, facilitarla y fomentarla, preparándola, si así puede decirse el terreno. (“Ordenanzas municipales” 522)

In the urban layout of Barcelona, the imprint of the “usos y costumbres que ya fueron” was reified in the intricate network of narrow streets and alleys. The core of the city had been shaped around the medieval institution of craftsmen and merchants guilds, which had been controlled by the forebears of nineteenth-century *menestrals*. As Luis Corteguera explains,

menestrals, or “mechanics,” that is, men who worked with their hands, [...] and their spouses, children, relatives, or servants [...] lived and worked for the most part in three- and four-story buildings along narrow streets bearing the names of their trades: Carrer dels Escudellers (potters), Carrer de la Freneria (harness making), Carrer de la Tapineria (clog making), and so on. Some trades had long concentrated in certain neighborhoods. (5)

The consolidation of the Barcelona guilds coincided with the period of Catalan expansion in the Mediterranean, which fostered the local economy of the principality through trade with the newly established Consolats de Mar.¹⁴ The economic flourish of medieval Barcelona that accompanied the Mediterranean expansion—with the conquest of València, Mallorca, Corsica,

Sardinia, and Naples—brought forth the city’s unstoppable urban growth between the twelfth and thirteenth centuries (Cubelles and Puig 54). This era of political and economic hegemony was characterized by the introduction of Catalan Gothic architecture, and especially by the consolidation of Gothic civil architecture in local private, political, and commercial structures.¹⁵ The economic vitality of this period contributed to the chaotic urban development of narrow labyrinthian streets especially conditioned by the cluster of small urban conglomerates of craftsmen grouped according to their trade.

As Cerdà points out, the medieval mode of production was long gone and, resulting from the economic and social conditions of that period, the structure of the city should be rethought in order to conform to the particular needs of capitalism. Even when the relevance and political influence of the guilds was gone, Cerdà claims that the reification of modern mores governing urban layout had to be enforced by strong municipal control. In Vilanova’s short fiction we witness the local administration’s increasing power in managing the public spaces. From self-management of the public space, in which the neighborhood is understood as an extension of the home, we observe the progressive rupture between private and public space and the disappearance of certain forms of public socialization.

Vilanova was the city of the petty bourgeoisie and the working class that was caught between the consolidation of the local bourgeoisie elite and the emergence of an industrial proletariat. It was the city that nineteenth-century *menestrals* had inherited from their medieval forebears and the traditional guild organizations. It was the city of those workers that—unlike the Gil Foix of Oller’s *La febre d’or* or the *menestral* family of Coroleu’s *Memorias de un menestral*—had not found a way to capitalize the possibilities of social mobility in order to fit in with the local bourgeoisie. As Josep Yxart skillfully summarized, Vilanova’s universe was that

of

la clase menestrala, que, en los grandes centros, crea el desarrollo de las pequeñas industrias, y la mayor facilidad de hallar subsistencia en oficios menudos, con los caracteres peculiares de nuestra localidad. Agrúpanse en torno suyo todos los tipos dedicados al servicio público o privado, como serenos, cocheros, guardias, escribientes y criadas, con los propietarios humildes de escasas rentas, ociosos paseantes o parroquianos de café. Vilanova conoce y ama ese mundo bigarrado y pintoresco, y no solo lo ama sino que gusta de su contacto y de sus tradiciones genuinas, participa de sus fiestas, sabe sus usos, y comparte su amor intenso y limitado a los tortuosos y mugrientos callejones donde habita perenne e inmóvil, adornando el barrio el día de su santo patron, bailando en los negros sótanos de algún almacén. (*El año pasado* 239-40)

By focusing on the *menestral* life, the work of Vilanova transforms the irregular, contaminated and developable space of Cerdà and Baixeras into a livable place. The mores and practices of Vilanova's characters, deeply rooted in the old layout of the city, are also liable to fall prey to the creative destruction of the inner city.

As Baixeras maintained, the northern neighborhoods of the city—the quarters of La Ribera, Santa Caterina, and Sant Pere—were precisely the areas that needed a more urgent reform. For him, the reform of this part of the city was “más fácil [...] y más necesaria y urgente por existir en ella los barrios verdaderamente insalubres, y de edificaciones la mayor parte viejas y ruinosas; barrios que formaban el primitivo recinto de Barcelona, y que son de construcción antiquísima” (*Colección de artículos* 57-58). As we saw in Fig. 5.14, Baixeras' proposal of reform of these neighborhoods took the concept of creative destruction to the extreme. While

Baixeras preserved a few straight streets of the old layout, the vast majorities were going to be substituted by longer streets following a straight line. In this task, the scope of the demolitions had to be extensive: "vemos un verdadero laberinto de calles y callejones estrechos y tortuosos, que rodean manzanas del todo irregulares y de dimensiones enteramente reducidas [...] se hace del todo indispensable que la piqueta trabaje mucho y sea manejada por mano robusta, para que desaparezca de aquellos barrios tanta irregularidad, á fin de dejarlos en buenas condiciones viables y completamente saneados" (*Colección de artículos* 47-48).

Indeed, Emili Vilanova's compromise with the old geography of the inner city is intimately related to his personal life. Born to a prosperous petty bourgeoisie family, he spent his life in the family estate at Basea St., a Gothic palace built at the end of the fifteenth century (Antoni Vilanova 9). Basea St. was precisely one of the warped streets of "manzanas irregulares" questioned by Baixeras. Starting at the core of the old city, in Angel Square, the irregular alignment of Basea St. penetrated La Ribera neighborhood (Fig. 5.15).

As Antoni Vilanova explains in Emili Vilanova's biography, the author's perception of the city was filtered by the windows of the family house at Basea St.: "Les arcades i les columnes dels vells palaus del carrer de Mercaders i, per damunt de tot, l'estretor grisa del carrer de Basea, amb la vella casa on ha nascut. Allí tindrà, durant tota la vida, la seva taula de treball al costat d'un finestral" (40). His compromise was not as much a matter of class allegiance as a cultivated empathy towards the civic society that inhabited his immediate familiar quarters. In Antoni Vilanova's words, the working class world that fascinates the author "no és el seu món, però sí la faceta del món que esguarda amb més delectació, que veu de prop amb més freqüència, i que el circumda materialment dins del barri antic de la Barcelona vella on ha nascut" (49). As his biographer states, Emili Vilanova's immediate surrounding space marks the author's literary

interests. In all his short fiction, the inner city comes to life as the core of Barcelona.

Such a gaze produces a work coded in Barcelonan terms designed for consumption through the local press. The indigenous character permeates Vilanova's short fiction, which is linguistically,¹⁶ socially, and geographically coded for the local market. This fact restricted, but not impeded, the consumption of Vilanova's work beyond Catalonia.¹⁷ As the nineteenth-century critic Francisco Blanco García¹⁸ indicated, the work of Emili Vilanova was restricted to "un medio social restringido de particular y típica fisonomía" (95). While Blanco García praised Vilanova's work, he found his fiction hardly translatable into Spanish to be consumed by a Castilian audience. According to the critic, "la casi ninguna semejanza que existe entre el gracejo catalán y el genuino de la literatura castellana, harían inaccesible á nuestro autor para la mayor parte de los españoles en caso de que se tradujeran sus libros al idioma nacional" (95). But the Catalan "gracejo" was only one of the hardly translatable trademarks of Vilanova's fiction. Because, as Blanco acknowledged the key to his work was precisely his particular and distinctive microcosm, which made it elusive to traditional criticism:

Es preciso estar familiarizado con el microcosmos de lugares y personas que en ellos se exhibe, para saborear el mérito de la copia; es precisa una disposición de ánimo que difícilmente conseguirá quien no haya nacido en Cataluña, para asimilarse el jugo de este prosista, algo semejante, sí, por ciertos rasgos accesorios de bondad risueña y comunicativa, á Mesonero Romanos, y en ocasiones, cuando carga las tintas y recurre al figurón, á Luis Taboada y otros periodistas festivos; pero que siempre conserva algo de personal y no imitado de nadie, algo que se resiste al análisis y á la crítica. (95)

As Blanco explained, Vilanova's short fiction, although it emerged from a purely romantic

sensibility, had a particular compromise with realism as apparently “se limita á reproducir, como por fotografía instantánea, escenas cómicas ó sentimentales, cuando no son las dos cosas á la vez, reduciendo la acción á sus proporciones mínimas, presentando los caracteres no más que bosquejados, y complaciéndose, sobre todo, en la animación, vivacidad y colorido del diálogo” (96). But as “photographer” of the urban vitality of old Barcelona, Vilanova also exercised its prerogative of focalizing and foregrounding a particular reality while eliding elements that may question the author’s desired image. As Antoni Vilanova reminds us, it would be naïve to understand Emili Vilanova as a “pintor ingenu i espontani del món circundant” (41). Vilanova’s subjectivity indelibly marked the universe he portrayed. As Blanco expresses, Vilanova “no sólo pone en sus cuadros vigoroso sello individual y subjetivo, no sólo ve las cosas á través de sus aficiones, sino que suprime instintivamente lo que está en desacuerdo con ella, combinando la libre selección de los hechos con la fidelidad al reproducirlos” (95-96). The result is a coherent image of inner Barcelona that—thanks to his precise selection of characters and spaces—presents itself practically as the binary opposition of the monumental and modern city portrayed by photographers like Esplugas, Martí, and Puig.

Vilanova’s distinctive portrayal of the urban experience and his overt criticism of the Baixeras plan, was explicitly and implicitly present in his contributions for the local press. On the first hand, Vilanova responded bluntly to Angel Baixeras reform plan in two open letters published in the press, where he formally addressed the pragmatic terms of the disturbance that this extreme haussmannization plan would provoke in the city. Furthermore, Vilanova’s tableaux also addressed the more human concerns of the potential creative destruction of the old city. In 1889, Vilanova’s collection *Gent de casa* included an open letter to the Mayor of Barcelona. In “Carta al Senyor Arcalde,”—under the distinctively Barcelonan pseudonym Joseph

Oriol¹⁹— Vilanova recognized the need for inner city urban reform (202). However, he perceived Baixeras's project as a disproportionate attempt to erase the old city in order to build a new one for merely speculative reasons. In its opening lines, Vilanova called Baixeras "un dèspota" and labeled his project the product of "les farisayques cobdicies de l'especulació" (195). Right before the approval of Baixeras's modified project by Real Decreto, Vilanova perceived the debate on implementing the urban reform plan as winds that bring a certain misfortune and the voices guiding those winds as "pròxims trastornaments físichs y morals" (196). As Vilanova explains, his judgement of the Baixeras plan²⁰ was based on the potential material transformation of the urban reality: but also, and maybe more importantly, on the particular effects that the modernization of the urban layout would have on what he calls the "moral" life of Barcelonans—a matter that he developed more profoundly on his tableaux. In "Carta al Senyor Alcalde," Vilanova stresses the material transformation summarizing the immediate consequences for the inhabitants of the inner city "nos ve de sobte l'emboxada de que's pensa destruhir Barcelona pera reformarla; que'ns volen traure de casa, l'ensarnos al carrer sens misericordia" (200). For Vilanova, this radical transformation of the old city—presented as a humanitarian task that had to improve the hygienic conditions of the urban labyrinth—was actually motivated by Baixeras and his associates capitalist pursuit of profit in order to "córrer a jugar, com si fossen criatures, en les divertissions de la *bolsa*" (201). Furthermore, familiarized with the main arguments used in the reform proposals, Vilanova tried to overturn the hygienic and aesthetic dialectic of Cerdà and Baixeras by reclaiming the sustainability of the city's uneven urban arrangement. For Vilanova, "tots aquests carrers ombrívols y sanitosos, modestos y arreconats" have kept a peripheral symbolic position in the local universe "com per no fer nosa a les vies més orgulloses" (201). Inverting the factors, Vilanova poses the plans of sanitization and

beautification of the city as a matter of the supposed conceit of certain spaces. Of course, the new beautified urban reality of straight, wide, and luxurious streets would be perceived as a materialization of mere vanity. For Vilanova, the eventual urban reform of the inner city should facilitate the amelioration of the living standards of the actual inhabitants of these spaces—the *menestrals* and the working class. Under no circumstances should the needed transformation be used as an excuse for financial speculation or for the pretended gentrification of the core of the city:

Ja que la època present es tan democràtica, vingan los procediments democràtics! vingan noves barriades en lo cor de la ciutat, ab habitacions modestes y senzilles, a fi de que'ls menestrals y obrers que i viuen en aquexos carrerons, que a tan llastí mer compadiment mouen als *filàntropos* benignes y negociants al mateix temps, tinguen ayre, sol y carrers amples, axís com los desitjan tan generosos benefactors; però no's prenga com a falsa excusa la *reforma* y servèxi pera allunyarlos y tràurels de sos niuets dexant lo lloch a altres classes que, encara que molt dignes y més acomodades, no per axó han de tenir la privativa de gosar més ayres y més sol que la menestraleria. (203-204).

As Vilanova clarifies, the inner city needed a reform, but an egalitarian reform that was not guaranteed by the plan of beautification of Baixeras, which implied a gentrification of the city center. Wishfully, Vilanova professes his inner hopes to the Mayor. He wants the city to become beautiful so its traditional inhabitants can enjoy it:

Ja qu'estem en lo capítol de les súplices, y que cadascú pot demanar pel seu profit, convertèxinse estos carrerots esquifits y de mal viure, en vies amples y magnífiques, ab esteses soleyades, arbres frondosos que les hermostegen, ab dolls de aygua que, surtint de les mangueres,

ran de terra, aparentin xàfechs que's desfan al revés, y que de tant luxu y maravella'n siguem gosadores les families de posició senzilla que hi tinguem nostres morades. (206).

But as Vilanova's tableaux nostalgically recognizes, the implementation of the luxury of the new alignments in the old city inevitably implied a process of gentrification that scattered the long-established inhabitants along the Barcelona plain. The erasure of the old shadowy and uneven streets of the inner city also meant the expulsion of the working classes from the core of the bourgeois city.

In the following pages I will analyze two particular examples of how Vilanova's gaze selected and foregrounded those particular microcosms that were perceived as expendable by the new proposals of urban modernization. The first one was published in 1879, the same year Angel José Baixeras presented his preliminary proposal of inner reform to the Barcelona City Hall. The first collected works of Emili Vilanova appeared that year in the volume *Del meu tros*, issued by the publishing house of *La Renaixensa*, where Vilanova published many of his works. With this title—roughly translatable as “On my piece” or “On my plot”—Vilanova inaugurated his book-publishing career by vindicating property in his own neighborhood.

From the fifteen short stories contained in the collection, “No n'hi ha d'altre” appears as the first glorification of the small microcosm of the old Barcelona streets as a model for ideal civic relations. Vilanova's tableau repeatedly praises the energy of these neighborhoods threatened by the reform posed first by Cerdà and later by Baixeras. In “No n'hi ha d'altre,” a picturesque sketch published in the press in 1877, Vilanova uses a neighborhood man as the mouthpiece of a community ignored by nineteenth-century proposals of urban modernization. On this idealized street, people daily renew their urban experience by joining fellow neighbors in the street to smoke and talk until bedtime: "A l'hora baixa, surten los vehins dels pisos á pendre la

fresca, y'ls de las botigas, posats en manega de camisa, trayem cadiras á fora la porta y fem tertulia, tot cremant lo cigarret y enrahonant fins á l'hora de anar á retiro" (194-95). This place, limited by the small territory of the street, is a space that refuses the modern delimitation between public and private. The public space appears as the best space for intimate socialization that does not rely on the construction of carefully controlled differentiation between the private and the public image of the self. The comfort of the private home is brought to the public space of the street and shared with fellow neighbors. Vilanova's neighborhood experiences a sense of loss after modernity changes the public domain. Vilanova reacts to what Richard Sennett's describes as the increasing "unbalance personal life and empty public life" provoked after "the fall of the *ancien regime* and the formation of a new capitalist, secular, urban culture" (16). Vilanova poses the possibility of retaining a set of communal values in which the public image is not radically dissociated from the private one—a sense of personal cohesion that, as Sennett summarizes, challenges the private/public split characteristic of modernity after the implementation of nineteenth-century industrial capitalism (16-24). In "No n'hi ha d'altre," the Catalan author presents himself as a champion of the *res publica*, the commonwealth of the street and neighborhood, which is fostered and self-regulated by its members with no need for external administrative or political regulation.

Also in this tableaux, Vilanova's narrator takes special pride in looking at the immediate social structure that surrounds the delimited space of his beloved street when he describes the traditional vitality of the surrounding neighborhood: "carrers hont hi há tota mena d'oficis [...] aquell ple de riquesas d'or y argent; lo d'enllá al lo tráfech dels comerciants [...] indianas y demés robas [...] y en fin tan animada per tot ab l'alegria que dona lo treball, ab l'ajuda del qual anava en aument l'hermosura, de riquesa y benestar" (181). This description of the commercial activities

of goldsmiths, silversmiths, and textile merchants as the promoters of local wealth seems a little dated when compared to Narcís Oller's Barcelona, whose wealth magically materializes through industrial production and stock exchange speculation. Amidst the industrial city, Vilanova's description brings an echo of the medieval mode of production that shaped the layout of medieval Barcelona. Indeed, the neighborhood described by the narrator is the core of the city that had been growing for centuries around the medieval organization of craftsmen and merchants' guilds. Beyond the guild structures impact on the materiality of urban space, it also determined the way public space was socially and politically understood. As Corteguera explains, the institution of guilds was organized around the concept of common good: "it was their duty as loyal subjects to act for the common good by praying and working honestly at their trades. When necessary, artisans felt that duty was a reason enough to meet with people of authority to voice their views on important matters. [...] artisans saw themselves as political actors" (25). Centuries after the end of the local guilds hegemony, Vilanova's microcosm resonates with this traditional understanding of the organized *menestrals* as political agents able to control the immediate reality of their proper space. This medieval understanding of the common good, a period in which *menestrals* sent "delegates to their kings in the name of the common good" (Corteguera 36), seems to permeate Vilanova's understanding of the *res publica*. The possibility of fighting for the common good from the myriad of minuscule locations that composed the maze of the inner city appears in Vilanova's work as a real alternative to the modern alienation of citizens in the newly rationalized city.

In 1886, Vilanova's collection *Escenas Barceloninas*, published amidst the debate about the convenience and the scope of the Baixeras plan, revisited the arguments of "No n'hi ha d'altre." This time however, Vilanova decided to face the impact that the creative destruction of

the new urban layout had not only in the materiality of urban space but also in the traditional social structures of those spaces. In *Escenas Barceloninas*, the reform project designed by Angel Baixeras is mentioned explicitly in “Regidor,” in which a City Council candidate clarifies that his political aim is to stop Baixeras’s chastisement of the inner city, or “lo càstich d’en Baxeres” [sic] (59). From this anecdote, in “L’Arch d’en Mirambell,” Vilanova goes on to explore the impact of haussmannization policies on individuals’ lives and the consequent loss an urban sense of community. This time, Vilanova revisits the trope of “No n’hi ha d’altre” under a new gaze. In “L’Arch d’en Mirambell,” Emili Vilanova invites us to visit the material and symbolic gap left by the demolition of the ancient street of that name, which, in 1853, was pulled down to give way to the new Princesa street. In this occasion Vilanova’s everyman is an old man that visits the empty space where his childhood home and memories once stood. “El senyor Ignasi Roca” is forced to face the formal uniformity of the new space and confront the nostalgia of the collective experience lost with the old street. When Vilanova’s narrator introduces the old street, he makes sure his audience understands that this was not a relevant place in the city’s history. The street is presented as an ordinary space: “L’arch d’en Mirambell havia sigut sempre un dels carrers més tranquils de Barcelona. Rónech, estret, sense pretensions y de poca passada, parexía com si ja estigués content del lloch modestíssim que desde sigles ocupava en la Ciutat” (261). This shabby (*rònech*) narrow, and down-to-earth space had been a modest part of Barcelona for centuries, but it could not claim any symbolic historical value beyond the magnitude of the sense of community the space nurtured. Ignasi Roca felt empowered in his microcosm, like he owned the communal space of the street as well as every neighbor because in l’Arch d’en Mirambell “tothom era amo” (268).

The creative destruction of Princesa St. not only made the space of the old street

disappear but it brought the sense of community to an end. The neighbors scattered around the city looking for a new home while the new urban reality emerged: “Allí mateix hi van obrir un gran carrer y [...] adeu carreró tranquil y solitari, niuets del benestar [...] No més sortiges, ni diversions; tota l'alegría va marxar, y no la cerqueu més” (269-70). The peace, well-being, joy, and pleasure are long gone, having yielded to a new reality: “Ara, una vía esplèndida ocupa'l siti del antich carrer; les cases son luxoses, iguals, afilerades; la matexa faxes de sol les banya, y la matexa amplada d'ombra dexan caure sobre l'empedrat. Totes son boniques de fóra, cares de lloguer, y de dins mesquines y sofocades: la gent hi viu encongida” (269). Under the new urban rationale, the shabby, narrow, and down-to-earth Arc d'en Mirambell has been demolished and substituted by a modern, standardized, unvarying, continuity of regular luxurious buildings. The open perspective of Rigalt's panorama of Princesa St. now occupies the place of l'Arc d'en Mirambell (Fig. 4.10). While Rigalt's 1867 sketch captures the slight resistance to the all-embracing regularity in the three last buildings standing from the traditional layout, Vilanova's nostalgic gaze finds a landscape that has been definitively transformed. This transformation is not only material.

The physical alteration of the neighborhood has also brought a radical modification of the way the public space is (not) lived: “No hi busqueu en lo nou carrer festes ni sortiges; cadascú's diverteix per son compte; los vehins no arriban a conèxers casi may” (70). The new public space seems to resist appropriation by its potential users. A new urban alienation has erased the former sense of community that governed the public space before the reform. The new codification, sanitization, and homogeneization of the public space have isolated the urban individual from the community. The citizens of the new city have fallen prey to what Georg Simmel identified as one of “the deepest problems of modern life”: the aspiration to “preserve the autonomy and

individuality of [the] existence [of individuals] in the face of overwhelming social forces” (409). For Vilanova, the new spatial rationalization has broken the links that cohered the community by imposing an undistinguished homogeneous design that summoned in individuals “the utmost in uniqueness and particularization, in order to preserve [their] most personal core” (Simmel 423).

Vilanova’s “L’Arch d’en Mirambell” reflects the potential nostalgia of the inhabitants of the old city that had to find a new dwelling place after the construction of Princesa St. in 1853. But being published in 1886, Vilanova’s short story was surely read as food for thought on the potential effects of the Baixeras plan. Before being approved in a revised and limited version in 1889, the Baixeras plan arose the specter of wide expropriations, evictions, and demolitions. The vindication of the vitality of the traditional neighborhood versus the alienation provoked by the new urban reality, along with the nostalgic gaze of Senyor Roca, are an open invitation to reconsider the extent of Baixeras’s proposal of inner reform.

“No n’hi ha d’altre” and “L’Arch d’en Mirambell” demonstrate that Vilanova is repulsed by the threat the Baixeras plan of undercover gentrification poses for the sense of community. As Vilanova expresses in his novella *Tristeta*, certain sections of the old city, like Malla street, are in desperate need of refurbishing: dirty streets in which the smells and noise of the sweatshops make living unbearable. It is for these streets that Vilanova reclaims the necessary urban reform. The conflict between Vilanova and the Baixeras plan relies on exactly the same problem that José Luis Guerín points out in “En construcción.” Baixeras plan, based on a system of methodical expropriations of large sections of the inner city, was a covert plan of gentrification and financial speculation. Barcelona City Hall finally approved the Baixeras plan in 1889. However, Vilanova did not live to see his family home disappear under the modern Via Layetana, one of the avenues of the plan that was finally opened in 1908. After the emergence of

Via Layetana, no other part of the Baixeras plan has been implemented as in the original project. Still, in 1998 the Barcelona City Hall completed the Rambla del Raval, a more modest version of one of Baixeras's main avenues.

As I have tried to demonstrate, Lluís Rigalt and Emili Vilanova's work reflected on the questionable models of urban modernization designed by urban planners Ildefons Cerdà and Angel Baixeras, and endorsed by other local authors like Narcís Oller and Josep Yxart.

Rosa Cabré suggests that the Emili Vilanova's work shows his particular opposition to urban modernity in a way that allows him to testify to material prosperity and that also sets him apart from other local authors like Narcís Oller, Jacint Verdaguer, Joan Sardà, Josep Yxart, Apel·les Mestres, Pompeu Gener, and Josep Roca i Roca (14). As we have seen, Vilanova certainly shows radical resistance to the transformation of the inner city according to the conditions of Baixeras plan. Being affected at a personal level, as a certainly privileged neighbor of Basea St., Emili Vilanova decided to voice the popular resistance of this process of haussmannization not only with regards to the material transformation but also unveiling the human cost of this venture.

In a first reading, Vilanova's attitude towards urban modernization could be labeled as what in cultural history has been called antimodernism

the pervasive sense of loss that often coexisted in the decades around the turn of the century along with an enthusiasm for modernization and material progress.

[...] It describes what was in effect a critique of the modern, a perceived lack in the present manifesting itself not only in a sense of alienation [...] As such, it embraces what was then a desire for the type of 'authentic,' immediate experience

supposedly embodied in pre-industrial societies. (Jessup 3)

As the articles I have analyzed above suggest, Vilanova's reaction towards this comprehensive plans of haussmannization is not merely a strategic move of castling in order to save a particularly traditional place. Vilanova admits the need for urban reforms but at the same time recognizes the cost of relinquishing the inner city to Baixeras's speculative plans. The *sventramento* of the inner city implied not only the erasure of certain spaces but, more importantly, the eviction of popular classes that inhabit those spaces. Vilanova is certainly against the consequences of gentrifying the inner city but not against material progress in itself.

In order to fight the arguments of the Cerdà and the Baixeras plans of reform—based on the modern needs of hygienization, transportation, and beautification—Vilanova introduces people as the most important and compelling issue in the debate. In this sense, he subordinates notions of the space perceived and the space conceived to the space lived. Vilanova's nostalgia is not anchored in the materiality of the inner city but on the traditional spatial practices that these spaces have facilitated for centuries. The success of his works heavily relies on his representation and the readers' recognition of traditionally codified urban practices. Vilanova's nostalgia arises, using Bourdieu's terminology, not from the loss certain spaces *per se* but from the disappearance of a familiar spatial habitus.²¹ As "L'Arch d'en Mirambell" suggests, the disappearance of those spaces under the urban reforms imply the interruption of the possibility of perpetuating the reproduction of such practices in the modern city. Vilanova's tableaux invites us to mourn the lost sense of community, the progressive emergence of the gap between the private and the public sphere, the creeping commodification of the urban space that results in the alienation of individuals, and the advancing subordination of social and cultural capital to economic capital.

Against a new commodified city dominated by spectacle and marked by the progressive

rupture between private and the public spheres led by the local bourgeoisie, Vilanova still dreamed of an integral city. His work illuminates the inner tensions that emerged in nineteenth-century Barcelona when the rise of the bourgeois elite and the new urban forms that accompanied it confronted the material conditions of a city generated under a different mode of production. As Henri Lefebvre reminds us, “every society—and hence every mode of production with its subvariants [...]—produces a space, its own space” (31). Amidst the emergence of the bourgeois city, Emili Vilanova’s resistance relied on the possibility of negotiating a synthetic outcome between Cerdà’s and Baixeras’s rationalizing proposals of reform and the preservation of a local social capital deeply rooted in this specific geography.

NOTES

¹ The Consell de Cent—the Council of the Hundred—was a political institution founded in 1249 by Jaume I as a way to introduce popular representation in the administration of the city of Barcelona. As a civil institution that guaranteed the civil liberties in front of the king, the Consell de Cent is one of the first symbols of Catalan home rule. The Consell de Cent was abolished by Philip V with the Decreto de Nueva Planta following the Catalan defeat of September 11, 1714.

² The building of the so-called Audiencia, located opposite to the City Hall, was in fact the traditional site of the Diputació del General or Generalitat de Catalunya. Built in the 15th C., the palace of the Generalitat is one of the best examples of Catalan civil Gothic architecture. The medieval Diputació del General was a permanent institution of self-government which was aimed at representing the generality of the Catalan subjects in front of the king of the Catalan-Aragonese Crown. The General Council was composed by representatives of different estates of Catalan society. Instituted in the 14th C., the Diputació del General was also abolished by the Bourbon dynasty in 1715. This self-government institution was the foundation on which the new contemporary Generalitat de Catalunya was fashioned in April 1931 after the proclamation of the Spanish Republic.

³ As I mentioned in chapter two, the Llotja had been the international hub of Catalan trade, which ruled the commercial relations between Barcelona and the *Consolats de Mar* during the Catalan expansion in the Mediterranean between the thirteenth and the fifteenth centuries.

⁴ As we know, Angelón and Cerdà did not work together on the transformation of the old city but they actually joined forces in the project of implementation of the new urban reality of the Eixample. In 1863, they worked together in the society Fomento del Ensanche de Barcelona

in which Cerdà was the technical director and Angelón the secretary-general (*Fomento del Ensanche de Barcelona* 3).

⁵ As Eva Gimeno and Francesc Magrinyà remind us, the implementation of the plan of the Eixample rejected the restrictions on development, increased the density of the city blocks, and reduced the detailed plan of urbanization created by Cerdà to a simple plan of street alignments (36-37).

⁶ Interestingly de Molins decided to include an entry to Ángel José Baixeras in his *Diccionario biográfico y bibliográfico de escritores y artistas catalanes del siglo XIX* even when he was not an artist. Even if de Molins included him as an author on the account of his proposals for urban reform it is interesting to note that this work does not include an entry for Ildefons Cerdà. Curiously enough, the entry for Baixeras appears mistakenly as “Ángel Maria.”

⁷ We must not forget, the impact that the events of the Paris Commune between March and May of 1871 had on the bourgeois perception of the revolutionary threat. On the other hand, Barcelona also had an important tradition of local revolts—like the 1843 revolt of La Jamància, the summer revolts of 1854, 1855 and 1856, and the ones of 1871 and 1872. Furthermore, the city witnessed the consolidation of a local Anarchist structure after the visit of Giuseppe Fanelli, a representative of Mikhail Bakunin, in October 1868.

⁸ “Crónica.” *La Vanguardia* 22 July 1883: 4787.

⁹ “Crónica” *La Vanguardia* 21 May 1881: 2256.

¹⁰ The concept of the space *perceived* is thoroughly articulated by Lefebvre as “*Spatial practice*, which embraces production and reproduction and the particular locations and spatial sets characteristic of each social formation” (33). Soja elaborates Lefebvre’s “spatial practice” as his concept of “Firstspace” (66).

¹¹ Lefebvre defines the notion of the space conceived as “*Representations of space*, which are tied to the relations of production and to the ‘order’ which those relationships impose, and hence to knowledge, to signs, to codes, and to ‘frontal’ relations” (33), which Soja elaborates as his concept of “Secondspace” (66).

¹² In Lefebvre, the notion of lived space is conceived as “*Representational spaces*, embodying complex symbolisms, sometimes coded, sometimes not, linked to the clandestine or underground side of urban life” (33), which Soja elaborated as “Thirdspace” (66).

¹³ The Convent of Sant Maria de Jonqueres in Barcelona was founded by the Benedictine order in 1293. The Convent was evicted in 1808 under French occupation. In 1869, after the Spanish Revolution, the Spanish Government decided the demolition of the building. The Comissió Provincial de Monuments and the Acadèmia de Belles Arts de Barcelona obtained the consent of the Spanish Government to move the cloister and the church of the Convent to a new location in the Eixample between 1869 and 1871 (Durá 37).

¹⁴ The institution of the Consolats de Mar—roughly translated as Sea Consulates—was organized between 1260 and 1270 around the legal system of *Llibre del Consolat de Mar*, a set of Catalan commercial laws that incorporated local as well as Pisan, Genoese and Venetian regulations of trade in the Mediterranean. Distributed around the most important trade harbors of the Mediterranean, the network of the Consolats de Mar was in charge of defending the legal interests of traders of the Crown of Aragon.

¹⁵ In this sense, we could emphasize the Gothic palaces of Montcada St.—which was developed between the eleventh and the twelfth centuries—, the fourteenth-century Saló del Tinell at the Major Royal Palace erected between 1359 and 1362, and the Gothic hall of the Llotja building finished in 1392.

¹⁶ The intricacy of Vilanova's short fiction goes beyond the fact that it was written in Catalan for the local press. In fact, one of Vilanova's literary accomplishments is precisely the meticulous recreation of the local dialects and the particular idiolects of some of his characters.

¹⁷ It is important to mention that, while Vilanova's works were distinctively local, the publication of his collected works was acknowledged both in the Spanish market and beyond the Pyrenees. For instance, in 1885, the French *Polybiblion: Revue Bibliographique Universelle* included Vilanova's *En familia* as one of the works that certified that "le mouvement du roman ne se ralentit pas en Espagne" along with Pereda's *Sotileza*, and Pardo Bazán's *El cisne de Vilamorta* (184). In Spain, Pardo Bazán herself recorded in his *Nuevo Teatro Crítico de Emilia Pardo Bazán* having received "*Plorant y rient*, del humorista catalán Emilio Vilanova," which deserved "que no se le eche en saco roto" (85).

¹⁸ Francisco Blanco García was an Augustine friar and professor of literature at the Real Colegio del Escorial who devoted attention to Catalan literature in his three volume work *La literatura española en el siglo XIX* (1890-93).

¹⁹ Vilanova's pseudonym "Joseph Oriol" borrows the name of the local Sant Josep Oriol, a Catholic saint born in Barcelona in the seventeenth century. Josep Oriol, known as the thaumaturge of Barcelona, was beatified in 1806 and declared as saintly in 1909. His life was also intimately linked with La Ribera as he was born and raised in this neighborhood where he served as an Altar boy in the church of Santa Maria del Mar.

²⁰ Vilanova also devoted a satirical article to Angel Baixeras in his 1891 collection *Plorant y rient*. Once again, in "Punt y apart," Vilanova identifies the motivations of the self-appointed urban planner as a matter of pure economic speculation: "Quan al senyor Angel Baxeras [Baixeras], capficat entre'ls infolios del seu escriptori, sumant fortes columnes de

guarismes, com poderosos batallons de infanteria, qu'en forma de valors acàs havían d'entrar (ò exir,) del seu calaix de comerciant, li sobrevingué l'idea de la reforma de Barcelona, es ben probable que no fou ab cap designi mesquí, interessat ó especulatiu, ni tan sols com a trassa per auroentar aquells exèrcits atapahits de números y ferios caure, en virtut de la estrategia mercantil, convertits en centenes de milers, dins la ferrada caixa dels seus cabals" (194-95).

²¹ Bourdieu refers to habitus as “the systems of dispositions characteristic of the different classes and class fractions” (*Distinction* 6)

FIGURES, CHAPTER 5

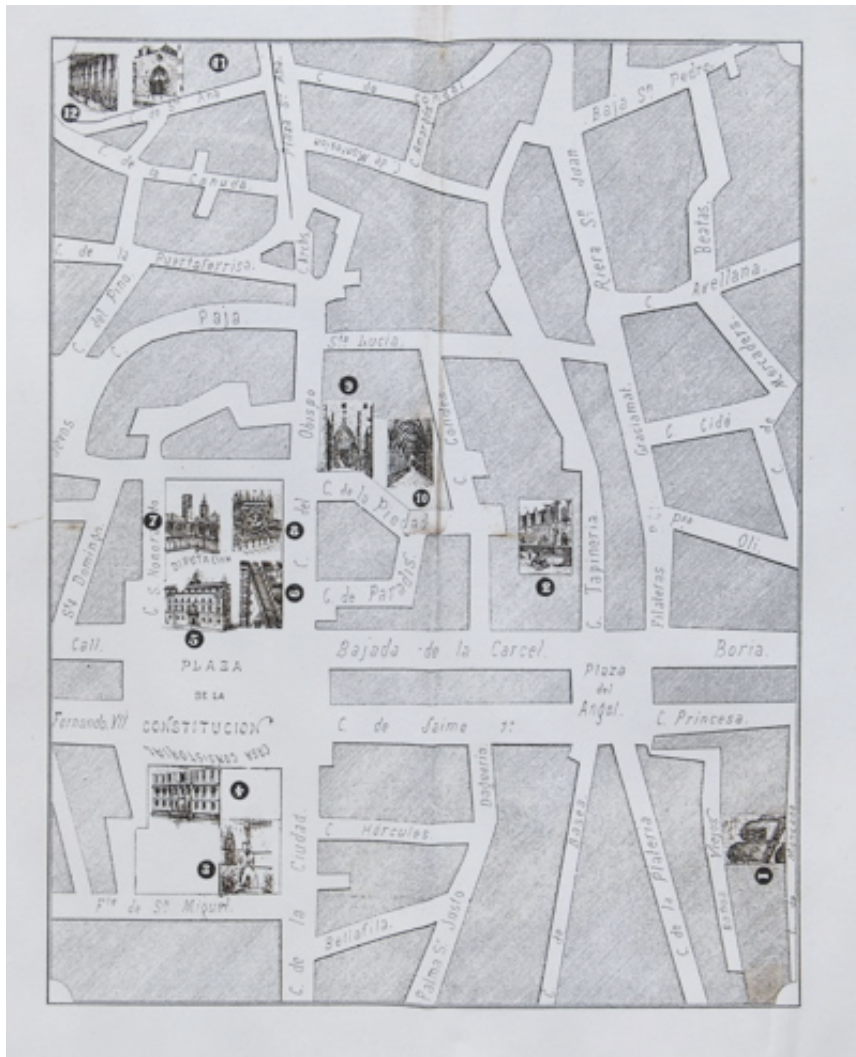


Fig. 5. 1: Unfolded map included in J. E. Puig's *Plano y vistas de Barcelona* of 1888. The map indicates the location of the twelve photographs that compose the album. All of them are included in the political core of the traditional city, especially around the Plaza de la Constitución—today's Plaça Sant Jaume—with four views of the building of the Audiencia—the building of the Generalitat before 1714—, two of the City Hall, one of the Plaça del Rei, while the rest are devoted to religious buildings.



Fig. 5. 2: Joan Martí. "Plaza de Palacio" and detail. *Bellezas de Barcelona*. Notice the contrast between the sharp figure of the man in the middle of the square, the slightly blurred image of the man that appears cropped in the foreground, and the innumerable totally blurred shadows of those individuals that populate the square walking too fast for the long exposure of the camera.

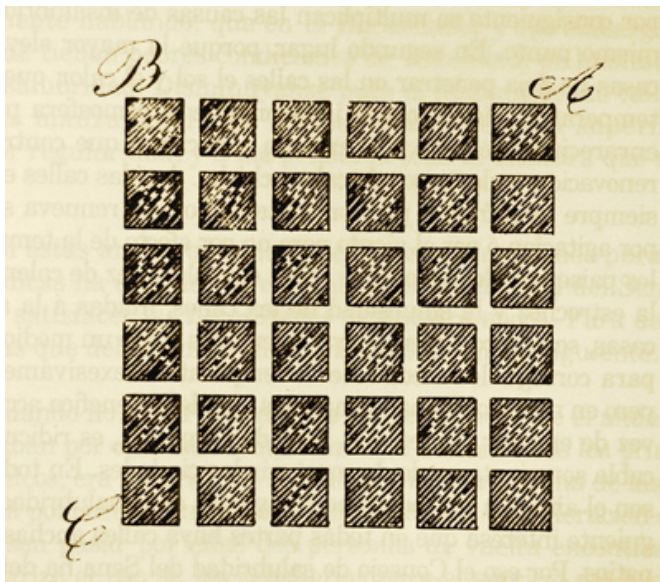


Fig. 5. 3: Comparison of Moliné i Ferran's illustration that accompanies Angelón's commentary on the streets of Barcelona in 1854, before the approval and the implementation of the Cerdà plan (*Guía satírica de Barcelona* 19) and Cerdà's schematic diagram of the basic proposal of the Cerdà plan in his *Teoría de la construcción de las ciudades* Vol. 1. (375).

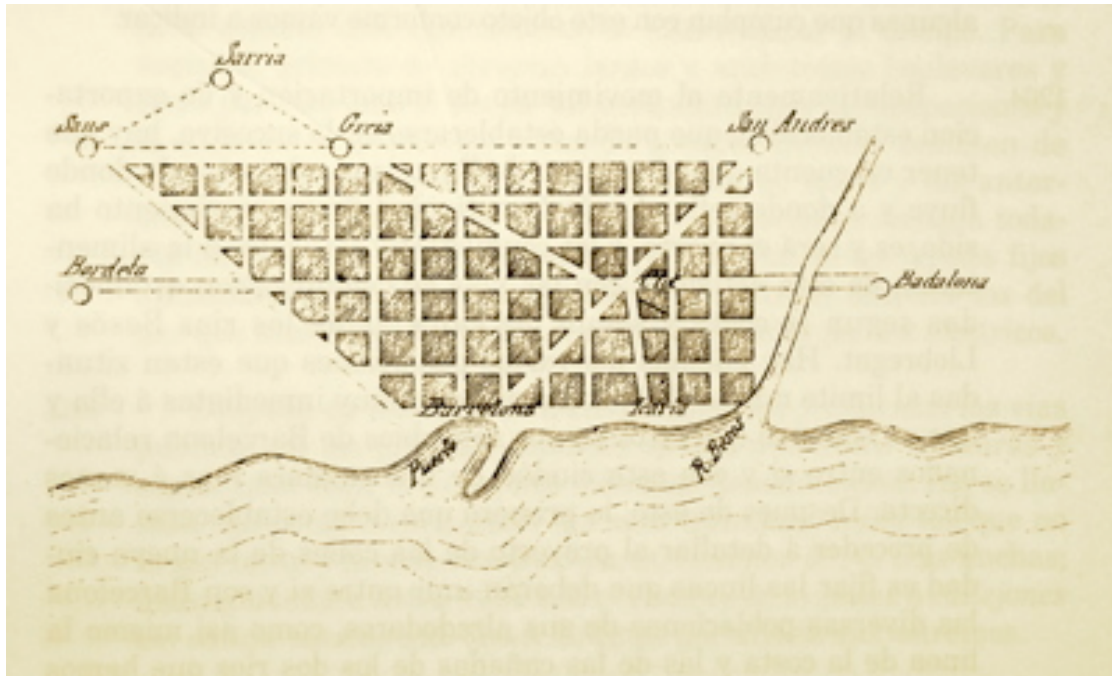


Fig. 5. 4: Sketch of the potential “Estructura en cuadrículas según las principales vías de importación/ exportación” for the city of Barcelona included in *Teoría de la construcción de las ciudades* Vol. 1 (376). Notice the disappearance of the old perimeter of the city under the schematized grid of Cerdà.



Fig. 5. 5: “Proyecto de Ensanche de la Ciudad de Barcelona y su puerto aprobado por el Gobierno de S.M. la Reyna. Plano de Barcelona y sus alrededores” by Ildefons Cerdà. Notice the three avenues marked by two parallel red lines that, according to Cerdà’s project were intended to reform the inner city.

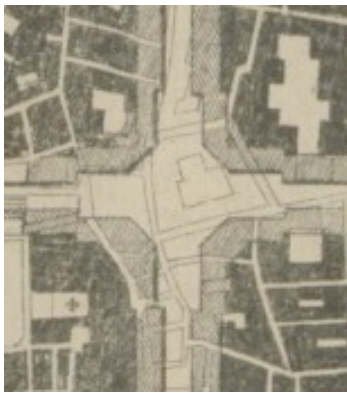


Fig. 5. 6: Two details of the “Plano de los alrededores de la ciudad de Barcelona y proyecto de reforma y ensanche” (1859) by Ildefons Cerdà. On the left we can see how the red lines of the previous map are already represented as actual avenues cutting through the old tissue of the inner city. On the closer detail to the right, we can perceive the details of the actual streets of the inner city and the blocks that had to be demolish in order to implement the inner reform.



Fig. 5. 7: Baixeras plan of urban reform of the old city (up) contrasted with the comparatively limited span of Cerdà's proposal of reform (down). Baixeras modifies the layout of Cerdà's avenues A, B and C and introduces a comprehensive rationalization of the rest of the urban layout, especially on the northern section of the city, located on the right side of both maps.



Fig. 5. 8: Comparative details of Cerdà's plan of urban reform (on the left) and Baixeras's proposal of reform (on the right). Notice how the irregular blocks of the old city are preserved in Cerdà's map—except for the opening of two of the three avenues included in his project—while Baixeras proposes to erase most of this section of the city in order to impose a quadrangular rationale that connects the old city with the Eixample.



Fig. 5. 9: Lluís Rigalt i Farriols, *Barcelona, Junqueras Marzo de 1869*. Pencil and sepia 17.5 x 30 cm. Rigalt archive at the Reial Acadèmia Catalana de Belles Arts de Sant Jordi. Ref. No. 40.



Fig. 5. 10: Lluís Rigalt i Farriols. *Barcelona, Calle de la Princesa, Abril 1867*. Pencil and sepia
14.9 x 22.8 cm. Rigalt archive at the Reial Acadèmia Catalana de Belles Arts de Sant Jordi. Ref.
No. 16.



Fig. 5. 11: Lluís Rigalt i Farriols. *Barcelona, Plaza del Angel y Calle de la Princesa, Enero de 1868*. Pencil and sepia 19 x 24 cm. Rigalt archive at the Reial Acadèmia Catalana de Belles Arts de Sant Jordi. Ref. No. 24.

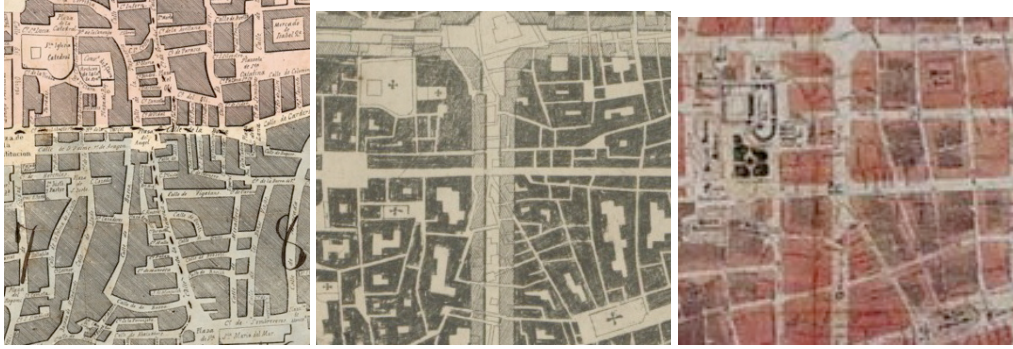


Fig. 5. 12, Fig. 5. 13, and Fig. 5. 14: Comparative details of the central area of the reforms of what would be the Via Laietana in an early nineteenth century map and in the plans of reform of Cerdà and Baixeras. From left to right: “Sistema Acklin. Plano de Barcelona con la división de distritos.” Published by Sala Editor. No date. The absence of Princesa St. identifies the map as prior to 1853. From the graphic archives of the Arxiu Històric de la Ciutat de Barcelona, Ref. No. 3018. To its right, detail of Cerdà’s plan of reform of 1859. And finally, detail of the same area according to Baixeras’s proposal.



Fig. 5. 15: Detail of a pre-1853 map of Barcelona with the alignment of Basea St highlighted in brown compared with the proposal of reform by Angel J. Baixeras. “Sistema Acklin. Plano de Barcelona con la división de distritos.” Published by Sala Editor. No date. The absence of Princesa St. identifies the map as prior to 1853. From the graphic archives of the Arxiu Històric de la Ciutat de Barcelona, Ref. No. 3018.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS—ON SPATIAL LEGIBILITY

AND THE ROOTS OF THE “BARCELONA MODEL”

Anybody whose mind is proud enough not to breed true,
secretly carries a bomb at the back of his brain;
and so I suggest, just for the fun of the thing, taking that private bomb
and carefully dropping it upon the model city of commonsense.
In the brilliant light of the ensuing explosion many curious things will appear.

—Vladimir Nabokov (372)

In 1888, the Barcelona World Fair symbolically closed the process of urban transformation that commenced in 1854 with the beginning of the demolition of the city walls. In this period, Barcelona had been able to break the boundaries of her stone belt in order to expand along the plain. The thorough plan of urban expansion designed by Ildefons Cerdà had been proposed, approved, rejected, debated, implemented, and finally perverted in order to satisfy the voracity of real estate speculators. Angel Baixeras had brought to life the old debate of inner reform and proposed a thorough plan of haussmannization that threatened the vast majority of the traditional layout of the city center. By this time, a new epistemology of urban space—based on hygienism, geometrical rationalization, and ornamentation—proposed a new conception of the city that ultimately aimed to eradicate the old urban layout. The 1888 World Fair came to symbolically endorse Barcelona’s claim to modernity. The event pleased enthusiasts of monumentalization who, like Narcís Oller, longed for a more spectacular and readable city. However, while the new rational and legible spaces developed and the World Fair responded to the rational urban epistemology of the period, the event also certified the impossibility of

domesticating the city and its practitioners.

6.1 THE 1888 BARCELONA WORLD FAIR

By the mid 1880s, Barcelona was trying to rise from the 1882 economic crisis that ended the bloom of the Barcelona stock exchange, brought the local “gold fever” to an end, and started a period of industrial depression for Catalonia. In 1885, in the midst of this economic crisis, an eccentric Spanish entrepreneur—Eugenio Serrano de Casanova—asked the Barcelona city hall for the concession of the grounds of the new city park in order to hold a Universal Exhibition. The new park was located at the old grounds of the Citadel imposed by Phillip V. The Catalan general Joan Prim had returned the ominous fortress to the city in 1869, right after the triumph of the Spanish Revolution of 1868. After a long process of demolition that ended in 1878, the city democratized the old military grounds by building a public park designed by local architect Josep Fontserè i Mestre. By 1885, the moment in which Serrano de Casanova asked for the concession of the park, the development of Fontserè’s project was quite advanced—with the completion of the monumental cascade in 1881. With the grounds of the Bourbon Citadel already returned to the city, the project of Serrano de Casanova presented a commercial appropriation of public space for private profit. Needless to say, the City Council and population of Barcelona received the project with utmost skepticism. The primitive idea of the Barcelona exhibition was, thus, a completely private venture.

One of the first steps of Serrano de Casanova in order to publicize the project was to promote the journal *La Exposición*, which became the main propaganda device for his project. The journal was primarily concerned with convincing the local audience about the viability and convenience of the project. While most of the local population was either indifferent or hostile to

the project, *La Exposición* appealed to the Catalan spirit as an assurance of success of the fair. Even the Madrid newspaper *La Época* claimed that the success of the Exhibition was guaranteed if the whole of Catalonia supported the project because

Desde el momento que Cataluña entera apoya tan levantado pensamiento, no puede ya dudarse del éxito. Los catalanes, cuyo carácter emprendedor, laborioso y reflexivo, es justamente celebrado, sabrán dar ahora un nuevo testimonio de su incansable perseverancia.

Siempre hemos creído que si algún día había de celebrarse en España una Exposición Universal, debería verificarse en Barcelona. (qtd. in *La Exposición* 4).

With such claims, both *La Exposición* and *La Época* tried to turn the private venture of Serrano de Casanova into a national affair—a *Catalan* national affair. The manipulative nationalist rhetoric of Serrano de Casanova’s entourage ended up with the definitive involvement of the Barcelona City Hall. Unfortunately for Serrano, in 1887 the city mayor, Francisco de Paula Rius i Taulet, turned the project into a public venture. He removed Serrano from the project, appointed a council of eight members of the local elite for the organizing committee, and obtained the involvement of the Spanish Government with a loan of 2 million pesetas (less than 20% of the total cost of the project).

According to historian Ainaud de Lasarte, after the initial period of doubt and local resistance, most of the city population ended up sharing the idea of the world’s fair as a great opportunity to communicate the reality of Barcelona and Catalonia to the rest of the world (24). Even today, the 1888 Exhibition signifies Barcelona’s modernity and still receives praise. For Joan Ramon Resina, the 1888 World Fair was “un ritu de pas que assenyalava el reconeixement de Barcelona com a metropolis en eclosió,” to the extent that this event, as a culmination of a

process, granted Barcelona the status of “unofficial Spanish capital” (*Barcelona’s Vocation of Modernity* 25). According to Brad Epps, “the 1888 Exposition served as spectacular proof of the transformation of the city from a militarized fortress controlled from Madrid into a monumental market open to the world” (19). Admiring reports of the Barcelona World Fair are grounded in the praise offered by authors like Narcís Oller and Josep Yxart. Oller, in his *Memòries literàries*, recalled the exhibition as “esforç titànic que donava tan brava mostra de les nostres ocultes energies i de la nostra set de progrés,” which arose the author’s imagination as well as “el [seu] catalanisme, la fe posada en en aquest poble, l’esperança en dies millors” (786). Several decades after the exhibition, Oller regretted not having written the novel he hoped to write about the 1888 World Fair. For the realist author, such a work would have helped him perpetuate what he considered “la gesta més esplendorosa de l’estimada Barcelona” (786).

Oller was certainly compromised with the project of urban modernization that promoted the hegemony of the city as spectacle through, among other factors, a thorough monumentalization of public spaces. Some effects of the Universal Exhibition were new spectacular avenues that led to the fair grounds and new monuments that embellished those spaces. At the outlet of les Rambles, the new monument to Christopher Columbus marked the beginning of a large avenue that became a visual epic reminder of the Catalan involvement in the Spanish colonial project.¹ At the northern gate of the Exhibition, the new monumental avenue of the Saló de Sant Joan emerged. At the gates of the venue, the new boulevard impressed its visitors with the triumphal arch designed by Josep Vilaseca i Casanovas. The rest of the Saló de Sant Joan was spotted with a series of minor monumental mementos of some of the Catalan historical characters privileged by the nineteenth-century romantic historiography of la Renaixença.² The two new monumental avenues reified Spanish and Catalan history in the new

urban public spaces. While the Columbus-Isabel II axis privileged the colonial history of Spain, the Saló de Sant Joan rooted the new avenue in the Catalan glories of the Middle Ages and Mediterranean expansion. These new urban spaces and the process of adding monuments in the city certainly responded to the needs of urban modernization that Oller demanded in his “Quatre mots sobre la policia urbana i l’ornat públic de Barcelona.” Ultimately, Oller’s idealized memory of the event in his *Memòries literàries* was anchored in the visual apprehension of the spectacular fair: “trobo viva encara la visió directa d’aquells spectacles i la vibrant tensió amb què els considerava llavors el meu esperit” (786).

Undoubtedly, as Epps explains, the 1888 Exhibition was more the culmination of modernization, a particular phenomenon of progress, than an actual agent of modernity. The exhibition left behind a series of new spaces—like the Saló de Sant Joan and the Columbus-Isabel II axis—that responded to the modern demands of monumentalization. It consolidated the democratization of the Citadel space that had been returned to the city in 1869, and it ultimately led to a period of local optimism that accompanied the *Modernisme* artistic revolution.

As some critics of the period explained, the event did not fulfill many of the expectations it created. According to some accounts, the Barcelona fair was more local than universal, and it was far from the turning point that some scholars associate with the event. In November 1888, shortly before the end of the fair, the Ateneo Barcelonés—the most important intellectual forum of nineteenth-century Barcelona—conceived the idea of holding a public conference with a series of lectures that offered a critical analysis of the Exhibition. In this series of conferences, Francesc Vila i Lletjós, a former commissioner of the local Diputación to the London exhibition of 1862, presented a highly critical account of the impact of the Barcelona World Fair:

“Retraídos, en inmensa mayoría, los productores extranjeros; poco y mal representado el resto de

España y sus Colonias, la Exposición Universal resultó huera y reducida poco más que á Catalana; comparable con la que en 1871 [...] improvisóse en esta ciudad con aplauso unánime y singular modestia" (711). Ultimately, according to Vila i Lletjós, the celebration of the Barcelona exhibition had not improved the perception of Catalonia as an industrial nation, neither abroad nor in the rest of Spain:

¿qué historiador de los pasados siglos ha dejado de consignar las excelencias de la industria catalana? Y, descubiertas las Américas, señores, ¿qué pueblo civilizado del Nuevo Mundo ha dejado de conocerla y ensalzarla? En nuestros tiempos, ¿no conoce la culta Europa todo, absolutamente todo, lo que en el orden industrial puede y vale Cataluña? Sus relaciones mercantiles con los países que imprimen crédito á nuestro siglo [...] ¿no ponen de relieve ante las naciones extrañas, todo el alcance de sus *fuerzas vivas* con más firmeza y más eficacia que lo ha hecho la última *parodia*? Y Cataluña, ¿no tiene acaso conocimiento íntimo de su potencia industrial, bien definida? ¿Necesitaba aquel *alarde* ruinoso para conocer sus fuerzas vivas?" (711).

For Vila i Lletjós, Catalonia's industrial capacity was well known abroad. He perceives the event as a mere theatrical, and ultimately failed, *mise en scène* of an already established fact: that Barcelona was a modern industrial city, which was already inserted in the Western capitalist network. For Vila, the 1888 World Fair becomes a mere parody, a pompous display. Blinded by his radical pragmatism, Vila failed to acknowledge that—behind the commercial justification—the most important factors of a World Fair were its enticing visual presence, the character of its grounds as a leisure place, and its overtly monumental aspect.³ As Sigmund Engländer explained in 1864, “the idea of presenting an exhibition of industry is born from the wish to amuse the

working classes, and it becomes for them a festival of emancipation” (qtd. in Benjamin, *Arcades Project* 180).

The literary critic Josep Yxart better addressed the notion of the 1888 Barcelona World Fair as leisure place. Yxart, like his cousin Oller, advocated a proactive modernization of Barcelona and recorded his experience of the 1888 Exhibition in his collection of articles *El año pasado* (1889). In its pages, Josep Yxart verifies the deficiencies that Vila i Lletjós denounced regarding the poor display of the industrial and scientific fields in the fair grounds. For Yxart, nothing new was presented in the Exhibition. However, his chronicles of the event highlighted its social and cultural impact. His accounts testify that the fair confirmed the emergence of a new understanding of modern life: recognition of fragmented experience, a new commodification of leisure, and an acceleration of the daily pace of life. In his articles in *El año pasado*, Yxart cinematically describes his own walk through the Exhibition. His eyes become like a camera that documents the exciting movement of the fair, the central role of spatial practices.

In *El año pasado*, Yxart embodies the perfect “observateur, flâneur, philosophe” that Baudelaire praised in “Le Peintre de la Vie Moderne” (57):

Pour le parfait flâneur, pour l'observateur passionné, c'est une immense jouissance que d'élire domicile dans le nombre, dans l'ondoyant, dans le mouvement, dans le fugitif et l'infini. Être hors de chez soi, et pourtant se sentir partout chez soi; voir le monde, être au centre du monde et rester caché au monde, tels sont quelques-uns des moindres plaisirs de ces esprits indépendants, passionnés, impartiaux, que la langue ne peut que maladroitement définir. (64)

Yxart is like Poe's narrator in “The Man of the Crowd” with “a calm but inquisitive interest in everything,” and he invites us to follow him to the grounds of the World Fair (39).

Each walk is planned as a pleasure trip where the author acts as our guide, directing our gaze to specific places. In the first of these articles, entitled “Panoramas”, Yxart walks from the new International Hotel to the Exhibition through the new Passeig de Colom:

Sales con tu amigo, lector, del Hotel Internacional en el Paseo de Colón; dejas aquel vestíbulo anchuroso, flamante, de aspecto realmente moderno y singularmente animado... ya estamos en el paseo. Con sus palmeras enanas; y sus faroles eléctricos que dejan tamañitos los antiguos de gas [...] [al] otro [lado], vasta línea de casas, nuevas, limpias, prosaicas unas, ennegrecidas por la intemperie y el tiempo atrás [...] restos de la ciudad vieja, de una arquitectura propia, pintoresca, movida, donde se hallan incrustados nuestro carácter y nuestra vida municipal decadente, en faz de la vía contemporánea, rectilínea como el derecho igualitario, y anchurosa como el espíritu cosmopolita (“Panoramas” 180-81).

In this stroll, Yxart evaluates the city that hosts the World Fair. The new boulevard is an excellent vantage point to observe the modern city—the one with luxurious hotels, palm trees that remind us of the Spanish colonial enterprise, and electric lights that rendered gas lighting obsolete. However, the perfect panorama of modern Barcelona is still stained by the “remains” of the old city, presented as a sign of the decadence of the City Hall. In this passage, the new boulevard of Passeig de Colom—the “vía contemporánea”—is the epitome of the new urban rationale as conceived by Ildefons Cerdà and Angel Baixeras: “rectilínea como el derecho igualitario y anchurosa como el espíritu cosmopolita” (181).

In the second promenade, described in “La Exposición por fuera,” Yxart leads us from the triumphal arch—the main entrance of the Exhibition—through the pavilions of the park and

ends at the docks. Yxart's gaze enjoys the initial panorama of the entrance to the exhibition thanks to the rectilinear rationale that governs this new space: "[un] primer panorama [...] grandioso y bello: tiene la simplicidad de la recta" ("La Exposición por fuera" 189). Upon arrival in the docks, at the other end of the fair grounds, the new panorama from the bridge that crosses the railroad tracks is also presented as a pure spectacle of industrial modernity: "El espectáculo que divisamos desde aquí [...] recuerda los grabados de las grandes ilustraciones norteamericanas: una vista fragmentaria de una gran población industrial con la grandeza singular del tráfico y el poder de la maquinaria" ("La Exposición por fuera" 195). After Yxart's visual scanning, there is no doubt that Barcelona is undeniably modern.

Besides Yxart's attempt to substantiate Barcelona's modernity through the visual apprehension of carefully selected urban panoramas, "La Exposición por fuera" also introduces the author's experience with another key element of the urban modern experience: the crowd. Yxart introduces the mass of visitors to the exhibition as a familiar crowd that does not seem to disturb the magic of the moment. Here, the crowd is presented as "una gran concurrencia circulando por tan diversos puntos á la vez, [...] diseminada por las distintas veredas [...] se ofrece al espectador, no con la monotonía de una multitud aturdida que desfila por delante de un vasto museo, sino con la variedad pintoresca y animada de un pueblo que se divierte y goza" ("La Exposición por fuera" 193).

The face of the crowd blurs at nightfall. In "La Exposición de noche"—his best account of his experience at the Barcelona World Fair—the crowd turns into something much more problematic. This time, the crowd is not the mass observed from the distance. At night, the narrator is leveled to become just another member of the multitude. At this point, Yxart describes a radically different experience of the fair grounds that is intimately connected to his own

presence in the crowd. While, in “La Exposición por fuera,” Yxart gave a reasoned account of the phenomena of modernity, in “La Exposición de noche,” immersed in the crowd, Yxart can only express alienation, puzzlement, and disorientation. The primacy of senses like sight and hearing in Yxart’s “La Exposición de noche” confirms Georg Simmel notion of the psychology of the masses: our presence in the crowd provokes the preeminence of our feeling over reason (Frisby 84). As a result, the preeminence of feeling over reason triggers the sensation that “one never feels as lonely and lost as in the metropolitan crowd” (Simmel, *Simmel on culture* 181).

In “La Exposición de noche,” Yxart shows for the first time some of the anxieties caused by the modern urban experience: the commodification of leisure, the acceleration of the pace of human experience, and the alienation of the author immersed in the crowd. In his nocturnal visit to the World Fair, Yxart initiates his narration at the same place he started “La Exposición por fuera”: the triumphal arch designed by Josep Vilaseca. This time, the monument is reduced to “una negra mole, misteriosamente agrandada, sobre el fondo de cielo que alumbra pálidamente la luna” (“La Exposición de noche” 245). The Triumphal Arch presides the ritual of entrance of the masses to the fair grounds: “En hilera, en buen orden y silenciosos, vamos pasando uno á uno por el torniquete que da vueltas sin parar... Suena acompasadamente la rueda dentada, por debajo del montón de pesetas... Al tic-tac de la rueda, van cayendo sobre la taquilla; parece que cada golpe las acuña allí mismo” (“La Exposición de noche” 245). One by one, the “multitude” enter the Exhibition through a turnstile that counts how many people enter and reaps the benefits of each visitor: one visitor, one peseta. For Yxart, each revolution of the turnstile seems to be actually coining a peseta. Once inside, the visitor finds immersed in “una multitud inmensa y compacta que no permite dar un paso, y llena, ennegrecida por la relativa oscuridad, la plaza de Armas” (247). The multitude pushes and shoves to find a proper place to see the great spectacle of the

magic fountain: “hombres, mujeres, niños, sentados, de pie, discurrendo á duras penas, codeándose, empujándose, todos contemplan absortos el raudal inflamado, cuyos colores varían al infinito” (247). The display of the fountain is impressive but the audience has to pay something else besides the peseta at the entrance—the spectacle of modernity comes at the cost of individuality. By the mere passing through the turnstiles at the gates, each individual is transformed into a minimal component of the crowd. At night, moved by the masses along the very same space the narrator had enjoyed in the daytime, the same modern place becomes a blurry space in which the promise of modernity seems to fade: “¡Todo agrandado, todo indeciso y flotante, animado por la intensidad del tráfico, cuyo ruido, si no cesa de noche, se esfuma, y apaga con misteriosa sordina su franca vibración diurna!” (248-49). The effect this new panorama causes is far from the excitement of the “American” scene of the industrial city under the sun. By night, the individuality of the narrator dissolves in a multitude puzzled and mystified by the silent panorama of the sea under the moonlight. But unexpectedly, with the beginning of the fireworks show, the quiet and docile mass of people becomes an obstacle for the free circulation within the fair grounds. All of a sudden, the crowd becomes an ambush that immobilizes Yxart. Everyone stops attentively watching the pyrotechnics. Yxart identifies the multitude as a trap to which he has no other option but to surrender to: “es imposible transitar: todas las bocacalles obstruidas; todos los puntos de libre circulación interceptados. Hay que permanecer en pie, mirando al cielo, recibiendo los empellones” (250). The crowd is no longer the picturesque group that Yxart observed from a distance. It is not the mass in which he dissolved his own identity after passing through the turnstiles. The crowd has then become the problem: the multitude that levels the social distinctions, that is able to transform the otherwise privileged *flâneur* into a trapped member of an indistinct mass.

With the multiple events of the World Fair, the crowd invaded the vast majority of the public space of Barcelona. As Yxart explains in “La cabalgata,” the international event had familiarized Barcelonans with “la aglomeración de grandes multitudes” (326). In this article, Yxart narrates his experience, watching the night parade of the five carriages that symbolizes the harmony of the five continents represented in the World Fair. In this occasion, Yxart preserves his individuality as a narrator and observes the dynamics of the crowd from the outside. Instead of narrating his experience as a member of the crowd, Yxart strategically creates the figure of an alter ego—“mi hombre” (326)—who becomes the pawn in the game of the crowd. From the sidelines, Yxart presents the multitude as a fluid body of water that indiscriminately invades the public space of the city “como negros y caudalosos torrentes, afluían a la Rambla, formando encrespado remanso en la plaza de Cataluña [...] *invadiendo* la vía central; iban á confundirse al pie del monumento a Colón” [my emphasis] (“La cabalgata” 326). As Yxart suggests, the masses are uncontrollable. They are able to appropriate the carefully planned public space. The fluid multitude also swallows up Yxart’s “man,” to which he peacefully surrendered (327). From the vantage point of Yxart’s distant narrative, no longer moved by feeling but appealed by reason, he is able to identify the central human motive for the attraction of such a crowd: “la curiosidad colectiva y el placer de un espectáculo gratis [...] la pasión de ver lo que verá todo el mundo, y gozar de lo que gozará todo el mundo” (329). The crowd is moved by an egalitarian motivation: each and every individual wants to enjoy equal opportunity. Yxart’s treatment of the modern urban crowd suggests a specifically bourgeois anxiety about the limits of such democratization.

While Yxart was an advocate of urban modernization, his articles show that the social impact of modernity was unpredictable. As local history repeatedly proved, in a city whose working class politics were predominantly dominated by the Anarchist movement, the

uncontrollable masses could have unexpected consequences for the local economic and cultural elites. Yxart felt the need to report the actual aesthetic effect of the new spaces of the Exhibition and of the new movements of modern life. He documents the personal experience of the transient and the contingent. While he advocates the benefits of modernization, he is suspicious of the social consequences of these changes. In Yxart's conception of modern Barcelona, rational ordering of the urban space should facilitate the perpetuation of the hegemony of the local bourgeoisie over the masses. But, what seems to shock Yxart is the possibility of questioning that hegemony through "non-rational" spatial practices in a space that should be "rationalized" by urban planning. Yxart's accounts of the World Fair convey the recognition of the uncontrollable face of urban modernity. Modern urban planning is in fact not able to regiment the actual production of space made through uncontrollable public interactions of all kinds of citizens. As Manuel Delgado suggests, urban practitioners break the stage directions of the urban space and "es desentenen de les directrius dissenyades, "passen" dels principis arquitecturals que han orientat la morfologia urbana i s'abandonen a modalitats de territorialització efímeres i transversals" (*Elogi del vianant* 13).

6.2 ON URBAN MYTHOPOEIA

As geographer Carles Carreras notes, the conception and representation of Barcelona has been marked by a tension between the champions of the material city and the supporters of the lived city of its inhabitants and users (37). According to him, in the real city, these two aspects always appear disassociated (37). Nevertheless, when one analyzes the textual or visual articulation of the city, one is not dealing with the "real city." The wide variety of artifacts that allows us to conceive and represent the city—treatises, articles, poems, short stories, novels,

maps, drawings, paintings, cartoons, and photographs—are not windows into the real city.

According to Joan Ramon Resina, the distance between the city and its representations relies on the fact that the city in itself is excessively codified, and actual urban experience can never be brought back to life by means of representational artifices (*Barcelona's Vocation of Modernity* 10). As Resina reminds us, the tendency of criticism toward an excessively close association between urban images conceived in literary works and the actual material, social, and economic conditions of the city point to the referential fallacy (*Barcelona's Vocation of Modernity* 10).

The referential fallacy, intrinsically connected with the project of Realism, is triggered by the illusion of transparency of certain textual representations.⁴ Regarding visual culture, the levels of referentiality differ between media like photography, painting, or cartoons. Nonetheless, all these media rely on the construction of a particular image—by means of explicit focalizations, framing, foregrounding, and elisions—prompted by the materiality of the real.

As actual signs anchored in the social, economic, cultural, and physical reality of the city, the textual and visual artifacts analyzed in this dissertation all share one characteristic trait: their mythopoeic nature. Cerdà's and Baixeras's textual and visual proposals of urban transformation explicitly relied on the possibility of materializing a textual and visual construction into the hard materiality of the Barcelona plain. Others, like Narcís Oller, also wished to see their textual conceptions of the monumental city materialized while, as a novelist, endeavored to consolidate a particular image of the modern city. Photographers like Álvarez and Martí engaged in particular tasks of commodifying an attractive image of the city—through a meticulous selection and focalization of certain spaces—that was attuned with the desire to consolidate the modern city as an icon.

As I have tried to prove, the particular mythopoeic projects embodied in these textual and visual conceptions and representations of the city do not—and cannot—characterize all the intricacies and broad complexities of the city and urban experience. Each image of the city takes a particular stance towards urban experience. While, as Carreras explained, in the real city its materiality cannot be dissociated from the practitioners of its spaces, its representations explicitly or implicitly rely on the dissociation of these aspects. The *perceived*, *conceived*, and *lived* city appear here not as three negotiable aspects of the trialectics of space but as hardly reconcilable factions in a struggle for the hegemony of an urban model.

6.3 THE TWO RENAIXENÇAS AND THE CONSOLIDATION OF PHOTOGRAPHY

The three particular approaches to the representation of urban reality—characterized by their different emphasis on the *perceived*, *conceived*, and *lived* aspects of the city—are firmly rooted in an aesthetic and cultural matrix initially dominated by Romanticism and progressively transformed by the new Realist gaze that accompanied the consolidation of photography.

The historical period analyzed in this project is also defined, according to Catalan literary historiography, as the highest peak of the Renaixença movement with the consolidation of the Jocs Florals, the emergence of Catalan theater, and the rise of major literary figures. As I discussed in the previous chapters, the Renaixença movement, with its vindication of Catalan language as a legitimate literary vehicle, also contributed to the appearance of a solid local press in the vernacular tongue. Journals like *La Renaixensa*, *Lo Gay Saber*, *El Calendari Català*, and *La Il·lustració Catalana* helped to spread the tenets of the Renaixença movement. However, the literary movement aligned around Jocs Florals—with its motto *patria, fides, amor*—was deeply ingrained with an archaic conception of Catalan as a literary language—inherited from the

troubadour's tradition—and a ruralist conception of the nation sprung from the *pairal* institution. Besides a few incursions in the urban experience—whose best example is Jacint Verdaguer's *Oda a Barcelona*—the conservative Renaixença movement was certainly not interested in representing that reality. The Romanticism of this literary movement engaged in an archeological project of articulating the distinctive traits of Catalan culture through a travel in space and time. Rural Catalonia was the contemporary repository of vernacular mores. In addition, historical revisionism helped articulate an autonomous identity rooted in the traditional Catalan institutions before the defeat of 1714. The Romantic escapism of la Renaixença left the industrial city unrepresented until the introduction of literary Realism through the work of Narcís Oller and his interest in the modern metropolis.

As Enric Cassany explains, the Catalan bourgeois market and local literary critics started to embrace the popular literature of *costumisme* during the restoration of monarchy (14). Emili Vilanova continued publishing his sketches of the urban *menestrals* experience in the *La Renaixensa* journal. Later on, with the appearance of Narcís Oller and the Catalan novel in the milieu of la Renaixença, urban experience was introduced into the Catalan cultural mainstream. By the 1880s, from this exciting local intellectual milieu, new artistic attitudes surfaced around publications like the *L'Avenç* journal, which introduced the work of European Naturalism and would later initiate the new Modernista movement at the beginning of the 1890s.

The Romantic aesthetics that dominated the institution of els Jocs Florals, as well as the local artistic academies like La Llotja school of art, delayed the development of an interest in the representation of Barcelona's urban experience, especially in poetry and painting. As we have seen, only ephemeral media like articles and cartoons published in the press—intended for immediate consumption and instantly substituted by the newest issue of the journal—and fleeting

sketches not even destined for public consumption were first and foremost concerned about the urban experience. Progressively, the popularization of certain authors, like Vilanova and Robert, brought forward the collection, publication, and critical recognition of their works, elevating them to esteemed status in the world of arts and letters.⁵ It was not until Narcís Oller's consolidation of the Catalan novelistic tradition that the city of Barcelona was officially sanctioned as a literary motif. Curiously enough, until the appearance of Oller in the Catalan literary milieu, the same elite that was investing in the urban modernization of the city was also producing and consuming products of high culture—especially poetry and painting—anchored in the Catalan past and Catalan countryside. Oller is the first one to break this dissociation.

The period 1854-1888 did not only witness the aesthetic transition from Romanticism to Realism and Naturalism but also the consolidation of photography. The new medium appeared as the perfect mimesis of the real, as an ideal way to represent not only the human appearance—through the tremendously popular *carte de visite*—but also the materiality of the city. By the 1870s the local commercial market of photography was fully consolidated. The representations of the city found a niche through the commercialization of photographic albums that included a series of specific views capable to stand for the totality of the city. The scientific revolution of the perfect mimesis was presented as the ideal medium to represent the city. After the first Spanish photographic test in the Iberian Peninsula on November 10, 1839, the city of Barcelona became a regular subject for local and foreign photographers. Beginning with the first photograph of the Xifré building, the epitome of modern urban architecture at the time, and the central building of the local stock exchange, photographers tried to represent the most emblematic spaces of the city, those especially related with local political, economic, and religious power. If Barcelona's first photograph focused on the stock exchange as the core of the

economic vitality of the city, the albums of Álvarez and Martí also performed similar processes of selection in order to portray and commodify a modern image of the city. Their gaze on the city, due in part to technical restrictions that prevent them from capturing the actual activity of the city, focalizes on the wide spaces of the city, those created by the new urban rationale while eliding those counter-spaces that questioned the new modern image of the city liable of being commodified.

6.4 THE NEW URBAN RATIONALE

The work of the *Renaixença* movement—organized around the local satirical press—was the first local literary expression to reflect Barcelonans’ urban experience. In their tableaux, the city generally appears not as the simple scene for the action of discrete individuals but as the place for communal interaction. For authors like Emili Vilanova, the materiality of space and certain traditional uses of the urban layout were inextricably linked. The medieval urban layout of the old city is presented in Vilanova’s tableaux as the condition of possibility for a distinctive sense of community. For him, the intricate maze of irregular and curved streets was not the chaotic, unsanitary, and dispensable remains of an irrational urban conception that appeared before the eyes of urban planners but a meaningful place that proved the social nature of space.

As Lewis Mumford explains, the intricate network of streets that composed medieval cities was not the result of urban neglect. The medieval city, as Leone Battista Alberti conceived in *De Re Edificatori*, was designed with curved streets in mind because “the slow curve is the natural line of a footwalker” (Mumford 303). Also, according to the historian of urbanism Pierre Lavedan, the use of curved streets facilitated the articulation of a city organized around a city core in a radio-concentric system in which “all the lines converge toward the center and that the

contour is usually circular” (Mumford 303). This was the city structure that allowed for the consolidation of the basic socio-economic and political network of the trade guilds, which organized local craftsmen reaching its peak in the sixteenth-century. Through the progressive erosion of guild restrictions, eighteenth century pre-industrial development allowed for the emergence of a new entrepreneurial class that would set the basis for the nineteenth-century industrial revolution (Thompson 10). Eighteenth-century Barcelona was characterized by the rise of the bourgeoisie and the definitive decline of the guild system. Progressive industrial freedom helped to secure the rising of a local bourgeoisie that would slowly distance from the *menestral* world anchored in manual production. But the city that the guilds built was still standing. As Mumford points out, by the eighteenth century “both the physical shell itself and the practices of the guild lingered on, hardly altered,” until they were ultimately erased by the enlightenment project, which was “largely devoted to their demolition” (272). René Descartes, in his *Discours de la méthode*, was one of the first voices to question the ancient layout of European cities as a problematic reality that needed serious reconsideration:

those ancient cities which, from being at first only villages, have become, in course of time, large towns, are usually but ill laid out compared with the regularity constructed towns which a professional architect has freely planned on an open plain; so that although the several buildings of the former may often equal or surpass in beauty those of the latter, yet when one observes their indiscriminate juxtaposition, there a large one and here a small, and the consequent crookedness and irregularity of the streets, one is disposed to allege that chance rather than any human will guided by reason must have led to such an arrangement. (10)

Thus, the seventeenth-century rationalism of Cartesian thought was already demanding the imposition of “human will” on medieval urban layouts. For Descartes, the “professional architect” was urged to rationalize the “ill laid” structure of the crooked and irregular medieval streets.

However, Descartes’s urge to rationalize the urban network did not affect European urban planning until the nineteenth century. This was the moment in which the new mode of production of industrial capitalism felt the need to create an urban space in its likeness. As Schumpeter summarized, creative destruction, the fundamental driving force of capitalism and its model of modernization, was mobilized in order to eradicate “the institutional arrangements of the feudal world—the manor, the village, the craft guild” (139). In this process, “the world of the artisan was destroyed” (Schumpeter 139). It was then when “urban “improvers”” considered the definitive eradication of the medieval urban system conceived by a mode of production structured around the city guilds (Mumford 306). In Paris, haussmannization literally erased the urban network that surrounded Notre Dame in the Île de la Cité (Mumford 306). In Barcelona, first Cerdà then Baixeras decided to reform the inner city through the elimination of the structural irregularities that characterized the city center.

Cerdà’s gridded order—based on his quadrangular layout of straight, parallel, and wide streets—was conceived as a reification of the perfect blueprint for a modern life governed by steam and electricity. Cerdà appears as the agent of the “human will” that Descartes demanded. Cerdà’s theory of urbanization is presented as a new instrument at the service of the relentless power of modernization. In spite of his explicit egalitarianism, his theory appears as an instrument able to submit not only to the materiality of space but also to its inhabitants. Cerdà’s draft for the municipal ordinance of the new city proves Cerdà’s faith in a supreme and

multifaceted power. In his “Ordenanzas Municipales de Construcción,” Cerdà explains “la base y fundamento de [su] sistema”: the implementation of “[una] autoridad [...] omnimoda y absoluta” able to control the inhabitants of the city by reproducing explicitly the basic structure of patriarchal order (519-21).

Cerdà’s project of urban expansion also included a plan of inner reform based on the opening of three wide streets that had to rationalize the old city, connecting it with the grid of the Eixample. However, the long and slow process of developing the new city put Cerdà’s project on hold until 1879. By then, unexpectedly, Angel Baixeras decided to revive Cerdà’s sketches and take the project of haussmannizing the city to the next level. Baixeras’s project proposed the ultimate creative destruction of the old city center. The old network of irregular narrow streets and alleys—presented as a threat for the sanitary and social order of the city—was reduced to a clean slate from which to build the new layout. Baixeras’s project tried to consolidate the new urban rationale of the grid—based on a hygienic, mathematical, and visual conception of the urban space—into the old perimeter of the city.

Baixeras and Cerdà, in their role as urban planners, reduced their conception of space to the rationalization of the perceivable space. Their theorization of space, as space *conceived*, is almost exclusively preoccupied with the articulation of a new material space that completely disregarded the actual production of space by its inhabitants and users. As urban planners trying to implement their new spatial epistemology, Cerdà’s and Baixeras’s discourse is dominated by the matter-of-factness of “the “real” material world” that is “fixed [...] on the concrete materiality of spatial forms, on things that can be empirically mapped” (*Thirdspace* 6; 10). Their scientific stance, however, reminds us that their theoretical articulations of urban space do not reflect the sheer materiality of space but “a system of verbal (and therefore intellectually worked

out) signs” that identif[y] the space perceived with the space conceived (Lefebvre *The Production of Space* 39). The well-defined dyad formed by perceived and conceived space has been the center of scientific analysis of space in disciplines like geography and urban planning until the last decades of the twentieth-century. Today, however, thanks to the groundbreaking work of Henri Lefebvre, this initial duality has been complemented by another key factor in the production of space: the role of its inhabitants and users in the production of space. Lefebvre’s “representational space” is “the space of “inhabitants” and “users” but also of some artists and perhaps of those, such as a few writers and philosophers, who describe and aspire to do more than describe” (*The Production of Space* 39).

The Catalan *costumisme* of authors like Emili Vilanova helped conceive a different aspect of the city that was radically ignored by the perceived/conceived space dyad. Through his particular understanding of Barcelona, the materiality of the city was intimately linked with the spatial practices of the traditional *menestralia* and the working class that inhabited the core of the city. Like the medieval conception of the city, in Emili Vilanova’s Barcelona everything converges upon the center of the city, upon those popular neighborhoods threatened by the new proposals of urban reform. As a reaction against the blurring of the boundaries of the new city, Vilanova invites his readers to look back to the core, to the vitality of a space characterized by the community of traditional neighborhoods. Against Baixeras’s project of haussmannization, Vilanova uncovers the complex imagery of strictly codified urban practices that contributed to the production of those spaces. As Soja observes, authors like Emili Vilanova and Robert Robert and artists like Lluís Rigalt show “a distinct mode of critical spatial awareness” (*Thirdspace* 10). Their particular critical awareness of space leads them to portray specific aspects of the city that have been precluded from an emerging conception of space based exclusively on hygienic,

geometrical, and visual parameters. Their gaze on the urban experience is part of a dialectical debate that tried to negotiate a viable model of urban modernity in front of the emerging techniques of power that aimed at domesticating the city. Against a new urban epistemology based on the transformation of the city into a spectacle, governed by the ample panoramas of the streets and the process of monumentalization, the work of Vilanova vindicates the city of everyday practices. His tableaux reveal the banality of everyday life in socially peripheral and even marginal spaces, in the representation of ephemeral moments drawn out from the lives of street vendors, workers, *serenos*, thieves, and stray dogs.

Taking into consideration Charles Baudelaire's description of modernity in "Le Peintre de la Vie Moderne," Emili Vilanova's and Lluís Rigalt's commitment to the representation of the ephemeral and the contingent characterize them as true painters of modern life. Their work was devoted to depicting the persistent sense of loss epitomized in the disappearance of certain spaces, in the case of Rigalt, and in the fading sense of community caused by the transformation of the city, in the work of Vilanova.

This particular stance is analogous to what cultural historians of turn-of-the-century Anglo-Saxon Modernism identify as antimodernism. As Lynda Jessup explains, the term antimodernism refers to the expression of "the pervasive sense of loss that often coexisted in the decades around the turn of the century along with an enthusiasm for modernization and material progress" (3). Even taking into account their cultural and temporal distance from Modernism, the works of these Catalan authors and artists are certainly imbued with an antimodernism *avant la lettre*. In my point of view, Lluís Rigalt and Emili Vilanova are far from offering a merely reactionary response to the notion of modernity as a threat.⁶ According to Enric Cassany, Catalan *costumista* authors respond to the "consciència de crisi" inherent in the process of modernization,

while, at the same time, they share a certainly modern sensibility (Cassany 8; 11). It is only within this modern sensibility that antimodernism is possible because, as Benedict Anderson describes, “antimodernism is the dark-moon side of this fleeting modernity” (103).

The work of Emili Vilanova recurrently evolves around the feeling that Georg Lukács defined as “transcendental homelessness”: the threat of loosing one’s own potential for agency and the constant danger of losing oneself in an increasingly unfamiliar world (33). In this sense, Vilanova’s modernity has to be distinguished from the possibility of an unquestionable commitment to the hegemonic processes of industrialization and urban transformation (Boym 22)—like in the cases of the personal allegiances of authors like Narcís Oller and Josep Yxart to the hegemonic process of urban modernization. The modernity of Vilanova’s work relies on his critical stance towards the emergence of what Hegel called “the spirit of the time, growing slowly and quietly ripe for the new form it is to assume”—epitomized by the increasing dehumanization and the progressive spectacularization of the city—which is slowly destroying “the structure of its previous world” (*The Phenomenology of Mind* 10).

As historians like García Espuche have proposed, the celebration of the 1888 World Fair in Barcelona signaled the emergence of an official image of the city crafted by the City Hall of mayor Rius i Taulet (49-50). Between 1886 and 1888, the city hall embarked on a totalizing plan of urban beautification that tried to communicate a unified and unproblematic projection of Barcelona as a modern European city. This period of monumentalization was praised by authors like Oller and Josep Yxart in part because the new spaces eclipsed the dreadful hidden city of narrow streets and back alleys but also because, as Oller stated in his *Memòries literàries*, they foresaw the materialization of a new modern metropolis. As we have seen above, this period was marked by the development of new readable monumental spaces like the axis Passeig de Colom-

Isabel II—anchored in the Spanish colonial project—and the Saló de Sant Joan—spotted with key figures of Catalan nation building. Furthermore, as Brad Epps reminds us, the City Hall also used Verdaguer’s *Oda a Barcelona* instrumentally in order to construct a patriotic image of the city (“Barcelona and Modernity” 15). Last but not least, the celebration of the 1888 World Fair was presented as a matter of local and national pride. The honor of Barcelona, of Catalonia, and of Spain was at stake.⁷

The project of urban modernization of Barcelona during the 1880s was marked by the progressive monumentalization and spectacularization of the public space, by the plans of gentrification of the inner city proposed by Baixeras, and by the construction of an official image of the city controlled by the City Hall. Anyone familiar with contemporary urban planning and with Barcelona’s current branding will have identified that the 1880s project of urban modernization relied on the same phenomena that characterized what in modern times would characterize the “Barcelona model.” As the architect Josep Maria Montaner summarized for *El País*, “el eje del modelo Barcelona ha consistido en promover grandes acontecimientos; en favorecer un entendimiento entre la voluntad social de la iniciativa pública y los intereses de la iniciativa privada, y en otorgar a los técnicos toda la iniciativa del proyecto urbano” (Montaner n. pag.). Today, scholars like Montaner argue that such a model of urban development has ultimately failed due to its inability to appreciate the fragmentation of the modern city, or to acknowledge the right of citizens to the usage of public spaces (Montaner n.p.). For the last twenty-five years, the city has been characterized by the increasing attempts to reduce urban complexity, to comply with the simple readability of a theme park, by the organization of international events (presented as rites of passage able to consolidate Barcelona’s international name and develop the city), and also by specific processes of haussmannization—with the

opening of the Rambla del Raval⁸—and gentrification of neighborhoods like el Born and la Barceloneta.

As the social anthropologist Manuel Delgado explains, the radical problem of this model relies on the fact that urban planners depend on a fixation of spatial legibility (*Sociedades movedizas* 14). As we saw in the case of Cerdà and Baixeras, their particular obsession was to transform the opacity of the urban experience, epitomized by the intricacies of the inner city, by means of a rational model based on hygienism, geometrical regularity, and the spectacularization of the city. Other interventions, like the commission of Víctor Balaguer to name the new streets of the Cerdà plan, finally contributed to transform the aseptic blank space of Cerdà's grid into a reification of Catalan Romantic historiography. But as Manuel Delgado reminds us: “el espacio urbano no es el resultado de una determinada morfología predispuesta por el proyecto urbanístico, sino de una dialéctica ininterrumpidamente renovada y autoadministrada de miradas y exposiciones” (*Sociedades movedizas* 13). In front of the attempts of the planned city to render the urban complexity readable, writers like Emili Vilanova will always vindicate the essential role of inhabitants and users in the construction of the city. After all is said and done—from Vilanova's “L'Arch d'en Mirambell” (1867) to José Luís Guerín's *En construcción* (2001)—authors, artists, and filmmakers will always fight for Antonio Atar's right to the city.

NOTES

¹ Under Columbus monument, the new Passeig de Colom connected with the Passeig d'Isabel II, which led to one of the main entrances of the Exhibition. At the end of the Passeig de Colom, by the monastery of Saint Sebastian close to the Llotja, since 1884 there was a new monument in honor to Antonio López y López—the Marquis of Comillas, a Grande de España and a former slave trader, founder of the Compañía Transatlántica Española, founder of the Banco Hispano Colonial, and the Compañía General de Tabacos de Filipinas.

² The monuments of the Saló de Sant Joan were devoted to key figures of Catalan history according to the romantic spirit of the historiography of la Renaixença. This set of sculptures was formed by the monuments dedicated to Guifré el Pilós (statue of the Count of Barcelona and mythical founder of Catalonia according to nineteenth-century historiography, made by Venanci Vallmitjana), Roger de Llúria (statue of the Admiral of the Catalan-Aragonese fleet made by Josep Reynés), Bernat Desclot (statue of the Catalan medieval historian made by Manuel Fuxà), Rafael Casanova (statue of the commander of the defense of Barcelona in 1714 made by Rossend Nobas), Ramon Berenguer I el Vell (statue of the Count of Barcelona made by Josep Llimona), Pere Albert (statue of a Catalan magistrate made by Antoni Vilanova), Antoni Viladomat (statue of the Catalan painter made by Torquat Tasso), and Jaume Fabre (statute of the architect made by Pere Carbonell).

³ According to Walter Benjamin, the New York exhibition of 1853 was organized by Phineas Taylor Barnum, the founder of Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bayley Circus (*Arcades Project* 184).

⁴ As Linda Nochlin explains, "the commonplace notion that Realism is a 'styleless' or transparent style, a mere simulacrum or mirror image of visual reality, is another barrier to its

understanding as an historical and stylistic phenomenon. This is a gross simplification, for Realism was no more a mere mirror of reality than any other style and its relation qua style to phenomenal data - the *donnee* - is as complex and difficult as that of Romanticism, the Baroque or Mannerism" (Nochlin 14).

⁵ Emili Vilanova's complete works were collected and published in 1906 by La Il·lustració Catalana, and once again in 1949—amidst the harshest period of Francoism's repression of Catalan language—by Editorial Selecta. Robert Robert's works were collected in 1893 and published by Biblioteca Popular Catalana, in 1907 by the Biblioteca Popular de L'Avenç, and, ultimately, in a critical edition by Joan Lluís Marfany published in 1965.

⁶ In this sense, for critics like Rosa Cabré, the works of Emili Vilanova respond simply to his intention to "retenir el passat," to freeze in time a kind of "paradís perdut" (*La Barcelona de Narcís Oller*_13).

⁷ As Vilà i Lletjós explained, from the very beginning the project was articulated as a patriotic task in which every Barcelonan, and every Catalan was inevitably involved: "[en] la reunión de prohombres que tuvo lugar en 23 de Abril [de 1887] en el Salón de Ciento; [...] labios autorizadísimos excitar[on] al *patriotismo* de todos los concurrentes y reclamar[on] su valioso apoyo para la Exposición prohijada por el Municipio, ya que su fracaso implicaba el descredito de Barcelona en cuyo nombre se había convocado á los expositores de todo el Universo; añadiendo: que el Alcalde de Barcelona, custodio de su *honra*, de su prestigio [...] consideraba como la mayor de las desventuras, la mayor de las desdichas, el mayor de los infortunios aquel *fracaso de incalculables y funestísimas consecuencias* para la Capital del Principado... veía comprometida la *honra inapreciable de Barcelona, de Cataluña, de España entera*" (698-99).

⁸ The opening of the Rambla del Raval is in fact the contemporary implementation, with slight modifications, of one of the projects of inner reform of the city originally designed by Ildefons Cerdà and Angel Baixeras. As I mentioned in the introduction to this dissertation, José Luis Guerín's *En construcción* documented the initial three years of this process of haussmannization and its progressive gentrification.

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