



Dear members of the Academia Europaea and Young Academy of Europe

**Report of the activities of the Disputatio Week (21–24
Nov. 2016)**

November 21, 2016

**Audience with the president of Catalonia, M. Hon. Carles
Puigdemont**

Location: Palau de la Generalitat de Catalunya (Gothic building
from the 14th century, seat of the Government of Catalonia)

From 17.00 to 18.00 h, members of the Board of the Academia Europaea and other MAE were received in a special audience by the president of Catalonia, M. Hon. Carles Puigdemont. Some aspects of the collaboration between the Barcelona Knowledge Hub of the AE (AE-BKH) and the Government of Catalonia were discussed in a warm and pleasant atmosphere. President Puigdemont encouraged the Board of the AE, and particularly the director of the AE-BKH,

Prof. Ricard Guerrero, to continue the excellent work that they have done to promote and spread knowledge at the highest level, in both humanities and sciences. The audience was also attended by some of the participant lecturers in the Disputatio Week 2016, and enjoyed this unusual visit very much.



November 21, 2016. The Board of the AE during the audience with the president of the Government of Catalonia, M. Hon. Carles Puigdemont and the Secretary of Universities and Research, Prof. Arcadi Navarro. (Photo courtesy of the Generalitat de Catalunya)

Disputatio of Barcelona 2016 Debate

Topic: NATURAL LIFE vs. SYNTHETIC LIFE

On November 21, 2016, from 18.00 to 20.00, The fourth modern-day *Disputatio of Barcelona* was held at the Palau de la Generalitat under the presidency of the President of Catalonia, M. Hon. Carles Puigdemont. This year, the *Disputatio of Barcelona* was devoted to the topic “**Natural Life vs. Synthetic Life**”. Two scholars, **Anna Veiga** (Centre of Regenerative Medicine, Barcelona), and **Ricard Solé** (Complex Systems Lab, PRBB, Barcelona), debated

on the new challenges that the current scientific advancements present to human societies.

The impressive knowledge in their respective fields of research allowed the two *disputantes* to clearly expose their ideas to the audience. An active debate among the public and the speakers helped to better understand several critical questions previously exposed by the *disputantes*.

Disputantes:

Natural Life: Anna Veiga, Centre for Regenerative Medicine of Barcelona (CMR[B]).

Synthetic Life: Ricard Solé, Complex Systems Lab, PRBB (Barcelona Biomedical Research Park), Barcelona.



Dr. Anna Veiga



Dr. Ricard Solé

Concert “*Iter Luminis, Works and Pleasures of Love*”, by singer-songwriter Lídia Pujol

Location: Institut d’Estudis Catalans (Prat de la Riba Hall). 20.30–22.00 h.

Singer-songwriter **Lídia Pujol** and her accompanying musicians and singers offered a concert devoted to the life and work of Ramon Llull (1232–1316) to commemorate the 7th centenary of his death. Lídia Pujol was accompanied by Mohamed Ayoub (voice), Miquel Àngel Cordero (double bass and voice), Pau Figueres (guitar), Mohamed Soulimane (violin, lute, *kemanje*, tambourines), Sandra Ballbè (movement/dance) and the Chorus of Vallferosa.

The public filled up the solemn Hall of the IEC and enjoyed the music, the voices and the spectacular performance of light, sound and dance. At the end, the audience gave the artists a long, warm ovation. (A short video with excerpts of the main moments in the concert is in preparation and a link will be included in the next issue of this electronic Bulletin.)



November 21, 2016. Concert “*Iter Luminis, Works and Pleasures of Love*”, by singer-songwriter Lídia Pujol and her musicians and singers. (Photo by Rubén Duro)

November 22, 2016

Guided visit to the *Call* (Jewish Quarter) of Barcelona

Location: Gothic Quarter, Barcelona

From 12.00 to 13.30 h, the Board of the AE, other MAE and accompanying persons visited the Jewish Quarter of Barcelona, the *Call*. The visit was guided by **Victor Sorensen**, director of the Jewish Community of Barcelona. His explanations about the history of Jews in Catalonia, and their way of life in the city during the Middle Ages, while visiting several of the related buildings and streets, made the walk through the narrow and old streets of the “Old Barcelona” especially interesting. (See the link to the 3-min 46-s video at the end of this electronic Bulletin.)



November 22, 2016. Several moments of the visit to the *Call* of Barcelona. (Photos by Rubén Duro)

At the end of the guided visit to the *Call*, there was a visit to the home of Prof. Andreu Mas-Colell and his wife, Esther, a building of the 13th-14th century located in the middle of the *Call*, which has been accurately restored. Prof. Mas-Colell and his wife offered the attendants a warm reception at their home with a wonderful appetizer to recover energy.



November 22, 2016. Location: Gothic Quarter of Barcelona. (Photos by Rubén Duro)

Lunch at the Petit Palace Boqueria Garden

Afterwards, the attendants enjoyed a lunch at the restaurant of the Petit Palace Boqueria Garden Hotel, located in a 19th-century building at the heart of the city, and in the limits of the former *Call*.



November 22, 2016. Lunch at the patio of the Petit Palace Boqueria Garden, located at the edge of the former Jewish Quarter of Barcelona. (Photos by Rubén Duro)

InterSection Workshop. Topic: “What is Life? In remembrance of Lynn Margulis (1938-2011)”

Location: Institut d’Estudis Catalans (Prat de la Riba Hall). 17.30–21.00 h



As in former editions of the *Disputatio Week*, an InterSection Workshop was held on a topic related to the topic of the *Disputatio Debate*.

The InterSection Workshop was coordinated by **Prof. Christophe Thébaud** (from Toulouse, Chair of the Organismic and Evolutionary Section of the AE, Section C-4). The Workshop was devoted to the topic “What is Life?”, on which the whole scientific career of Lynn Margulis focused. Prof. Margulis died on November 22, 2011, and the AE-BKH decided to dedicate the Workshop to remember her work.

Lecturers:

Annia Domènech (Out-of-Pluto, Paris), imparted the *lecture Extraterrestrial life: a very human quest*, focused on the advancements on SETI (Search of ExtraTerrestrial Intelligence)



Gloria G. Cuadrado (Barcelona) talked about *A brief history of the Universe: from the Big Bang to the origin and evolution of life*. She described the main events in the history of the Cosmos from the beginning to the most-valued treasure of its timeline: the origin of life.

David Jou (Autonomous University of Barcelona) talked about *Thermodynamics and Life* and explained life as a non-equilibrium physical system.



Ricard Guerrero (AE-BKH) talked about *Minimal Life* and discussed several aspects of the establishment of minimal ecosystems.

Mavi Sánchez-Vives (IDIBAPS, Barcelona), with her lecture *Intelligent Life*, discussed various issues related to neurobiology and to the study of the minimal neural connections.



Javier Macia (Complex Systems Lab, PRBB, Barcelona) talked about *Artificial Life*, discussing the advancements on that specific field of research.

After the lectures, there was a debate with the attendants.
(Photos by Rubén Duro)

November 23, 2016

Preview screening of the film *Symbiotic Earth: How Lynn Margulis rocked the boat and started a scientific revolution*, directed by John Feldman (Hummingbird Films, New York)

Location: Institut d'Estudis Catalans (Pere i Joan Coromines)

Room). 17.00–20.30 h



November 23, 2016. Preview screening of the film devoted to the life and work of Lynn Margulis, by director John Feldman. (Photo by Rubén Duro)

The film, accurately produced and edited, offered a ten-chapter journey, both throughout time and space, into the director's personal view about the scientific and personal figure of Lynn Margulis. Through several interviews to various colleagues and disciples of Margulis, Feldman has created a linear narration that deals with the main aspects of Margulis scientific career and the impact of her research in the current state of the biological sciences.

November 24, 2016

Guided visit to the premises of the Industrial School of Catalonia

Location: Industrial School of Catalonia. 12.00–14.30 h

The last event of the Disputatio Week was the visit to the Industrial School of Catalonia, in the quarter known as the *Eixample*. The visit was guided by **Prof. Jaume Rosell**, from the School of Architecture of Barcelona (Technical University of Catalonia, UPC). The original building (1867) was Can Batlló, the textile factory of the Batlló brothers, built by the renowned architect Rafael Guastavino. Since 1889, when the industrial activity ceased, the

building had many changes. New facilities and functions were added to the originals, and now the large architectural ensemble is the home of different departments of the Diputació de Barcelona (provincial Council), and of the Industrial School of Catalonia.



November 24, 2016. Several moments of the visit to the Industrial School of Catalonia. (Photos by Rubén Duro)

VIDEO on the “AE-BKH in Action” Video Channel

Visit to the *Call* of Barcelona



November 22, 2016. Audiovisual composition from the visit of members of the Board of the Academia Europaea and other MAE to the *Call* (Jewish Quarter) of Barcelona. (Produced by Rubén Duro, rduro@microbios.org)

Length: 00:03:46

LINK: <https://vimeo.com/193969098>



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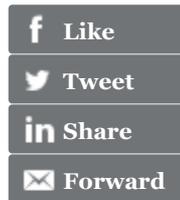
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