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[*Francesc Pujols, Philosopher*]
Afers, Catarroja, 2014, 82 pp.

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Knowing how best to treat a person is not something that can be made into a science or technique, unless it is a science or technique that teaches a kind of treatment that is not a treatment in the strict sense, but rather an interest. There cannot be a science or technique of this kind, just as there can be none of tact: their highest expression rises to the form of an art. We do not know how to deal with some people, just as others prove hard to deal with. Certainly, these are not the same people for each of us, but it is worth noting that we sometimes regret not treating a person well enough or not ending our dealings with another soon enough. Life itself keeps presenting us with occasions, but it is up to us to grasp them when they come, even to seek them out. And there are those who can teach us how to treat people as they require, because we have had no luck with them in the past. This is precisely one of the merits of Joan Cuscó's book on Francesc Pujols, because Cuscó has treated the man with diligence. He has impressed this treatment upon us for some years now. In his *Francesc Pujols i Morgades, el filòsof heterodox* [*Francesc Pujols i Morgades, the Heterodox Philosopher*] (Barcelona, 2008), Cuscó gave us an approach to Pujols that was at once about Pujols and from Pujols, in a successful attempt to engage in dialogue with our culture framed in its European context. The book reviewed many subjects raised by a figure of multiple faces and facets, one we had not known how best to treat, largely because of the interruptions in our cultural tradition. In *Francesc Pujols i la filosofia* [*Francesc Pujols and Philosophy*] (Barcelona, 2012), Cuscó included not only an introductory overview, but also papers and lectures that Pujols himself had dedicated explicitly to philosophy. Now Cuscó's new book stakes a claim for the man's philosophy. After an introduction of his numerous facets and a defence of his philosophy, the added merit of Cuscó's book *Francesc Pujols, filòsof* [*Francesc Pujols, Philosopher*], his third on the subject to be published by Afers, is that it shows us a sound way to treat Pujols.

Before exploring the content in greater detail, though, the distinctive imprint of Vilafranca del Penedès should be noted in the renewed spotlight on

Pujols. We have only to follow the trail of recent editions of his works, many of which have been rescued from neglect and even virtual disappearance. As a spur to the reader looking for a way to treat Pujols, let me mention the reissue of *Vilafranca del Penedès en la Catalunya moderna [Vilafranca del Penedès in Modern Catalonia]* (l’Odissea, Vilafranca del Penedès, 2003), *El nuevo Pascual o la prostitución [The New Pascal or Prostitution]* (Andana, Vilafranca del Penedès, 2005), *Llibre de Job [Book of Job]* (Andana, Vilafranca del Penedès, 2007) and the seminal *Concepte General de la Ciència Catalana [General Concept of Catalan Science]* (Andana, Vilafranca del Penedès, 2014). The city is handsomely repaying its debt to Pujols’s local ancestry.

What is clear from Cuscó’s latest book is that Francesc Pujols is deserving of the name “philosopher”. And anybody who is unduly exercised by this claim might do well to revisit what he understands by philosopher. The original appearances of the word “philosopher” refer to men who stumbled into holes in the ground while gazing at the stars or who hung in baskets dangling in the air or who were pale and white from so much reading and discussion. Pujols is not this kind of philosopher, but he might be one of the sort who had a golden thigh, making everything they wore or carried, house included, according to their own peculiar tastes, or one of those who mocked all preceding philosophers with good humour, which is the sense of humour possessed by a person who laughs at himself too. In this way, Pujols joins together just as much or more of Aristophanes as he does of Plato and there is something, too, of Apuleius and Lucian.

Joan Cuscó presents two texts that are extremely thorough and conscientiously written to be read—not all texts are written chiefly to be read. The first offers a treatment of Pujols’s *Concepte general de la ciència catalana*. It gauges the work’s value and sets out a way to read this singular book, that is, how to treat it. So how then should one read Pujols? Pujols himself shows how: in this respect, the helpful hand of a person like Joan Cuscó who knows the man is a guarantee against misfiring. Cuscó, above all, knows where to situate the sense of humour needed to approach Pujols. In the second text, which examines Ramon Llull and the Catalan philosophical tradition, the author inserts Pujols within a tradition, while at the same time showing how to treat the tradition—in any manner at all, except with disdain or ignorance. Pujols, who mocked most Catalan philosophers, embodies a defence of the work of thought grounded in its own circumstance and its own antecedents.

A last, but not least, point to raise. Joan Cuscó writes at a key spot in his text: “knowing how philosophy is rooted in our culture, and in the authors who feel closest to us, is a cardinal tool for education and for democracy; to understand and be understood. To bring us nearer the major problems posed by philosophy by rediscovering the riches of the environment we inhabit (to live better)”. Certainly, these words could frame a programme for a university town.