

was also directed at Lorca's poetry. His own poetic texts of 1928-9 indeed reveal almost complete rejection of metaphors and a continuous insistence on the presentation of "facts," however irrational they might appear, such as the evocation of a grasshopper that is "made up of more than 100,000,000 tiny swordfish; if he is blown on, the tiny swordfish scatter away in the air" ("With the Sun"). These developments can also be seen in terms of Dalí's estrangement from Lorca, with Buñuel progressively taking the lead as his close companion and collaborator. Consideration of their poetic and narrative forms in relation to their respective contribution to *Un chien andalou* will be offered in Section Four.

Saint Sebastian

To F. García Lorca

IRONY

Heraclitus tells us, in a fragment collected by Themistius, that it pleases Nature to hide itself. Alberto Savinio believes that this same self-hiding is a phenomenon of modesty.¹⁰ It has to do – so he tells us – with an ethical reason, for this modesty is born of the relationship between Nature and man. And he finds this to be the primary cause for the engendering of irony.

Enriquet, a fisherman from Cadaqués, told me the same things, in his own words, when, one day, looking at a picture of mine which represented the sea, he observed: "It's the same. But it's better in the picture, because there the waves can be counted."¹¹

Irony could begin in such a preference as well, if Enriquet were capable of moving from physics to metaphysics.

Irony, as I have said, is nakedness; it is the gymnast who hides behind the pain of Saint Sebastian. And it is this pain too, because it can be counted.

PATIENCE

There is a patience in Enriquet's rowing that is a wise mode of inaction; but there is also the patience that is a mode of passion, the humble patience in the maturing process of the paintings of Vermeer of Delft, which is the same mode of patience as that of the ripening of fruit trees.

There is another mode still; a mode between inaction and passion, between Enriquet's rowing and Van der Meer's¹² painting, which is a mode of elegance. I am referring to the patience in the exquisite death throes of Saint Sebastian.

DESCRIPTION OF THE FIGURE OF SAINT SEBASTIAN

The black and white marble paving of the staircase made me realize that I was in Italy. I went up. At the top was Saint Sebastian, tied to an old cherry-tree trunk. His feet rested on a broken capital.¹³ The more I observed his figure, the odder it seemed. Nevertheless, it seemed to me as if I had known it all my life, and the aseptic light of the morning revealed every small detail with such clarity and purity that it was impossible for me to feel perturbed.

The Saint's head was divided into two parts: one, made of a material similar to that of a jellyfish, was held up by an extremely fine circle of nickel; the other was filled by half a face which reminded me of someone very well known; from this circle there emerged a support of a blinding white plaster cast which seemed like the dorsal column of the figure.¹⁴ The arrows had all marked on them their temperature and a little inscription engraved on steel which read: *Invitation to the Coagulation of Blood*. In certain parts of the body, the veins appeared on the surface with their intense hues of blue of a Patinir¹⁵ storm, describing curves of painful voluptuousness on the pink coral of the skin.

Having reached the Saint's shoulders, the directions of the breeze left their impressions there as if on a sensitive plate.

TRADE-WINDS AND COUNTER-TRADE-WINDS

On touching his knees, the rare air was checked. The martyr's halo was like rock crystal, and, in his hardened whiskey bloomed a rough and bleeding starfish.

On the sand covered with shells and mica, precision instruments of unknown physics projected their explicative shadows, offering their crystals and aluminums to the disinfected light. Some letters drawn by Giorgio Morandi¹⁶ indicated: *Distilled Instruments*.

THE SEA AIR

Every half-minute there came the smell of the sea, constructed and anatomical like the pieces of a crab.

I respired. Nothing was mysterious any longer. The scent of Saint Sebastian was a pure pretext for an aesthetics of objectivity. I breathed again, and this time I shut my eyes, not out of mysticism, nor to better see my inner self – as might be said platonically – but simply for the sensuality of the physiology of my eyelids.

Afterward I went on slowly reading the names and the precise directions on the apparatuses; each annotation was the point of departure for a whole series of intellectual delectations, and a new scale of precisions for unheard-of normalities.

With no previous explanations, I intuited the use of each of these apparatuses and the joy of each one of their sufficient precisions.

HELIOMETER FOR DEAF-MUTES

One of the apparatuses bore the following title: *Heliometer for Deaf-Mutes*. The name already indicated its connection with astronomy, but this was made manifest above all by its constitution. It was an instrument of a lofty physical poetry formed by distances and by the relationships between these distances. These relationships were expressed geometrically in some parts, and arithmetically in others; in the center, a simple gauge served to measure the agony of the Saint; its mechanism consisted of a little calibrated dial made of plaster, in the center of which a red coagulation, enclosed within two crystals, performed as a sensitive barometer for each new wound.

In the upper part of the heliometer was located Saint Sebastian's magnifying glass. This magnifying glass was concave, convex and flat all at once. On the platinum frame of its clear and precise crystals was engraved: *Invitation to Astronomy*; and below it, in letters that looked as if in relief: *Saintly Objectivity*. On a crystal wand with a numbered scale, one could read further: *Measurement of the Apparent Distances between Pure Aesthetic Values*, and, on the side, on a very thin test tube, the following subtle notice: *Apparent Distances and Arithmetical Measurements between Pure Sensual Values*.¹⁷ This test tube was filled up to its middle with sea water.

In Saint Sebastian's heliometer there was neither music nor voice, and, in some sections, it was blind. These blind spots of the apparatus were precisely those matching its sensitive algebra, and the ones intended to concretize what was the most insubstantial and the most miraculous.

INVITATIONS TO ASTRONOMY

I brought my eye closer to the magnifying lens, the product of a slow distillation that was numerical and intuitive at the same time.

Each drop of water, a number. Each drop of blood, a geometry.

I looked. To begin with, the caress of my eyelids on the wise surface formed by calculation. Then I saw a succession of clear sights, perceived in such a necessary disposition of measurements and proportions that each detail appeared to me like a simple and eurhythmic architectural organism.

On the deck of a white packet-boat a girl with no breasts taught sailors satiated with the south wind to dance the *black bottom*.¹⁸ Aboard other ocean liners, dancers of the *Charleston* and *blues* saw Venus each morning in the bottom of their *gin cocktails*, at the time they had their pre-aperitifs.¹⁹

There was hardly any vagueness in this, with everything seen clearly, with the clarity of a magnifying glass. When my eyes lingered on any detail, this detail grew bigger as in a cinematographic close-up, and achieved its highest plastic property.

I see in the nicked headlight of an *Isotta Fraschini*²⁰ a girl playing polo. I do no more than let my curiosity lead me to her eye, which then occupies the whole field of vision. This single eye, suddenly enlarged to become a sole spectacle, is the whole depth and the whole surface of an ocean on which sail all poetic suggestions, and where all the plastic possibilities are stabilized. Each eyelash is a new direction and a new quietude; the oily and tender mascara forms, under microscopic enlargement, precise spheres amidst which may be seen the Virgin of Lourdes and Giorgio de Chirico's painting *Evangelical Still Life* (1926).²¹

And as I read the delicate letters engraved on the biscuit,

Superior
Petit Beurre
Biscuit

my eyes filled with tears.

An indicating arrow, and beneath it: *Direction Chirico; Toward the Limit of a Metaphysics*.

The extremely thin line of blood is a silent spread-out plan of the underground railway. I don't want to proceed until the life of the radiant *leukocytes* and their red ramifications are converted into a little spot, passing speedily through all the phases of their decrement. One can see once again the eye in its primitive dimension at the depth of the concave mirror of the headlight, now like an unusual organism in which swim the precise fish of the reflections in their watery, lachrymal medium.

Before continuing to look, I dwelled again on the details of the Saint. Saint Sebastian, free of symbolism, was a *fact* in his plain and unique presence. Only with such a mode of objectivity is it possible to go on

observing with calm a stellar system. I renewed my heliometric vision. I realized that I was moving within the antiartistic and astronomical orbit of the *Fox Movietone* newsreels.²²

The spectacles succeed one another, simple facts giving rise to new lyrical states.

The girl in the bar plays *Dinah*²³ on her little phonograph, while preparing gin mixtures for the motorists, inventors of subtle blends of games of chance and black superstition in the mathematics of their engines.

At the Portland racetrack, the race of the blue Bugattis, seen from the airplane, acquires the dreamy movement of hydroids descending in a spiraling motion to the bottom of an aquarium with their parachutes open.

The rhythm of Josephine Baker²⁴ in slow motion²⁵ coincides with the purest and slowest growth of a flower produced by cinematographic accelerated motion.

The cinema breeze, again. *Tom Mix*'s²⁶ white gloves with touches of black, pure like the latest amorous interlacements of the fish, crystals and stars of *Marcoussis*.²⁷

Adolphe Menjou,²⁸ in an anti-transcendental ambiance, offers us a new dimension of the dinner jacket²⁹ and of ingenuousness (by this time enjoyable solely in cynicism).

Buster Keaton³⁰ – here is Pure poetry, Paul Valéry!³¹ – post-machinist avenues, Florida, Corbusier,³² Los Angeles. The pulchritude and eurythmics of the mass-produced utility, aseptic and antiartistic displays, concrete, humble, live, joyful, comforting clarities, to oppose art which is sublime, deliquescent, bitter, putrefied. . . .

Laboratory, clinic.

The white clinic takes shelter around the pure chromolithography of a lung.

Within the crystals of the vitrine, the chloroformed scalpel sleeps recumbent like a beauty sleeping in a wood of impossible interlacements of nickels and Ripolin enamel.

The American journals offer *Girls, Girls, Girls*³³ for our eyes, and – under the sun of Antibes – Man Ray³⁴ obtains a clear portrait of a magnolia, affecting our flesh more than the tactile creations of the Futurists.³⁵

A shop window of shoes in the Grand Hotel.

Tailors' dummies. Dummies quiescent in the electric splendor of shop windows, with their neutral mechanical sensualities and disturbing articulations. Live models, sweetly stupid, who walk with the alternating rhythm and opposing movement of hips and shoulders, clasping unto their arteries the new, reinvented physiologies of their costumes.

PUTREFACTION

The other side of Saint Sebastian's magnifying glass corresponded to putrefaction. Everything seen through it was anguish, obscurity, and tenderness, even; tenderness, yet, because of the exquisite absence of spirit and naturalness.

Preceded by I don't know what lines by Dante, I got to see by and by the whole world of the putrefieds:³⁶ cry-baby transcendental artists, removed from all clarity, cultivators of all germs, ignorant of the precision of the graduated double decimeter; families that purchase art objects to be placed on top of the piano; the public-works employees; the associate committee member; the university professor of psychology. . . . I didn't want to go on. The thin mustache of a clerk at the counter moved me. I felt in my heart all its exquisite, Franciscan and highly delicate poetry. My lips smiled in spite of having the desire to cry. I lay down on the sand. The waves reached the shore with the peaceful murmurs of Henri Rousseau's *Bohémienne endormie*.³⁷

"Sant Sebastià," *L'Amic de les Arts*
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Two Pieces in Prose

*For Lluís Montanyà*³⁸

MY GIRLFRIEND AND THE BEACH

"Honey is sweeter than blood"³⁹

Right at this moment, on the beach, the printed letters of the daily newspaper are eating up the torpid donkey, which is rotten and clean like mica.

We will go near the place where pitiful and knocked-down beasts⁴⁰ are perishing, having burst a little vein in a flight that grinds and sweats small serum drops. There we will break the plaster of snails, until we find those containing tiny nickel apparatuses, as sweet as honey, and lightly feverish from the limpidity of their own articular perfections.

Now that I am sweating under the arms, I'll let the gentle air expire in its sponge, the air that all the apparatuses on the beach exude by letting loose the joy of the flying breasts, red and warm, that drip blood.

My girlfriend is sprawled with her extremities tenderly dissected, full