

homage to catalunya

November 9, 1714. Stabbed in the back by English allies playing a wider game, Catalonia has no choice but surrender to Bourbon Philip V.

Eight years earlier Scotland had been similarly brought to heel by Act of Union, though the next thirty years would see two major rebellions. But for all the parallels, Catalonia's case is the stronger. Spain's attacks on Catalan culture and language go hand in hand with asymmetric fiscal arrangements and, adding insult to injury, national polls showing that Spain despises (and envies) Catalonia.

November 9, 2014. Three hundred years after the shotgun wedding, two million Catalans turn out, in a referendum Madrid dubs unlawful and irrelevant, to express their desire to wave Spain goodbye.





I'd timed my arrival to coincide with the day of defiance. Alas, within minutes of landing, camera gear worth £3-4k was snatched while I studied a signboard at Placa de la Universitat. (I'd rolled up my best lenses and flash guns in T-shirts packed into a small travel suitcase so the thief, back at his evil lair, must have come thought birthdays all at his once.)

I'm insured for this sort of thing.

For now though, all I had was
the camera on my Galaxy S3.





Queuing to vote



Backstory: late 9th century. As Wilfred the Hairy lies wounded by Moors (Normans in some versions) the Frankish King Charles the Bald, grandson of Charlemagne, rewards his bravery ...



... by grasping Wilfred's hand to drag the man's bloody fingers across his copper shield and so create the *Senyera* of Catalan and Aragon with its four *gules* over *or* - red on gold.



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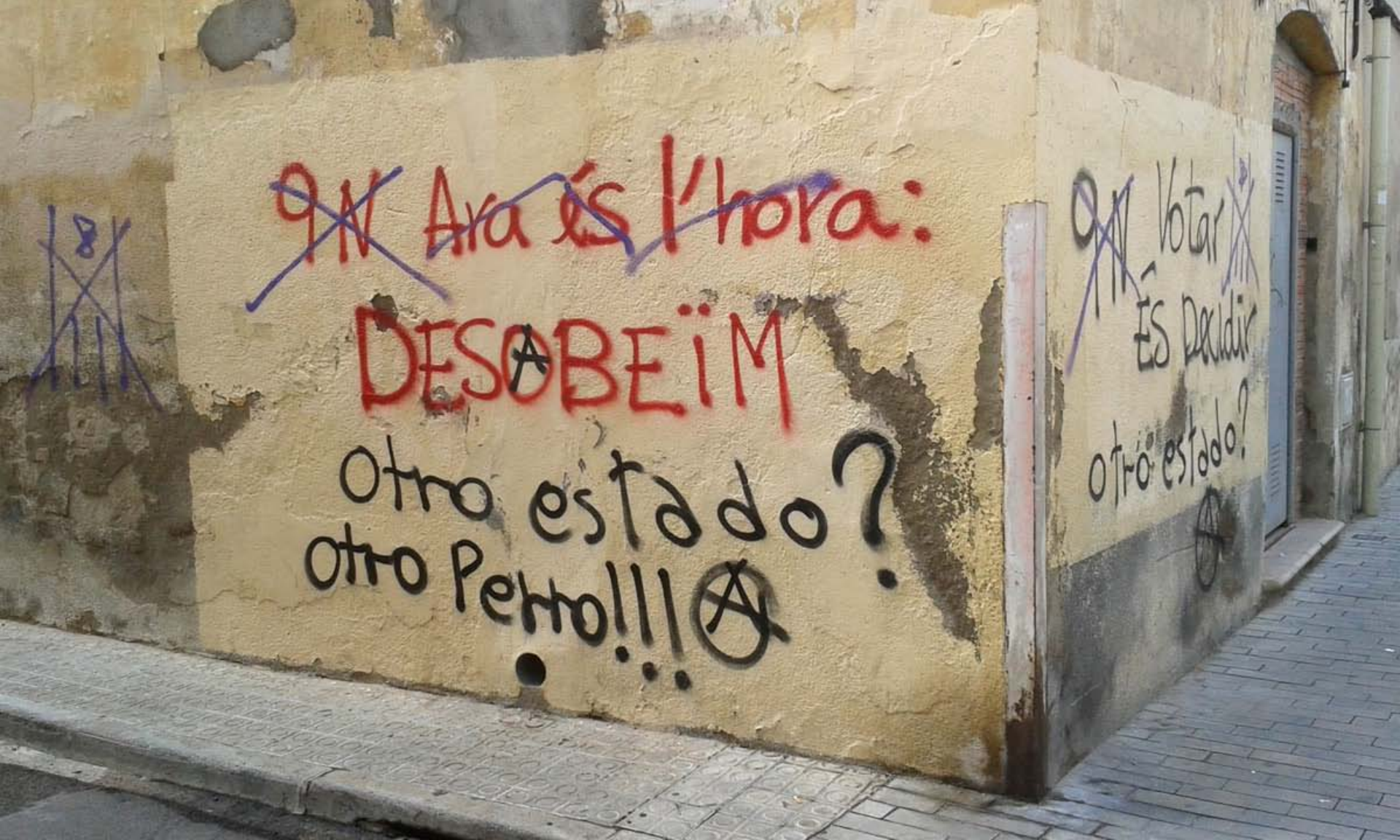
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MY BRAIN
IS ~~NOT~~
SPAIN

ed





DISOBEDIENCE (Catalan). **Another state? Another dog!!!** (Castilian).

Hard to know what to make of the latter. The second **A** points to one reading but ...

Back in the sixties – Franco’s time, when the Catalan language was still largely illegal outside the privacy of home – there was an incident on the Spanish Cadena SER radio station that’s still remembered in Catalonia. The best known voice of the period, a presenter called Bobby Deglane – who came onto his guests, according to author Quim Monzó, like a “knight in shining armor” – invited a Catalan comedienne, Mary Santpere, onto his show. Straight out, he came out with: “Mary, is it true you Catalans, rather than talk, simply bark like dogs?” Santpere, after a moment of being taken aback, replied, “I wouldn’t say that but in Catalonia Bobby is a typical dog’s name”.

Barcelona, Catalonia: A View from the Inside, by Matthew Tree

L'AMOR NO
CONEIX POR
NI DOMINACIÓ

Love knows neither fear nor domination (Catalan)





SIN TI

E IV YQ

Without you I am myself

Even without the women's symbol, the Castilian wording suggests feminist rather than secessionist but could easily mean both.



In Belfast or Ballymena I'd know what the red hand signifies. In Barcelona I've no idea.

PENSIO
SANT DOMENEC
DEL CALL
PRAL.izda.



V. JUNOY

Everyone wanted a quietly dignified protest. Approving but bored, I turned to the narrow slanting lanes and alleys of this atmospheric city – home or host to Gaudi, Orwell, Messi, Wilfred the Hairy and the atomic core of opposition to Franco – as I tried to figure out what I could and couldn't do with my Mickey Mouse phone-cam.





I'm a Mingus fan myself. Few musicians can match his sense of drama





1714 X 2014

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Ajuntament de
Barcelona



MÚSICA **EN** FEMENÍ

Octubre-desembre'14

FUNDACIÓ MAS i MAS



KENTUCKY



Entrance to what's now a Prada-type shop
on Aribau, once an apothecary perhaps.





Edge of the Arab Quarter



On my first visit in 1979 – everyone still high and dancing on Franco's grave – the place was full of joints like this.







Catalan is also spoken outside Catalonia: The Balearics, Valencia, Aragon, Andorra and (off the map) Sardinia.