

“A Sea of Equilibrium.” Antoni Gaudí’s Political Undercurrent

Senior Thesis

By

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to Professor Clayton Black

*I pledge my word of honor that I have abided by the Washington College Honor Code  
while completing this assignment.*

In 2010, Pope Benedict XVI dedicated the Sagrada Familia in Barcelona, saying that the cathedral "stands as a visible sign of the invisible God, to whose glory these spires rise like arrows pointing towards absolute light and to the One who is Light, Height and Beauty itself."<sup>1</sup> This cathedral is perhaps the best known work of Antoni Gaudí, the Catalan architect responsible for the distinctive character of many private, secular, and religious Barcelonan spaces.

Gaudí admitted to drawing from influences in and beyond Spain for his unique, naturalistic, style. The arboreal columns and hive-like structures of the Sagrada Familia, for example, stemmed from his extensive observation of nature as a child, when he was too ill to do much else. He even went so far as to say that his "structural and aesthetic ideas have an 'indisputable' logic," and that, "convinced of their perfection, it is my duty to apply them."<sup>2</sup> Because of his admiration for the structure of creation, there is often a disproportionate focus on Gaudí's religious architecture, or the religious inspirations behind his designs. While this influence is undeniable, there remains a secular, and political influence in many of his works.

Gaudí's life, which began in Reus in 1852 and ended in Barcelona in 1926, spanned an eventful time in Spain's history, from just after a cluster of European revolutions to just before the Spanish Civil War. While religious movements were certainly on the rise during this time within Spain, so were cultural, social, and nationalist ones. Gaudí's architecture was as connected to these as it was to Christian philosophy and can provide insight into the political climate in Spain during this time. However, the architecture of Antoni Gaudí can be such an

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<sup>1</sup> "Dedication of the Church of the Holy Family," *Pope Benedict XVI Visits Spain*, Catholic News Agency, November 7, 2010, [https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/spain10/resource.php?res\\_id=1448](https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/spain10/resource.php?res_id=1448).

<sup>2</sup> Jordi Bonet i Armengol, *The Essential Gaudí: The Geometric Modulation of the Church of the Sagrada Familia* (Barcelona: Pòrtic, 2000), 54-58.

overwhelming presence that, for many years, few historians paid attention to the man behind it. The earliest works written about him were by people who knew him personally. There was a large gap between Gaudí's death and the publication of the majority of these works. Most of the earliest writings by architects or artists who knew him were published after the centenary celebration of Gaudí's birth in 1952.<sup>3</sup> Crucial events like the Spanish Civil War and the start of the Franco dictatorship separated the span of his life from the majority of biographies written on him.

During the time that elapsed between Gaudí's death in 1926 and some of the most well-known histories written about him, Spain faced many societal changes which led to different perceptions of the meanings behind his architecture. Gaudí's architecture was quite controversial at the time it was created. Following Gaudí's death, the Spanish government entered a period of increasing instability, and Catholicism and bourgeois values became abhorrent to growing leftist factions. The College for the Company of St. Theresa was damaged by the Republican side in 1936 during the Spanish Civil War, and Gaudí's workshop, designs, and plaster models of the Sagrada Familia were almost completely destroyed by secular Republicans as well.<sup>4</sup> This limited the number of sources available to future historians. Thankfully, the unfinished cathedral was spared, but only because the bridge connecting the

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<sup>3</sup> Juan Bassegoda Nonell, "Digressions on the Personality of Antoni Gaudí," 1983, Series IV, Box FF 141.2, George R. Collins (1917-1993) Archive of Catalan Art and Architecture, 1864-1992, Ryerson and Burnham Archives, Ryerson and Burnham Libraries, The Art Institute of Chicago, 1.

<sup>4</sup> Crippa, Maria Antonietta, *Antoni Gaudí 1852-1926: From Nature to Architecture*, (Köln; London: Taschen, 2003), 80.

sections of towers that were under construction could be used as a point to spot and attack fascist troops from above.<sup>5</sup>

The cathedral was even hated by artistic contemporaries of Gaudí such as Pablo Picasso and George Orwell, who noted “I think the Anarchists showed bad taste in not blowing it up when they had the chance.” These negative views were not due solely to the aesthetic components of the church. In such a tumultuous political climate, many on the political left simply could not tolerate the conservatism and staunch Catholicism that the Sagrada Familia cathedral represented to them.<sup>6</sup>

In later years, much of this controversy was forgotten. The debates that still exist often shape what historians choose to focus on with regard to Gaudí’s life and career. During Franco’s regime, some architects believed that the cathedral was not living up to Gaudí’s vision in an architectural or symbolic sense. The Centro de estudios Gaudinistas released a compilation of writings about his life and career a few years after the celebration of his centennial. One architect included in the compilation, Oriol Bohigas, questions the use and expense of a giant expiatory cathedral in Spain and wonders whether it could really fulfill Gaudí’s intention, since so many of his plans for it were destroyed.<sup>7</sup> Most likely, these destroyed plans included those for

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<sup>5</sup> Jordi Bonet i Armengol, *L'últim Gaudí: El Modulat Geometric Del Temple De La Sagrada Familia*, (Editorial Portic, 2000), 47.

<sup>6</sup> Michael Eaude, *Catalonia: A Cultural History, Fleeing the Straight and Narrow*, (Oxford University Press, USA - OSO, 2008), ProQuest Ebook Central, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/oxford/detail.action?docID=716674>, 6.

<sup>7</sup> Oriol Bohigas, “Problemas en la continuacion de la Sagrada Familia,” in *Gaudí*, eds. Manuel de Sola-Morales, Cesar Martinelli, Amigos de Gaudí, Centro de estudios Gaudinistas, (Barcelona: Cuadernos de arquitectura, Colegio oficial de arquitectos de Cataluña y Baleares, 1960).

the Passion façade and interior of the cathedral, and because various architects have since been constructing and interpreting these, only “Gaudí’s work on the Nativity façade and Crypt of La Sagrada Familia” are listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site rather than the entire cathedral. <sup>8</sup> This high touristic attendance and destruction of Gaudí’s original plans in the Spanish Civil War have led architectural experts to believe that the cathedral is nothing more than a tourist trap that can and will never live up to the original intentions of Gaudí.<sup>9</sup>

Sentiments like these led to the publication of *Gaudí: Su vida, su teoria, su obra* by Cesar Martinelli, who worked on architectural projects under Gaudí’s direction. It contains quotes from Gaudí which Martinelli remembers, intended to show the true thoughts and feelings of the architect but which are not verified. Through these quotes and his own descriptions of the architect, we see an emphasis on the uniqueness of Gaudí’s work. “The man on the street automatically asks what style it is in order to orient himself, and on finding that it does not correspond to any known style he remains disoriented.”<sup>10</sup> Martinelli believes that at a certain point in his career, Gaudí shunned any historical or cultural influences and became decidedly inimitable.<sup>11</sup> Martinelli argues that “The basic source of Gaudí’s creative activity was passion —

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<sup>8</sup> United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization, *World Heritage Convention*, 2018, <https://whc.unesco.org/>.

<sup>9</sup> David Cohn, “Gaudí’s Sacred Monster: Sagrada Familia, Barcelona, Catalonia,” *Buildings, The Architectural Review*, July 25, 2012, <https://www.architectural-review.com/buildings/gaudis-sacred-monster-sagrada-familia-barcelona-catalonia/8633438.article>.

<sup>10</sup> Cèsar Martinelli, *Gaudí: His Life, His Theories, His Work*, (Barcelona: Colegio de Arquitectos de Cataluña y Baleares, Comisión de Cultura), 194.

<sup>11</sup> Martinelli, *Gaudí*, 302

a warm, decisive passion guided by faith and an ideal of beauty...His spirit was kindled by the flames of art and religion.”<sup>12</sup> Religion, then, triumphs over all other sources of inspiration, according to Martinelli. However, he makes a contradiction by saying that we can only understand Gaudí’s architecture “if we can extricate ourselves from the forms which have been categorized as beautiful by tradition.”<sup>13</sup> Martinelli does not reconcile the importance of religious tradition with some other source of inspiration that apparently transcends Spain’s past.

George Roseburgh Collins, an art historian and arguably the foremost expert on Gaudí of the twentieth century, also believed that Gaudí’s mission to emulate God’s natural design transcended all other meanings behind, or interpretations of, his architecture. In an article from 1972, he argues that “Gaudí did not intend his architecture as protest. His was a deeply held belief in the essential divinity of his calling and a feeling that the divine nature of architecture allowed it to encompass everything that we experience from the most ‘realistic’ to the totally ‘abstract.’”<sup>14</sup>

Collins wrote extensively on the architect’s life and designs and contributed to the “Masters of Modernism” series, which was basically a chronology of Gaudí’s works with a description of how they fit within the framework of modernist architecture. Like Martinelli, he believes that inspirations from the past are not as important to study because Gaudí was capable of transcending them and says that “historical styles were exactly what he was growing away

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<sup>12</sup>Martinelli, *Gaudí*, 190.

<sup>13</sup> Martinelli, *Gaudí*, 134

<sup>14</sup>George R. Collins, “The Organic Art of Antonio Gaudí,” *Lith Opinion*, 1972 24.9, 4.

from in his search for personal expression,” although he argues that architecture before 1900 is much different than designs created later.<sup>15</sup>

This emphasis of the uniqueness of Gaudí’s architecture has contributed to a tourist cult that surrounds his works. His sites are some of the most visited in Barcelona, but many tourists are uninformed of their original context, which further shapes more recent scholarship on Gaudí. Gaudí’s secular “historic houses,” for example, were only ever thought of initially as residential homes. In the many years that passed since they were constructed, the bourgeois families for which he designed these homes found that Barcelona was no longer a safe place for them, especially during the Spanish Civil War. In 1934, many of the bourgeoisie involved in the textile industry, in which his patrons in the Güell family played a role, were assassinated.<sup>16</sup>

The majority of these abandoned houses are now UNESCO World Heritage sites, not because of their history with the industrial bourgeois class but, again, because of the uniqueness of Gaudí’s designs. The UNESCO criteria that Gaudí’s structures fulfilled pertain to cultural, artistic, and architectural significance (particularly his connection to *Modernisme*) rather than any religious or political meaning, reinforcing the emphasis on architecture in the minds of tourists and scholars and downplaying any deeper meaning behind it.

The Sagrada Familia provides a good example of how the designation as World Heritage sites was intended to draw more visitors; but just as UNESCO does not recognize some of Gaudí’s original intentions for the site, many visitors do not either. Studies of modern cathedral

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<sup>15</sup>George R. Collins, *Antonio Gaudí*. (George R. Collins Masters of World Architecture, George Braziller, 1960), 17.

<sup>16</sup>Ángel Smith, *Red Barcelona: Social Protest and Labour Mobilization in the Twentieth Century*, (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), 100.

visitors indicate that the majority of the Sagrada Família's contemporary visitors are drawn not for religious or spiritual reasons but for cultural ones.<sup>17</sup> Estela Marine Roig, the statistician behind one of these studies, also suggests that some tourists come to the site merely out of a sense of obligation from outside pressures to visit it.<sup>18</sup>

In response to the growing number of tourists, much of the literature on Gaudí focuses solely on the structural or design aspects of his architecture. Juan Bassegoda Nonell was an architect who served as the director of the Royal Gaudí Chair at the School of Architecture of the Polytechnical University of Catalonia (Barcelona) for some fifty years and was president of the Asociación de Amigos de Gaudí. With this background, Nonell generally took a singularly technical approach to studying Gaudí. In *La catedra de Antoni Gaudí: estudia analytica de su obra*, he does focus more specifically on historical influences of the architect, such as orientalism, naturalism and neogothicism. He discusses the geometric structure and form of Gaudí's designs, examining the tangible influences on Gaudí, such as other architects, buildings and styles, and includes a brief chronology for his life and upbringing.<sup>19</sup> However, Nonell does not attempt to connect the influences for his structural designs to any symbolic or broader context in this work.

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<sup>17</sup> Estela Marine-Roig, "Religious Tourism versus Secular Pilgrimage: The Basilica of La Sagrada Família," *International Journal of Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage*: Vol. 3: Iss. 1, Article 5, (2015), 28-29.

<sup>18</sup> Marine Roig, "Religious Tourism," 29.

<sup>19</sup> Juan Bassegoda Nonell and Gustavo Garcia Gabarro, *La Cátedra de Antoni Gaudí: estudio analítico de su obra*, (Edicions UPC, 1998).



Because of fascination with the architecture itself over any meaning or intention behind it, more recent writing on Gaudí tends to lean away from writing and toward a display of the aesthetic quality of Gaudí's work. A large quantity of visually oriented books has been published, such as *The Designs and Drawings of Antonio Gaudí*, by George Roseburgh Collins and Juan Bassegoda Nonell. This is considered one of the definitive volumes on Gaudí's life and work, and while it does contain substantive information about Gaudí's biography and influences, its main focus and the reason for its significance is the comprehensive collection of photographs, sketches, and plans for Gaudí's architecture, which take up most of the page space.<sup>20</sup>

This collaboration with Collins seems again to be focused mainly on facts and photographs; yet in other works Nonell falls into the idealization of Gaudí similar to that of Collins or Martinelli. In his writings on Gaudí's disposition, Nonell portrays him almost as a religious martyr for his architecture: "Not all architects are prepared to suffer these pains of the spirit, which moreover last all life long and culminate with the tragic fragmentation of the soul. One thing is inspiration, skill, and technique, another is sustained, constant sacrifice."<sup>21</sup> This combines with something near idolatry of Gaudí. Nonell finishes the article with an ambiguous statement that seeks to capture (or influence) public opinion of Gaudí: "Bittersweet fruit satiates the present generation which is increasingly seeing in Gaudí the incarnation of the spirit of genuine architecture."<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> George R. Collins and Juan Bassegoda Nonell, *The Designs and Drawings of Antoni Gaudí*, Box FF. 30.1-30.2, George R. Collins (1917-1993) Archive of Catalan Art and Architecture, 1864-1992, Ryerson and Burnham Archives, Ryerson and Burnham Libraries, The Art Institute of Chicago.

<sup>21</sup> Nonell, "Digressions," 11.

<sup>22</sup> Nonell, "Digressions," 14.

This consideration of Gaudí as an architect-saint does not just exist in historical interpretations. There is a current, ongoing movement in Spain for his beatification. The Associacio Pro-Beatificacio Antoni Gaudí developed in 1992 to promote the beatification and canonization of Gaudí. The endeavor has been so serious that a biography of Gaudí was published by the association, which of course emphasizes the most pious and religious aspects of Gaudí's life. It includes quotations from the works of those who knew him, like Martinelli, and thoughts from present-day devotees, such as: "the immortal work of this genius will be represented throughout history."<sup>23</sup> While this work intends to represent Gaudí in a specific way, it clearly considers itself as part of the arc of a broader interpretation of a historical figure, revealing the heavy emphasis on Gaudí's religiosity in historical literature.

These religious interpretations of Gaudí may be part of a backlash to his sites as admission-charging tourist attractions perceived as architecturally interesting, but not fulfilling their original purpose. There are many who still look beyond the bizarre aesthetic of Gaudí's architecture to attempt to discern his religious fervor. The construction of the Sagrada Familia has, in fact, received criticism even from some officials in the Catholic Church. In 2005, the office of the Archbishop of Barcelona complained that the excess of the Cathedral and the many donations it accepts do not emphasize the humility of Christ, and that some of the money donated that should be used to assist the poor. However, Father Serra, a

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<sup>23</sup> Juan Manuel Gonzalez Cremona, *Toward the Beatification of Antoni Gaudí Since 1992*, (Barcelona: Associacio pro-beatificacio d Antoni Gaudí, 2012), 69.

representative of the bishopric, said that the Archbishop also saw the Sagrada Familia as a useful conversion tool, saying it was a symbol of Catalonia “at a time when religious symbols are difficult to accept.”<sup>24</sup>

This emphasis on religious symbolism is amplified over other potential meanings behind Gaudí’s architecture because the Catholic Church is one of the few inspirations behind his artistic vision that is still well-known. Catalan nationalism is, of course, still present in Spain, and relevant architectural forms, such as the Gothic, still exist. However, these may not be as widespread outside of Western Europe, and the tourists who visit and interpret these sites are from all over the world.

Some of these considerations are present in the work of Judith Rohrer, another historian who highlights the architectural significance of Gaudí’s works. She does not just examine structural elements but devotes considerable time to analyzing architectural and cultural movements within Spain during the time he was alive, such as *Modernisme* and the *Renaixença*. In a 1965 work about the etymological origins of the word *modernismo*, she pits the two against one another, arguing that the modernistas were those who broke away from specific regional influences, and that architecture was not initially considered as a form of art that could fit into this category, because it was excluded from modernist art publications.<sup>25</sup> She does argue that

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<sup>24</sup> Elizabeth Bryant, “Gaudí Masterpiece Sparks Controversy,” *Defense News, UPI*, November 17, 2005, <https://www.upi.com/Gaudi-masterpiece-sparks-controversy/75451132238696/>.

<sup>25</sup> Judith Rohrer, *Modernismo and Architecture: Some Etymological and Ideological Considerations*, (Department of Art: Hunter College of the City University of New York, 1965), 2-3.

Modernism and the Renaixença shared a “Common hatred for enforced uniformity in artistic matters,” and contends that Gaudí made important contributions to the Renaixença.<sup>26</sup>

Robert Hughes, a twentieth century visitor to Barcelona who wrote on the city’s architectural history, takes a similar perspective but argues that Gaudí is entirely removed from the movement of Modernisme that he is so commonly associated with, saying “In certain respects Gaudí was not a *modernista* architect at all. His religious obsessions, for instance, separate him from the generally secular character of *Modernisme*. Gaudí did not believe in Modernity. He wanted to find radically new ways of being radically old.”<sup>27</sup> This position clearly diverges from those held by Collins or Martinelli. Rather than labeling Gaudí as a figure beyond tradition or history, he considers him as an architect stuck in the past.

Juan José Lahuerta, Chief Curator at the National Museum of Art of Catalonia in Barcelona and Professor of Art History at the Barcelona School of Architecture, is one of the more recent historians who has published research on Gaudí. Lahuerta addresses this duality of avant garde and tradition in a different way. He claims that the historical elements of Gaudí’s architecture are taken out of context and “are obliged to represent a tradition that has nothing to do with the custom out of which they had evolved, on which they had been established,” and that Gaudí had created “a new history” for them.<sup>28</sup> Lahuerta acknowledges the political influences and implications of Gaudí’s work, examining his affiliations to nationalist and conservative organizations and families. Lahuerta believes that Gaudí was “not unaware” of the political

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<sup>26</sup>Rohrer, *Modernismo*, 5.

<sup>27</sup> Robert Hughes, *Barcelona*, (Penguin Random House, 1993), quoted in Jeremy Roe, *Antoni Gaudí*, (Parkstone International, 2012), 40.

<sup>28</sup> Juan José Lahuerta, *Gaudí, 1852-1926: Architecture, Ideology, and Politics*, (London: Phaidon Press, 2003), 242.

implications of these associations but ultimately concludes that “Gaudí essentially arrived at that interest and that commitment by the path of religion of a Church that, as we have seen, established as the principal strategy in its program for the Christian reconquest of society the original identification between its own restoration and that of the Catalan nation.”<sup>29</sup>

While Gaudí’s religious fervor and desire to honor God’s natural creation are often cited as his primary architectural influences, he had other, more secular motivations in his design of buildings, regardless of their function. One possible contributor to Gaudí’s artistic vision could be the cultural currents that were on the rise during his youth.

Gaudí is known for his piety and humility, but Cèsar Martinelli, the biographer who had the unique position of working under Gaudí, suggests that his religiosity was not always as intense as it became in later years. Martinelli notes the antiauthoritarian sentiment that pervaded Spanish culture under King Fernando VII, who reigned throughout the early part of the nineteenth century until 1833, and continued after his daughter, Isabella II (r. 1833-1868), took the throne. The monarchy was so unpopular and so intimately connected with powerful clerics that Isabella was eventually deposed, and a wave of anticlericalism swept over much of the Spanish population.<sup>30</sup>

Martinelli claims that these events, which occurred when Gaudí was only a young man, severely weakened his Catholic faith.<sup>31</sup> He strongly emphasizes the return of Gaudí’s faith, however, and is adamant that the architect “never felt disconnected from religion.” In his

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<sup>29</sup> Lahuerta, *Gaudí*, 302.

<sup>30</sup> Martinelli, 35.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

opinion, the religious sentiment that was instilled in Antoni Gaudí as a child lay dormant, perhaps, but was never completely eradicated.<sup>32</sup> If this anticlerical sentiment did leave him, the anti-authoritarian feeling stayed with Gaudí later in his life, when he made anti-dictatorial statements such as “Opposition is indispensable in politics.”<sup>33</sup>

Prior to the decline of the monarchy and the growth of anticlericalism, to combat her unpopularity, Isabella II unwittingly accommodated the interests, tastes, and ambitions of the middle class in Barcelona by authorizing the destruction of the old city wall. This allowed the city to expand and paved the way for the creation of *l'Eixample*, an experiment in urban planning that would become the home of most Barcelonan modernist architecture, including many of Gaudí's designs.<sup>34</sup>

*L'Eixample* became the expansive western portion of Barcelona, composed of wide streets that separated octagonal blocks, the corners of which were cut off to allow carriages to navigate easily. It was forward-thinking in its hygienic and spacious design and created in a way that could have benefitted all classes. However, the streets in the gridded layout of this extension were named after Catalan medieval institutions, territories, and heroes. This was done to placate the wealthy elites who were annoyed by the streamlined, unembellished, and un-Catalonian nature of the new project.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 36.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ross, Anna, 2018, “Down with the Walls! The Politics of Place in Spanish and German Urban Extension Planning, 1848-1914,” *Journal of Modern History* 90 (2), 2018: 302.

<sup>35</sup> Josep-Maria Garcia-Fuentes, “A Nation of Monasteries: The Legacy of Víctor Balaguer in the Spanish Conception of National Monuments,” *Future Anterior: Journal of Historic Preservation, History, Theory, and Criticism*, 10 (1), 2013: 43.

Ildefons Cerdà, *l'Eixample*'s creator, broke up his grid of octagonal blocks with the occasional green space or park. Like Gaudí, he let nature influence his designs. Gaudí played a role in the development of one of these green spaces, the Parc d'la Ciutadella, which was previously the site of a Spanish citadel that served as a central component of the city wall, delaying the expansion and industrialization of Barcelona.<sup>36</sup> The destruction of this citadel to make way for the park, according to historian Benjamin Fraser, outlines the "historically fraught relations of the Catalan capital with the imperial Spanish state and the later assertion of Catalan identity."<sup>37</sup>

The region of Spain known as Catalonia, originally its own kingdom in the middle ages, was brought under the same ruler as the kingdom of Aragon with the marriage of Ferdinand and Isabella in 1469.<sup>38</sup> A desire to be separate from the rest of Spain can be traced to a Catalan revolt in 1640. The rebellion was a reaction to perceived repression from the Spanish government, and a reluctance to fully assimilate linguistically and culturally. Originally started by peasants, by Gaudí's lifetime in the nineteenth century, the movement had gained the support of higher classes, notably the Catalan bourgeoisie.<sup>39</sup> While few statistics exist on the supporters

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<sup>36</sup> Benjamin Fraser, "The Public Animal in Barcelona: Urban Form, the Natural World and Socio-spatial Transgression in the Comic 'Un cocodril a l'Eixample' (1987) by Pere Joan and Emilio Manzano," *Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies*, 19:1, 2018: 100.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Francisco Javier Higuero and Albert Balcells, "Catalan Nationalism. Past and Present," *Hispania* 81, no. 1 (1998): xiii.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 23.

of the nationalist movement throughout history, around 24 percent of the current population of Catalonia wishes to be independent.<sup>40</sup>

These tense relations with the Spanish government are further outlined in some of Gaudí's designs for the Parc d'la Ciutadella. He assisted with the landscaping, benches, aquarium, and fountain (see figure 1). The gate outside the park, with its wrought-iron coat of arms and knight's armor evoking a time when Catalonia had its own king, was entirely of his design (see figure 2).<sup>41</sup> This suggests that the anti-authoritarianism that guided Gaudí through his anticlerical phase, and stayed with him throughout his life, was nothing more than a manifestation of Catalan nationalism and contempt for the modern Spanish ruler outside his locality.

The equalizing intention of Cerdà's *l'Eixample* and the Parc d'la Ciutadella, to provide a cleaner, uncluttered city for the previously confined masses, allowed for the expression of class development. Spaces like the Parc d'la Ciutadella were planned almost exclusively by the middle and upper classes, who imposed rules upon those poorer visitors who might not know how to behave themselves correctly in such a place.<sup>42</sup>

In 1888, the park was the site of Barcelona's International Exhibition, which, according to Lahuerta, displayed the unique, cosmopolitan, character of the developing middle class, and

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<sup>40</sup> Sonya Dowsett, "Barely a quarter of Catalans want to pursue split from Spain: poll," *Reuters*, November 27, 2017, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-spain-politics-catalonia/barely-a-quarter-of-catalans-want-to-pursue-split-from-spain-poll-idUSKBN1DR0XI>.

<sup>41</sup> George Roseburgh Collins and Joan Bassegoda Nonell, "Chapter draft, 'V. Chronology of the Life and Works of Antonio Gaudí.' Typescript," c. 1980-1982, Box 30, Folder 9.

<sup>42</sup> Fraser, "The Public Animal," 101-102.



the progress that Barcelonans had achieved as a result of the Industrial Revolution.<sup>43</sup> It was one of a series of European exhibitions inspired by the Crystal Palace in London in 1851, with massive and varied displays that drew enormous crowds. Some scholars have argued that the purpose of these exhibitions was to placate the populace and quell any possible rebellion by the impoverished in an industrial era.<sup>44</sup> A number of more affluent Catalonians attended as well. It was at the Paris Exhibition of 1878 that one of Gaudí's display cases attracted the attention of his most important patron, industrialist Eusebi Güell. Some of Gaudí's earliest work was featured at the 1888 exhibition in Barcelona, and was, from then on, noticed by a series of wealthy Catalan families such as the Calvets, Graners, and Milás, at least a few of which made their fortunes in some form of industry.<sup>45</sup>

Thus, Gaudí was exposed early in his architectural career to the lifestyle of the bourgeoisie, and as one of his first projects he designed a palatial summer home for the Vicens family strongly influenced by natural, Islamic, and Persian motifs (see figure 3). In later, more industrial designs, Juan Antonio Jiménez's research on the "beehive metaphor" shows Gaudí's use of hive-like structures in the planning of secular, worker-oriented structures like the Cooperativa obrera at Mataró. A sketch of a proposed logo for Mataró portrays the workers as honey bees, with all the cooperative behavior, productivity, and solidarity of bees in a hive (see figure 4).<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Juan José Lahuerta, *Antoni Gaudí: Ornament, Fire and Ashes*, (Barcelona: Tenov Books, 2016), 12-13.

<sup>44</sup> Interpreting Municipal Celebrations of Nation and Empire: The Barcelona Universal Exhibition of 1888 75

<sup>45</sup> *Antonio Gaudí*, George R. Collins Masters of World Architecture, (George Braziller, 1960), 30-32.

<sup>46</sup> Martinelli, *Gaudí: su vida*, 42.

Martinelli argues that Gaudí shared many of the concerns with the cooperative workers and “carefully researched the question of the workers’ demands and rights by studying the contemporary treatises and taking note of salaries and statistics.”<sup>47</sup> He apparently thought himself above his bourgeois patrons in his earliest years as an architect and considered himself both an intellectual and a worker. “He admired the select and refined worker whom he found in his friend Salvador Pagés, the manager of the Mataró cooperative, and the industrious aristocrat whom he had seen in Eusebio Güell, and he hoped for a fraternal integration of the two living side by side.”<sup>48</sup> Although Gaudí designed the cooperative during his supposedly anticlerical phase, he exhibited some degree of religiosity when he hesitated to involve himself too closely with the project because he objected to the director being an atheist.<sup>49</sup>

An alternative interpretation to the meaning behind his beehive design aligns more with the rise of the nationalist bourgeoisie. Beekeeping became a popular hobby among bourgeois members of the Catalan *renaixença* movement, who promoted Catalan history, culture and language in conjunction with the cause of nationalism. The incorporation of beehives, rather than evoking labor symbolism, could be making a conservative statement by emphasizing the particular interests of his wealthier patrons.<sup>50</sup>

In this context, the cooperative, productive, hive would be under the direct supervision of a wealthy industrialist. Indeed, one of the strongest connections Gaudí made at the cooperative was with the daughter of a wealthy businessman. Gaudí evidently was attracted to the woman,

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 46.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 48.

<sup>49</sup> Martinelli, 39.

<sup>50</sup> Juan Antonio Ramírez, *The Beehive Metaphor: from Gaudí to Le Corbusier*, (London: Reaktion Press, 2000), 57.

but upon learning of her engagement to another, he ceased attending the labor meetings there and focused his attentions on the Sagrada Família.<sup>51</sup>

The celebration of Catalan culture and nationalism of the *renaixença* was influenced in large part by Jacint Verdaguer, a priest and a close friend of Gaudí's.<sup>52</sup> Verdaguer argued for the connection between the land and the idea of Catalonia as a nation. He built a coalition in support of the movement composed of wealthy landowners and the bourgeois class.<sup>53</sup> The *renaixença* also emphasized natural features of Catalonia, such as its mountains and sea, in relation to the natural independence of this territories.<sup>54</sup>

Gaudí's own statements on his homeland decidedly identify him as a member of this movement. He believed that the light that shines on the Mediterranean region is superior to and purer than the light that shines other climates, stating, "Architecture is, then, Mediterranean ... because of the harmony of the light. And this light does not exist in the northern countries, which have a sad and horizontal light, nor in the hot climates, where it is vertical."<sup>55</sup>

This opinion, that "Orestes knows where he's going; Hamlet wanders lost," gives Gaudí a different perspective from many of his more liberal, modernist contemporaries, who openly embraced the influences of German and other European artists. He did, however, support the use

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<sup>51</sup> Martinelli, 58.

<sup>52</sup> Juan José Lahuerta, "Verdaguer, Gaudí i la producció simbòlica d'una burgesia catalana," (ed): Gaudí i el se temps, *Instituts d'Humanitats*, (Barcanova: Barcelona, 1990), 101-141.

<sup>53</sup> John Etherington, "Nationalism, nation and territory: Jacint Verdaguer and the Catalan Renaixença," *Ethnic & Racial Studies* 33, no. 10 (November 2010).

<sup>54</sup> Joan Nogue and Joan Vincente, "Landscape and National Identity in Catalonia," *Political Geography*, 23, (2004): 122.

<sup>55</sup> Ronald Alvarez, "A Survey of Statements by Antonio Gaudí, Unpublished in English," 1965, Series IV, Box 37, Folder 1, George R. Collins Archive of Catalan Art and Architecture, 1864-1992, The Art Institute of Chicago, 35.

of industrial parts in the construction of his buildings and incorporated many of the technological advancements that his patrons were making into his own architecture.<sup>56</sup> This was a typical practice of *Modernisme*, the Catalan branch of the larger modernist architectural movement. While modernism as a broader movement endorsed new styles and materials for buildings, *Modernisme* continued to draw on history, incorporating unique local cultural aspects and medieval Christian and Islamic legacies.<sup>57</sup> The modernistas in Catalonia expressed their confusion and dissatisfaction at the growing stratification and division of their society, often producing eclectic designs that sometimes critiqued existing institutions and the growing bourgeois culture by rejecting their artistic preferences, and other times highlighted a nationalist spirit with Catalan symbolism.<sup>58</sup>

This Mediterraneanism shines through in the sinuous curves and iridescent colors of Casa Batlló and Casa Milá, which stand like two naturally formed islands in *l'Eixample*'s sea of octagonal blocks (see figures 5 and 6). Gaudí's regional pride also manifests itself in the Parc Güell, originally intended as a paradisiacal community on a hill for the upper middle class. While it never blossomed into the utopian neighborhood that nationalist patron Eusebi Güell conceived, the parts that were completed by Gaudí evoke the natural caves in the hillside of Catalonia, and the Doric colonnade calls to mind the heritage of another great Mediterranean civilization, ancient Greece (see figure 7).

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<sup>56</sup>Lahuerta, *Ornament*, 37-38.

<sup>57</sup> Carlos Flores, *Gaudí, Jujol y el modernismo catalán*, (Madrid: Aguilar, 1982), 57.

<sup>58</sup> Ignasi Solà-Morales Rubió, *Antoni Gaudí*, (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1942), 9-11.

Gaudí may have been influenced by some of Güell's ideologies in his design of the park. Güell avidly searched for linguistic evidence of Catalonia's separation from Latin and Roman culture to support its distinctiveness from the rest of Spain. Above all other influences, he emphasized the similarity between the Catalan language with that of the Rhaetian people, Etruscans who were thought to have avoided the heavy influence of the Romans. Rather, many aspects of their culture were considered to be from the Greeks.<sup>59</sup>

Gaudí's alignment with this conservative attitude seems to separate him from the Spanish modernistas, who took a more liberal route and admired a more diverse range of foreign influences. This very Mediterraneanist manner of thought seems more in line with the beliefs of the Generation of '98, a group of artists and intellectuals disillusioned by the downfall of the once-great Spanish empire, and the loss of Spain's colonial holdings in the war with the United States in 1898. While this group was inclined toward the educational and social reform of Spain for the purpose of its modernization, its members also concerned themselves with tradition, nationalism and objective truth.<sup>60</sup> Like many Spaniards of his generation, Gaudí deeply regretted the forfeiture of foreign colonies, and felt that Spain and Latin America "should be one," he claimed, because of the special type of light that shone upon both of them. "Only we are in a condition to progress... Only we forge images."<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Lahuerta, *Gaudí*, 121-123.

<sup>60</sup> Dolores Romero López, "Hispanic Modernismo in the Context of European Symbolism — Towards a Comparative De/construction," *Orbis Litterarum*, n 52, 1997: 197.

<sup>61</sup> Alvarez, "A Survey of Statements," 34.

Spain lost the trust of its colonies in the Americas, according to Gaudí, because the capital was located at Madrid. Speaking highly of Phillip II, Gaudí nonetheless wished that the monarch “had taken the Court to Seville or Valencia — notice that I do not insist that it be Barcelona — the South American republics and the mother country would be closer to each other. All great acts of valor have been done by sea. The sea intervened in the most stupendous enterprises of humanity.”<sup>62</sup>

Gaudí’s insistence that Barcelona is not the only seaside with potential to be a capital may seem odd, but this way of thinking had origins in the nationalist landscape of his day. The idealized “City-Catalonia” was a utopian model that gained prominence toward the end of Gaudí’s life. Many considered Barcelona “just another district of City-Catalonia,” out of fear that a capital could project its own culture and natural landscape onto the rest of the country.<sup>63</sup>

Another sentiment to which Gaudí may have subscribed is the idea of monasteries as national monuments punctuating the Spanish countryside. This idea was circulated prior to Gaudí’s birth by Víctor Balaguer, who considered monuments crucial to the cohesiveness of a nation-state. He sought to reinvent abandoned Spanish monasteries as sites of pride and fascination for Catalan, Spanish, and even pan-Iberian nationalists in the mid-nineteenth century by associating them with the long-dead Catalano-Aragonese kingdom.<sup>64</sup>

Among the monasteries identified in this movement was Poblet, an abandoned Cistercian site which Martinelli claims inspired Gaudí to become an architect. One of his earliest projects,

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Nogue, Vincente, “Landscape and Catalan National Identity,” 125.

<sup>64</sup> Garcia Fuentes, “Monasteries,” 41-43.

along with two of his friends, was to design a theoretical renovation of the site. This happened, of course, during his anti-clerical phase, so his motivations were not religious. As a preface to their designs, he and his friends wrote: “Yes, Poblet must be restored; here nevermore must nest the ominous power of the black vultures which once devoured the mind of the Spanish people in order to eradicate the memory of their own evil deeds. In marked contrast with those days of old, it must now be newly elevated as the sublime temple of humanity, where Science and Art have their museums and academies, where the farmer finds his means.”<sup>65</sup>

This very anti-establishment perspective on the monastery at Poblet does not mean that Gaudí and his friends had no nationalist motivations for wishing to restore the site. While this interpretation of the monasteries as monuments was largely appropriated by Catholic nationalists in Catalonia, “Monasteries became the sites of social and cultural tensions between secular and Catholic nationalists, both of whom wanted to appropriate the symbolic capital that Balaguer had first granted them.”<sup>66</sup> Gaudí’s nationalist leanings were present here even before his close affiliations with the Catholic Church and the Catalan bourgeoisie.

However, despite these nationalist leanings, Gaudí was not conservative enough to satisfy the nationalist Catalanian organization, the *Lliga regionalista*, which grew in power during his lifetime. Eugeni D’Ors, leader of the *Lliga*, criticized the Parc Güell for the inclusion of any modernist elements and for not aligning itself perfectly in its design with the political platform of the *Lliga*.<sup>67</sup> D’Ors was also happy to see him leave to work on the restoration of the cathedral of

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<sup>65</sup> Martinelli, 38.

<sup>66</sup> Garcia-Fuentes, 49.

<sup>67</sup> Lahuerta, *Antoni Gaudí*, 245-249.

Mallorca, possibly because of disagreements with leaders in that region, which was also struggling to develop its own nationalist identity.<sup>68</sup>

Gaudí's willingness to take on the project at Mallorca may show his religious piety, or sympathy toward another culturally distinctive group in Spain. He ultimately left the project in 1914, however, after coming to some disagreements with its commissioners.<sup>69</sup> Perhaps speaking to his growing bourgeois sympathy, Gaudí claimed that, while private patrons treated him fairly and with respect, the state-run organization did not pay him on time.<sup>70</sup> Here, Gaudí seemed to prioritize his own financial needs over the completion of a building that was religiously and culturally significant.

Gaudí's faith did permeate his designs as well. Just as secular themes seeped into his religious designs, he sought to include religious symbols even in projects that were unrelated to the Church. For example, he initially conceived Casa Milá, although it was commissioned as a private residence, as an enormous pedestal for a sculpture of the Virgin and Child (see figure 8).<sup>71</sup> This would indicate that, in addition to his career trajectory influencing his religious development, his religion also informed his architectural designs.

Martinelli, although he seems to consider Gaudí's faith as very strong and entirely genuine, hints that there was some connection between his ideology and his patrons and suggests

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid., and Antoni Marimon Riutort, "Sobre el nacionalisme a Mallorca (1890-1936)," *Circles, Revista d'història cultural*, no. 11, 2008.

<sup>69</sup> Lahuerta, *Antoni Gaudí*, 248-250.

<sup>70</sup> Jeremy Roe, *Antoni Gaudí*, (Parkstone International, 2012), ProQuest Ebook Central, [http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/oxford/detail.action?docID=](http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/oxford/detail.action?docID=,), 134.

<sup>71</sup> Francisco Javier Asarta and Richard Lewis Rees, *La Pedrera: Gaudí and His Work*, (Barcelona: Fundació Caixa Catalunya, 1998), 20-21.



that, as Gaudí became more connected with the upper echelons of society, his Catholic faith deepened even more.<sup>72</sup> There are indications that Gaudí put the will of his patrons over his own religious or aesthetic design preferences. During the “Semana Trágica,” which involved violent conflict between workers and authorities in the city, the patron of the famous Casa Milá decided preemptively to protect his house by forgoing Gaudí’s planned religious imagery to avoid future destruction or even rioting by members of the working class, which would not have approved of it. Gaudí begrudgingly complied with this decision.<sup>73</sup>

This relationship between religion, Gaudí’s industrial patrons, and their workers was further manifested in his designs for the Colonia Güell, a worker colony meant to mitigate discontent by concentrating over a thousand families of industrial laborers in an environment removed from the city and the dangerous ideas that it bred. It was created in reaction to unfavorable popular opinion of Güell among labor groups, who viewed him as “one of the ‘big fish’ who was keeping the workers enslaved” and representing “scheming clerical-colonial interests.”<sup>74</sup> Civic, artistic, and religious activities were provided for the workers in addition to healthcare, so that they did not have to venture beyond the limits of the colony for anything and could not come into contact as easily with radical philosophies.<sup>75</sup>

Gaudí was tasked with designing the church at Colonia Güell, although only the crypt was ever built. He integrated the church with the surrounding colony and landscape, using not only stones indigenous to the area but also recycled industrial parts from the factory in its

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<sup>72</sup> Martinelli, 37.

<sup>73</sup> Martinelli, 85.

<sup>74</sup> Smith, *Red Barcelona*, 5-6.

<sup>75</sup> Lahuerta, *Gaudí*, 190-193.

construction.<sup>76</sup> In the original design, the towers of the church pile up like parabolic hives, replicating the bee-related imagery at the Mataró Cooperative (see figure 9). Here, this motif could again symbolize the solidarity or efficiency of workers, except that it is used in a religious context. In Gaudí's other designs in which hives appear, the Sagrada Família and the Colegio Teresiano, a convent, the "beehive metaphor" is meant to emphasize religious, even monastic values such as chastity and communal harmony rather than the organization or camaraderie of workers.<sup>77</sup> The use of this design element in religious structure may call Gaudí's true enthusiasm for the cause of the workers at Mataró into question.

The symbol of the beehive as a synthesis of the ideals of labor and religion could draw its inspiration from a popular nineteenth-century Catholic ideology. In 1866, Josep Maria Bocabella founded the *Asociación espiritual de devotos de San José*, which fostered an adoration of St. Joseph as a father and worker; a saint whom the everyday man could aspire to emulate.<sup>78</sup> This rising prominence of St. Joseph in European culture was another trend whose time of peak popularity coincided with Gaudí's youth. In addition to having a religious significance, this rise in veneration for a paternal figure might also carry political implications. Some of Gaudí's bourgeois friends and patrons, including the patron of the worker colony, Eusebi Güell, were part of a social movement of paternalist employers and founded Catholic workers' associations for their employees.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Martinelli, 131-132.

<sup>77</sup> Ramírez, *The Beehive Metaphor*, 55.

<sup>78</sup> Lahuerta, *Gaudí*, 256-58.

<sup>79</sup> Smith, *Red Barcelona*, 5.

This devotion to Jesus's foster father, the worker-saint, could be tied to paternalism or Social Catholicism, alternatives to class struggle that manifested themselves extensively in some of Gaudí's designs. On the coat of arms he created for the Güell family, for example, Martinelli tells us that "the architect placed an owl on a quarter-moon as a symbol of prudence and wisdom through changing temporal conditions, coupled with the phrase 'today a nobleman' (*avui senyor*). On the other half the concept was completed with the words 'yesterday a shepherd' (*ahir pastor*) and a dove with a gear wheel alluding to Güell's industrial colony, Santa Coloma,"<sup>80</sup> applying religious symbols to a secular figure.

The decorative mosaics on the portico of the Colonia Güell crypt include similar imagery of a dove (this time representing the Holy Spirit) as well as representations of the seven virtues, faith, hope, charity, fortitude, justice, temperance, and prudence (see figure 10). Although dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the crypt emphasized St. Joseph conspicuously; in a mosaic representing the holy family, his carpenter's saw is arguably the most prominent image (see figure 11).

Whether or not Gaudí internalized the concept of the worker-saint, Josep Bocabella, who promoted the cult of St. Joseph, was among the first who set the plan for Sagrada Família in motion. It was he who, after unsuccessfully trying other architects, approached Gaudí for the project.<sup>81</sup> In the case of the Sagrada Família, then, Gaudí was influenced by the popular

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<sup>80</sup> Martinelli, 52.

<sup>81</sup> Lahuerta, *Gaudí*, 256-58.

religious movements of his youth, or the ideologies of the directors of his architectural projects, such as Bocabella, shaped his artistic choices. Many Barcelonan workers viewed this renewed devotion to St. Joseph as an excuse to maintain clerical dominance, and many workers' groups were displeased.<sup>82</sup> Gaudí's association with this movement, therefore, allied him more closely with the conservative values of the day than with the plight of the working class.

In addition to the school of *Modernisme*, many of Gaudí's works gestured back to a more religious or hierarchical time in Spanish history, the medieval era. Several of his works, particularly the Sagrada Familia, are considered representative of the neo-Gothic style (see figure 12). He incorporated Gothic design elements in his aforementioned plans for the restoration of Poblet.<sup>83</sup> Gaudí was familiar enough with the Gothic style of architecture, which was once common to many churches throughout Spain, to undertake the restoration of several Gothic structures later in his career.<sup>84</sup> In his original designs, for religious structures in particular, he added his own flair to the solemnity and symbolism of Gothic architecture.

Gothic architecture began to develop in Europe during the high middle ages. It was known for being elaborate, rich in symbolism and architectural detail, and reflecting religious ideologies that were on the rise during the height of its popularity. Some of these included mysticism, the idea that a person should humble himself to glorify God, and nominalism, which emphasizes the infinite physical universe of which human beings are a part.<sup>85</sup> These religious

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<sup>82</sup>Smith, 6.

<sup>83</sup> Flores, *Gaudí, Jujol*, 141.

<sup>84</sup> Roe, *Antoni Gaudí*, 125.

<sup>85</sup> Erwin Panofsky, *Gothic Architecture and Scholasticism: An Inquiry into the Analogy of the Arts, Philosophy, and Religion in the Middle Ages*, (Plume, 1974), 15.

currents could be easily be applied to the designs of many Gothic and neo-Gothic churches. For example, mysticism was commonly emphasized in naturalistic depictions of saints, particularly on the nativity façade of the Sagrada Familia, which were meant to induce empathy in the viewers, thereby bringing them closer to the holy subject of the art.<sup>86</sup>

These ideologies, while diverse, are also present in parts of Gaudí's life and career, such as the interior of the Sagrada Familia, which echoes a forest and other natural aspects of God's creation (see figure 13). The vastness of such a grand interior could have the same effect of humbling the visitor, while at the same time making them aware of their greater context. The ascetic régime Gaudí took on in his later years displayed this humble ideal in his personal life.<sup>87</sup>

Gaudí's neogothic elements did not copy Gothic architecture exactly but built on these established characteristics with more layers of symbolism. For example, in religious works such as the Sagrada Familia and Colonia Güell, and secular ones like the Torre Bellesguard and Palau Güell, he mimicked the pointed, Gothic arches with his own, naturalistic, parabolic ones.<sup>88</sup> This naturalization of the Gothic style serves more than just an aesthetic purpose. Gaudí's own explanation of his stylistic choices was that "God has never made a sterile law, that is to say that all His laws have an application; the observation of these laws and the manner in which they are applied is the physical manifestation of the Divinity."<sup>89</sup> He was willing to compromise on this principle in the case of the Colonia Güell and the Torre Bellesguard, as we shall see.

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<sup>86</sup>Ibid., 19.

<sup>87</sup> Martinelli, 98.

<sup>88</sup> Jing Jing Liu and Yue Hu, "Anatomy of Gaudí's Curve Architectural Language," *Journal of Arts and Humanities* 06, no. 7 (2017).

<sup>89</sup>Ramírez, 36.

Gaudí thought that the division between arch and pillar looked unnatural, for example, and also disapproved of “crutches” in Gothic architecture and shunned quintessentially Gothic support systems such as flying buttresses.<sup>90</sup> The lack of visible supports in Gaudí’s architecture, could be interpreted as a representation of the strong bourgeois class, which was able to rise up on its own during the Industrial Revolution, without the advantages or established support systems that the Spanish nobility traditionally possessed. This crypt at Colonia Güell meanwhile, with all its paternalist symbolism, has a number of slanting pillars supporting the outer portico (see figure 14). While some of these were structurally necessary, Martinelli indicates that the rectangular cross sections were decorative and provided no support.<sup>91</sup> These superfluous, buttress-like appendages evoke a Gothic past rather than an industrial future.

This motif could be tied to his patron’s pretensions to the nobility. Lahuerta argues that Güell’s “patriarchal long beard” and refusal to use a motorcar instead of a horse and carriage were an attempt to imitate the British aristocracy of the nineteenth century, methods used by the European bourgeois to mimic the “legitimacy” of tradition.<sup>92</sup> Güell, who was named a count in 1910 and extensively patronized the arts in Barcelona, had several things in common with aristocrats from the middle ages as well. One of Gaudí’s contemporaries, Isidre Puig-Boada, quotes him as saying “Don Eusebi Güell is a great gentleman, of princely spirit, like the Medicis of Florence and the Dorias of Genoa,” and emphasizing a strain of noble blood in Güell’s mother.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 39-40.

<sup>91</sup> Martinelli, 340.

<sup>92</sup> Lahuerta, *Gaudí*, 73.

<sup>93</sup> Isidre Puig-Boada, *El Pensament de Gaudí*, (Barcelona: 1981), 167.

The Palau Güell, a secular structure designed by Gaudí, is a re-working of Gothic style to suit the aristocratic aims of the wealthy, industrial, Güell family. The dark, stone corridors and stained glass in Catalan reds and yellows give the space a truly palatial feel (see figure 15). Michael Eaude and Alastair Boyd label this the style of “industrial feudalism” and note that “Its severity...is the result of its design as a rich man’s palace in the medieval sense: it was built with defensive purposes against the local population, the poor who surround it.”<sup>94</sup> The wrought iron gates were designed specifically so that the Güells could see out but no one on the city streets could see inside.

Gaudí also sacrificed naturalism for the neo-Gothic at Torre Bellesguard, built on the site of the medieval fortress of Martin the Humane, last King of the Catalan Dynasty in the House of Barcelona. <sup>95</sup> In order to maintain a sense of authenticity, the structure incorporated the straight lines and corners Gaudí saw as so unnatural (see figure 16). Here, the connection to the medieval past is even more tangible, with a mosaic of a ship with white sails bearing the bad news of the death of Martin the Humane’s male heir in 1410, although this may also denote nationalist nostalgia for a more powerful and autonomous Barcelona (see figure 17).<sup>96</sup> Artificial arrow slits crown the top of the structure, the roof of which looks like the face and scaly back of a crouching dragon, a symbol of Catalonia (see figures 18 and 19).

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<sup>94</sup> Eaude, *Catalonia: A Cultural History*, 7.

<sup>95</sup> Martinelli, 177.

<sup>96</sup> Josep M. Palau i Baduell, “Sixth centennial of the death of King Martin the Humane: The International Conference *Martin the Humane, the Last King in the Barcelona Dynasty (1396-1410): The Interregnum and the Compromise of Caspe*,” *Catalan Historical Review*, 4:(2011).

The dragon, which appears prominently other Gaudí designs like the Finca Güell, Parc Güell, and Casa Vicens, traditionally appeared on the crest of Jaume I, a thirteenth-century king who expanded Catalonia by acquiring more Mediterranean territory (see figures 20, 21, 22). In reality, the dragon is a misinterpretation of the original symbol of a bat, which also features in Gaudí's designs for the Palau Güell and Torre Bellesguard (see figures 23 and 24).<sup>97</sup>

Martinelli distinguishes the Torre Bellesguard as the beginning of a new era for Gaudí in which he “no longer concerned himself with historic styles” and tried to “evade those historical motifs which would tie it to tradition and to avoid all established patterns of form.”<sup>98</sup> However, about his own masterpiece, the Sagrada Familia, which fell under this phase of his development, Gaudí said, “Many say that I am a revolutionary, but they are mistaken; I am not revolutionary. I am a traditionalist, who, being charged with the construction of a basilica, went to find out how basilicas were built in the time when they were common.”<sup>99</sup>

Eaude states that the Sagrada Familia was intended as an atonement of the sins of the revolutionary working class in Barcelona, without any consideration or acknowledgement of the sins of the upper classes.<sup>100</sup> Another view on the initial purpose of the Sagrada Familia was for the expiation of the sins of the industrial class and the materialism that stemmed from it, rather than from the revolutionary workers. Gaudí's nickname for the church was “Cathedral for the Poor,” because it was located in a neighborhood where underprivileged industrial workers

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<sup>97</sup> Lahuerta, *Gaudí*, 99.

<sup>98</sup> Martinelli, 310.

<sup>99</sup> Alvarez, “A Survey of Statements.”

<sup>100</sup> Eaude, et al., 9.



lived.<sup>101</sup> This more proletarian perspective of cathedral's purpose distances Gaudí from the social stances of some of his wealthy patrons, suggesting that a few of the radical ideas of his youth never left him, or perhaps that these ideas melded into Gaudí's Catholic beliefs, namely that we are meant to serve the poor.

The façade of the cathedral drips with layers of religious symbolism; some of it, like the neo-Gothic statuary of the Holy Family, is especially obvious (see figure 25). Other aspects, such as the naturalistic crevices that resemble grottoes, the numerology, or the New Testament may be more cryptic but are still meant to inspire thoughts of the scriptures and the life of Christ (see figure 26).<sup>102</sup> Even with all of the biblical imagery, Gaudí's masterpiece may contain references to the patrons of the work (in this case clergy) as well, with the finial, or ornament adorning several of his towers representing the mitre, staff, and ring of a bishop (see figure 27). This design suggests the reverence that Gaudí had for Church officials in later years, or for specific patrons and friends like the bishops of Mallorca or Astorga with whom he was connected throughout his life.<sup>103</sup>

It appears that Gaudí intended all churchgoers to feel humbled and beholden to the redemptive sacrifice of Jesus. Describing an entrance to the nativity façade, Gaudí said "Some may find this doorway too extravagant, but I want it to inspire fear; and, in order to obtain that effect, I will not be niggardly with chiaroscuro, the receding and advancing motifs, anything that

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<sup>101</sup> Mark Burry, *Expiatory Church of the Sagrada Família: Antoni Gaudí, Architecture in Detail*, (London: Phaidon, 1993), 6.

<sup>102</sup> Eade, *Catalonia*, 7-8.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., and Juan Bassegoda Nonell and Gustavo Garcia Gabarro, *La Catedral de Antoni Gaudí: estudio analítico de su obra*, (Edicions UPC, 1998), 31.

results in a gloomy effect. What is more, I am willing to sacrifice the very construction — to break the arches, to cut the columns, in order to represent the cruelty of sacrifice.”<sup>104</sup>

The Sagrada Familia as an accessible or welcoming “Cathedral of the Poor” seems excluded by this declaration, but whether the structure was intended as a gloomy or harsh reminder of salvation for some visitors or for all is less clear. Gaudí left us with a mixture of seemingly contradictory influences in his architecture. At various points throughout his life, he was a man who loved nature and appreciated industry, a nationalist who believed in the limitlessness of God’s creation, a rebellious anti-cleric and a fervent Catholic. Underpinning all these motivations for his artistic vision, however, is a conservatism and a willingness to affiliate himself with a conservative bourgeoisie.

While Pope Benedict XVI dedicated the Sagrada Familia, he stated that, since Gaudí designed the cathedral, “Life has changed greatly, and with it enormous progress has been made in the technical, social and cultural spheres. We cannot simply remain content with these advances. Alongside them, there also need to be moral advances.”<sup>105</sup> Much has changed since Gaudí designed the Sagrada Familia and other religious and secular structures, and perhaps some of the contexts of Gaudí’s inspirations were lost as the movements they represented dwindled or transformed.

His architecture seems to represent contradictory beliefs because the movements that inspired him did contradict one another. To only examine the religious influences behind his

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<sup>104</sup> Ronald Alvarez, “A Survey of Statements by Antonio Gaudí, Unpublished in English,” 1965, Series IV, Box 37, Folder 1, George R. Collins Archive of Catalan Art and Architecture, 1864-1992, The Art Institute of Chicago.

<sup>105</sup> “Dedication of the Church of the Holy Family,” *Pope Benedict XVI Visits Spain*, Catholic News Agency.

work, without acknowledging the desire to return to a powerful Spanish empire and to reject Spanish influence in Catalonia, to sympathize with the worker and to build up the industrial bourgeoisie, is to lose an understanding of other aspects of Spanish society prevalent during Gaudí's lifetime. Though he was, on the whole, conservative, the fact that these mixed ideologies were present in the life and work of Antoni Gaudí demonstrates that his exposure to political theories was as significant as religious ones.

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## Appendix

Figure 1.



Figure 2.

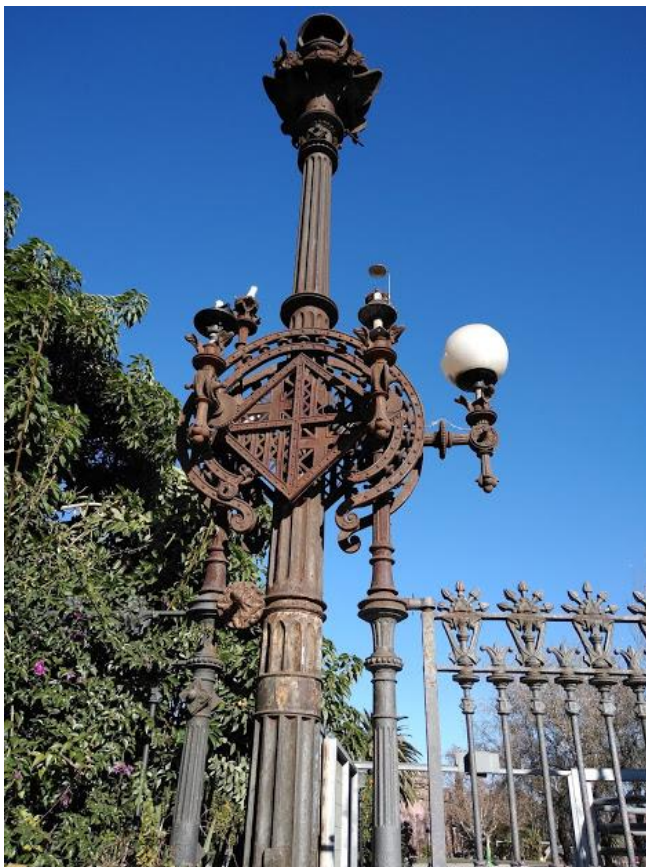


Figure 3.

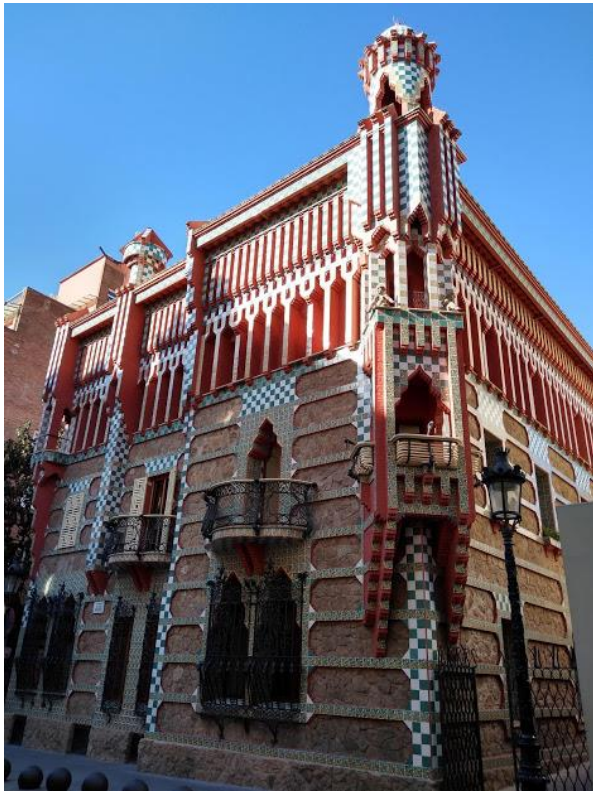


Figure 4.





Figure 5.



Figure 6.



Figure 7.



Figure 8.





Figure 9.



Figure 10.



Figure 11.



Figure 12.





Figure 13.



Figure 14.



Figure 15.

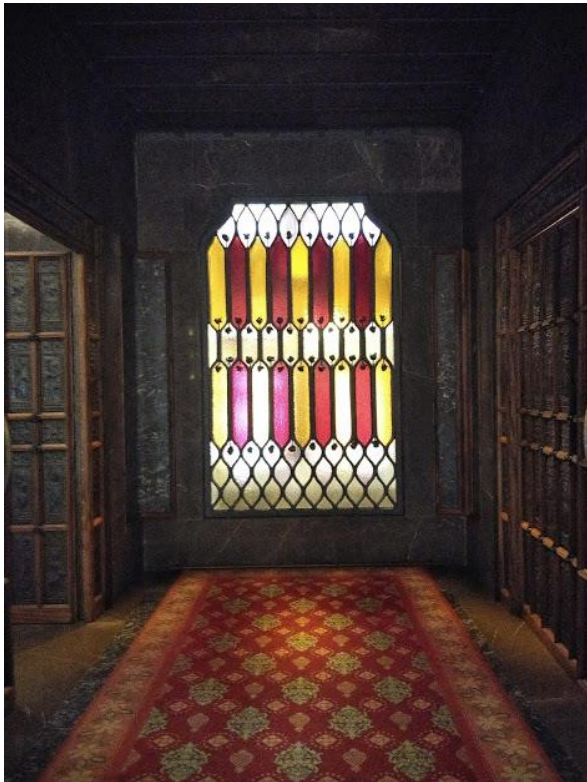


Figure 16.





Figure 17.



Figure 18.

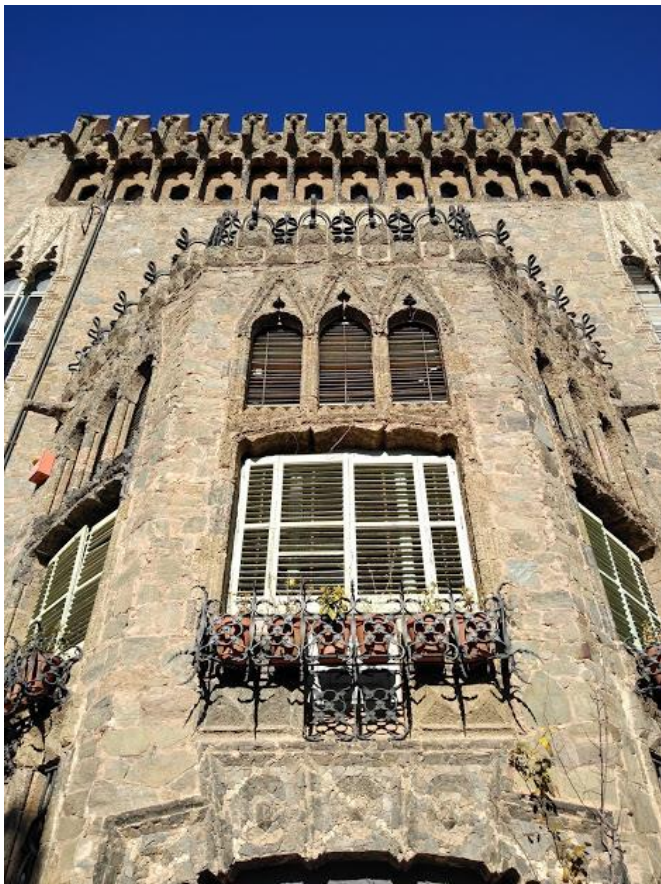


Figure 19.



Figure 20.





Figure 21.



Figure 22.



Figure 23.



Figure 24.





Figure 25.



Figure 26.



Figure 27.

