

Anxiety/Anarchism

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Religion

I was from birth indoctrinated into seeing the world a certain way. The skin around the tip of my penis was cut, water was doused upon my head, and I was given two backup parents just in case the parents I did have, had died, and I needed someone else to continue the indoctrination. At 5, I was an altar boy who served at a ritual where my parents worshiped, so tangentially they worshiped me. Later in college, I could not understand how someone could not believe, and would ruminate on why these people chose not to. I felt sorry for them, and disturbed at the same time. Even then, at 20, I would speak to god at night, asking why things were the way they are. There was always someone who would listen and I still miss that comfort today. There was reason why things worked, a logic which I took for granted and never thought to question.

It wasn't logic which made me doubt my faith, it was the hypocritical action of those around me who believed. Why spend your time worshiping, when you could actually spend it helping someone? I had begun to meet other people during my college years. Kind, good people, who did not believe in religion, but were much more christ like than the christians I knew. Homosexual, bisexual, transgender, atheist, agnostic, their life's work was to make the world a better place; though they might not describe it that way. Why were these people considered not worthy, while the rich and lazy were? I came to the conclusion that a true christian, someone who really understood what Jesus was about on a deep level, would lose their faith in such a system of belief. And in doing so, would no longer be christian, at least in the formal religious sense.

Religion is like a scaffolding inside our mind. In fact, any strong belief system can be a structure on which we place our reality. If this scaffold holding up all the things we believe in breaks, it causes a huge rupture in how we see the world. What a human is, what our life means, the fundamental reasons why we do the things we do, all are cast into doubt. This doesn't happen to most people, as we carefully move through life staying within the boundaries of this frame, for we do not need (nor want to) break the structure in which we are so comfortable. But this is what happened to me. The doubts began, cracks formed in this faulty logic, and finally I could no longer force myself to believe. I began a journey to understand how I came to be the way I am and to find an alternative frame to live within.

Anxiety

Anxiety happens naturally in all animals. It is what kept our prehistoric ancestors alive when they were in nature and it keeps us alert when we walk across the street in the city. However this awareness can go too far, one can be overly aware, in a constant state of fear without interruption - a sense of impending doom coating everything you see. As the mind tries to understand why

these worrisome thoughts are happening, it starts a vicious cycle: worrisome thought - worry about the thought - worry about *that* thought - faster and faster it spins. A sealed loop which reaches incredible speed until your bowels tighten, adrenaline rushes, the gums electrify, and you have the same horrible feeling when someone told you your son, daughter, wife, father, mother had died. The “flight or fight response”, interpreted as a flushing of your happiness. As this feeling has no logical motive, the next step is to think: are you going insane?

But you aren't going insane. You are mentally ill. The way you see the world is not what is. This particular response is a byproduct of a mental illness called “Generalized Anxiety Disorder”, which I've lived with for the past 10 years of my life - beginning right around the period I lost my faith. From time to time, usually when I stop taking my medication, it rears its head once again and I need to return to seeing a world which is not the shattered one of my religious past. A disconnection process which has been on one side very painful, but on the other side very interesting, as it has made me keenly aware of how one builds the reality we see out in the world from within our own mind.

The contemporary psychological methods of dealing with this problem is to become aware of these distorted thoughts via cognitive based therapies, and other practices such as yoga and meditation, and build in your mind an augmented form of what reality really is. Even though these distorted thoughts are saying something else entirely, as one becomes accustomed to your augmented view, this built reality starts to take precedence over and eventually becomes how you “see” the world. The neuronal pathways of what we once thought as ‘happy’ and ‘sad’, ‘painful’ and ‘joyful’, slowly wither away and die, while these new self-sculpted pathways come into play. The alcoholic getting sober, the depressed finding happiness, and the calming of my own anxiety are all examples of this process.

Scientifically the brain rewiring itself in this way is known as neuroplasticity. It takes place continuously as we focus on particular topics which are important to us: sex, food, and fear being the major concentrations. Each is injected into our reality via the real thing (actual fear, actual love), or more often a synthetic version given to us via some form of media. It is these neural networks that funnel our trajectory through life - the biological manifestations of the scaffolding which I spoke about above. Unfortunately for most, we have no understanding of how this process is tenting the color our lives and what we see as life's possibilities. For the frame is something which makes us feel safe and secure, thus when we begin to augment its form, cognitive dissonance drives us away from going any further.

Ironically the mentally ill are the first to gain both the motivation and skill-set needed to bend reality to the form they wish. The kind, the sensitive, the altruistic, are mistuned to the way the

current competitive world is shaped. Akin to my own mis-framing of reality, this “mental illness” can be preemptively averted by finding alternative means of understanding earlier in life, before the structures are set. Many become artists. Those who do not find an alternative, get sick. Some live with this dis-ease their entire life, as Thoreau has written, “in quiet desperation”, while it pushes subconsciously to create an alternative frame. But one cannot simply “will” the world to be different, the frame you take on must have a philosophical underpinning, usually termed as a “worldview”. Logic structures that have answers to why things are the way they are, such as free-trade, capitalism, catholicism, feminism, scientism, etc. Sometimes they interrelate and coalesce, while others are isolating, cult like, and austere.

Anarchism

For me, the most radically prescient philosophical framework to today’s society, while also retaining the altruistic aspect of my past faith, was anarchism. To most it would be impossible to think of living in a place without a government to protect us from the more “sinister” side of the population. But anarchism has many strains, some of which are incredibly organized and peaceful, fostering an awareness of a communal structure of society within every citizen. An outlook that eliminates much of the apathy that appears when one is separated from the democratic process by proxy, generates a natural bond between citizens, and makes the need for a “protective” hierarchy like government much less obvious. It has a scientific background leading back to Darwin from the work of Peter Kropotkin and it continues to develop philosophically today, adapting to whatever culture it finds itself in. I like to think of anarchism as like gravity, a force that constantly checks to see if a certain hierarchy is needed, and if not, throwing it off for something better.

The particular strain of anarchism in Spain during the Spanish Civil War was anarcho-syndicalism. In this form, Syndicates (or unions), are the main connecting points for the democratic process to happen. The union system was an already entrenched community of like-minded people, so it was a clear next step when Franco tried to take power to band together via a militia system based on these unions to protect the democratic freedoms which they had gained in the years leading up to the war. What made this moment profound was that this banding together was not only a protection mechanism for the republic, but also (as Orwell states below), the beginnings of a true revolution. The militias themselves were working non-hierarchical societies in miniature.

Not all militias were anarchist, some like the POUM (Workers' Party of Marxist Unification) which Orwell fell into were communist. However, it was anti-Stalin in a sense that it’s orientation was closer to anarchism, rather than the totalitarian form of communism which was

happening in Russia at the time. In *Homage to Catalonia*, Orwell documents first hand the differences between the POUM form of communism and that in Russia via its suppression in Barcelona by the Russian totalitarian influence. As the atrocities of the Russian state had not come to light yet in the world, it was the first time for many of these believers in communism as a path to a utopian socialist future (including Orwell), to recognize the true face of Russian totalitarianism.

Every second the revolutionary militias survived, was a second proving the falsehoods of Marxism. For a libertarian form of socialism was achieved right then and there without the need for an overseeing “Dictatorship of the Proletariat” (the major pillar holding up the reasoning behind Russian authoritarianism). The Russian’s knew this, and were quickly moving to disband any form of anarchist militia. On the other side, as fascist Spain bared down on the Republic with the backing of the rest of the world, via either complacency (the United States and England) or direct involvement (Italy and Germany), the only thing holding this onslaught back was the people’s will to fight and what supplies and weapons the communists granted them to have (but came with the stipulations of disbanding the militias). It was obvious that this moment would be fleeting.

It was this frame, soon to be destroyed from within and without, which caught my attention. Here was a worldview which inclined the human mind towards mutual aid, without the need for an ornate religious structure. It was a solid political framework, naturally enhancing the better parts of our nature, and regularized into everyday life and understanding. One can only imagine how these people felt in the great numbers which were fighting in Aragon and Catalonia. I had found the outlook which I might take on, now I wished to somehow see what they saw, feel what they felt, and think the same thoughts - to find the particular wiring pattern which made up their worldview. If we were indoctrinated into altruism at birth, would anarchism be considered so radical? Would the cutting of skin upon the tip of a baby’s genitals be so normal?

Massacres

Not all was perfect in the Republic. Any work dealing with the Spanish Civil War must come to terms with the massacres brought about by both sides. It is well known the atrocities of Franco, but much can be said of what happened in Barcelona and other cities during the war at the hands of the more radical sections of the population. They murdered people, innocent people, and most of this aggression was focused on the christian church. It hurt everything which they were fighting for, and to this day is a stain on the social libertarian cause. The republic and anarchism were much more than these revenge killings, but one of the factors of it’s failure lays within them. The spiritual side of the Catalan people were left untapped, and like

two warring brothers the battle between them was most tragic for their viewpoints were closer than they realized.

Underneath both forms of belief, anarchism and christianity, lies a revolutionary outlook - of seeing another world being possible. One is buried by 2 thousand years of ignorance, the other is on fire. What is lacking in the anarchist position is a philosophical understanding of what the human condition is at it's most base form, before it has entered into the political debate. Is there a soul? Does it transmigrate? These questions which religion answers in one way or another, could be tapped to allow for a political/spiritual anarchist position. What is lacking from the christian orientation is the immediacy of death. Why work here on earth if we will go to heaven? By separating heaven from the moment here on earth, all effort goes towards this illusional goal. Liberation Theology has begun to unwind this disconnection, but still the soul's movement to heaven in the future will always dissociate one from the wrongs in the world today.

Some would say that one of the pillars of anarchism is a lack of spiritual belief, but I disagree. In the space of denial, of saying that we just "end" when we die, one forces on the mind an intensity in life. This is a spiritual choice. It is this spark through negation that lights a fire inside the anarchist soul. But without a solid spiritual framework, the fire burns quickly and out of control, for even though altruism consciously makes sense in practice, subconsciously the mind needs a reason to live, a metaphysical logic to it all. There are spiritual avenues to explore which allow for both this intensity in life, and a path that would offer a grounding for this altruism anarchists naturally display. This grounding could form a bridge for those who are coming from christianity to identify not only politically, but also spiritually with anarchism. There are tracks within Christianity leading back to the new testament (Luke 17:20 - 21) and Saint Francis - that might have been enough to open the door for those who would have fought Franco. Indeed, in the Basque region of Spain, religion was on the side of the Republic.

Extending this further, eastern philosophies represent the clearest connection to the altruistic mindset. The methods mentioned above which contemporary psychology uses to deal with mental illness, stem from these meditative religious traditions. Based more on logic than faith, these traditions extend the concept of neuroplasticity back 4 thousand years. And moving laterally into the spiritual realm, the foundation of these practices orient the patient to see themselves outside the limited frame which popular christianity has propagated within the concept of the "soul". The core of which is the concept of nothingness or emptiness, which like anarchism many times is misunderstood as a negation of reality. It is in fact simply seeing yourself in others - the perfect spiritual underpinning to the anarchist position. It's a testament to the non-religious basis of these belief systems that peer-reviewed research has proven it therapeutic that the more you see yourself in others, your neurosis diminishes. You become less

obsessed with your own mortality, but at the same time you are not disengaged from the world today, because you care about those who will live on when you die - for they in some way are you.

Visual Effects

So I have this mental disorder, a broken worldview, and the yearning to find a frame to replace it, but to most, it's impossible to envision why living in the muck and dirt, dying for a cause which would earn you no fortune, was somehow a good thing. From birth the contemporary brain is wired to not allow us to feel pleasure in altruism like those in Spain at that time. It's akin as to how we view the sadist searching for pleasure in pain, the anarchist inclination towards altruism and mutual aid. It makes no sense to us, because the logic structure inside our mind is built against, rather than for seeing the world this way. To us, the anarchist is simply 'mentally ill'.

Creative neuroplasticity is a personal choice. The specific combination of neurons which fire for the anarchist will never match the capitalism soaked individual no matter what visual imagery is put in front of them. One must choose to change their belief structure. But in the spectacle of augmented viewing there is a certain sense of wonder. A feeling of possibility that something else might be touched upon if we could only see around the corner. Perhaps we may not get to view it directly, we may only get our ear to the edge and listen, but it is enough to know that something else is there. A feeling akin to those transcendental moments when one is in nature or in love, which go beyond normal logic structures and allow us to empirically feel another world is possible.

This wonder is latent in visual effects. It is what draws millions to the theaters each year, where in the darkness we subconsciously yearn for other ways of living out our lives. The gigantic robot, the tentacled head of Davy Jones, the vista of an alien landscape, the strange logic which these narratives occupy, are the reasons why people go to the theaters today. The budgets of Hollywood motion pictures are pie charts to the human mind's wants and needs. The majority of feature film budgets go towards creating these alternate realities, the most man hours, the most talent, all help to suture the viewer into the narrative - allowing them to reach a new zenith of possibilities.

In a way, this work and text is a cementing of my own current lattice of reality. Helping me to better construct the world I inhabit, for the more I understand it, the more my anxiety lowers. Through visual effects I can augment it enough to test its limits and adjust it as needed. A small humble corner, not the massive world altering forms of hollywood cinema, but it's enough to

perhaps generate some of the zeitgeist that was there in Spain so long ago. To envision a world where kindness is like gold, empathy like the air we breathe, and the accomplishments of the other, the accomplishments of ourselves. It might be ephemeral and heady, but where could be a better place for utopia to begin than within one's own mind?

Text Selections (notes in italics)

“And, after all, instead of disillusioning me it deeply attracted me.”

chapter 8, 5th paragraph, 4th sentence then skips a little in the middle of paragraph and pick up again

"I had dropped more or less by chance into the only community of any size in Western Europe where political consciousness and disbelief in capitalism were more normal than their opposites. Up here in Aragon one was among tens of thousands of people, mainly though not entirely of working-class origin, all living at the same level and mingling on terms of equality. In theory it was perfect equality, and even in practice it was not far from it. There is a sense in which it would be true to say that one was experiencing a foretaste of Socialism, by which I mean that the prevailing mental atmosphere was that of Socialism. Many of the normal motives of civilized life — snobbishness, money-grubbing, fear of the boss, etc. — had simply ceased to exist. The ordinary class-division of society had disappeared to an extent that is almost unthinkable in the money-tainted air of England; there was no one there except the peasants and ourselves, and no one owned anyone else as his master. Of course such a state of affairs could not last. It was simply a temporary and local phase in an enormous game that is being played over the whole surface of the earth. But it lasted long enough to have its effect upon anyone who experienced it. However much one cursed at the time, one realized afterwards that one had been in contact with something strange and valuable. One had been in a community where hope was more normal than apathy or cynicism, where the word ‘comrade’ stood for comradeship and not, as in most countries, for humbug. One had breathed the air of equality. "...

"For the Spanish militias, while they lasted, were a sort of microcosm of a classless society. In that community where no one was on the make, where there was a shortage of everything but no privilege and no boot-licking, one got, perhaps, a crude forecast of what the opening stages of Socialism might be like. And, after all, instead of disillusioning me it deeply attracted me."

Near Alcubierre, one of the actual bunkers where Orwell was located during the war has been reconstructed into what it might have looked like at the time. The ruins seem to be integrated into the reconstruction in some places to the point you can't tell what is fake and what is genuinely from the time he was there.

“They had attempted to produce within the militias a sort of temporary working model of the classless society.”

Chapter 3, paragraph 8, 8th sentence, skips a sentence then continues

"In a workers' army discipline is theoretically voluntary. It is based on class-loyalty, whereas the

discipline of a bourgeois conscript army is based ultimately on fear."...

"In the militias the bullying and abuse that go on in an ordinary army would never have been tolerated for a moment. The normal military punishments existed, but they were only invoked for very serious offenses. When a man refused to obey an order you did not immediately get him punished; you first appealed to him in the name of comradeship. Cynical people with no experience of handling men will say instantly that this would never 'work', but as a matter of fact it does 'work' in the long run. The discipline of even the worst drafts of militia visibly improved as time went on. In January the job of keeping a dozen raw recruits up to the mark almost turned my hair grey. In May for a short while I was acting-lieutenant in command of about thirty men, English and Spanish. We had all been under fire for months, and I never had the slightest difficulty in getting an order obeyed or in getting men to volunteer for a dangerous job. 'Revolutionary' discipline depends on political consciousness "...

Chapter 3, paragraph 7, 6th sentence

"Everyone from general to private drew the same pay, ate the same food, wore the same clothes, and mingled on terms of complete equality. If you wanted to slap the general commanding the division on the back and ask him for a cigarette, you could do so, and no one thought it curious. In theory at any rate each militia was a democracy and not a hierarchy. It was understood that orders had to be obeyed, but it was also understood that when you gave an order you gave it as comrade to comrade and not as superior to inferior. There were officers and N.C.O.S. but there was no military rank in the ordinary sense; no titles, no badges, no heel-clicking and saluting. They had attempted to produce within the militias a sort of temporary working model of the classless society."

This particular location moves away from the reconstructed barracks, and on into the area which has been excavated nearby. The larger space which begins the piece is a water retention pit, and is untouched as to how it was years ago. The corner on which the worm was photographed was located within the reconstructed section, the rock itself is real and historical, but the constructed walls are new.

"The Anarchist viewpoint is less easily defined."

Chapter 5, 18th paragraph, first sentence then skips 3 sentences and ends with "equality" not end of paragraph

"The Anarchist viewpoint is less easily defined. In any case the loose term 'Anarchists' is used to cover a multitude of people of very varying opinions"

"Nevertheless they differed fundamentally from the Communists in so much that, like the P.O.U.M., they aimed at workers' control and not a parliamentary democracy. They accepted the

P.O.U.M. slogan: 'The war and the revolution are inseparable', though they were less dogmatic about it. Roughly speaking, the C.N.T.—F.A.I. stood for: (1) Direct control over industry by the workers engaged in each industry, e.g. transport, the textile factories, etc.; (2) Government by local committees and resistance to all forms of centralized authoritarianism; (3) Uncompromising hostility to the bourgeoisie and the Church. The last point, though the least precise, was the most important. The Anarchists were the opposite of the majority of so-called revolutionaries in so much that though their principles were rather vague their hatred of privilege and injustice was perfectly genuine. Philosophically, Communism and Anarchism are poles apart. Practically — i.e. in the form of society aimed at — the difference is mainly one of emphasis, but it is quite irreconcilable. The Communist's emphasis is always on centralism and efficiency, the Anarchist's on liberty and equality."

This bunker was constructed in Lanaja, not too far from the area in which Orwell was located. It was built by Republican forces and overlooks a wide swath of land, over 180 degrees from both outlooks.

In the text Orwell makes reference to the CNT - FAI. These are the two large anarchist unions in Catalonia. CNT stands for the National Confederation of Labor, and the FAI stands for the Iberian Anarchist Federation. Many times the two are linked, like above as they are so often mentioned in the same breath. The FAI is a faction within the CNT and is more militant, while the CNT is more oriented for workers rights, federalism, and mutual aid.

"...for some reason all the best matadors were Fascists."

Chapter 2, first paragraph, 3rd sentence

"On a ruinous wall I came upon a poster dating from the previous year and announcing that 'six handsome bulls' would be killed in the arena on such and such a date. How forlorn its faded colours looked! Where were the handsome bulls and the handsome bull-fighters now? It appeared that even in Barcelona there were hardly any bullfights nowadays; for some reason all the best matadors were Fascists."

The Osborne Bull was erected in 1956 as an advertisement for a new brandy that the Osborne Company was selling. Over the years the bull became a symbol for Spanish power and moved into the public domain, no longer a product but an icon. It is even shown on the flag from time to time, and to this day the bulls are located all over the countryside. In Catalonia the bull is seen as a symbol of restraints that the country has placed over Catalan culture. Thus from time to time the bull is burned or vandalized. More recently, bullfighting, the most famous of Spanish customs, has been banned in Catalonia.

“....as an anti-revolutionary force.”

Chapter 5, 11th paragraph - huge paragraph again, starts after “the seizure of the barcelona telegraph exchange, then after a few sentences, skips a little bit and picks up again

"the workers' militias, based on the trade unions, were gradually broken up and redistributed among the new Popular Army, a 'non-political' army on semi-bourgeois lines, with a differential pay rate, a privileged officer-caste, etc., etc. In the special circumstances this was the really decisive step; it happened later in Catalonia than elsewhere because it was there that the revolutionary parties were strongest. Obviously the only guarantee that the workers could have of retaining their winnings was to keep some of the armed forces under their own control. As usual, the breaking-up of the militias was done in the name of military efficiency; and no one denied that a thorough military reorganization was needed. It would, however, have been quite possible to reorganize the militias and make them more efficient while keeping them under direct control of the trade unions; the main purpose of the change was to make sure that the Anarchists did not possess an army of their own. Moreover, the democratic spirit of the militias made them breeding-grounds for revolutionary ideas. The Communists were well aware of this, and inveighed ceaselessly and bitterly against the P.O.U.M. and Anarchist principle of equal pay for all ranks. A general 'bourgeoisification', a deliberate destruction of the equalitarian spirit of the first few months of the revolution, was taking place."...

"The whole process is easy to understand if one remembers that it proceeds from the temporary alliance that Fascism, in certain forms, forces upon the bourgeois and the worker. This alliance, known as the Popular Front, is in essential an alliance of enemies, and it seems probable that it must always end by one partner swallowing the other. The only unexpected feature in the Spanish situation — and outside Spain it has caused an immense amount of misunderstanding — is that among the parties on the Government side the Communists stood not upon the extreme Left, but upon the extreme Right. In reality this should cause no surprise, because the tactics of the Communist Party elsewhere, especially in France, have made it clear that Official Communism must be regarded, at any rate for the time being, as an anti-revolutionary force."

Montserrat is the location of the Santa Maria de Montserrat Monastery where during the war 22 monks were killed by Republican forces. After the war many republicans hid upon the mountain hoping to avoid the nationalists controlling the land below.

“The thing that had happened in Spain was, in fact, not merely a civil war, but the beginning of a revolution.”

Chapter 5, paragraph 8, 4th sentence down to end

"Along with the collectivization of industry and transport there was an attempt to set up the rough beginnings of a workers' government by means of local committees, workers' patrols to

replace the old pro-capitalist police forces, workers' militias based on the trade unions, and so forth. Of course the process was not uniform, and it went further in Catalonia than elsewhere. There were areas where the institutions of local government remained almost untouched, and others where they existed side by side with revolutionary committees. In a few places independent Anarchist communes were set up, and some of them remained in being till about a year later, when they were forcibly suppressed by the Government. In Catalonia, for the first few months, most of the actual power was in the hands of the Anarcho-syndicalists, who controlled most of the key industries. The thing that had happened in Spain was, in fact, not merely a civil war, but the beginning of a revolution."

José Antonio Primo de Rivera, the street upon which the piece starts, was the founder of the Falange (Phalanx), the major fascist movement in Spain. Belchite itself was a nationalist stronghold and was captured by the republican forces during the war. When Franco's forces recaptured the town it was left as is, and those forces who were captured there were made to build a new Belchite adjacent. The rubble of the old town was left as a sign to those nationalists who fell in battle there. The building located in front of the wind turbine's is a concentration camp where these prisoners were housed. According to a local resident the fountain in the piece is the location where many involved in the Republican attack were shot and killed - "The streets ran with blood". In the final composite, the graffiti (which has since been covered up) on the door of the cathedral is translated as:

"Old town of Belchite, young children won't walk around you any more, the "jotas" our parents used to sing won't be heard any more."

"...and which undoubtedly has a religious tinge."

Chapter 6, paragraph 14

"It struck me that the people in this part of Spain must be genuinely without religious feeling — religious feeling, I mean, in the orthodox sense. It is curious that all the time I was in Spain I never once saw a person cross himself; yet you would think such a movement would become instinctive, revolution or no revolution. Obviously the Spanish Church will come back (as the saying goes, night and the Jesuits always return), but there is no doubt that at the outbreak of the revolution it collapsed and was smashed up to an extent that would be unthinkable even for the moribund C. of E. in like circumstances. To the Spanish people, at any rate in Catalonia and Aragon, the Church was a racket pure and simple. And possibly Christian belief was replaced to some extent by Anarchism, whose influence is widely spread and which undoubtedly has a religious tinge."

The cross was placed there by Franco to commemorate the fallen nationalist soldiers in the battle of Belchite.

“...with the normal division into rich and poor.”

chapter 9, first two paragraphs with a skip in the 2nd paragraph

"From Mandalay, in Upper Burma, you can travel by train to Maymyo, the principal hill-station of the province, on the edge of the Shan plateau. It is rather a queer experience. You start off in the typical atmosphere of an eastern city — the scorching sunlight, the dusty palms, the smells of fish and spices and garlic, the squashy tropical fruits, the swarming dark-faced human beings — and because you are so used to it you carry this atmosphere intact, so to speak, in your railway carriage. Mentally you are still in Mandalay when the train stops at Maymyo, four thousand feet above sea-level. But in stepping out of the carriage you step into a different hemisphere. Suddenly you are breathing cool sweet air that might be that of England, and all round you are green grass, bracken, fir-trees, and hill-women with pink cheeks selling baskets of strawberries.

Getting back to Barcelona, after three and a half months at the front, reminded me of this. There was the same abrupt and startling change of atmosphere. In the train, all the way to Barcelona, the atmosphere of the front persisted; the dirt, the noise, the discomfort, the ragged clothes the feeling of privation, comradeship, and equality."

.... "Everyone was profoundly happy, more happy than I can convey. But when the train had rolled through Sabadell and into Barcelona, we stepped into an atmosphere that was scarcely less alien and hostile to us and our kind than if this had been Paris or London."...

Chapter 9, 8th paragraph - skips first few words

"there was the startling change in the social atmosphere — a thing difficult to conceive unless you have actually experienced it. When I first reached Barcelona I had thought it a town where class distinctions and great differences of wealth hardly existed. Certainly that was what it looked like. ‘Smart’ clothes were an abnormality, nobody cringed or took tips, waiters and flower-women and bootblacks looked you in the eye and called you ‘comrade’. I had not grasped that this was mainly a mixture of hope and camouflage. The working class believed in a revolution that had been begun but never consolidated, and the bourgeoisie were scared and temporarily disguising themselves as workers. In the first months of revolution there must have been many thousands of people who deliberately put on overalls and shouted revolutionary slogans as a way of saving their skins. Now things were returning to normal. "

Chapter 5, 11th paragraph - huge paragraph, it's about 3/4^{ths} of the way down

"what had seemed on the surface and for a brief instant to be a workers' State was changing before one's eyes into an ordinary bourgeois republic with the normal division into rich and poor."

The Generalitat of Catalonia, the face of Catalan autonomy in Spain, has a huge historical significance to the people of Catalonia. Each time when Catalonia lost its rights, its freedom, it was here that it was taken away and here that it was restored. Ironically the Anarchist influence in Barcelona which kept the fascists from sweeping into the city during the coup did not wish at first to fully participate in this political enterprise. Anarchism itself is based on non-heretical structures, and thus a political government is antithetical to this belief, but in the idea of the greater good it fought alongside this more classical type democratic institutions. This amalgamation was termed the popular front.

The Spanish republic was envisioned by some artists as a Spanish woman.

The Ramblas, translated as a "long meandering stream", runs through much of the city and plays a role in the book. Along this path is the hotel Continental, the location where Orwell stayed during his time there (at least while he could).

Finally the cemetery in the piece is Montjuic cemetery, I was searching for Buenaventura Durruti's grave, the great Anarchist hero, but could not find it and got lost.