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MODERN CATALAN POETRY: A CRITICAL INTRODUCTION WITH
TRANSLATIONS

by

David H. Rosenthal

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in
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for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University
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1977

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Comparative Literature in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Abstract

MODERN CATALAN POETRY: A CRITICAL INTRODUCTION WITH
TRANSLATIONS

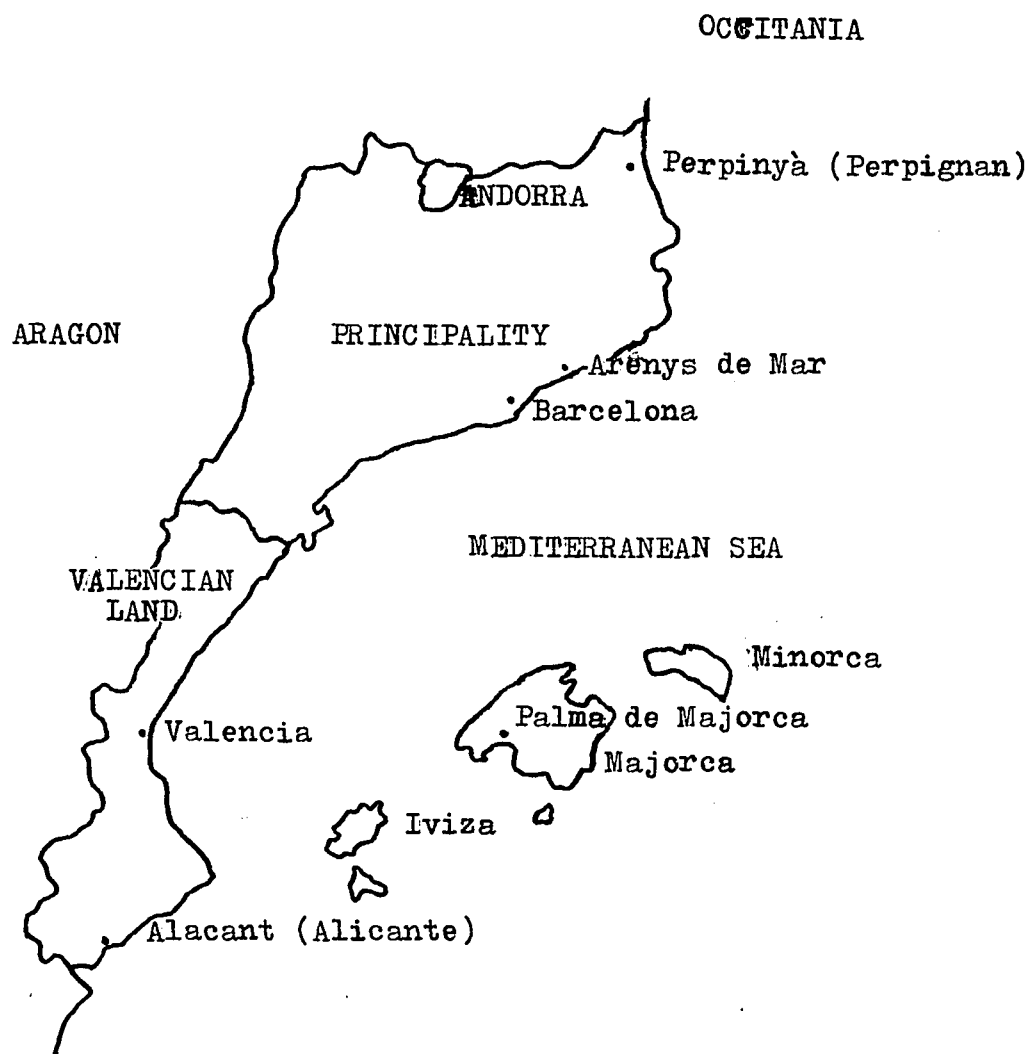
by

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Although several modern Catalan poets rank among the greatest of our time, they have received virtually no critical attention in the United States. The present work provides an introduction to Catalan poetry from 1920 to the present, with special emphasis on the following authors: Joan Salvat-Papasseit (1894-1924), J.V. Foix (1894-), "Pere Quart" (Joan Oliver, 1899-), Agustí Bartra (1908-), Salvador Espriu (1913-), Vicent Andrés Estellés (1924-), and Gabriel Ferrater (1922-1972). Through critical analysis of individual poems, this study traces the development of modern verse in Catalonia and attempts to arrive at a sense of its particular quality and preoccupations. The concluding chapter offers some general thoughts about modern Catalan poetry: the sources of its unusual richness and range of figures, its deep and intimate relation to the nation for which it speaks, and the promise that the future holds for it under a new Spanish regime.

This critical introduction, which begins with a brief summary of Catalan culture and history, makes up approximately half the dissertation. An anthology of original Catalan poetry, together with translations by David H. Rosenthal, makes up the other half. Each author's poetry is preceded by a short biographical sketch. Finally, there is a bibliography that includes translations of the poets, critical works about them, and a selected list of books on various areas and aspects of Catalan life.

THE CATALAN LANDS

NOTE ON PLACE-NAMES

As much as possible, I have used standard English place-names in my study, for example Iviza, not the Catalan Eivissa or Castilian Ibiza. All other place-names have been rendered first in their Catalan and then in their Castilian or French forms (if these differ), for example Alacant (Alicante).

PRONUNCIATION GUIDE

In Catalan words ending with a consonant, the stress is on the final syllable. Those that end with a vowel, s, in, or en carry the stress on the next to last syllable. Words with irregular stress bear a written accent (típic, mètode). Accentuation is also occasionally used to differentiate words of identical spelling (dóna = he gives; dona = a woman). Monosyllables are stressed, except for articles (like la, un), objective or adverbial pronouns (like et, en), prepositions (like de, a), and possessives (like son, ton). In two Catalan vowels, the accent also has a phonetic value: e (è and é) and o (ò and ó). The acute accent (´) indicates a long vowel (é like ai in pain; ó like o in note); the grave accent (`): indicates a short vowel (è like e in pen; ò like o in offer). The accent is, however, only used when the stress is irregular.

pronunciation of vowels

a -- when stressed, sounds like <u>f</u> ather.	[a]
when unstressed, is neutral like cell <u>a</u> r	[ə]
e -- when stressed, sounds like <u>p</u> en (è) or <u>p</u> ain (é)	[ɛ, e]
when unstressed, has same sound as unstressed <u>a</u> .	[ə]
i -- always pronounced like <u>h</u> e, <u>k</u> ee <u>p</u> .	[i]
o -- when stressed, sounds like <u>n</u> ote (ó) or <u>o</u> ffer (ò)	[o, ɔ]
when unstressed, sounds like <u>c</u> uck <u>oo</u>	[ʊ]
u -- when stressed, sounds like <u>c</u> oo <u>k</u> .	[u]

-- when unstressed, sounds like unstressed o. [U]

pronunciation of consonants

is often the same as in English, with the following exceptions:

- b -- at the end of a word sounds as p: Jacob = Jacop.
 between a vowel and an l, sounds as pb: poble = popble.
 after m is not pronounced: tomb = tom.
- c -- like s before e or i. Otherwise like k.
- ç -- like s.
- d -- like t at the end of a word: fred = fret.
- g -- like j before e or i. Otherwise like g in go.
- h -- always silent.
- j -- pronounced like a French j.
- ll -- pronounced like lli in William, million.
- l.l-the l sound is lingered over, but is not palative like ll.
- ny -- pronounced like ni in onion.
- p -- mute after m: camp = cam.
- q -- like k before ue or ui, like qu in English quorum,
 quack before uo, ua, ui, or ü.
- r -- as in Castilian. Rolled heavily at beginning of words,
 when doubled, or after l, m, n, and s. Final r is
 usually mute: clar = cla.
- s -- pronounced like z if between two vowels: rosa = roza,
 as in English resolve. Otherwise like English s in
 see. Double s between two vowels is also pronounced
 like English s in see.

t -- not pronounced after l or n in same syllable: prudent = pruden, malalt = malal.

before ll or m, t is mute but doubles the other consonant sound: bitllet = bill-llet; setmana = sem-mana.

w -- pronounced like v: wàter = vàter.

x -- at beginning of word or after a consonant sounds like English sh in ship. Ix after a vowel or at the beginning of a word has this same sound.

after a vowel other than i, x is usually pronounced like ks (as in English box).

when ex begins a word and is followed by a vowel or h, it is pronounced egz, like eggs in English.

after t, x is pronounced like ch: fletxa = flecha.

Vowels in combination are pronounced as a diphthong in the following cases: a) when the second vowel is unaccented i or u (reina like English rain, aula like English house); b) when the first vowel is u and comes after g or q (quatne like English quality; guanyar like English Gwen).

PREFACE

To the stroller, Barcelona is a city of boulevards, sidewalk cafés, and small squares. During the late nineteenth century, Art Nouveau was popular with the rising Catalan bourgeoisie, and even the most staid residential blocks abound with surprises, sometimes grotesque, sometimes exquisite. Barcelona is Antoni Gaudí's town. His Güell Park, perched on one of the hills that ring the city, is one of the world's enchanted places -- a play of fantasy that never overpowers the natural world it is meant to complement. And from many spots one can see the Tibidabo, an amusement park a little farther (and higher) from the center. Its sparkling strings of lights enhance the fairy-tale atmosphere.

But there is another side to Barcelona too, one hardly mentioned until recently in Spanish or foreign newspapers. Workers killed and tortured, massive general strikes, squalid shantytowns that cling to the same hills that surround the city and are part of its charm. And beneath these dramatic manifestations, there is an overall sense of restlessness, of still-frustrated yearnings for a freer press, a more European ambiance, an authentic public life. And for self-determination, toward which, thirty-eight years after the end of the Civil War, Catalans are now groping.

After twenty years of silence, Catalan culture in gene-

ral, and the printed word in particular, have been going through a period of renewal. Records of "folk songs" in Catalan, often with political implications and sung by performers like Raimon and Maria del Mar Bonet, are popular with the young. Avui (Today), the first Catalan-language newspaper since 1939, has reached a circulation of seventy thousand. One can buy Catalan magazines of high intellectual content like Serra d'Or and reviews like Oriflama and Cavall Fort for adolescents and children. An excellent Gran enciclopèdia catalana (Great Catalan Encyclopedia, Barcelona: Salvat) is in the making, being issued volume by volume. It promises to be one of the finest works of its kind anywhere. Even in the windows of cars one sees, side by side with stickers from discothèques and the Barcelona soccer team, injunctions to llegiu, escriuiu, i parleu en català (read, write, and speak Catalan). In addition, there is now a thick catalogue of books in Catalan: history, technical works, translations of classical and modern authors (including North Americans like Faulkner, Hemingway, and Nathaniel West), literature, children's books -- in short, the entire range of materials usually found on publishers' lists.

To understand the import of all this, a little historical background may be useful. Modern Spain has four major languages: Basque (which belongs neither to the Romance languages nor to any other language group), Castilian (what is usually called "Spanish"), Galician (the language

of an area above Portugal), and Catalan. Catalan is spoken by about seven million people, some of whom live in the Balearic Islands, others in a small strip of southern France that includes Perpinyà (Perpignan), and others in Spain proper, from Alacant (Alicante) to the French border and between the Mediterranean Sea and Aragon. To take the Castilian contribution as the literature of Spain, either now or in the past, is to accept a myth propagated by the Spanish government and to miss about half the richness of Spanish writing.

It is with one aspect of this "other half" of Spanish literature that I shall be concerned in the following study. More specifically, I have translated a number of representative works by seven of the outstanding Catalan poets since 1920. An anthology of these translations, together with the original texts, forms the second half of my study. The first half is devoted to an analysis of the texts, both in their poetic character and in their cultural and historical context. The materials I shall present are the fruits of four years of study, including a two-year stay in Catalonia. Among the many Catalans who helped me during my time in Barcelona, I particularly want to thank three editors: Tomàs Tèbè of Editorial Selecta, Francesc Vallverdú of Edicions 62, and Eliseu Climent of L'Estel. I am indebted to all of them for their advice and for their gifts of books. I also wish to acknowledge the assis-

tance of my dissertation advisors Frederick Goldin, Fred J. Nichols, and Gregory Rabassa, as well as that of my father M.L. Rosenthal. Finally, I wish to thank the staffs of the libraries at C.U.N.Y. Graduate Center, Harvard University, and the Casa Hispánica at Columbia University, along with a host of Catalan and North American friends who helped me at one time or another with my translations. It is to these friends -- many of them poets themselves -- that I dedicate this dissertation, in the hope that it will offer convincing proof of the richness and vitality of modern Catalan verse.

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I

THE PLACE AND ITS CULTURE

Like most modern European languages, Catalan assumed its definitive shape in the years between 900 and 1300. During this period, it was particularly influenced by the Occitan culture to the north. In fact, ninth-century Catalonia was simply the Spanish March of the Franks. Catalonia's close political and cultural ties with Occitania are partly responsible for the distinctive Catalan social structure and national character. These factors have produced a literature that, both qualitatively and linguistically, is thoroughly independent of Castile.¹

The most interesting Catalan literature is of two periods: the medieval and early Renaissance (1250 to 1500), and the modern (approximately 1875 to the present). The first period produced several brilliant figures. One was Ramon Llull (1233-1316), a philosopher, poet, and storyteller who wrote in Arabic and Latin as well as Catalan. Another was Ausiàs March (1397-1459), a poet initially influenced by Dante and by the Occitan troubadours. March's own personality, however, led him towards a more stark and introspective verse.

March's poetry made effective use of the sound of Catalan -- a rougher, brusquer sound than one usually finds in Romance languages. An example of the linguistic quality of Catalan would be these lines cited by Arthur Terry in

Catalan Literature. They are followed by Jorge de Montemayor's 1560 translation into Castilian:

Qui no és trist, de mos dictats no cur,
o en algun temps que sia trist estat.

No cure de mis versos, ni los lea
quien no fuese muy triste, o lo haya sido.²

(Let no one care for my words who isn't sad
or who hasn't been so at some time.)

Even those who know neither language will note the predominance of monosyllables and consonant endings in the Catalan.

March announced in one of his poems that he was "lexant a part l'estil dels trobadors"³ ("leaving aside the troubadours' style"). He replaced it with a tortured literary personality that took him far beyond the conventions of courtly verse:

Colguen les gents ab alegria festes,
loant a Déu, entremesclant deports;
places, carrers, e delitables horts
sien cerquats ab recont de grans gestes;
e vaja yo los sepulcres cerquant,
interrogant ànimes infernades,
e respondran, car no són companyades
d'altre que mi en son continuu plant.⁴

(Let the people celebrate joyous holidays,
praising God and mingling sports;
let squares, streets, and delectable gardens
be sought out with songs of noble deeds,
while I go out in search of graves,
questioning the damned
and they'll answer, for I'm the only one
who keeps them company in their constant laments.)

Today March remains a strong influence on young Catalan poets, and his works continue to be widely read and sung. In fact, one of the newest poetry-publishing houses in Barcelona is called Ausiàs March Editions.

Another early figure worth mentioning is Joanot Martorell (ca. 1410-1468). A Valencian like March, Martorell has been called the first modern novelist. His greatest work, Tirant lo Blanc (1490), was cited by Miguel de Cervantes as "el mejor libro del mundo"⁵ ("the best book in the world"). Martorell has also had more recent admirers. The most prominent of them is Mario Vargas Llosa, a well-known Peruvian novelist who claims Martorell and William Faulkner as his two main teachers.⁶ Martorell was an active knight, and his two favorite themes in Tirant lo Blanc are sex and political power in the Mediterranean. The realistic descriptions of warfare, the psychological depth of characterization, and the mixture of flowing prose and colloquial speech have made him a key figure in the history of European literature.

In his treatment of sex and politics, Martorell made short shrift of traditional chivalric fantasies. In one passage, a knight named Hipòlit replies to Tirant's lady love Carmesina, who had offered to send several hairs to Tirant as a keepsake:

--No em valla Déu -- dix Hipòlit --si jo los prenc,
si ja no em dieu la significança per que són
estats més tres que quatre, que deu o vint. E com,
senyora!, pensa vostra altesa que siam en lo temps
antic, que usaven les gentes de llei de gràcia? Car
la donzella, com tenia algun enamorat e l'amava
en extrem grau, dava-li un ramellet de flors ben
perfumat, o un cabell o dos del seu cap, e aquell
se tenia per molt benaventurat. No, senyora, no,
que aqueix temps ja és passat. Lo que mon senyor
Tirant desia bé ho sé jo: que us pogués tenir en
un llit nua o en camisa; posat cas que lo llit no
fos perfumat, no s'hi donaria res. Mas si la majestat
vostra me dona tres cabells en present a Tirant, no

acostume jo tal cosa portar: trameteu-los-hi per
altri, o diga'm vostra excel.lència sots quina
esperança són eixits del vostre cap.

("May God punish me," said Hippolytus, "If I take them, unless you tell me the significance of their being three instead of four or ten or twenty. And really, my lady! Does your highness imagine that we're still back in the old days, when people followed the laws of grace? For a damsel who had some suitor and loved him in extreme degree would give him a well-perfumed little bunch of flowers or a hair or two from her head, and he considered himself very fortunate. No, my lady, no, that time is now past. I know quite well what my lord Tirant desires: to get you in bed, either naked or in your nightdress. If by chance the bed isn't perfumed, he won't care a bit. But if your majesty gives me three hairs as a present for Tirant, I'm not accustomed to carry such things around. Send them to him by someone else, or let your excellency tell me under what hope they've come out of your head.")

Both March and Martorell were major figures in the European Renaissance. If they remain generally unrecognized as such, this is only because they wrote in Catalan. Both are seen by their countrymen as forming part of a sophisticated and innovative literary past in which emotional directness was highly valued.

At the beginning of this early period, Catalonia was heavily influenced by Occitan literature. As time went on the Catalans developed separate traditions and modes of expression. Nonetheless, Catalan, as a language, has always been closer to Occitan than anything else. An example would be the word for bird: pájaro in Castilian, oiseau in French, aucel in Occitan, and ocell in Catalan. But the vitality and directness of the early Renaissance remain, at least in literature, far more alive in Catalonia than in Occitania.

These elements lead directly into the modern period. Indeed, poets in their twenties, like Ramon Pinyol, are still writing sonnets of love and revolution with caesuras in every line. During the late 1800's, this continuity was nourished by the revival of the Jocs Florals (Floral Games), public poetry contests with their roots in the troubadour era. They came to play an important part in the life of Barcelona and of the Catalan area as a whole. For the last hundred years poets have had a special position there, acting as spokesmen for Catalan culture and political aspirations.⁸

Between 1500 and 1800 Catalan life stagnated, both because of the shift of world trade from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic and because of a series of civil wars in which Catalans took the losing side. Nonetheless, Catalonia was still the main center of Spanish commerce (as opposed to the shipment of gold through Seville). With the beginnings of industrialization in the nineteenth century, the Catalans and the Basques were the first to build railroads, establish banks, and keep abreast of advances in Europe.⁹ At the same time Catalan, which had remained the spoken tongue but had nearly died out as a literary language, was taken up again by a group of intellectuals who were determined to make it an instrument of modern thought, and who also wanted political autonomy within Spain. They were supported in these endeavors by an important sector of the bourgeoisie. In the late nineteenth century Catalanist political parties were formed, Catalan newspapers and magazines were founded, and

first-rate poets and novelists like Joan Maragall and Narcís Oller were published and encouraged.¹⁰

The period from 1870 to 1939 was an intense and vital one in Catalonia. Industry developed rapidly, Barcelona spilled forth from its medieval walls and invaded the surrounding countryside. At the same time, anarchism took hold among the workers, producing such phenomena as a system of schools and lecture halls called Workers' Lyceums and later on Free Women, a radical feminist organization with a membership of twenty thousand.¹¹ Theater groups, leftist organizations, newspapers and magazines flourished everywhere. Barcelona became one of the most exciting cities in Western Europe.

Along with the rise of avant-garde culture and radical politics, there was also a strong movement for Catalan autonomy. This movement, which was a response to the stagnation and conservatism of Madrid, reached its culmination in the Second Republic. During the 1930's Catalonia was a self-governing area with its own parliament and chief executive. Public signs and announcements were printed in Catalan and Castilian.¹² A bilingual school system was created, and became one of the most progressive in the world.¹³ Catalan itself, as a language, was renovated and modernized -- in particular by Pompeu Fabra, whose Diccionari general de la llengua catalana (General Dictionary of the Catalan Language)¹⁴ remains the standard one.

During the 1920's and 1930's, a number of outstanding

poets appeared. Among them were J.V. Foix and Joan Salvat-Papasseit, experimentalists with one foot in surrealism and futurism and the other in the medieval and Renaissance tradition. Their poetry is an unusual combination of whimsy and high seriousness, qualities that also coexist in the work of Joan Miró, Catalonia's most famous twentieth-century painter, and that until the Civil War seemed to be the special fingerprint of Catalan genius. The combination is still visible in a younger writer like "Miquel DescLOT" (Miquel Muñoz), whose poems bear such titles as "Ella, la goja immortal, se m'aparegué sobtadament i amb la fitora d'os de lleó em punyalejà les pupil·les condormides" ("She, the Immortal Fairy, Appeared to Me Suddenly and with Her Harpoon of Lionbone Pierced My Drowsy Pupils"). This mixture of whimsy and seriousness is, to some extent, the spirit of architects like Gaudí, whose work mostly dates from the late nineteenth century. During the 1930's, also, a series of Catalan translations from the Greek and Roman classics appeared. Though out of print since 1939, they remain the most comprehensive ever done in Spain.¹⁵ At the same time, a lively popular culture flourished in the local cabarets and theaters.¹⁶

The victory of the fascists in 1939 brought all this to an end. Many of the most prominent intellectuals went into exile -- some to Latin America but most to France, where they lived through Hitler's invasion and the Vichy regime.¹⁷ Catalan was banned from public use, and large

numbers of Catalan books were burned. Offices were hung with signs reading "No ladres. Habla el idioma del imperio español." ("Don't bark. Speak the language of the Spanish Empire.") For writers who stayed behind, it was a time of pain and unreality. Catalonia's school system had been dismantled, and her language seemed in danger of becoming a dialect. No visitors came from abroad. Foreign periodicals were banned. The Spanish press, meanwhile, devoted itself to diatribes against the evils of Communism, separatism, and freemasonry. The twentieth century itself seemed to have been driven underground.¹⁸

All of Spain was desperately poor in the years after the Civil War. Catalan children grew up not knowing how to read or write their native language. Businessmen made haste to appease the central government, speaking (as some of them had during the late nineteenth century) a grotesque pidgin-Castilian that had the graces neither of that language nor of Catalan. Very slowly during the 1940's and 1950's, a few books -- mostly Catalan classics of one sort or another -- were reprinted for circulation in limited editions. But in the meantime a generation was growing up that had never known the trauma of the Civil War, or that remembered it only vaguely from childhood.

Then, in the 1960's, things began to change. Spain started to boom, developing and maintaining one of the world's highest industrial growth rates. New factories and blocks of flats sprang up in and around the big cities. Cheap labor

from places like Aragon and Andalusia flooded into Catalonia, along with capital from Europe and the United States. In one decade the nation was transformed from something a bit less than it had been before the war into the largest industrial complex on the Mediterranean.¹⁹

Today the overwhelming impression, as in northern Italy ten years ago, is of rapid and chaotic industrial expansion. Everywhere streets are being torn up and new buildings erected. Vast, bleak housing projects for workers rise on the outskirts of cities, often remaining without vital services such as schools and hospitals for several years.²⁰ Cars and trucks, factories and power plants spew filth into the air, casting a permanent grey pall over the downtown sections. At the same time, in the stores and boutiques, in the wealthy suburbs, and in the daily life of Barcelona, Valencia, or Palma de Majorca, it is obvious that, more than ever before, there is money in Catalonia. Even the physical contrast between the healthier, taller young people and their elders is impressive. For it is now possible, as it was not for most people right after the war, to rear children on a diet that includes milk and meat as well as chickpeas and potato omelettes. For some people, indeed, Catalonia is a very profitable place. The vast amount of tax evasion practiced by the rich -- one of those public scandals nobody can do anything about -- makes it even more profitable.²¹

At the base of all this prosperity are, on the one hand, the unskilled "immigrants" from the rest of Spain and, on

the other, foreign capital. But the Catalan bourgeoisie (along with the Basque) has always been the most industrious in the land, and has been quick to take advantage of the opportunities offered. For them, also, this new-found wealth has meant an increase in self-confidence. And their sons and daughters at the universities of Barcelona and Valencia have embraced Catalanism even more enthusiastically than their elders. The essential justice of their cause is, to me, self-evident. At times, however, there are elements of race and class prejudice in their feelings. Most Catalans are not rich. They do, however, have a rather middle class way of looking at things. The industrial proletariat, on the other hand, is mostly composed of workers from other parts of Spain. In addition, Catalans are among the more "European-looking" Spaniards. Their coloration tends to be light, and they sometimes look upon southerners much as other Spaniards look upon Moroccans -- as a semi-savage race somewhere between man and ape.²²

The Catalan economic boom has slackened recently, but the most immediate result of this slowing down has been a rise in political activity. Catalonia has been swept by strikes in the past three years. Its businessmen have emerged from their ostrich-like posture to complain about government discrimination, cultural repression, and the lack of basic human rights. There is a semi-underground Catalan Assembly and a comparable Assembly of the Valencian Land. Both bodies are broad coalitions of political parties that range from

Christian Democrats to Maoists, and both demand democracy²³ and self-determination for their areas. Now, with the death of Franco and succession of Juan Carlos de Borbón, Catalans are expecting -- and often fighting for -- a better life.

There are, of course, many differences between the present and the 1930's. One interesting change is that Catalanism is far stronger now than it was then in Valencia and the Balearic Islands. In 1930 such areas were still provincial, semi-feudal societies, dominated by landowning classes heavily dependent on Madrid. Now they are far closer to the Principality (the four provinces of Barcelona, Girona [Gerona], Lleida [Lérida], and Tarragona), and far more militant in their demands for autonomy and linguistic freedom.²⁴

In the past fifteen years Valencia, the Balearics, and the Principality have all undergone a cultural transformation. Literary exiles, including poets like "Pere Quart" (Joan Oliver) and Agustí Bartra, have returned. Restrictions on the publication of books have eased. Writers like Salvador Espriu and Mercè Rodoreda, who were considered promising before 1939, have come into their own. And a number of completely postwar figures like Terenci Moix, a young experimental novelist, or poets such as Gabriel Ferrater and Vicent Andrés Estellés have emerged. Joan Fuster, Joaquim Molas, and other critics have again tried to give Catalan writers a sense of their own special traditions and possibilities.

With Catalan culture again in the ascendant, this is a good moment to survey the poetry of the last sixty years.

One of the most striking things about it -- especially considering what a tight little world Catalonia is -- is its diversity. From Foix's surrealism to Ferrater's conversational directness, this book is full of the most varied visions and voices. It is this spectrum of styles and sensibilities, perhaps, that marks Catalan most clearly as a mature modern literature. The present selection covers the period from approximately 1920 to the present. In it, I have tried to discuss in depth some of the major figures, while also giving an overview of Catalan verse in the twentieth century. I have omitted poets such as Carles Riba and "Guerau de Liost" (Jaume Bofill i Mates). It seems to me that their work belongs stylistically to what we would call either Romantic or Symbolist verse.

Catalan poetry is in good health. The future of Catalan as a language, however, remains in doubt. The daily press, the movies, and -- most important -- television are mainly Castilian. In the public schools courses in Catalan language and literature are now more common, but all other subjects are still taught in Castilian. Thus, for the common folk -- the lower middle class, the skilled workers, the peasants -- Catalan remains a language for private use only. For them change will be much more difficult than for the intellectuals. Yet it is to them that change must come if an independent Catalan culture is to survive. Large sections of the Madrid government still have scant sympathy for Catalonia. In that respect, at least, things have not changed much since 1939.

Figures like Prime Minister Adolfo Suárez are still determined that Castile shall triumph, as is evident from the reign of terror in the Basque country and the exclusion of "separatists" from future political life. One can only hope that the spirit of Catalonia, which since 1900 has produced such outstanding literature and art, will finally be able to free itself from Franco's policy of slow suffocation.

Notes for Chapter I

¹A good general discussion of Catalonia's national character and origins is Jaume Vicens i Vives' Notícia de Catalunya (Barcelona: Destino, 1954).

²London: Ernest Benn Ltd., 1972, p. 3. All English translations in this dissertation are my own.

³Poesies, II (Barcelona: Barcino, 1952), p. 83.

⁴Ibid., p. 46.

⁵El ingenioso hidalgo Don Quijote de la Mancha (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1940), p. 40 (Primera parte, Cap. vi).

⁶See "Carta de batalla por Tirant lo Blanc," Revista de Occidente, XXIV (January 1969), 1-21.

⁷Barcelona: Seix Barral, 1969, II, p. 138.

⁸An interesting discussion of the relation between Catalan authors and their nation can be found in Angel Carmona's Les dues Catalunyaes (Barcelona: Ariel, 1967).

⁹For an excellent overall history of modern Catalonia, see Pierre Vilar's La Catalogne dans l'Espagne moderne, 3 vols., (Paris: S.E.V.P.E.N., 1962).

¹⁰See Jordi Solé-Tura, Catalanisme i revolució burgesa (Barcelona: Edicions 62, 1967).

¹¹See Mujeres libres España 1936-1939, ed. Mary Nash (Barcelona: Tusquets, 1975).

¹²See anon., Catalunya sota el règim franquista (Paris: Edicions Catalanes de Paris, 1973), pp. 27-57.

¹³A vivid description of this school system is given by Francisco Candel in Los otros catalanes (Barcelona: Península, 1972), pp. 91-98, 273-281. For example, Candel on p. 280 comments that "Era una enseñanza europea. Aulas con sol, ventiladas, patios con jardines, niños i niñas juntos, nada de lecciones de memoria tipo loro, se nos enseñaba jugando. Se cantaba, se aprendía danza. Los alumnos no estábamos amontonados. No teníamos pupitres, sino amplias mesas planas y para varios niños, como en tertulia, con jarros de flores. La escuela constaba de todos los adelantos: biblioteca, botiquín, duchas de aseo, hombre anatómico, esqueleto, máquina neumática, microscopio, mapas, grandes láminas...

En el verano nos llevaba un mes fuera, 'a colonias'."

(It was a European education. Sunny, ventilated classrooms, courtyards with gardens, boys and girls together, no parrotlike memorization. We learned while we played. We sang, we studied dance. The students weren't lined up in rows. Instead of desks, we had large tables, like in a meeting, with vases of flowers. The school had all the most modern facilities: a library, first aid, showers, an anatomy model, a skeleton, an air pump, a microscope, maps, large illustrative sheets...

In the summer, they took us away for a month to camps.)

¹⁴4th ed., Barcelona: E.D.H.A.S.A., 1968. Fabra headed the lexicographic section of the Institut d'Estudis Catalans (Institute of Catalan Studies). The author of many grammar books, he orchestrated the successful effort to regularize and modernize Catalan grammar, orthography, and vocabulary.

¹⁵As of January, 1939 this series, which was published by the Fundació Bernat Metge (Bernat Metge Foundation) under the title Col·lecció Catalana de Clàssics Grecs i Latins (Catalan Collection of Greek and Latin Classics) included eighty-four titles. For a complete listing, see Catalunya sota el règim franquista, pp. 39-41.

¹⁶See José María Carandell, Guia secreta de Barcelona (Madrid: Al-Borah, 1974) and "Sempronio," Los secretos de Barcelona (Barcelona: Barna, 1960).

¹⁷On pages seven and eight of his introduction to Mercè Rodoreda's La meva Cristina i altres contes (My Christina and Other Stories, Barcelona: Edicions 62, 1967), Joaquim Molas quotes her description of the early 1940's: "El món d'abans de la guerra em semblava un món irreal i no m'havia refet encara. I el temps que vaig tardar! Tot cremava per dintre, però imperceptiblement ja s'anava tornant una mica anacrònic. I això és potser el que feia més mal. No hauria pogut escriure una novel·la baldament m'haguessin apallissat. Estava massa deslligada de tot, o potser massa terriblement lligada a tot, encara que això pugui semblar una paradoxa. En general, la literatura em feia venir vòmit. Només tolerava els més grans: Cervantes, Shakespeare, Dostoievski... Estic segura que mai no he estat tan lúcida com aleshores; potser perquè menjava poc." ("The prewar world seemed unreal to me, and I still hadn't reconstructed it. And the time I spent! Everything burned inside, but imperceptibly it was becoming a little anachronistic. And perhaps this is what hurt most. I couldn't have written a novel if they'd beaten it out of me. I was too disconnected from everything, or maybe too terribly bound up with everything, though that might sound like a paradox. In general, literature made me feel like vomiting. I could only stand the greats: Cervantes, Shakespeare, Dostoyevsky. I'm sure I've never been as lucid as

I was then, possibly because I hardly ate anything")

¹⁸See Catalunya sota el règim franquista, pp. 221-453.

¹⁹See Ramon Trias-Fargas, Introducció a l'economia catalana (Barcelona: Edicions 62, 1972).

²⁰See Frederic Miralles, Josep Miró i Ardèvol, and Ernest Sena, La Catalunya pobre (Barcelona: Nova Terra, 1974), pp. 85-181.

²¹For a brilliant anatomy of Spanish society in the wake of its "boom," see Eliseo Bayo's De qué viven y por qué no mueren los españoles (Barcelona: Diosa, 1975). For specific studies of Majorca and Valencia, see Antoni Serra's Gent al carrer (Palma de Majorca: Editorial Moll, 1971) and Josep Vicent Marqués' País perplex (Valencia: L'Estel, 1974).

²²The best book on the situation of "immigrants" in general is Candel's Los otros catalanes.

²³Though it is a bit out of date, a good introduction to the intricacies of current Catalan politics can be found in the anonymous El sistema dels partits polítics en la Catalunya d'avui (France: Edicions Catalunya, 1974).

²⁴The best basic study of Valencia as a part of greater Catalonia is Joan Fuster's Nosaltres els valencians (Barcelona: Edicions 62, 1962). A comparable treatment of Majorca is Josep Melià's Els mallorquins (Palma de Mallorca: Daedalus, 1967).

II

THE POETRY

For Catalan poetry, the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were a period of feverish and concentrated development. In 1850, the Catalan language was still an insignificant regional dialect. By 1920 it had developed into a modern tongue with one of the richest literatures in Europe. Though 1920 is the starting point for this study, a brief survey of nineteenth-century Catalan verse will be of value here.

The beginning of the Catalan literary renaixença (renaissance) is usually given as 1833. In that^{year} Bonaventura Carles Aribau, a middle class Catalan living in Madrid, published "A la pàtria" ("To the Fatherland"). Effectively and simply, Aribau's poem evoked the special and intimate ties between a writer and his native tongue.

Si, quant me trobo sol, parl ab meu esperit,
En llemosi li parl, que llengua altra no sent:
E ma boca llavors no sab mentir ni ment,
Puig surten mas rahons del centre de mon pit¹

(If, when I'm alone, I speak with my spirit,
 In Catalan I speak, for it hears no other language
 And then my mouth cannot and does not lie
 For my words rise up from the center of my breast.)

Aribau's successors, who organized and participated in the Jocs Florals, developed a poetry of nostalgic love for the Catalan countryside and history. Their work was generally modest in scope and ambition. Not until 1877 did a really major Catalan poet emerge. This was Jacint Verdaguer (1845-

1902), a country priest whose two epics (L'Atlàntida and Canigó)² shocked Catalan literature into a new and broadened sense of its own possibilities. Vast in breadth and resonances, demanding in structure and vocabulary, Verdaguer's epics mark the first of several giant steps towards literary maturity. Thematically, L'Atlàntida (The Atlantiad, 1877) is based on the revolt of the Titans, the destruction of Atlantis, and Columbus' discovery of America. The Pyrenees provide the setting for Canigó (1885), which is the story of the victory of the Franks over the Moors and of Christianity over the pagan or fairy gods. With Verdaguer, nineteenth-century Catalan literature jumped from approximately nowhere to the level of authors like Victor Hugo.³

One immediate effect of Verdaguer's success was to inspire other young authors. Among these were the naturalistic novelist Narcís Oller (1845-1930) and the playwright and poet Àngel Guimerà (1845-1924), both of whom produced works of European stature. One of Oller's greatest admirers was Emile Zola, who wrote the introduction to the French translation of his novel La papallona (The Butterfly, 1882).⁴ Oller and Guimerà have been widely translated. They remain popular classics in the way Dickens and Shaw are in English. Verdaguer, Guimerà, and Oller represent the full flowering of the literary renaixença. They were followed by a school known as Modernists.⁵ This group included the architect Antoni Gaudí (1852-1926), the painter and author Santiago Russinyol (1861-1931), and -- in a vague way -- the poet

Joan Maragall (1860-1911).

Maragall's work, though only a few decades removed from Verdaguer's, is vastly different in tone and degree of sophistication. An accomplished translator of German authors like Goethe and Nietzsche, Maragall brought to his work a European literary sense beyond anything Verdaguer had possessed.⁶ Sensual, intimate, and also deeply concerned with public issues,⁷ Maragall's poetry establishes him as a major transitional figure between nineteenth and twentieth-century verse. Such qualities come together in a poem like "Paternal," written after an anarchist bombing in Barcelona.

Tornant del Liceu la nit del 7
de novembre de 1893

Furiat va esclatant l'odi per la terra,
regalen sang les colltorçades testes,
i cal anà' a les festes
amb pit ben esforçat, com a la guerra.

A cada esclat mortal -- la gent trèmula es gira:
la crueltat que avança, -- la por que s'enretira,
se van partint el món...
Mirant el fill que mama, -- la mare que sospira,
el pare s'arruga el front.

Pro l'infant, innocent,
que deixa, satisfet, la buidada mamella,
se mira an ell, -- se mira an ella,
i riu barbarament.⁸

(Returning from the Liceu opera
house, the night of November 7, 1893)

Raging hatred explodes through the land,
blood pours from heads on twisted necks,
and to go out at night
you need a strong heart, as to a war.

At every mortal blast, the trembling people whirl.
The cruelty that advances, the fear that retreats

divide the world between them...
 Seeing his son at the breast, and the sighing mother,
 the father wrinkles his brow.

But the innocent child
 who satisfied, releases the emptied nipple,
 stares at him, stares at her,
 and laughs barbarously.)

The groundwork for modern Catalan poetry was completed by two Majorcan poets -- Joan Alcover (1854-1926) and Miquel Costa i Llobera (1854-1922) -- and by the critic Eugeni d'Ors (1882-1954). D'Ors and his followers, collectively known as noucentistes (twentieth-centuryists), broke with the individualistic Romanticism of Maragall and his contemporaries. Instead, writers like Josep Carner (1884-1970), Guerau de Liost (1878-1933), and Carles Riba (1893-1959) developed a poetry of aesthetic distance, irony, and a new kind of attention to form. Such poetry consciously attempted to recoup Catalan literature's lost centuries of development and to reestablish contact with Renaissance humanism -- a tradition felt to have been broken off after the time of March and Martorell.⁹

One example of noucentista verse would be this poem by Riba, from his Primer llibre d'estances (First Book of Stanzas, 1919):

Com el cabdill que amb peu alat
va passant entremig de sa gent adormida
i tusta gentilment a l'espalla fornida
de cad'un dels qui en son pensament ja ha triat;
i ells van alçant-se i prenen l'espassa del combat:

així tu, Joia, te m'emmenes
de dins el pit covard els mots com un estol;
dia i nit forem junts i els reconec a penes:
dormiren muts, fins ara que deixen mon redol
amb una estranya música que fa un batec de vol.

Bé sé, però, sots la bandera
quanta de força em robes: cada mot per mi era
un torrent de ma sang, set anys del meu voler.
I sempre la conquesta fuig davant de llur fe...
Joia, torna'm l'estol, torna'm el cant enrera.

Sóc com el pare que jaquí
la fillada guerrera i espera dalt la torre.
Buit dels mots de mon cant, en va darrera els corre
mon deler: un dia encara ton manament diví
me'n prendrà més, com altres fills novençans de mi.¹⁰

(Like the leader with winged foot
 who passes amidst his sleeping people
 and gracefully taps the sturdy backs
 of those whom in thought he's already chosen,
 and they slowly arise and seize the sword of combat,

thus you, Joy, bring forth
 words from my fearful breast like a fleet;
 day and night we were together and I barely knew them.
 They slept mutely, till now they leave my clearing
 with an alien music that beats like wings.

But well I know, beneath your banner,
 how much force you steal from me. For me each word was
 a torrent of my blood, seven years of will.
 And always the conquest flees before their faith...
 Joy, turn my fleet back, turn back my song.

I'm like a father who's left
 his warrior sons and waits atop a tower.
 Emptied of my song's words, in vain my longing
 runs behind them. One day again your divine command
 will take more from me, like other newborn sons.)

By 1920, Riba had established himself both as an outstanding translator, most notably of The Odyssey, and as an original poet of great learning. In his work we find echoes of March and ^{the} Catalan Renaissance poet Joan Roig de Corella, of Dante and the stilnovisti, and of contemporaries such as Mallarmé and Rilke.¹¹ Though noucentisme generally lacked the vitality of both Maragall and the twentieth-century avant-garde, it also formed the point of departure for modern Catalan verse. In particular, it served to place

a final polish of culture and formal flexibility on Catalan as a literary language.

Modern Catalan poetry begins after 1915, when one begins to find a new combination of stylistic freedom and direct speech. Although quite different in many ways, both Joan Salvat-Papasseit¹² and J.V. Foix reveal this combination. Both poets felt the liberating influence of the futurist and surrealist schools. Salvat, in poems like "Drama in the Port" and "Wedding March," makes use of Apollinaire's visual experiments. Salvat's work also reveals the influence of Marinetti and the futurists -- particularly in his fascinated descriptions of Barcelona's cranes, ships, and streetcars. Such influences, however, are relatively superficial. What really is of interest in Salvat's work is the concrete, detail-packed imagery and the conversational tone. In place of "literary tradition," one finds a passion for popular culture -- songs, circuses, Charlie Chaplin -- and a sometimes poignant, sometimes joyous love affair with the physical and social universe around him.

Along with Salvat, J.V. Foix is the other major Catalan poet of the 1920's. In an early sonnet like "If I Could Reconcile Reason and Madness," one can see traces of the noucentistes, of the nineteenth-century Symbolists, and of medieval and Renaissance authors like Guido Cavalcanti and Francis Petrarch. Deeply conscious of a specifically Mediterranean cultural tradition, Foix attempts to reaffirm classical values in the face of a violent and chaotic twentieth century. His poems often comment indirectly on political

events. "At the Entrance...", for example, responds to the brutal beginnings of the Spanish Civil War. "I Arrived in that Town...", one of his finest works, expresses the sense of disorientation that came over many Catalans after 1939.

Foix's attitude towards modern life is somewhat more ambivalent than Salvat's. "At the Foot of a Cyclopean Wall..." celebrates the mechanical world of airplanes and industrial draftsmen, but it also links this world to pagan Mediterranean traditions and the "Eternal Ungraspable." In his efforts to reunite a fragmented world through a search for meaningful cultural roots, Foix is close both to Eugeni d'Ors' programmatic humanism and to such North American figures as T.S. Eliot and Ezra Pound.

In Catalonia, as in all of Europe, the 1930's were a time of increased political commitment among poets. At the forefront of the movement towards revolutionary verse in Catalonia were Pere Quart and, a few years later, Agustí Bartra. Quart, in a poem like "Useless Stars, Useless Bell" or in the postwar "Paid Vacation," balances direct political statement against an exuberantly surrealistic imagination. In part, both of these poems are attacks on public indifference and passivity. "Paid Vacation," however, strikes much closer to home. Its target is the cowed and obedient bourgeoisie of the 1940's. Quart's language is brusque and direct, often edged with self-mockery. Though this is per-

haps his most typical tone, he can evoke a wide variety of moods, ranging from the whimsy of pieces like "Pig" from his Bestiary to the bittersweet nostalgia of "Songs of Exile," written shortly after the Civil War.

Like Quart, Bartra can be both declamatory and lyrical. His Whitman-influenced "Many" is one of the finest poems to come out of the Spanish Civil War. "Many" is Whitmanesque in more than style. Something that has made Whitman a difficult poet for twentieth-century North American authors to assimilate is his deep identification with the United States. This quality of national rapport is one of the distinguishing features of Catalan verse. Most of the authors in this anthology identify strongly -- though at times angrily -- with the Catalan nation. Their sense of deep and intimate solidarity, along with the feeling that poets are national spokesmen (as they have been in Ireland, another colonized European nation) is one main source of the energy of Catalan verse.

If a certain joyous flamboyance marks poems like Salvat's "Wedding March," bitterness and irony are the characteristic tones of the postwar. One can find them in poems like Quart's "Paid Vacation," and they are particularly pervasive in the work of Salvador Espriu. Silence, death, a revulsion against the ugliness and sterility of postwar life dominate Espriu's work. In "Suburban Square" the poet, "chattering away/ to myself in Catalan/ defunct language of funeral chants," stands in contrast to a world of censored films, hurdy-gurdies, and public drunkenness. In defeated

Catalonia, the poet has become "a one-eyed man," king among the blind subjects of a totalitarian state. Yet for all this, Espriu in "Trial Hymn in the Temple," one of his most famous poems, still loves "with a desperate grief,/ this my poor,/ dirty, sad, unlucky homeland." Silence and death are also psychological themes for Espriu, and seem to be the coordinates of his private sensibility: a dark and anguished lyricism that finds its echo in the external world.

Though all three of them make good use of the breakthroughs of the 1920's, Quart, Bartra, and Espriu are all under too much ^{pressure} to worry about experimentation for its own sake. With figures like Estellés, however, we re-enter the world of the avant-garde. Estellés, one of the two entirely postwar figures in this collection, has certain stylistic affinities with Andalusian poets like Federico García Lorca. Part of the affinity lies in Estellés' dominant imagery: a world of interpenetrating violence, sexuality, and nature.¹³ Although one does not wish to push the idea too far, it is intriguing to note that Estellés is indeed from Valencia, a lush, more passionate area often described as the Catalan Andalusia.

Estellés is the first postwar poet in this anthology. The Principality, however, has also produced several major poets since 1950: Of these, the most influential has been Gabriel Ferrater. Ferrater's career was cut short by his suicide in 1972. In the twelve years preceding his death,

his poetic impact was tremendous. Less rhetorical than any major poet since Salvat, Ferrater's work at first glance seems entirely natural and intimate. Actually, he was both better-read and more in control of his materials than Salvat had been. Although "naturalness" is always something of an illusion in literature, Ferrater's determination to make Catalan speech-rhythms the basis of his poetic language influenced a number of younger writers. Its fiercely concentrated imagery keeps his verse from falling into prosaicism.

A work of this kind can offer little more than an introduction to the literature it represents. Many of these poets certainly deserve separate studies in English. What I hope to suggest, however, is the extraordinary range and vitality of modern Catalan verse. When one thinks that so much outstanding poetry has come from a nation of only seven million, many of whom have been prevented from learning to read and write their language, is really is astonishing. The usual banalities of dialect and "regional" literature are conspicuous by their absence. Instead one finds a mixture of high sophistication, receptiveness to international experimentation, and a deep rootedness in the Catalan nation. I hope that this discussion and anthology may begin to make North Americans in general -- and poets in particular -- aware of one of the finest modern literatures in Europe.

Notes for Chapter II

¹La pàtria: trobes (Barcelona: Biblioteca de Catalunya, 1933), p. 4.

²Both L'Atlàntida and Canigó are included in Verdaguer's Obres completes (Barcelona: Selecta, 1943).

³An interesting discussion of this period of Catalan poetry can be found in Pere Gimferrer's introd. to Àngel Guimerà's Antologia poètica. Gimferrer is especially good on the unusually strong narrative element in nineteenth and twentieth-century Catalan verse. This element can be found not only in Verdaguer and Guimerà but also in works as recent as Agustí Bartra's Marsius i Adela (Barcelona: Selecta, 1957).

⁴In its French edition, Le papillon, trans. Albert Savine (Paris: E. Giraud, 1886).

⁵The best overall study of Modernism is E. Valenti i Fiol's El primer modernismo literario catalán y sus fundamentos ideológicos (Barcelona: Ariel, 1973).

⁶See Arthur Terry, La poesia de Joan Maragall (Barcelona: Edicions de la Revista, 1963). Maragall's translations of Goethe (pp. 271-422) and Nietzsche (pp. 485-488) can be found in his Obres completes, I (Barcelona: Selecta, 1970).

⁷One of the best studies of Maragall's political views and of his career as secretary and columnist for the daily newspaper Diario de Barcelona is Josep Benet's Maragall i la setmana tràgica (Barcelona: Edicions 62, 1964).

⁸Obres completes, I, p. 90.

⁹E.g., d'Ors commented in a piece entitled "Vers l'humanisme" ("Towards Humanism," Obra catalana completa: Glosari 1906-1910 (Barcelona: Selecta, 1950), p. 189: "Au, de pressa, de pressa, vinguen Museus, vinguen Acadèmies, vinguen Exposicions, vinga Urbanitat, vinga Frivolitat, vinga Galeria de catalanes formoses, vinga el desig de tots, i el valor de tots, i l'esforç de tots, perquè avui, en el mes de juny, en el jorn de les Vestals, els catalans, santament ambiciosos, ens hem posat al cap d'aconseguir, en la seva ruta vers l'Humanisme, els navilis de Pantagruel, fill de Gargantua!" ("Quickly, quickly, let us have Museums and Academies, Exhibitions and Education, Culture and Public Life, Urbanity and Frivolity, a Gallery of Beautiful Catalan Women, let us have the desire and the courage and the effort

of all, because today, in the month of June, on the day of the Vestal Virgins, we Catalans, in our holy ambition, are determined to catch up with the ships of Pantagruel, son of Gargantua, in their voyage towards Humanism!")

¹⁰Obres completes, I (Barcelona: Edicions 62, 1965), p. 85.

¹¹See Arthur Terry's introduction to Riba's Obres completes, I, pp. 7-39.

¹²The seven poets briefly discussed here (Salvat, Foix, Quart, Bartra, Espriu, Ferrater and Estellés) will receive fuller treatment in later chapters. For pertinent critical studies of their works, see my bibliography.

¹³See, e.g., "Romance somnábulo" ("Sleepwalking Ballad") in The Selected Poems of Federico García Lorca (Norfolk; New Directions, 1955), pp. 64-68.

III

JOAN SALVAT-PAPASSEIT

CANTO LA LLUITA¹ (I SING OF BATTLE)

Cavaller d'un corset
só jo l'incendiari de mots d'adolescent
Blasmo els déus a ple vol:
I'arraulit bestiari
tem el fuet del meu cant!
I he maridat la lluna
(Però no dormo amb Ella si el filisteu governa els
meus domenys.)(p. 113)

(Cavalier on his steed
with flaming mane
that's me setting adolescent words on fire
I curse the gods in full flight:
the cringing herd
fears the whip of my song!
And I've married the moon
(But I don't sleep with Her if philistines govern my
domains).

The Catalan avant-garde, in a way curiously suggestive of New York in the 1940's (when exiled surrealists such as André Breton, André Masson and Matta influenced painters like Arshile Gorky or Willem de Kooning)² came to life under the stimulus of World War I. By 1917, a number of European artists fleeing war-desolated homelands had settled temporarily in Barcelona. Perhaps the most notable of these was Francis Picabia, whose magazine 391 was for a time published there. Several Catalan poets and painters were quick to respond to new developments in Zurich, in Paris, and also in their own city. Josep Junoy, for example, published many poems like this typographically experimental "Art poètica" (1920):³

Z
A

Another of Junoy's "calligrammes" (Apollinaire's phrase for this genre), entitled "Oda a Guynemer" ("Ode to Guynemer"), was republished in France by Apollinaire along with a commentary.⁴ Junoy represents one aspect of Catalan response to the avant-garde: fairly shallow imitation.

Also influential, however, were writers like Joan Salvat-Papasseit. From a working class background,⁵ Salvat caught the experimental excitement in the air and did spontaneously what few European avant-gardists were able to achieve through diligent effort. He responded enthusiastically and lovingly to the seething life of the streets and of machinery. An example of such response would be his poem "5 4 0 4 5," where mechanical things, sexuality, and the writer's own creative act are swiftly brought together in the first three lines:

The turning dynamo moves its burning phalluses
in CIRCUMVOLUTION
I've never seen more majesty than in this pen of fire

The movement of the streetcar is evoked by the repeated "TROLLEY TROLLEY TROLLEY," suggestive of the rhythmic turning of wheels and their clicking as they move along the track. Salvat was an admirer of Marinetti. The statement "I've never seen more majesty than in this pen of fire" brings to mind the Italian author's whole futurist position.⁶ But the statement also falls easily within Salvat's felt enthusiasm

in the poem, and seems less forced than many of Marinetti's pronouncements.⁷

Salvat's poem, however, is not purely celebratory. For, having set up this initial framework, he then insists in a somewhat challenging tone that he is "the equal of anyone in this alley." Well, the age of industry is supposedly the age of democracy, and Salvat's statement seems positive enough. Yet its very declamatory quality makes one a bit uneasy -- especially thinking of the poor, tubercular Salvat, always ill and living from hand to mouth.⁸ The uneasiness, moreover, is reinforced by what follows: a sense of the blank anonymity of large cities:

It makes you sick everyone knows some foreign language
and surely this old man doesn't know my name

Another wears eyeglasses
 with dirty lenses
Against his nose Against his nose
BECAUSE THE INSPECTOR

The dirty eye glasses and the ticket inspector continue the poem's downward spin from sexuality and creativity into the grubby reality of petty bureaucrats, dirt, and aloneness. At this low point, Salvat is only saved by the conductor's wink, which suddenly reestablishes the intimate sympathy of ordinary folk. This other kind of equality, however, is very different from Salvat's previous declaration. Instead of the Rights of Man, we have something closer to "the Complicity of the Downtrodden." Meanwhile, the outer cityscape bursts gloriously into view through Barcelona's Arc of Triumph, which looms up visually on the page. Salvat, searching for his wallet, finds he has none. He has no wallet, one

imagines, because he is too poor or too bohemian to carry one. The last word in the poem ("friend") draws the reader as well into Salvat's conspiracy with the conductor. We too are assumed to be downtrodden, and Salvat leaves the poem addressed to his peers.

Although "5 4 0 4 5" is certainly not Salvat's best poem, it gives us a useful introduction to several of his preoccupations: sexuality, Barcelona's urban and industrial landscape, his own uneasy feeling of being an outsider (which he certainly was among highly educated noucentistes like d'Ors, Riba, and even Foix), and his strong empathy with people in general.

A loyal and respectable husband and father, Salvat was also the most erotic Catalan poet in the fifty years between Joan Maragall and Gabriel Ferrater. As straightforward lyricism, this is illustrated by a poem like "Epigram:"

A perfume of colors invaded Margot
She dressed quickly:
Lest anyone know the scent of her breasts
she placed a flower
on her fresh clothes

In a more complex way, it is revealed in a work like "La femme aux oranges." In both cases, though more obviously in "Epigram," Salvat draws heavily on folk materials. The popular song quality of "Epigram" is underlined by its reiterated three-beat rhythmic units:

Un perfum/ de colors/ ha invadit/ a Margot

The pattern is repeated at several other points in the poem:

S'ha vesti/ da de pressa

/ / / / /
Perquè hom/ no sabés

This rhythm, together with the "innocent" imagery of fresh clothes, flowers, sweet smells and morning reinforces the unselfconscious celebration of youth, spring, and sexuality we often find in folksong.

Likewise, in "La femme aux oranges," we find, beneath the unusual metro-woman conceit (though not really so unusual if one thinks of the whole tradition of woman-boat comparisons), a cataloguing of feminine graces. This cataloguing suggests any number of celebrations of beautiful women disrobing or in their baths. Salvat himself takes care to explain the metaphor in his opening comment. As with "Epigram," "innocent" sensuality ends the poem when la femme aux oranges, perhaps sitting opposite Salvat on the train, without further ado opens her blouse and shows him her nipples.

In addition to sexuality, both poems also show Salvat's capacity for finding the wonderful in everyday life. It is perhaps this quality, more than any other, that pervades his verse and gives it a special flavor. In "Drama in the Port," a sparsely literal evocation of oceanliners, lights, buoys and dredges simultaneously radiates a sense of the mystery of apparently commonplace things. The first two lines ("SLOSH OF OCEAN/ IN THE NIGHT") are allowed to echo alone on the page, momentarily disconnected from any previous or succeeding idea. In its simplicity, the image might even suggest the opening of "Genesis:"

. . .and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters.⁹

Salvat's light, however, is not divine but human. And more than human, it is electric! It is man's imagination, then, that beautifies or clothes nature, and Salvat uses the technical term "arc voltaic" to suggest industrial man, the technician or inventor. The lights of homo industrialis twinkle beneath Salvat's marveling eye. In its turn, this imagery is linked to male sexuality (the transatlantic male, also a transatlantic oceanliner penetrating the unknown) and later by the phallic dredge. These motifs lead us back toward the natural world again, so that the poem closes with seagulls, darkness and thunder. Just before the end, however, Salvat himself appears, expanded into oneness with the infinite, constantly exploding horizon that leads us towards what is always beyond ourselves. This horizon, which must be external, is a mirror in which the poet sees himself reflected, separate and yet absorbed through the projection of his image.

At first glance, "Drama in the Port" seems a more static poem than "5 4 0 4 5." In "Drama," Salvat creates several intersecting centers, each one of which generates images like ripples that cross each other but retain their individual patterns. Nonetheless, the two poems are close in their efforts to transcend a sense of isolation -- in "Drama" by the final oneness with the horizon and in "5 4 0 4 5" through the conspiratorial wink.

Another key element in Salvat -- one I have already mentioned in connection with "Epigram" and "La femme aux

oranges" -- is his love of popular culture. This is most fully expressed in "Wedding March," one of his finest poems. Much of Salvat's verse is optimistic in tone, but rarely is he as joyously celebratory as here. The very first image, "Light of the chameleon RADIANCE," evokes the shifting colored spotlights of a circus, mercurial and changing, made organic by their connection with the chameleon. The clowns are then placed side by side with "romantic leaders" -- perhaps figures like Alexandre Lerroux or "Noi Sucre" (Salvador Seguí, a charismatic anarcho-syndicalist leader from Salvat's Poble Sec neighborhood in Barcelona). Certainly there was a good deal of murderous spectacle in Barcelona between 1915 and 1925.¹⁰ This momentary suggestion, however, is not amplified. Instead Salvat passes on to again "see himself in the horizon" -- that is, at the vital center of things:

The earth only turns because I am here and I am a
CLOWN in agony

In using the circus as an embodiment of everything profusely creative in pop culture, Salvat fits into a strong tradition in modern art. Particularly worth mentioning is Pablo Picasso, who lived in Barcelona in the late 1910's and whose work from that period is full of clowns and popular entertainers. Other figures one might think of are the Italian filmmaker Federico Fellini or T.S. Eliot in his love of the English music hall. All of these artists saw in popular art a vitality and richness that they could draw on at a time when traditional humanistic attitudes seemed to

have been played out or trivialized. Among these four, however, Salvat is distinguished by his genuine lack of education. He could not have written a poem like Riba's "Like the Leader with Wingèd Foot..." even if he had wanted to. Salvat's verse is practically without learned references. Like a clown, he presents himself as an instinctive artist, speaking a language whose meanings are not learned but rather traditional -- or within the psyches of all people.

As a poet, however, Salvat understands his materials perfectly, which of course is what counts. In "Wedding March" he places himself at the center of the circus, amidst all its wonders: clowns, horses, a trapeze artist, and his beloved Margot in her red tights, who naturally only burns for him. From this peak of ecstasy, Salvat looks down on the humdrum world and pronounces one of modern Catalan poetry's most famous dicta:

SPIT ON THE BALD
PATE

OF THE CRETINS

Who the "cretins" are becomes clearer within a few lines. They are the fans of Richard Wagner, highbrow culture lovers. Such cretins can be vanquished by the simple words of a pompier, that proverbial symbol of bad taste, who hurls the lightning bolt of his scorn at the overeducated and overrefined. Fresh from this triumph, Salvat recalls for a moment Marinetti's eulogies of speeding cars and airplanes. The euphoria snags briefly on the horses who want to juggle, but it rises again triumphantly to proclaim Edison and

Charlie Chaplin twins, who will enter heaven through their respective technologies of electricity and film. In addition, of course, Chaplin is the very essence of the popular entertainer as artistic genius -- something Salvat himself approached at certain moments. Yet it is strange that Salvat should insist on Chaplin's ignorance of the past, for it is precisely from a continuing tradition with roots in medieval joglaría and even further back that the circus draws much of its vital force.

Salvat, however, wants us to think not about the past but about completeness and new beginnings:

The dial of the clock at TWELVE engenders the hours
to come which are:

one	two	three	four
five	six	seven	eight
nine	ten	eleven	

The hours on the clock in turn move towards another twelve. And parallel to this, humans create other lives and in so doing re-create themselves. Thus the enormous circular O of "connubiality," and thus Salvat's own immortality through the ongoing, self-perpetuating human race.

It would be hard to overestimate the singularity of a poem like "Wedding March" at the time of its appearance. At that moment, Eugeni d'Ors and his followers -- Josep Carner, Riba, Guerau de Liost et al -- were the dominant literary group in Barcelona, determined to protect the domains of what d'Ors called "arbitrary art" against the encroachments of vulgar reality. The sense of infinite horizons in Maragall's lines "La poesia ha tot just començat/ i és plena de

virtuts inconegudes"¹¹ ("Poetry has just begun/ and is full of unknown virtues") had moved d'Ors to remark "Vet aquí quelcom que no sé llegir sense esgarrifança"¹² ("Here's something I can't read without terror.") And indeed, d'Ors and the noucentistes would have liked to banish raw reality and emotional directness forever from Catalan verse, replacing them with the autonomy of art and the self-sufficient poetic intellect. The noucentistes' attitude will perhaps be clarified by a short quotation. These lines "about" trees are from de Liost's "Avets i faigs" ("Beeches and Firs"):

...les agulles sobiranes
de les eternes catedrals,
immòbils, pal·lides, llunyanes.¹³

(...the sovereign spires
of eternal cathedrals,
unmoving, pale, distant.)

Salvat, although he admired d'Ors, remained far closer to Maragall in his perspectives as a poet.¹⁴ At the moment of Salvat's emergence, he stood virtually alone amidst the noucentista Parnassus that surrounded him. He also was alone in his class background, and yet in a political sense, Salvat was never a revolutionary poet. At one point, he seems to have been attracted to anarchism. This is most obvious in an early and rather mediocre poem called "Columna vertebral: sageta de foc" ("Spinal Column: Arrow of Fire"), in which, among whoops of "VICTÒRIA" ("VICTORY"), "JOVENTUT" ("YOUTH"), "SEMPRE AMUNT" ("ALWAYS HIGHER"), and "NO VULGUEU GOVERNAR" ("DON'T WISH TO GOVERN") we find such stanzas as

Experiència,
moral,

sistemes de govern,
sistemes filosofics,
religions: (p. 95)

(Experience,
 morality,
 systems of government,
 philosophic systems,
 religions:)

SOFISMES

SOPHISMS

One might question, of course, how experience can be a kind of sophism. But what is most conspicuously missing from this poem, in a political sense, is class consciousness. Its anarchism never goes beyond Romantic rebelliousness.

Salvat has always had a rather mixed critical press in Catalonia. The fact that, while a genuine proletarian poet, he never became one in capital letters may have tended to put off certain Catalan Marxist critics who otherwise might have adopted him as a hero. His lack of "refinement," on the other hand, has often led more strictly literary types to dismiss him as a kind of inspired primitive.¹⁵ Finally, Salvat's use of Catalan was rather cavalier at a time when the struggle to create a koiné really did demand the utmost sobriety. Thus we find lines like "No he vist més majestat que en lo stylo de foc" in "5 4 0 4 5." The juxtaposition of stylo -- a barbarism taken from French -- with the archaic definite article lo (the normal modern form would be el) seems ridiculous. This particular aspect of Salvat's verse is impossible to translate into English, a language that has been more or less regularized since the eighteenth century.

All these points, however, are relatively trivial ones.

If Salvat was not a profound political thinker, he was, on the other hand, an effective literary spokesman for Barcelona's working class. He introduced a colloquial speaking voice in Catalan verse at a time when it was desperately needed. This voice, along with an emphasis on subjective states of feeling and abrupt shifts of tone and thought, mark him as one of his nation's first modern poets. Salvat's enthusiastic response to the avant-garde, coupled with his avoidance of mechanical imitation, also show a specifically poetic intelligence.

Salvat's death in 1924 was tragically premature. He had only been writing verse for eight years. One result of his early departure is that today he remains inextricably linked to the Barcelona in which he lived: a turbulent blend of profiteering businessmen, hired gunmen, anarchists and avant-garde artists. In Salvat's day, the city was one of Europe's liveliest spots, and it is to Salvat that we owe some of our most vivid impressions of the place. As a personality and an artistic consciousness, he had no parallel in any other area of Spain. Formally adventurous, crammed with vivid detail and illuminated by an intense imagination, Salvat's verse helped define an entire area of Catalonia's modern poetic landscape.

Notes for Chapter III

¹Citations from Salvat-Papasseit in my text are to Poesies (Barcelona: Ariel, 1962). Works cited only in English or Catalan are in the anthology section of this dissertation.

²See, e.g., Harold Rosenberg, Arshile Gorky: The Man, the Time, the Idea (New York: Grove Press, 1962), pp. 97-118.

³Cited in Josep M. Castellet and Joaquim Molas, Poesia catalana del segle XX (Barcelona: Edicions 62, 1963), p. 54.

⁴Ibid., p. 53.

⁵There is a good biographical sketch of Salvat by the poet Tomàs Garcès on pp. 9-33 of Salvat's Poesies.

⁶See, e.g., F.T. Marinetti, "Manifesto tecnico della letteratura futurista," Opera, II (Verona: Mondadori, 1968), pp. 40-48.

⁷This less equivocal attitude seems logical also because the Spanish had not experienced World War I, and therefore had less immediate sense of the murderous possibilities of technology.

⁸Our best description of Salvat is given by J.V Foix in Catalans de 1918 (Barcelona: Edicions 62, 1965, p. 73): "I amb aquell somriure groc i trist que em recorda alguns dels personatges que pintava En Picasso a començaments de segle i que fa que un l'estimi més encara,..." ("And with that sad yellow smile that reminds me of some of the characters Picasso used to paint at the beginning of the century and that makes one love him even more...")

⁹The Oxford Annotated Bible with the Apocrypha (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962), p. 1 ("Genesis," I:3).

¹⁰A good historical introduction to this period can be found in ch. iv ("The Army and the Syndicalist Struggle in Barcelona, 1916-1923") of Gerard Brenan's The Spanish Labyrinth, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 1950), pp. 57-77. See also Alberto Balcells, El sindicalismo en Barcelona: 1916-1923 (Barcelona: Nova Terra, 1968).

¹¹Obres completes, I (Barcelona: Selecta, 1970), p. 158.

¹²Obra catalana completa: Glosari 1906-1910 (Barcelona: Selecta, 1950), p. 185.

¹³Obra poètica completa (Barcelona: Selecta, 1948), p. 167.

¹⁴Foix, on p. 73 of Catalans del 1918, perceptively describes him as giving "la versió maragalliana" ("the Maragallian version") of futurism.

¹⁵Both of these attitudes can be found in Joan Fuster's introduction (pp. 37-84) to Salvat's Poesies. See also Castellet and Molas, pp. 51-69.

IV

J.V. FOIX

L'antic museu, les madones borroses,
I el pintar extrem d'avui! Candid rampell:
~~L'antic museu, les madones borroses,~~
I el pintar extrem d'avui! Candid rampell 64)¹

(The ancient museums, the faded madonnas,
 And today's extreme painting! A naive sudden
 impulse;
 The new inflames me and I'm in love with the old.

-- "Em plau, d'atzar..."
 ("I like, at random...")

The other major Catalan poet to emerge in late 1910's was J.V. Foix. Influenced at once by the avant-garde and by medieval and Renaissance verse, Foix went on to forge a style and a vision that have made him a major figure in modern European literature. Salvat, in a fictitious "Lletra d'Itàlia" ("Letter from Italy") at the beginning of his book Poemes en ondes herzianes (Poems in Electric Waves, 1919), commented that "Aquí a Roma es murmura que per a comprendre a En Foix de Sarrià hom deu llegir a Sòfocles primer."² ("Here in Rome people murmur that to understand Foix of Sarrià one must first read Sophocles.") The choice of Sophocles is somewhat arbitrary, but Salvat's meaning is clear enough: part of Foix's subject matter is culture itself.

Foix was, indeed, far more cultured than his friend Salvat. Like the noucentistes, Foix sought to establish direct links with the Catalan past, drawing into his work what he conceived to be an entire Mediterranean tradition. This synthetic effort is perhaps clearest in early sonnets like

"If I Could Reconcile Reason and Madness..." At the time of its composition (between 1913 and 1927, according to an introductory note), Foix was also writing experimental prose poems. Yet the form of "If I Could Reconcile" is classically Petrarchan and uses Ausiàs March's characteristic decasyllables. Broken into two sentences, the sonnet really makes one long, closely-knit period. The tone is meditative, philosophical, and suggestive of Ramon Llull's efforts to join intellect and feeling:

Acompanyaren-se memòria e voluntat, e pujaren en lo munt de l'amat, per ço que l'enteniment s'exalcàs, e l'amor se doblàs en amar l'amat.

(Memory and desire came together, and climbed the Beloved's [i.e. God's] mountain, so that understanding might increase and love be doubled in loving the Beloved.)

In this context, the word follia (madness) also suggests Llull, who often appears in his own books under the senhal of Ramon lo Foll (Ramon the Mad).⁴

Also evoked, however, are a series of "classical" equilibria between Apollonian and Dionysiac, transience and eternity, imagination and reality. Thus, in the poem, Reason and Madness are followed by a subtler dichotomy: the clear morning air and Mediterranean Sea, symbolic of Greek rationality, and Foix's own individual sensibility "avaricious for joy." These dichotomies are joined together by the creative act itself. The Eternal can be made concrete through the poet's "fantasy... of words, sounds, and tones."

The argument, explained thus, sounds rather dry. In the

poem itself, however, Foix manages to impart a sense of breathless intellectual adventure that keeps the reader deeply involved. This is accomplished, in part, by the constant linking of abstractions with emotionally-charged language. Two examples would be "My mind, avaricious for joy" and "with fantasy/ That the heart inflames." Another instance is the fascinating shift from the abstract "Oh sweet thoughts!" to the vividly sensory "Sweetness in mouth!" The poem's syntactical structure -- the way it slowly builds towards its final "light and dancing!" -- also contributes to the emotional impact.

A glance at the quotations Foix chooses to introduce his early sonnet sequences -- Guido Cavalcanti and Dante, Ausiàs March and Llull, Bernart de Ventadorn and Jordi de Sant Jordi -- will suggest some of his poetic models, and give a more precise idea of what "Mediterranean tradition" means here. The link to the stilnovisti and to March and Llull is particularly evident. Like their work, Foix's poetry is at once densely speculative and passionate. Foix seeks what T.S. Eliot, speaking of the English metaphysical poets, called "a direct sensuous apprehension of thought, or a recreation of thought into feeling."⁵ In addition to Foix's medieval and early Renaissance sources, there is also a strong effort to reach back towards classical antiquity. This aspect is most obvious in the juggling of opposites ("make the Eternal present," "make today permanent,"

"and that strange shadow be good sense and guide"). "Reason and Madness" also suggests Nietzsche's Dionysus-Apollo dichotomy. In the sonnet's final tercet, these opposites are linked and brought into a kind of Platonic tension by the imagination:

Bring alive sleep's eye-evoked images;
And time might not be; and the hope
Of Absent Immortals, light and dancing!

In these final three lines, Foix condenses a tremendous amount of thought and feeling. The imagination, conceived of here as closely akin to dreams, can make the transient permanent and turn the idea of the gods into a concrete ritual of artistic celebration.

Foix's sonnet-writing period ended in the late 1920's. Since then most of his work has been unrhymed, more structurally open, and often distinguished by long explanatory or scene-setting titles. When the poetry has a specific historical context, these titles -- together with the dates at the end -- can be very useful. One poem, dated September, 1936, opens with a scene from the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War:

AT THE ENTRANCE TO AN UNDERGROUND STATION, BOUND
HAND AND FOOT BY BEARDED CUSTOMS OFFICIALS, I SAW
HOW MARTA SET OFF IN A TRAIN FOR THE FRONTIER. I
WANTED TO SMILE AT HER, BUT A POLICELIKE MILITIA-
MAN CARRIED ME OFF WITH HIS OWN FAMILY, AND SET
FIRE TO THE WOODS

In other cases the titles may be more complicated, but they usually attempt to orient the reader. "At the Foot of a Cyclopean Wall" opens with a clearly etched scene involving

two figures: a pulley-adjusting mechanic and an uneasy observer, perhaps the poet himself, "watching the sea with an old book in my hand."

It is helpful to know here that Foix was an aficionado of amateur aviation and a member of the Catalan Penya de l'Aire (Aviation Circle).⁶ "At the Foot" opens in a mood of mystical adulation for the mechanic. Foix knows him "in fable and sleep," describes him in terms suggesting Poseidon ("regal, in a cave of the sea") and Hephaestus ("humming and surrounded by tools,/ measuring stellar chasms and their foliage"), and even follows him "Torch in hand." In the poem's first section, the literal mechanic in his work-suit gradually evolves into a god of airplanes who "anoints their gears/ in elliptical hangars and sacred watchposts."

At the same time, Foix develops a strain of natural imagery centered on the sea. This imagery is woven into the portrait of the mechanic and is played off against the artificial world of tools and planes just as the clear sea, tamarisks, and sheltered inlets interact with Platonic ideas in "If I Could Reconcile." The mechanic is slowly enveloped in a nimbus of magic and ancient Mediterranean myth.

The second stanza continues and deepens this pattern, with natural and sexual imagery gradually gaining dominance over the mechanical. The mechanic, as a character, disappears entirely and we are left with the plane, which by now is as much a sexual presence as a machine:

Night's androgyne, generous with seed,

darkening solitudes of primitive meadows,
present wherever we covet the body,

The plane itself has become alive, a "bird of the afternoon"
as well as a divine presence, beautiful and frightening,
an "ancestral form" or "menhir."

This series of mystical parallels and correspondances
is reinforced by the poem's incantatory quality. Though there
is no rhyme scheme, the meter (decasyllables and Alexandrines)
is regular within each stanza and underlines the mysterious
prayerlike intonation. Another element in this atmosphere
is the series of syntactically parallel lines beginning with
nouns:

flama perenne . . .
brisca cantaire . . .
forma ancestral . . .
claror de freixe . . .

These nouns are then linked to another series of nouns that
locate them in imaginative space:

. . . als merlets de les calmes,
. . . a les blavors boscoses,
. . . als nocturns de les cales,
. . . en el cangost del somni.

A final element -- the most obvious but the most important
of all -- is Foix's intensely lyrical imagery in lines
like "darkening the solitudes of primitive meadows" or "a
singing breeze in the leafy blueness." Such lines are at
once literal descriptions of a plane and magical interpene-
trations among mechanical, natural, and emotional worlds.

The poem's last stanza introduces still another ele-
ment: the Eternal Ungraspable. With this transcendent ab-

straction, another speaking voice also enters the poem, first addressing the poet and then gradually merging with him in a final chant. Here images of the sea mingle with images of fertility and birth ("when joy runs to seed," "It bears secret creatures") and with the repetitive songs of night fishermen. The result is a sense both of the oneness of everything and of the miraculous possibilities of each individual object.

Though "At the Foot" is formally quite distinct from "If I Could Reconcile," the two poems do have a number of interesting similarities -- in particular their effort to bind together such opposites as imagination and reality, concrete and abstract, old and new. The effort, in both poems, ends in Platonic unity and in the synthesizing nature of art, an art that makes the intangible specific and brings together all of man's experience. In an often-cited "Lletra a Clara Sobirós" ("Letter to Clara Sobirós, pp. 7-9), Foix describes the poet as "mag, especulador del mot, pelegrí de l'invisible, insatisfet, aventurer o investigador a la ratlla del son," ("magician, word-speculator, pilgrim of the invisible, unsatisfied, adventurer or investigator on the border of sleep"). Though the word "magician" seems to emphasize the poet's role as inventor, the succeeding terms suggest that he is the revealer of a world that already exists, independent of his verse. This conviction of a prior poetic reality is even more explicitly stated in the preceding paragraph:

Si em llegeixes a mi--i temo que t'hi penses com

qui vol contravenir el semàfor--recorda sempre que
sóc un testimoni del que conto, i que el real, del
qual parteixo i del qual visc, amb cremors a les
entranyes, com saps, i l'irreal que tu et penses
descobrir-hi, són el mateix.

(If you read me -- and I'm afraid you're thinking of it like someone determined to cross against a traffic light -- always remember that I'm a witness to what I tell of, and that the real, from which I depart and live, with my insides burning as you know, and the unreal you think you'll find there, are the same.)

To achieve this synthesis, Foix relies heavily on the Catalan cultural, historical, and physical landscape. One aspect of this landscape is the Hellenic and Renaissance tradition, which I have already discussed in some detail. Another is the world of Pyrenean shepherds from which Foix's own ancestors came. This world forms the focal point of "El meu país és un roc" ("My Country's a Rock"), a poem dedicated to his family line and to Catalonia's rough mountain folk in general:

Lliberts, i durs, amb alous,
Llur fona en rosa de cercles
Colpia el menhir dels segles
En una tardor de bous.
O mels purs del paratge!
Recobrar, dels meus, l'imatge,
Aigua enllà de l'hort furtiu,
Molls de rou de la caverna,
Hereus de la nit eterna
Amb els astres per caliu! (p. 159)

(Freedmen, tough, with freeheld land
 In a circle of rhumbs their slingshot
 Smote the centuries' menhir
 In an autumn of oxen.
 Oh, the pure honeys of that spot!
 Rediscovering my people's image
 Water beyond the furtive garden,
 Wet with dew from the cavern,
 Eternal night's heirs
 With the stars for hot ashes!)

As is often the case with Foix, the date at the end -- August, 1939, immediately after the end of the Civil War -- is significant. The poem's last four lines, coming after the celebration of a heritage that seemed mortally threatened, are one of the most poignant expressions of Catalan postwar sensibility:

Vaig i vinc de roc a roc
--O pasturo palets tosos
En un bosc de crits confosos--
I, en ser fosc, hi vento foc. (pp. 159, 160)

(I come and go from rock to rock
 -- Or I pasture shaved pebbles
 In a woods of confused cries --
 And when it's dark, I fan the fire.)

The end of the war evoked some of Foix's very best verses. Prior to 1939, he had been an ardent Catalanist and one of the leaders of Acció Catalana (Catalan Action), a conservative nationalist group that included a number of prominent intellectuals. An admirer of the French reactionary Charles Maurras, Foix had denounced the Catalan anarchists. He accused them, both in poetry and in prose, of destroying the nation's classically balanced heritage and replacing it with Iberian fanaticism. Despite his often conservative positions, Foix was a highly respected figure during the 1930's. He led the Catalan delegation at the 1934 PEN Club Conference in Dubrovnik. He was also the literary director and a frequent columnist for La Publicitat (Publicity), a daily Barcelona newspaper.

With Franco's victory, of course, all this came to an

end. For a time, the future of Catalan literature itself seemed in doubt. It might seem that Foix, whose verse had been so allusive and philosophical, would have been among those least equipped to express the mood of the postwar period. In fact, he did it better than virtually anyone else. Perhaps his outstanding poem of this period is "I Arrived in That Town..." Once again, the date (1942) situates it historically and the title establishes the tone of disorientation and nightmare:

I ARRIVED IN THAT TOWN, EVERYONE GREETED ME AND
I KNEW NO ONE; WHEN I WAS GOING TO READ MY
VERSES, THE DEVIL, HIDDEN BEHIND A TREE, CALLED
OUT TO ME SARCASTICALLY, AND FILLED MY HANDS
WITH NEWSPAPER CLIPPINGS

The clear, simple images that follow, and the innocent speaking voice, help create a mood of childlike bewilderment. Beneath this mood, there is also Foix's condition as a poet suddenly deprived of his audience.

Such crowds there are in the square!
They must be waiting for me;
I, who read them verses;
they're laughing as they leave.

It is not just poetry, however, but an entire culture that has been dislocated. Foix's portrait flutters on a scrap of newspaper, perhaps symbolizing the end of the Catalan press and of his position as a public figure. An entire national identity -- and with it memory itself -- has been obliterated. And Foix, who had striven to reconcile Reason and Madness, has now become a madman, a memoryless imbecile wandering through a town he does not recognize.

This atmosphere of disorientation is made grimmer by lines hinting at the poverty and bloodshed that followed the war.

I look at my bare foot;
in the shadow of a barrel
a puddle of blood is shining.

In general Foix plays down this element, allowing the panic to build as the half-naked speaker is mocked by the townspeople and cannot find his way home. Only in the penultimate stanza do public events burst suddenly into the open: "What do they say on the radio?/ I'm cold, I'm scared, I'm hungry:" And in the final lines the devil, whom we had met in the title, reappears. He awaits the amnesiac speaker, consummating the feeling of infantile terror.

"I Arrived" is one of Foix's most famous poems. In it, surrealist imagery is played off against a colloquially direct tone in the same way that it was earlier against accumulated literary tradition. Whether Foix really is a surrealist has been debated among Catalan critics, but the poet himself has always denied it. Though in isolation some of his images may seem rationally inexplicable, they usually do fit into a coherent system of idées, conceits, and personal myths. In an excellent study of Foix's work, the poet Pere Gimferrer describes his poems as transposing "en termes metafòrics o visionaris dades de l'experiència individual o col·lectiva del poeta"⁷ ("into metaphorical or visionary terms data from the poet's individual or social experience.")

The best explanations, however, come from the poet's own writings. Foix describes himself as an "investigador en poesia" ("investigator in poetry"), one who "retroba, per mitjà de símbols nous, el permanent"⁸ ("finds, by means of new symbols, the permanent"). For him, the experimental verse of the 1920's was not so much a new form of consciousness as a new set of genres in which he could work. These genres demand the same poetic discipline and craft as any other kind of verse. Thus Foix admonishes his fellow avant-gardists: "en els vostres versos sigueu durs i precisos"⁹ ("in your verses be hard and precise.")

The language here is similar to much of Ezra Pound's criticism.¹⁰ Though it seems improbable that either poet influenced the other, there are a number of parallels between them. Both writers drew on the Mediterranean Middle Ages and Renaissance for inspiration, while using experimental techniques in highly individual ways. Both attempted to reunite a Western culture they saw as fragmented and decaying, and knitted together art and social reality partly by applying artistic standards to the latter. In Foix, this is expressed by his "poetic real" in the "Letter to Clara Sobirós." But above all, the two authors both possessed a kind of literary perfect pitch: an ability to write verse at once lyrical and precise, intellectually demanding yet dense with feeling.

Beyond certain superficialities (such as his famous long titles), Foix has had no imitators in Catalonia. His

poetry is perhaps both too rigorous and too idiosyncratic to form the center of a school. Nonetheless, he is recognized by younger poets and by the reading public as a monumental figure. Emerging early in this century, he -- along with Salvat -- marked off a broad area of sensibility that Catalan poets have been exploring ever since. This area, which ranges from the most immediate daily impressions to intricate philosophical speculation, is partly responsible for Catalan poetry's rich diversity in the last fifty years.

Notes for Chapter IV

¹Unless otherwise noted, citations from Foix in my text are to Obres poètiques (Barcelona: Nauta, 1964).

²Poesies, p. 89.

³"Llibre d'amic e amat," Obres essencials, I (Barcelona: Selecta, 1957), p. 265.

⁴Foix frequently cites Llull at the beginnings of his books. The most significant of these citations comes at the beginning of Les irreals omegues (p. 104, Obres poètiques): "On pus scura és la semblança pus altament enten l'enteniment que aquella semblança enten" ("Where the semblance is most obscure the understanding that comprehends that semblance is most elevated").

⁵Selected Essays (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1950), p. 246.

⁶This and other biographical details about Foix are taken from Joan Colomines' introduction to Catalans de 1918 (Barcelona: Edicions 62, 1965).

⁷La poesia de J.V. Foix (Barcelona: Edicions 62, 1974), p. 192.

⁸Tocant a mà (Barcelona: Edicions 62, 1972), p. 8.

⁹Ibid., p. 9.

¹⁰E.g., Pound's "Second Set of Composition Exercises," ABC of Reading (Norfolk: New Directions, 1951), p. 66, where he begins: "1) Let the pupil write the description of a tree. 2) Of a tree without mentioning the name of the tree (larch, pine, etc.) so that the reader will not mistake it for the description of some other kind of tree. 3) Try some object in the classroom. 4) Describe the light and shadow on the school-room clock or some other object."

V

THE 1930'S

Sí, hom veurà més enllà d'aquestes estrelles taciturnes,
més enllà d'aquesta llarga nit de mans crispades,
per damunt els meandres de sang i foc,
per damunt els munts de runes fumejants i tenebres
xopes de llàgrimes,
per damunt el dolor dels vius i dels morts,
aixecar-se la màgica claror precursora. (p. 39)¹

(Yes, men will see, beyond these taciturn stars,
 beyond this long night of clenched fists,
 above these meanderings of blood and fire,
 above these mounds of smoking ruins and tear-soaked
 darkness,
 above this grief of the living and the dead,
 a magic precursory brightness arise.)

-- Agustí Bartra, "El nou dia" ("The New Day")

Even more than in the rest of Europe, the 1930's in Spain were marked by a series of political events that set the decade apart both culturally and historically. From the proclamation in 1931 of a "república democrática de trabajadores de todas clases" ("democratic republic of workers of all classes, Constitución, título preliminar) till the fall of Madrid in 1939, the entire country lived through a collective tragedy from which -- emotionally at least -- it is still struggling to recover. In terms of Spain as a whole, the period has been well covered by such historians as Franz Borkenau (The Spanish Cockpit, 1937)³, Gerald Brenan (The Spanish Labyrinth, 1943)⁴ and Hugh Thomas (The Spanish Civil War, 1961).⁴ All three of these authors (and particu-

larly Borkenau and Brenan) take some account of the peculiarities of Catalonia.⁵ Nonetheless, it will be worthwhile quickly to review those elements distinguishing the Catalans from other nations of Spain. As my discussion will show, much of the best poetry of the thirties bears a direct relation to the political struggles of the time.

In 1931, the classes that dominated much of peninsular politics -- absentee landowners, a powerful and reactionary church and military, landless peasants -- were conspicuous in Catalonia mainly by their absence. In their place were other social groups that most of the rest of Spain lacked. Notable among these were a prosperous peasantry, an industrial proletariat, an enterprising bourgeoisie, and a progressive lower middle class. The Catalan political spectrum ranged from center to left, and most Catalans voted for the social democratic Esquerra Catalana (Catalan Left) coalition. Shortly after the inauguration of the Republic, Catalans also voted ninety-nine percent in favor of an Autonomy Statute. This statute gave them a separate school system, courts, chief executive and parliament.⁶ The Esquerra ruled Catalonia liberally and imaginatively. Its policies would have done credit to any nation in Northern Europe. The public schools, for example, were set up following the ideas of Maria Montessori. They were the most advanced on the continent. Textbooks, including poems by figures like Guerau de Liost, Joan Maragall, and Carles Riba, were compiled by groups of outstanding authors.⁷

The Esquerra's major opposition came not from the

Right but from the anarchists and the Marxist POUM, whose leader Andreu Nin is also remembered for his fine translations of Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky.⁸ With the outbreak of the Civil War in 1936, these leftist groups seized the initiative. They nationalized most of Catalonia's industry and forced the Esquerra into a rather vestigial position. Although this revolutionary movement was later braked, Catalonia's economy remained mostly collectivized until 1939. Had the Catalans been entirely independent of the rest of Spain, either the Civil War would never have been fought there or it would have been a struggle between liberals and libertarian communists.

In 1931, Salvat -- the most promising working class poet of the twenties -- had been dead for seven years. Foix, though radical in literary terms, was politically conservative. The rest of the Catalan literary establishment remained under the firm control of the noucentistes and their successors: figures like de Liost and Riba, or belated Symbolists like Marià Manent. Certain surrealists as well, such as Bartomeu Rosselló-Pòrcel in some of his works, could be included in this category. Like the noucentistes, they stressed the autonomy of art and avoided engagement with any specific historical context.

The first major poet to break with this establishment in the thirties was Pere Quart. Quart, interestingly enough, was from one of the wealthiest and most powerful families among Catalonia's industrial bourgeoisie. In this regard, as

in the directness and engagement of his verse, he resembles Maragall. The difference between them, in Joaquim Molas' and Josep Castellet's words, is that while Maragall was "en efecte, la consciència de la seva classe" ("in effect, the conscience of his class"), Quart "s'hi rebel·là i esdevingué un dels crítics més sagnants" ("rebelled against it and became one of its most biting critics").⁹

Quart's first book of poems, Les decapitacions (The Decapitations) appeared in 1934. In pieces like "Useless Stars, Useless Bell!" he attempted to break with previous literary styles, introducing a poetry he later described as "breu i escassa com les notícies importants -- bones o males" ("short and sparse like important news -- good or bad").¹⁰ The word "news" here clearly signals Quart's desire to deal with public political realities. Nonetheless, the poem begins with an exclamation and a series of images ("Crippled time. Black night/ windy, ashy, oily, porous") that, while as terse and telegraphic as a headline, are also much literarily demanding than one.

The poem's entire first stanza, in fact, consists of a series of nightmarish visions that pile up quickly and create a sense of dizziness and terror. The stars and bell, man's traditional means of orientation in the unknown, are now useless. The poet addresses someone unconsciously adrift and in danger. The situation's inherent tension is heightened by the brusqueness of line like "Temps mutilat. Negra nit," or "de flames i gebre," and the harsh syncopation of others

("oratjosa, cendrosa, oliosa, porosa" and "wogues, vagues, divagues.")

In the next stanza, Quart's tone becomes alternately softer ("love, leisure, and a dream") and more accusatory ("You, with your head in your hand"). But the softness is only a pause before the angrier accusations to come:

You, with your head in your hand, you hid
behind the crimes of others' spotless hands,
generous with evil, with hideous caresses

By now Quart is clearly attacking someone for a deliberate lack of awareness that amounts to indirect murder. And with the explicit mention of Mussolini, the poem at last falls entirely into focus. Those addressed constitute Fascism's craven "empire of stuffed shirts," a nation that has betrayed its own best possibilities ("the supreme gesture that might have abolished shame itself") and willfully abandoned itself to an "inferno of closed eyes."

"Useless Stars, Useless Bell!" however, is more than a versified sermon addressed to the Italian bourgeoisie. It is also a journey through Quart's moral rage at a Europe surrendering to its vilest impulses. The specific topical reference is deliberately held back until we are deeply immersed in an atmosphere of black horror that resembles some of Dante's responses in Hell. Quart deliberately avoids conventional musical effects. Instead, he cultivates a harshness that has been one of Catalan poetry's strong points ever since Ausiàs March -- and that also suggests Dante's call for a verse "faticoso e forte, aspro e sottile."

Two years after "Useless Stars, Useless Bell!" was published, Fascism did come to Catalonia -- not as a domestic development but as an attempted external imposition. The uprising of 1936 was put down by Barcelona's working class, and for a time an atmosphere of revolutionary exultation filled the city.¹¹ While many of the Catalan literati kept themselves discreetly out of sight, Quart celebrated the mood in a long poem entitled "Oda a Barcelona" ("Ode to Barcelona"):

i les catifes comuniquen flonges protestes a les
espardenyes,
els balcons s'esbatanen
i entren alenades goludes
de carrer, sang, bruel, pols, pedres desvetllades
a cops d'ungla furiosa.
Fueteja el serpent,
fibla la llum el llarg llampec vermell,
"Estatge incautat per les Joventuts Socialistes
Unificades". (pp. 18, 19)

(and rugs communicate feeble protests to rope-soles,
 balconies are flung open
 and greedy gusts enter
 of street, blood, bellowing, dirt, stones awakened
 by furious clawing.
 The serpent's whip lashes,
 the light stings with long red flashes,
 "This floor taken over by the United Socialist
 Youth.")

A few lines later, Quart describes the pre-revolutionary situation. Again, as in "Useless Stars, Useless Bell!" the dominant emotion is moral rage:

Sofrí tant i no pas fam i nuesa
l'exaltació xarona de la injustícia,
la vanitat erecta,
l'atzar estult, l'oprobí de la beutat pristina,
la pau de l'ànima
bescanviada per monedes i voluntat esclava.
El treball prostituïnt-se

en les cambres secretes del negoci,
enllefiscant-se en les llacors
del luxe. (p. 19)

(It [Barcelona] suffered so, and not just hunger and
 nakedness
 the vulgar exaltation of injustice,
 vanity erect,
 stupid chance, pristine beauty's contempt
 peace of spirit
 exchanged for coins and enslaved wills.
 Work prostituted
 in business' secret chambers
 stuck fast in the slime
 of luxury.)

"Pristine beauty's contempt," of course, is a reference to
 the cultivators of pure and "arbitrary" art, the literary
 group Quart had broken with both politically and poetically.

Quart's sense of liberation from a degrading moral
 and aesthetic order was premature, however, and Barcelona's
 exultation was quickly replaced by the reality of a protracted
 war. Though active as a propagandist and editor, he did not
 actually serve in the Catalan army. Our most effective
 Catalan war poetry comes from the other major poet to
 emerge in the 1930's: Agustí Bartra. Bartra's first book,
Cant corporal (Corporal Song, as opposed to Maragall's
 earlier "Cant espiritual" or "Spiritual Song") appeared in
 1938. Like Quart, Bartra intended to break with the self-en-
 closure of previous poetry without resorting to what we
 might call "proletarian doggerel." His results, however,
 were quite different from Quart's. Bartra chose as his
 poetic model Walt Whitman, whom he referred to in a later
 poem as his "Great Comrade of the North."

By this choice, Bartra freed himself from the ethereal music of much previous Catalan verse, while entering a new realm of deep, hypnotic chant. The possibilities of the style are evident in a poem like "Many." The long breath-units that slowly unfold, the incantatory balancing of clauses ("Many... and others," "some... others," "not to make their lives... but those of the unborn") at the poem's beginning and the long strings of parallel clauses later on all add to the prophetic quality. Along with this style went a deep sense of the nation as an organically unified whole, pulsating with "collective awareness" and destiny. Thus when the war dead are buried, the clouds, ravens, and wind are drawn into the ritual of mourning, and the dead themselves are absorbed into a new Catalonia:

their clenched fists open
into hands that help the fervent offering
of igneous flowers to climb towards the light.

Starting with the title itself, this sense of collectivity is gradually built up throughout "Many." Bartra first evokes everyday private experiences, such as slicing bread or going to the beach. He then moves to scenes taken from mass public life: subway crowds, political demonstrations, games on playing fields. As the poem progresses, the imagery becomes more expansive. Bartra begins many individual stanzas with straightforward and immediately comprehensible statements-- for instance, "They knew nothing/ of sciences, arts, and letters" or "The same picks and shovels/ that opened trenches/ have opened their graves." Such state-

ments serve to anchor the more complex lyric flights that follow them, as when Bartra transforms those who "Lie/wrapped in shrouds" into a vision of abundance in a collectivized Catalonia:

Now they feel the roar of tractors,
the rip of plowing,
the golden wave of wheat stalks
and the scythe's impatience.

Bartra thus achieves some of the main goals of revolutionary verse: to be inspirational but not trite, artistically daring yet immediately accessible.

On January 25, 1939, Nationalist troops entered Barcelona. Ahead of them fled a half million refugees, most of them destined for French concentration camps where they would remain for weeks without shelter or sanitation. Antonio Machado, one of Spain's finest Castilian-language poets, was to die of neglect shortly after being released from such a camp.¹² Agustí Bartra was also among those interned, and the French Camp d'Agde provides the setting for two of his most beautiful poems: "'Pavilion Tl' Dawn" and "In Many Places of This World..."

"Pavilion" opens with the poet's sudden awakening from a dream whose delighted excitement contrasts with his waking state of emotional numbness:

My dream's liquid thread has broken.
Why does this brightness of trembling roses
sweetly enfold my heart of stone?

The whole history and emotional weight of Catalonia are then briefly suggested by the ancient scythes, memory, and

a landscape "deep in years and laughter." The scythes, however, also forebode the bugle that will cut through Bartra's dream, brusquely returning him to the real world. A somewhat similar mood dominates "In Many Places of This World," but in this poem the dreaming is more extensive and reality is only hinted at by the last line and the date and place at the end. Both poems achieve their effects by playing off visions of the rich ceremony of art and life against the concentration camp.

Quart was also among those who fled. His "Songs of Exile," in their simplicity and lyrical openness, stand in contrast to his usual satirical tone. Their poetic form comes from Catalan folksong. As with Bartra, the nation's landscape and traditions are painfully remembered. It is also interesting to note the similarity to Foix's "My Country's a Rock." At a moment when Catalan culture and public life seemed dead, exiled, or in hiding, Quart turned to the few things he felt would survive: the sea and mountains, old sayings like "Com el Vallès no hi ha res" ("There's no place like Vallès") and the daily work of fishermen:

Let the pines ring the inlet,
the hermitage on the hill;
and on the beach a cloth to cover fish
beating like a wing.

Perhaps most surprising of all is his comparison of his wife to those rough-hewn, Romanesque "Mothers of God" one sees in the Catalan Pyrenees.

In that tragic time Foix, the avant-garde investigator,

Quart the revolutionary, and Riba the classical conservative drew close to each other as poets. Each one laid aside the style he had cultivated, and tried to touch his deepest collective roots of song and feeling. Some of Riba's most moving lines can be found in tankas like this one, which he composed shortly after the war:

Infant refugiat adormit (Sleeping Refugee Child)

Com qui reposa
en l'amor o en l'onada
fill de la guerra,
dorms en la innumerable 13
falda absent de la fuga.

(Like one who rests
in love or amidst waves,
child of war,
you sleep in flight's
countless absent lap.)

Like Riba's "sleeping refugee child," Catalan culture had been torn from its normal context and put to flight. Barcelona, the city of revolutionary anarchists and experimental artists, of thronged boulevards and excited discourse, had become another grey provincial Spanish town. Its political and cultural leaders were gone -- some dead, some in exile. A defeated silence fell over the entire nation, a silence that for ten years would remain virtually unbroken. When it was broken -- furtively and sporadically -- it would be by the sound of bitter weeping.

Notes for Chapter V

¹This citation from Bartra and the passages quoted from Pere Quart's "Oda a Barcelona" are to Poesia catalana de la guerra d'Espanya i de la resistència, ed. Stephen Cartwright (Paris: Edicions Catalanes de Paris, 1969).

²London: Faber and Faber.

³Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press.

⁴New York: Harper and Row.

⁵Also worth mentioning are Elliot Paul's The Life and Death of a Spanish Town (New York: Random House, 1942) and George Orwell's Homage to Catalonia (London: Secker and Warburg, 1938). Paul's book deals with the Civil War's effects on the Ivizian town of Santa Eulàlia del Riu. Orwell's book gives an account of the struggles among the various leftist political groups in Catalonia.

⁶For a thorough analysis of Catalan party politics in the early 1930's, see Isidre Molas, El sistema dels partits polítics a Catalunya: 1931-1936 (Barcelona: Edicions 62, 1972). Molas' book also sheds light on the distinctive class structure of Catalonia, as do many of the works I cited in my first chapter, e.g. Vilar or Vicens i Vives.

⁷See Francisco Candel, Los otros catalanes (Barcelona: Península, 1972). For a general account of the progressive education movement in Catalonia and a study of one particular school, see Robert Saladrigas, L'Escola del Mar i la renovació pedagògica a Catalunya: converses amb Pere Vergés (Barcelona: Edicions 62, 1973).

⁸In addition, Nin is the author of an interesting Marxist analysis of the problems of national minorities: Els moviments d'emancipació nacional (Paris: Edicions Catalanes de Paris, 1970). During the 1930's, Nin and the POUM were often described as "Trotskyite" by the Communist press. This characterization is now generally recognized as inaccurate, and simply indicates that the POUM was anti-Stalinist and that it adopted positions to the left of the Communist International.

⁹Poesia catalana del segle XX (Barcelona: Edicions 62, 1963), p. 105. Castellet and Molas also give a brief description of Quart's family background.

¹⁰Obra (Barcelona: Fontanella, 1963), p. 291.

¹¹See, e.g., Borkenau, pp. 67-93.

¹²See Thomas, pp. 574-578..

¹³Obres completes, I (Barcelona: Edicions 62, 1965),
p. 181.

VI

SALVADOR ESPRIU AND THE POSTWAR PERIOD

Beviem a glops
aspres vins de burla
el meu poble i jo.

• • •
A baixar graons
de dol apreniem
el meu poble i jo. (p. 118)¹

(In sips we drank
 harsh wines of mockery
 my people and I.

• • •
 We learned how to go down
 steps of grief
 my people and I)

-- Salvador Espriu, "El meu poble
i jo" ("My People and I")

Salvador Espriu was the first major poet to emerge from the physical and emotional desolation of postwar Catalonia. Born in 1913, Espriu had already achieved a modest reputation during the thirties as a novelist and short story writer. He had attended the Catalan Autonomous University and belonged to the only generation of modern Catalan authors who were able to develop in "normal" linguistic circumstances. After the end of the Civil War, he turned mainly to poetry and to drama, but it is as a poet that he is best known. His obsessive brooding over the dead and the stark lyricism of his verse have made him a symbol of his nation in extremis.

Espriu's first book of poetry was Cementiri de Sinera (Sinera Cemetery, "Sinera" being an anagram for Arenys de

Mar, a small town on the Costa Brava). First published secretly in 1946, the book crystallized a new sense of Catalonia -- not as a nation living through the last act of a tragedy but rather drifting slowly towards death:

Quina petita pàtria
encercla el cementiri!
Aquesta mar, Sinera,
turons de pins i vinya,
pols de rials. No estimo
res més, excepte l'ombra
viatgera d'un núvol.
El lent record dels dies
que són passats per sempre. (p. 127)

(What a tiny fatherland
 encircles the cemetery!
 This sea, Sinera,
 hills of pines and vineyards,
 dust in lanes. I love
 nothing else, except a cloud's
 drifting shadow.
 The slow memory of days
 that are gone forever.)

In part, Sinera Cemetery is Espriu's lament for a "pàtria/ que mor amb mi" ("fatherland/ that dies with me," p. 128) and its language of "paraules/ esdevingudes cendra" ("words/ turned to ash," p. 128). But like the work of several postwar Eastern European poets,² Espriu's poetry is also a tactical withdrawal from a fraudulent public life into a few trusted realities. The most important of these realities is death itself, that vast army of the war dead with whom Espriu continually tries to come to terms. Thus in "What a Tiny Fatherland," Sinera is seen as huddled around its cemetery, which is at once a graveyard for lost possibilities and a link with the recent murderous past. Like all of the Sinera Cemetery sequence, the poem comes to us naked, strip-

ped of metaphors though full of vivid imagery. Espriu permits himself no symbolic or rhetorical flights. In their absence, the simple naming of things becomes a sacred ritual. Each thing has its name, its own inner essence that flames forth when the forbidden Catalan language is spoken. Immediately after the war, writing itself was an act of personal and political resistance. Espriu's rebellion lay in his immortalization of a small Catalan town, full of bitter memories, and in the grimly insistent sound of his own voice. Though at one point in Sinera Cemetery he says "No lluito més" ("I struggle no more," p. 39), the poetry belies his statement.

Espriu has frequently called his poetry "meditació de la mort" ("meditation on death"). In the three books that follow Sinera Cemetery -- Les hores (The Hours, 1952), Mrs. Death (1952), and El caminant i el mur (The Wanderer and the Wall, 1954) -- this meditation becomes increasingly intimate. The hard details of Sinera fall away, and we are left with the poet's intense magnetic attraction towards death. In "So Simple You Won't Like It," a poem from The Wanderer and the Wall, this attraction is partly conveyed through the syntax: one long period that gathers force as it spins downward towards the end. The first three lines have no internal breaks. They unfold slowly and melodiously, and in the first two Espriu relaxes the tone further by reiterated s, z, and a sounds.

Cansat de tants de versos que no fan companyia

-- els admirables versos de savis excel.lents --,
i de mirar com passa l'emperador tot nu,

A vague literary and political background is briefly sketched -- just enough to give the reader a couple of points of reference. Then in the fourth line, Espriu abruptly drops this earlier sarcastic tone with a sudden outburst of personal anguish: "and of the wind's vast lament, that old adversary." This line is the first of four that are broken by caesuras. The short, tensely staccato phrases give the poem a new sense of urgency. This urgency also derives from a series of words with their stress on the final syllable (excés, diré) that help push the poem forward.

At the same time, Espriu's emotional state comes into the foreground. His tone becomes confessional, his syntactical units shorter and rougher as he builds to the climactic "I want only to halt in the road." In the final four lines, the poem relaxes again -- as if actually "falling towards this last injustice" -- and then fades away with the halting "and lie down forever, without regrets, dead" and the only short line in the poem: the final "upon the good earth." The impact of "So Simple You Won't Like It" is partly a result of this emotionally-charged rhythmic structure. The initial expository tone, followed by a sudden excited acceleration and a final release of tension creates a standard lyric pattern of feeling. By using this pattern, Espriu is able to mobilize the reader's psychologi-

cal expectations in the service of his own personal death-obsession rather than the more usual celebration of love and sexuality.

"The Resplendent Air," another poem from this same period, has a rather different structure but achieves the same kind of effect: an excited rush towards death. More incantatory than "So Simple You Won't Like It," the poem relies heavily on repetition ("De la llum a la fosca, de la nit a la neu") and on clusters of prepositions (per or pel and later del or dels) at the ends of the two stanzas. Here, however, the two stanzas parallel each other. Both begin with short, relatively "distanced" statements and then accelerate, though the "acceleration" at the end of the poem is also a falling away towards nothingness. This nothingness is made attractive partly by reminders of Catalonia's recent history of "deaths" and "memories."

Recent history -- the Civil War and the period from 1939 to 1960 -- is never very far from the surface of Espriu's work. At the critic Josep Maria Castellet has noted,³ much of Espriu's work consists of an ongoing dialectic between personal "meditation on death" and the Catalan national situation. In the background, of course, is the Civil War itself, at once a collective tragedy and each person's individual one: 1,200,000 dead and 500,000 exiled. The sense of living immersed in a sea of specters, the ghosts of dead friends, enemies, acquaintances and relatives, all speaking a language itself in danger of dying --

is omnipresent in Espriu's work.

I sento com la muda
mort dels homes s'emporta
el meu do de paraules:
esdevé pur silenci
el meu dolor. (p. 249)

(And I feel men's mute death
 bear away
 my gift of words;
 my grief
 becomes pure silence.)

Silence and death: these social and personal foci create the emotional landscape of Sinera Cemetery. In later poems like "The Resplendent Air," however, the personal element is far more prominent and the social is barely suggested. Yet even in The Wanderer and the Wall, a book whose tone is generally introspective, the social dimension of grief appears in poems such as "Trial Hymn in the Temple." "Trial Hymn" is one of Espriu's most famous works. It has been recorded and performed by the popular singer Raimon, and for a time was almost the Catalan national anthem. The poem begins in a mood of weariness and anger, for if "brutish" is a supposed statement of fact, "craven" is an attack on the postwar prostration of Catalonia, where there was almost no immediate resistance to the Franco regime. These lines then lead into a glorified vision of Northern Europe -- a vision at once exaggerated and true (relative to Spain), but which also suggests a Catalonia that had itself been "free" and "wide awake."

At this point Espriu has, as it were, separated himself

from his own patriotism. In the next sentence, his language becomes more stately. The phrase "Com l'ocell... així l'home" ("Like the bird... thus the man") echoes both the style and the imagery of parts of the Old Testament. It is also the poem's first clearly patriotic expression, and suggests a parallel between Catalans and Jews, two peoples often persecuted for being more industrious and progressive than their neighbors. Another parallel is a common sense of deep and sometimes fatal attachment to a national identity. Having introduced this more emotionally involved note, Espriu quickly distances himself from it:

while I, now far away, would laugh
at the law and ancient wisdom
of this my arid village.

But the distancing is only momentary. Espriu is indeed bound to his land and people:

For I'm craven and brutish too.
And what's more I love, with a
desperate grief,
this my poor,
dirty, sad, unlucky homeland.

At the end of the poem, he accepts everything he has scorned: Catalonia with all its death, dirt, and misfortune. Thus the Biblical "Like a bird who leaves the nest" turns out to be not only the voice of the brothers in congregation -- that is, the nation as a whole -- but Espriu's own. A patriotic hymn is perhaps the most difficult genre for a modern poet. Yet Espriu succeeds in it, partly through an absolute avoidance of easy rhetoric. He holds his own feelings in abeyance till the end, thus making his final

explosion of love and "desperate grief" far more powerful than it would otherwise have been.

The Jewish-Catalan parallel, which has been one of Espriu's most consistent themes, is more fully explored in La pell de brau (The Bull's Skin, a common expression for Spain because of its appearance on the map). This book, Espriu's most widely read and most frequently translated,⁴ is also the one most given to public themes. When it came out in the 1960's, things seemed to be loosening up a bit in Spain. The fact that such a work could be published at all was indicative of the easing of restrictions. In The Bull's Skin, Spain is referred to by its Hebrew name "Sepherad." The book is a sequence of fifty-four poems, which touch on a number of themes. These themes mingle and interact, sometimes at random and sometimes for the light they can throw on each other. Espriu brings together some of his main preoccupations, including an eerie and highly personal sense of God:

No convé que diguem el nom
del qui ens pensa enlla de la nostra por.
Si topem a les palpentes
amb aquest estrany cec
i ens sentim sempre mirats
pel blanc esguard del cec,
on sinó en el buit i en el no-res
fonamentarem la nostra vida? (p. 354)

(It's better not to name
 that one who thinks us beyond our fear.
 If groping we bump into
 this bizarre blind man
 and always feel watched
 by his blind, vacant gaze,
 where else but in void and nothingness
 shall we lay our life's foundations?)

There are also bitter descriptions of postwar Spanish life, with its scarcity of food and abundance of fascist propaganda:

Però, mentre els elohim
juguen a coudineta,
tu, tan senzill i sofert,
et consoles
empassant-te una a una
les grasses paraules,
les més sonores, tibants,
laudatòries paraules
que et serveixen quasi de franc
els papers. (p. 326)

(But while the Elohim
 play at cooking,
 you, so simple and patient,
 console yourself
 by swallowing one by one
 the fat words,
 those most sonorous, stuffed,
 laudatory words
 that the papers serve you
 almost for free.)

The motifs that tie the work together are the Jewish one -- suggested in the above quotation by the word "Elohim" -- and the effort to draw all of Spain into a general vision of its postwar hopes and frustrations. This effort is unique in modern Catalan poetry, which has usually preferred to ignore the rest of the peninsula. The Bull's Skin's pan-Iberian focus is partly responsible for its popularity in the rest of Spain. The poetic possibilities of this focus can be seen in a piece like "At Times It Is Necessary and Unavoidable...". Here Esriu, whose petita pàtria had been Arenys de Mar, addresses all of Spain and Franco himself:

At times it is necessary and unavoidable
 that a man die for a people
 but never does a whole people have to die

for one single man:
always remember this, Sepharad.

The poem's atmosphere is calm and prayer-like. Espriu creates a sense of relaxed intonement partly through his flowing, balanced succession of clauses, partly by the use of the impersonal subjunctive (caigui, passi, visqui), and partly by the repeated s, z, and vowel sounds ("les raons i les parles diverses dels teus fills," "i l'aire passi com una estesa mà/ suau i molt benigna"). As a social program, "At Times It is Necessary and Unavoidable" proved to be about fifteen years ahead of its time. Nonetheless, The Bull's Skin did play an important role in opening new "bridges of dialogue" among the nations of Spain, with their "diverse motives and tongues."

During his period as a kind of national literary spokesman -- from 1946 to around 1965 -- Espriu generally steered clear of direct attacks upon Catalans. At times, however, he allowed himself to express some of the anger and frustration that intellectuals felt with their own nation. Perhaps his most impressive poem along these lines is "Suburban Square," which is set in Terrassa (Tarrasa), one of a group of ugly industrial towns that surround Barcelona. The poem presents a vivid picture of the barrenness and stupidity of postwar Catalan life: trashy music, a reactionary and myopic Church, and public drunkenness. Against this background, Espriu emerges as a "one-eyed man" among the blind, wandering through the town yet profoundly

alien to it:

I talk, chattering away
to myself in Catalan,
defunct language of funeral chants,

Amidst the "herds of fools," cowards "with hearts like paper bags" whose mispronounced Castilian grinds "Cervantes' language into pigeon droppings," Espriu stumbles towards the new Catalonia -- a place richer economically but dead in every other sense. He alone keeps his memories alive and remains true to his language, "killing time, while the Christian virtues/ die in me."

Behind a poem like this -- and behind a great deal of early postwar writing -- is a terror of isolation in the midst of a Castilianized Catalonia. This terror affected every Catalan author, and resulted in statements like this one by Pere Quart:

. . . què dirieu . . . d'un ordre sense justícia
que descansés en el desistiment general de la
dignitat individual i col.lectiva, per temor--o,
pitjor, covardia--o per ignorància culpable o
per docilitat de bestiola o bestiassa gregària,
dobejosa, concupiscent?

(What would you say of an order without justice that rests on a general surrender of individual and collective dignity, because of fear -- or worse, cowardice -- or through culpable know-nothingism or the docility of some sociable, greedy, concupiscent pet or fat beast?)

Such feelings of despair and disgust also inform much of Quart's postwar poetry. In exile from 1939 to 1948, he returned to a crushed Catalonia he could neither accept nor escape. In "Paid Vacation," Quart takes this frustrated ambivalence as his basic emotional framework. Though the

poem is a bitter attack on Catalans, it benefits (as does "Suburban Square") from a tone of ironic self-mockery:

The day after that I'll come back
like a carrier pigeon,
as stupid as he is,
not nearly as honest,
or as white either.

It is this irony that saves both Quart and Espriu from self-pity. What we have instead is a journey through their emotions, alternately mocking and grief-stricken:

Job of the pigsty;
tongueless, castrated,
pasturage for lice.

After two pages of half-humorous hesitation between departure and return, in which "the land which was our heritage" is compared to a stream of urine and Quart, the former revolutionary leader, finds himself "on four paws/ like a great-great-grandfather," the tone of "Paid Vacation" suddenly turns deadly serious. The poem ends on a suicidal note, with an abrupt leap into "the burning darkness."

Despite such black moments (and the circumstances that gave rise to them), Catalan literature did manage to survive the 1940's and 1950's and to re-emerge in good health. Much of the credit for this survival must go to poets like Espriu and Quart. Both of them responded less to immediate literary antecedents than to historical circumstances. Both sought and found a kind of imagistic, bare-bones lyricism that enabled them to penetrate and magnify reality rather than veiling it. By addressing Catalonia's real problems, both were able eventually to reach a wide audience and to

keep the language from becoming a museum piece. Meanwhile, a number of outstanding new poets were able to come forth, prepared to carry on old traditions and to create new tendencies of their own. My next chapter will deal with two of the best of these: Gabriel Ferrater and Vicent Andrés Estellés.

Notes for Chapter VI

¹Citations from Espriu in my text are to Obres completes, I (Barcelona: Edicions 62, 1973).

²E.g. Zbigniew Herbert in Poland or Miroslav Holub in Czechoslovakia.

³This is the central idea of Castellet's Iniciació a la poesia de Salvador Espriu (Barcelona: Edicions 62, 1971).

⁴Into Castilian, French, and Italian. Parts also appear in the English collection Lord of the Shadows (see bibliography).

⁵Obra (Barcelona: Fontanella, 1963), p. 296.

VII

VICENT ANDRÉS ESTELLÉS AND GABRIEL FERRATER

ha vingut la meua cosina
i m'ha dut un disc de raimon.

cantava raimon
i cantava la pedra i el vent.

oprimia jo la mà d'isabel.

en acabar el disc
la meua cosina estava plena d'alegria,
isabel i jo ploràvem.

quan voldran els déus o qui siga
que acabe aquesta situació.

arraparia les parets.
isabel se'n ha anat a la cuina

i m'ha dut un got d'aigua. (II, p. 95)¹

(my cousin came by today
with a record by raimon.

raimon sang
and the stone and the wind sang.

i squeezed isabel's hand.

when the record ended
my cousin was full of joy,
isabel and i were crving.

when will the gods or whoever put an end
to this situation.

i could rip out the walls.
isabel went in the kitchen

and brought me a glass of water.)

-- Vicent Andrés Estellés

The untitled poem just quoted is from Vicent Andrés Estellés' volume Horacianes (Horatians, 1970). It takes Raimon's angry protest songs as its point of departure,

and sums up the growing rage and impatience of Catalan poets during the 1960's and early 1970's. During these years, several major or potentially major figures have appeared, all of them hampered in various ways by Spain's official linguistic policies.² Although I shall discuss only two of these poets -- Gabriel Ferrater and Vicent Andrés Estellés -- some others worth mentioning are Miquel Martí i Pol, Francesc Parcerisas, and Marta Pessarrodona. All together, these authors have established contemporary Catalan verse as one of the most exciting in Europe. Each of these newer poets has a distinctive voice. Although politics inevitably enters their work, they have all moved beyond mourning and into a more expansive realm where personal feeling, collective experience, and artistic experimentation interact with and deepen each other. On the collective level, one of the strongest currents is a sense of eager expectation of change -- a change that now seems to be coming to Spain and to Catalonia.

The title of Ferrater's first book of poems, Da nucs pueris (Give Nuts to the Boys, 1960, a phrase taken from one of Catullus' marriage hymns), suggests part of the direction of his work: a focusing on specific personal details in the midst of more ritualized public events. Likewise, the book's first poem, "In memoriam," opens in the midst of the Civil War, which is initially used mainly as a backdrop for Ferrater's adolescent self-discovery:

Quan va esclatar la guerra, jo tenia

catorze anys i dos mesos. De moment
no em va fer gaire efecte. El cap m'anava
tot ple d'una altra cosa, que ara encara
jutjo més important. Vaig descobrir
les Fleurs du Mal, i això volia dir
la poesia, certament, però
hi ha una altra cosa, que no sé com dir-ne
i és la que compta . . .

(When the war broke out, I was fourteen years and two months old. At the moment it didn't affect me much. My head was full of something else, which I still consider more important. I discovered Les Fleurs du Mal, and that meant poetry, certainly, but there was something else, I don't know what to call it, and that was what really counted . . .)

These lines suggest a turning away from broad public myth-making in the manner of Espriu or Foix toward a more intimate focus. In Ferrater's work, even modern Catalan history tends to be experienced subjectively rather than in external political terms. His speaking tone is conversational, as if he had a confidence to share with his readers. In the case of "In Memoriam," this casually conversational tone of voice is reinforced by the frequent use of caesuras and enjambment. In his opening lines, Ferrater creates a regular pattern of syncopated six or seven-stress lines broken by caesuras before the last two accents:

/ / / / / /
Quan va esclatar la guerra, jo tenia
 / / / / / /
catorze anys i dos mesos. De moment
 / / / / / /
no em va fer gaire efecte. El cap m'anava

Such an apparently casual effect, however, is typical of a great deal of modern poetry, which frequently

seems more loosely constructed than it really is. What is important in Ferrater is that this deliberately intimate tone enabled him to achieve effects previously unexplored in modern Catalan verse. Of these, perhaps the most frequent is a kind of modulation from everyday life into an erotic vision. The poem "Womb" is a perfect example. It begins with a low-keyed statement ("She's been here for several hours now"), though the counting of the hours also suggests Ferrater's excitement about the woman's presence. The speaker in the poem seems to be lying in bed in a state of dreamy, post-coital relaxation, while the woman has momentarily left the room. As his train of associations develops, her clothes become first another body or "womb," and then "the boundaries of my land": an intimately erotic realm that is implicitly opposed to his normal, geographical "land." Thus, we are drawn into one of Ferrater's more vulnerable moments, the kind of moment that -- if we recall it in the midst of our coming and goings in the public world -- seems almost to belong to a separate life. It is towards this private world, dreamy and sensual, that much of his poetry tends.

The contrast of public and private worlds is also strongly suggested by the opening lines of "Idleness:"

She sleeps. The time when men
are already awake, and little light
yet enters to wound them.

Here the image of men awakening early evokes a whole world

of work and city streets that they will shortly face. In opposition to this world, Ferrater crystalizes a glamorous moment of contemplation that floats before the reader, making the "normal" world seem itself blurred and unreal:

With little indeed we have enough. Only
the feeling of two things:
the earth turns, and women sleep.

This crystalization represents a characteristic -- perhaps the characteristic -- lyric center of modern poetry. In North American verse, it can be seen in the work of writers like Ezra Pound and William Carlos Williams, or more recently in a poet like Paul Blackburn.⁴ Though deliberately suggestive of certain earlier visions of love, it is distinguished by the abruptness with which a luminous instant precipitates out of the welter of literal detail or out of an everyday context. An even clearer example in Ferrater would be his poem "Two Girl Friends," which starts from an image of two tourists seen for a moment in the street:

So much sun on ankles
and smooth, golden sea.
They hold hands,
saying nothing. Streets
of men, rancorous
for these girls know no man
of their kind.

The girls here have been transformed from tourists into goddesses. Bathed in golden sunlight, emerging like a pair of Aphrodites from the sea, they are at once foreigners who literally know no Spaniards and visionary figures moving indifferently through everyday streets.

When Ferrater does turn to political matters, in a poem like "A Small War" or "The Furtive Life" or "In Memoriam," he still seeks the point of intersection between public and private worlds. Thus his emphasis in "The Furtive Life" is on the intimate, psychological aspect of living in a police state. The scene portrayed -- an obsessed fantasy-rehearsal of an arrest -- must be familiar to anyone who has been involved in underground politics: one of those moments of fear and vulnerability that people normally try to keep to themselves. Though torture is not specifically mentioned (and political rhetoric is kept entirely out of the poem), it is implicit in the final phrase: "You have to tell them everything."

A similar perspective dominates "A Small War." The poem opens with a long, casually expository preamble. The maquis are compared to termites, and the diminutive nature of their invasion is underlined:

In groups of two or three, widely separated
from each other, lowly and stubborn
as termites in a great felled stump,
the maquis bored through the Pyrenees.

The climax, however, is not political but personal: a moment of confrontation with the poet's own mixture of panicky violence and terror. Part of the poem's initial casualness comes from its closeness to the rhythms of everyday speech. More than any other modern Catalan poet, Ferrater has tried to get the actual sound of spoken Catalan into his work. This effort has been partly respon-

sible for his influence on younger poets. Of equal importance, however, is the new note of confessional intimacy he introduced:

when the stench of death seemed
the smell of some filthy sex. Meaning
I was young like all those
who go to war, and the flesh
frightens them, and they mangle and abuse it.
All emblematic, immemorial.

Another outstanding Catalan-language poet who emerged during the 1950's was the Valencian Vicent Andrés Estellés. Far more prolific than Ferrater, Estellés has explored a variety of styles and voices, which range from the compulsively self-revealing chatter of "Now I'd Like to Write a Nice Poem..." to the concentrated passion of "Auguries." What ties his work together is a set of thematic preoccupations, which have been described by the Valencian critic Joan Fuster: "Els temes de Vicent Andrés Estellés, en una última reducció, tenen la nua elementalitat de la vida de cada dia: la fam, el sexe, la mort." (I, p. 30). ("In their final reduction, Vicent Andrés Estellés' themes have the elemental nakedness of everyday life: hunger, sex, death.") A few paragraphs later, Fuster discusses the particular form these themes took in the postwar era:

L'amor venia a ser el que ell diu: racons furtius, disegs sufocats, fantasies meticuloses. I la fam: racionaments, estraperlos, llum taxada. Subterrània, en la poesia de l'Estellés, hi ha una mena d'il·lusió feraç entorn del pa, de la taula de la infància, de l'aroma estimulant d'una salut esvaïda. Com la mort: la mort fou aleshores més "mort" que mai: no era solament un home o una dona, una criatura, que morien . . . (I, pp. 31, 32)

(Love came to be what he [Estellés] says it was: furtive nooks, stifled desires, meticulous fantasies. And hunger: rationing, the black market, restrictions on electricity. Beneath the surface, in Estellés' poetry, there is a kind of fierce excitement about bread, about what he ate as a child, about the stimulating aroma of a now-starved healthiness. Like death: death was then more "death" than ever: it wasn't just one man or woman or child who died . . .)

Hunger and sex are obviously central in "if it's permitted," which appeared in Estellés' Horatians. The book's title is mostly ironic: an indirect reference to the phony classicism (which the poet Francesc Parcerisas has categorized as "realismo fascista"⁵ or "fascist realism") that the Spanish state was pushing after the Civil War. The reference to Horace is nevertheless a genuine one. It evokes both the Latin poet's satires and his vivid depictions of Mediterranean rural life. Estellés' Mediterranean landscape is at once a real and a poetically created place, full of both brutal passions and literary fantasy.

In "if it's permitted" the poet, after a mock-ceremonious opening, plunges quickly into a savage realm of primary desires:

si m'és permés,
evocaré dies de l'infantesa.

furtava els fruits dels arbres.
mells menjava dins el dacsar,

(if it's permitted
i shall evoke the days of my childhood.

i stole the trees' bounty
and devoured it in the cornfield,)

The savagery is underlined by the verbs "stole" and "de-

voured" (the reflexive-intensive form "me'ls menjava" has a force far beyond the simple "els menjava" or "I ate them"). Nevertheless, the scene is also pastoral. Estellés' child leaves the real world of his village, which he at first hears only "far off" and then not at all. In the pastoral realm of the cornfield, he plays out fantasies born of hunger and frustration, freeing himself momentarily from socially-imposed scarcities and inhibitions. The two most idyllically "Horatian" lines in the poem are placed exactly at its center, and each one is further emphasized by being printed as a separate stanza:

it was real nice to hang around there.

a sadness and a laziness invaded me.

These lines form a momentary point of balance between the language of lustful hunger that precedes them and the language of gluttonous sexuality that follows.

The sexuality, like the hunger, is made as ravenous as possible by the verbs ("mount each other" and "roll around"), and by the image of the two children eagerly embracing in the dirt. Under the impact of desire, the everyday world blacks out entirely. Only the barking dog penetrates the poet's consciousness, and the poem's final lines underline the feeling of bestiality:

i no longer heard my father's voice.
some dog kept barking in a farmhouse.

Much of the impact of "if it's permitted" comes from the unexpected intersection of tones. These tones range

from the meditative ("a sadness and a laziness invaded me") to the colloquially direct ("and i'd take hold of your breasts -- that was what i liked best"). Like the poem's several levels of awareness, its various tones of voice keep interrupting and penetrating each other. They create a complex tension between the realms of reverie and lust, poetry and hunger, classical idyll and raw reality.

If we turn from "if it's permitted" to the sequence of twenty three-line poems called "Illicit Homage to Lluís Milà,"⁶ we can see the same sort of interpenetration of tones and motifs in a different formal context. Some of the short poems in "Illicit Homage" present moments of pure lyricism:

bull who runs loose through the field
green are the poplars
and there's a river nearby with singing washerwomen

Others center starkly or grotesquely on death:

after committing the crime and washing himself
he went to the movies
when the show ended they found him dead in his seat

Still others present what Fuster called the "furtive nooks, stifled desires, meticulous fantasies" of deformed sexuality:

the groom grabbed one of her breasts
he put it in his pocket
and left her forever on the corner of the avenue

Not all the poems, however, have as consistent a focus as these three do. In many of them sex, nature, and death criss-cross and violate each other more abruptly:

he looked at her one last time
 the twilight was full of pigeons and grain
 they'd beheaded her

In this piece the opening line is a popular literary cliché. Then the imagery suddenly shifts to a scene suggestive of Valencia's lush agricultural plenitude.⁷ But Estellés quickly cuts through this lyrical moment with the abrupt and brutal "they'd beheaded her." In the end, the realms of sex, nature, and death tend to merge, coloring each other with their normally distinct emotional charges. In "if it's permitted," we see this merger in the line "i forgot everything, night fell on me." Here the sex takes place in a cornfield and the poet's excitement is described in terms that suggest death. This deliberate blurring of boundaries is even clearer in "Illicit Homage," for the style is more elliptical and the interruptions more unexpected.

Though no poem of Ferrater's could be easily compared to "Illicit Homage," he and Estellés do have a number of points in common. Both draw their poetic power from a combination of literary sources and everyday speech-rhythms, with more emphasis on the latter than had been customary before them. Another shift of emphasis is their increased self-exposure: a willingness to reveal their private fears and obsessions in a relatively direct way. Though Ferrater is more gentle than Estellés (whose harsh irritability is sometimes reminiscent of Pere Quart), the Valencian poet can also achieve moments of lyrical transcen-

dence that bring him close to his Barcelona contemporary. An example would be a poem like "I See from Back Porches," which culminates in a deliberately distanced vision:

there, on the other bank, in the other part of the
wind.
There are girls drying their long hair
and browning their backs and their thighs and
their breasts.

Like Ferrater's "two girl friends," however, Estellés' girls also occupy a specific spot: those banal back porches where underclothes are hung out to dry. The poet works his way towards a moment of pure beauty through a mass of quotidian detail. He achieves this moment briefly and then loses it, as he moves quickly downward into the despairing alienation of "The air's full of bottles with messages from the shipwrecked."

Something worth noting, at least incidentally, in "I See from Back Porches," is the Valencianism "xiques" (the equivalent of "chicas" in Castilian, which would be "noies" in the Principality). Estellés, like the vast majority of Valencian intellectuals, accepts the norms laid down by the grammarian and lexicographer Pompeu Fabra in the 1910's and 1920's.⁸ Nonetheless, an occasional strategically placed word or turn of phrase makes it clear that his long-haired back-porch nymphs, like his "only country," are distinctly Valencian.

With Ferrater and Estellés, we have arrived at a point close to the present. Though one still feels political frustration and anger in their work (as in Estellés'

furious "i could rip out the walls" in the poem that opens this chapter), we have moved beyond the grief-stricken keening of Espriu and others. Today as in the 1930's Catalan poetry looks ahead, rather than backwards toward the traumatic past. In my final chapter, I will try to suggest what this future may hold, while also trying to sum up the achievements of modern Catalan poetry as a whole.

Notes for Chapter VII

¹Citations from Estellés and from Fuster in my text are to Estellés' Obra completa, introd. Joan Fuster, 2 vols. (Valencia: L'Estel, 1972, 1974).

²See Francesc Vallverdú, L'escriptor català i el problema de la llengua, 2nd ed. (Barcelona: Edicions 62, 1975).

³Les dones i els dies, 2nd ed. (Barcelona: Edicions 62, 1974), p. 13.

⁴See, e.g., Pound's "Shop Girl" in Personae (Norfolk: New Directions, 1926), p. 112, Williams' "Chloe" in Pictures from Bruegel (Norfolk: New Directions, 1962), pp. 50, 51, or Blackburn's "Fragment" in Halfway Down the Coast (Northampton: Mulch, 1975), p. 30.

⁵"Nota sobre el arte catalán contemporáneo," unpublished art. (1975). A copy of this article is in my possession.

⁶Milà was a sixteenth-century Valencian musician and author. He is remembered mainly for his book on how to play the guitar (El maestro, 1536), a work that included some of his own musical compositions. Estellés' homage to him is "illicit" in part because he wrote it without Milà's permission, and perhaps also because the sequence's tone is not the kind of thing Milà would have approved of.

⁷Though this is not the place to pursue the thought, it is interesting to compare Estellés with Blasco Ibáñez, the outstanding Valencian novelist. Blasco, in novels like La barraca (The Shack, 1898), combined an atmosphere of murderous passion with an exuberant natural setting in a way quite similar to Estellés.

⁸Specifically, Fabra was responsible for the Institute of Catalan Studies' Normes ortogràfiques (Orthographic Norms, 1913) and for its Diccionari ortogràfic (Orthographic Dictionary, 1917).

VIII

SOME FINAL THOUGHTS

Totes les reixes tenen llur parany,
i temem que llur ombra ens faci presoners.
Cada escala ens enfila a les parets proscrietes
i amb ull llanós veiem ço que és ofert.
No hi ha pas caça per al qui no fita;
ni el nou ardent, o advers! per als folls del passat.
No és llibert ni franc qui no s'oblida
o rosega records en valls aiguats.

(All the bars have their trap;
 we fear their shadow will imprison us.
 Each staircase lifts us to forbidden walls
 and with woolly eyes we see what is offered.
 For those who don't look hard there's no hunt possible
 nor the ardent, or adverse! new for those crazy
 with the past.
 He's not free or frank who doesn't forget
 or who gnaws his memories in rainy valleys,)

-- J.V. Foix, "Tots hi serem al port amb la desco-
neguda" ("We'll All Be There in the Port with
 the Unknown One")

These lines, at once ominous and hopeful, are from a poem Foix dedicated to Gabriel Ferrater shortly after his death. They also indirectly suggest Catalan poetry's current perspectives, as it moves towards previously "forbidden walls" and perceives "with woolly eyes" what the future offers. Foix, at the age of eighty-three, has witnessed the entire painful trajectory of modern Catalan verse. He has been a young artistic revolutionary, an honored public personage, and a furtive, underground figure. Yet he has survived to participate in a new flowering of Catalan culture. The most wonderful thing of all is that, in poetic terms, Foix remains as much a young revo-

lutionary as ever, exalted and challenged by "the ardent, or adverse! new."

All of Catalan life today is permeated by a sense of eager expectation. From Valencia to the Pyrenees, new political parties and labor organizations, new publications and newly-formed cultural groups appear daily. After thirty-seven years of governmental stupidity and immobility, the entire nation is itching for a public life that again will reflect its real character. Linguistically, this means the reintroduction of Catalan at all levels. Politically, the goal of most Catalans is self-determination: a plebiscite that will probably lead to a Statute of Autonomy like the one in force during the 1930's.

All these developments are of the greatest importance to Catalan authors, who were victimized in a special way by Franco's dictatorship. No other great modern literature has seen its basic means of expression so threatened. If Catalonia had succumbed to its fate as defined by the fascists, Catalan poets would also have disappeared or turned into mummified vestiges of a dead culture. As my study has amply shown, however, this has not happened. Though at times forcibly deprived of their audience, these poets have continuously produced work of the highest level. It is to them, rather than to their past oppressors, that the last word today seems to belong.

One of the most astonishing aspects of Catalan verse

since 1920 is the number of major figures it has produced. Alongside such truly great poets as Foix, Espriu, and Estellés, one finds a number of near-great authors: Salvat, Quart, Bartra, Ferrater and Miquel Martí i Pol, -- not to mention Riba, Carner and others who, while literarily "pre-modern," have also made important contributions. These poets vary widely in their styles and perspectives. In fact, when one thinks of what a small place Catalonia is, its twentieth-century poetry seems extraordinarily diverse. Nonetheless, these authors do have a number of similarities. All of them have thought long and hard about their literary heritage, and have been inspired by medieval and Renaissance sources. One such source has been Occitan lyric poetry. In the Middle Ages, Catalonia itself formed an integral part of the Occitan area. Some of the finest troubadours were Catalans like Guillem de Berguedà (ca. 1138-1192), Cerverí de Girona (fl. 1259-1285), and Jordi de Sant Jordi (ca. 1400-1425). Although Jordi de Sant Jordi has been called the last of the great troubadours, his work has a freshness that makes it seem as if the style had just been invented:

Si com l'infants quant mira lo retaula
e, contemplant la pintur' ab himatges
ab son net cor, no lo'n poden gens partre,
-- tant ha plasser del aur qui'll environa --,
atressi'm pren devan l'amoros sercle
de vostre cors, que de tants bens s'enrama.²

(Just like a child when he looks at an alterpiece,
 and as he gazes with pure heart on the painting's
 images,
 can't tear himself away,

-- so delighted is he by the gold that surrounds
~~him~~ --
 thus am I captured by your body's
 amorous circle, garlanded with so many beauties.)

These lines, with their mixture of idealized beauty and closely-observed detail, could easily be compared to a poem like Ferrater's "Two Girl Friends." It is, of course, well known that Occitan lyric verse forms one of the bases of modern European poetry in general. What is distinctive about Catalan is that it was directly involved in the creation of this tradition. Today, the Catalan language remains close to Occitan. One illustration of this closeness would be the opening stanza of Guilhem d'Aquitania's "Ab la dolchor del temps novel..." ("With the New Season's Sweetness..."), along with my own Catalan and English translations:

Ab la dolchor del temps novel
foillo li bosc, e li aucel
chanton, chascus en lor lati,
segon lo vers del novel chan,
adonc esta ben c'om s'aisi
d'acho don hom a plus talan.³

(Occitan)

Amb la dolçor del temps novell
fullen els boscs, i els ocells
canten, cadascú en llur llati,
segons el vers del novell cant;
doncs esta bé que hom es descansi
en això de que hom té més talent.

(Catalan)

(With the new season's sweetness
 the woods bring forth leaves and the birds
 sing, each one in his vernacular,
 following the verses of the new song;
 thus it is good that men take their ease
 in what they most desire.)

Among many similarities here, one might point out two that, among the Romance languages, are found only in Occitan and Catalan: the use of "ab" or "amb" to mean "with," and the impersonal use of "hom" to mean "one" or "men in

general."⁴

Let us leave aside strictly linguistic matters, however, and turn to the quality of the poetry itself. Even among Catalan poets in their twenties like Ramon Pinyol, one can find a mixture of sharp detail and glamorous lyricism comparable to Guilhem's or Jordi de Sant Jordi's.

Et trobaré on el pou no mor mai,
on l'aigua neix i és sempre clara i fonda.
La meva set no estroncarà la deu,
que la merçè brolla sempre i sempre.
Sempre, tostemps, etern el nus de l'hora.
Jo me'n desfaig, que és meu el temps d'amor,
La nit és jorn, la mort esdevé jove.

(I will find you where wells never die,
 where water is born and is always clear and deep.
 My thirst will not dry the fountain
 that grace feeds forever and ever.
 Always, forever, eternal the hour's knot.
 I undo it love's time is mine,
 night is day and death becomes young.)

In a more aggressive mode, one might compare Guilhem's or Peire Vidal's boasting fantasies with Salvat's in the poem that opens chapter III:

I curse the gods in full flight:
 the cringing herd
 fears the whip of my song!
 And I've married the moon

One strength of modern Catalan poetry, then, is its close link to troubadour verse -- a link that has nourished writers from Salvat through Pinyol. Another important link to the past is with such fifteenth-century Valencian poets as Ausiàs March and Jaume Roig (ca. 1400-1478). In this context, March is perhaps most notable for his combination of intellectual speculation and emotional urgency:

Alt e amor d'on gran desig s'engendra,
sper, vinent per tots aquests graons,
me són delits, mas dona'm passions
la por del mal, qui'm fa magrir carn tendra;
e port al cor sens fum continuu foc,
e la calor no'm surt a part de fora.
Socoreu-me dins los termens d'un'hora,⁶
car mos senyals demostren viure poch.

(Pleasure and love, from which great desire is
engendered,
and hope, coming up all these steps
are my delight, but the fear of evil
gives me suffering and makes my tender flesh
waste away;
and in my heart I bear continual smokeless fire
and the heat cannot get out.
Help me now within this hour,
for my symptoms show I won't live long.)

In swift succession, March moves through a variety of moods. From the calmly rational tone of the opening line, we descend into a confession of agony that ends with a cry of naked fear and need. There is also an abrupt leap from "Pleasure and love" to disease and dying. Such associative leaps are frequent in Estellés' verse too, with its rapid oscillation between death and sexuality. In a more general way, March's technique can be compared to most modern poetry, in which a free-floating sensibility tends to move quickly through apparently unrelated states of consciousness.

A final figure worth discussing is Jaume Roig, the author of a sixteen thousand line misogynistic poem entitled Lo spill (The Mirror) or Llibre de les dones (Book of Women).⁷ Roig's rapid-fire two-stress lines and his abrasively satirical tone have had a strong influence on both Espriu and Quart, who once declared himself "en certa
manera"

deixeble"⁸ ("in a certain sense a disciple") of Roig.

An example of Roig's ear for everyday speech would be these lines, spoken by one of his wives who is suffering from a hysterical pregnancy:

com só dolenta
trop me calenta
sino vomite
tantost m'enfite (p. 83).

(How I ache
I get too hot
and do nothing but vomit
and get stomach aches)

Another example -- this one more sarcastic -- deals with another wife who has just given birth:

gallina era
que tots temps calla
mas en la palla
com ha post l'ou
tothom la ou; (p. 90)

(she was [like] a hen
who's always silent
except when she's laid an egg
in the straw
then everyone hears her)

Direct echoes of Roig can be seen in lines like these from Espriu's play Primera història d'Esther (Esther's First Story, 1948). The speaker is the king:

La son ja no agafo,
ni prenent hipnòtic,
excitat en veure'm
tan apoteòtic.

(I never get tired,
even with a sleeping pill,
I'm so worked up
to see myself so apotheosized.)

As with the troubadours and March, however, Roig's

importance cannot be discovered by confronting passages from The Mirror with modern poetry. These poets' influence, rather, has taken the form of a vivid present-day awareness of their voices and literary postures. Impelled partly by the need to reestablish a literary continuity that had been broken between 1500 and 1850 and partly by the desire "to have gathered from the air a live tradition,"¹⁰ modern Catalan poets have made a special effort to recapture and transform whatever is useful and beautiful in their past.

These carefully-cultivated links with the literary past are, I believe, one reason for the energy and special flavor of modern Catalan verse. Another important factor has been the strong identification -- acknowledged and valued on both sides -- between the poets and their nation. Like many Third World writers (for example Wole Soyinka of Nigeria, Nicolás Guillén of Cuba, or René Depestre of Haiti), modern Catalan poets have always felt nourished, even in their darkest moments, by an implicit sympathy with those to whom they speak. Though I have commented most directly on this quality in Bartra, it can be found also in poems like Espriu's "Trial Hymn in the Temple," Eix's "My Country and I," and Quart's "Songs of Exile." In this regard, the obvious European comparison with Catalonia would be Ireland. With a population of only three million, that nation has produced an amazing number of first-rate writers in this century, starting with James

Joyc  and William Butler Yeats and continuing through figures like Thomas Kinsella and Flann O'Brien down to very young poets like Richard Ryan.

Since my own study purports to be a survey of Catalan poetry from 1920 to the present, it seems fitting that it should conclude with the young and the very young. There are at least four young Catalan poets of real promise: Miquel DescLOT, Francesc Parcerisas, Marta Pessarrodona and Ramon Pinyol. I have already mentioned Pinyol, who is perhaps the best of a group of young sonneteers who have emerged in the last seven or eight years. In part, this group represents a deliberate turning away from the influence of Ferrater and Espriu, and a determination to see what kinds of resources fixed forms still offer. Pinyol's subject matter ranges from the glowing love lyrics of the above-quoted "El nus de l'hora" ("The Hour's Knot") to the harsh political anger of "Servent de tu" ("Your Servant"):

Quants malparits ens estenen les xarxes!
I reverdits i agrisats paren pues
per tot cam , males herbes d'aquesta

terra de pus, plena de pus la cara,
de plata el pit i ben ple de medalles.¹¹
O, com escup l'esteril foc als camps!

(These bastards fling us their nets!
 And in green and grey uniforms scatter barbs
 everywhere, evil weeds from this

land of pus, pus-filled faces,
 silver-stuffed chests, bulging with medals.
 They spit sterile fire through the fields!)

DescLOT, who at the age of twenty-three is two years younger than Pinyol, is also a poet of real promise. I cited one of his titles ("She, the Immortal Fairy...", p. 7) in my first chapter to suggest the mixture of whimsy and seriousness one also finds in figures like Salvat or Joan Miró. In "She, the Immortal Fairy," DescLOT lets loose a series of fantasies in which his two-stress lines underline the sense of breathless discovery:

Pujaria al tren
i me'n aniria
cap al Nord, ivarsós,
cercant un estel
que m'omplís del tot
aquest veire buit.

(I'd board the train
 and be off
 to the North, swiftly
 seeking a star
 that might fill
 this empty glass.)

Later in the poem, this feeling of speed and exhilaration becomes explicitly sexual:

També un altre, encara,
per poder fugir
vers la llum de l'Est
i penetrar l'úter
dels dies d'estiu,
d'hivern i tardor...

(And yet another
 to be able to flee
 towards the light of the East
 and enter the womb
 of summer days,
 of winter and fall...)

In the end, all his trains derail, but their derailment seems more like a joyous climax than a fall:

Descarrilarien
tots aquests meus trens
i aniria en orri
tota fantasia.
Les immortals goges
em conhortarien.

(All these trains of mine
 would derail
 in a chaos
 of total fantasy.
 The immortal fairies
 would console me.)

For all the vigor of their writing, Pinyol and Desclot are still in their literary apprenticeship. It is to two slightly older poets, Francesc Parcerisas and Marta Pessarrodona, that we must turn for a more developed body of work. Parcerisas and Pessarrodona both have lived and taught in England, and have been influenced by modern poetry in English. Among Catalan poets, the strongest influence on both of them has been Gabriel Ferrater. Pessarrodona in particular had a close personal as well as literary relationship with him. One of her most moving poems, "La crueltat dels mesos" ("The Cruelty of the Months") describes her discovery of Ferrater's body after his suicide:

Sé que puc permetre'm, diguem-ne,
certs luxes: era una cambra
cap a les quatre de la tarda.
De l'aixopluc de després, faig
promesa de no oblidar-me'n.
He passat moltes hores fent
i desfent al cap aquella cambra.¹³
El rellotge vivia: res més.

(I know I can allow myself, let us say,
 certain luxuries: it was a room
 at almost four P.M.
 From the shelter of afterwards, I make

a promise never to forget it.
 I've spent many hours going over
 that room in my head.
 The clock was living: nothing else.)

In "The Cruelty of the Months," Pessarrodona places one of her most painful private experiences at the center of the poem. Her willingness to present such experiences directly recalls certain North American confessional poets. One of her poems, in fact, has an English title: that refers to Sylvia Plath: "In the Way of Mrs. Hughes." Although Pessarrodona has cultivated a hard-boiled, cynical literary voice, this voice nonetheless often reveals an intense vulnerability. In "Nit trista de Sant Joan" ("Sad St. John's Eve"), for example, the wearily ironic opening stanzas lead us to a final cry of anguish:

No vam saltar ni l'última foguera.
Nit sense sorolls ni xiuxiueig de brases.
Nit de somnifer, letífer remor.

(Quant de temps ha calgut
per saber cobejar el corb
--aquest literari animalot
de color d'ala de mosca?)

Nit per no viure-la;
dolor adéu, adéu amor.
Ho havíem ja cremat tot. (p. 41)

(We didn't leap even the last bonfire.
 Night without sounds, without crackling coals.
 Night of drowsy, poisonous rustling.

[How long did it take
 the raven to learn greed
 -- that literary beast
 fly wing color]

Night not to be lived through;
 grief farewell, farewell love.
 We'd already burned it all.)

Parcerisas' work is more varied in tone than Pessarrodona's, and therefore harder to characterize succinctly. At times his verse can be colloquial, as in these lines about a political conversation in a bar:

Mentrestant la noia del bar portà un nova ampolla,
l'aire era fred i el bar s'anava omplint més de
pressa.
Jo l'agraïa que no parlés del meu prestigi ja caduc.
--Ja se sap, només una paraula i tot recomença...¹⁴

(Meanwhile the girl at the bar brought another bottle,
the air was chilly and the bar filled up quicker.
I was grateful to him for not mentioning my now-declining fame.
"I know. Just one word and everything starts up again.")

At other times he can be more "literary," as in his erotically-charged, surrealistic "Una cambra estreta de forma triangular" ("A Narrow Room, Triangular in Shape"):

Com he parlat d'un índex il.lustre, talment el teu
cos
se'm fa paraula endinsada que fructifica en mi, com
l'eterna
raó de l'esperma que plou nova vida...¹⁵

(Like that famous table of contents I spoke of,
your body becomes
a penetrating word, bringing forth fruit in me
like the sperm's
eternal right to rain new life...)

Both Parcerisas and Pessarrodona have absorbed some of Ferrater's innovations -- in particular his conversational tone and willingness to expose intimate emotional states. Their work points to one possible future direction, just as Pinyol's suggests the enduring vitality of older sources.

In another sense, however, all these younger poets

can be seen as carrying on the tradition of modern Catalan poetry. This tradition, as I hope I have shown, is one in which volatile feelings, profuse and exuberant imagery, and a deep sense of the literary past have all combined to produce a dense accumulation of strong poetic voices. I myself, as a poet, feel that I have gained much from my close association with these writers and their works. Under the constant threat of annihilation, they have created a body of poetry that is at once formally adventurous and socially engaged, receptive to outside influences and yet secure in its own national identity. In fact, it is possible that the very threat of annihilation has contributed to the richness of modern Catalan verse. When poetry is an act of collective self-affirmation, the poet is less likely to wonder whether literature is essential to human life.

In any case, what is certain is that from Foix and Salvat to Estellés and Ferrater, Catalans have created an abundance of superb literature. It would be difficult to think of any other modern European literature with a comparable array of figures. One can only hope that in the future -- which despite everything can still only be seen "with woolly eyes" -- these poets will be able to assume their rightful place in a nation at last in control of its own destiny.

Notes for Chapter VIII

¹Tots hi serem al port amb la desconeguda (Barcelona; 1973), p. 2.

²Poesies, ed. Martí de Riquer (Granada: Universidad de Granada, 1955), p. 147.

³Les chansons de Guillaume IX Duc d'Aquitaine, ed. Alfred Jeanroy, 2nd ed (Paris: Librairie Honoré Champion, 1967), pp. 24, 25.

⁴The French "on" is also derived from this same root, but is no longer immediately recognizable as being related to "homme."

⁵Remor de rems (Barcelona: Amadeu Oller, 1972), p. 51.

⁶Poesies, II (Barcelona: Barcino, 1952), p. 12.

⁷Ed. Roque Chabas (Barcelona: L'Avenç, 1905). Citations from Roig in my text are to this edition.

⁸Obra, p. 292.

⁹Barcelona: Edicions 62, 1966, p. 23.

¹⁰The phrase is Ezra Pound's, from "Canto LXXXI" in The Cantos (1-95) (New York: New Directions, 1956), p. 100 of "Pisan Cantos."

¹¹Aigües d'enlloc (Barcelona: Edicions 62, 1973), p. 17.

¹²This and the following two citations from Desclof are to Ira és trista passió (Barcelona: Amadeu Oller, 1971), p. 26.

¹³This and the following two citations from Pessarrodona are to Vida privada (Barcelona: Lumen, 1972).

¹⁴Discurs sobre les matèries terrestres (Barcelona: Edicions 62, 1972), p. 13.

¹⁵Homes que es banyen (Barcelona: Aymà, 1970), p. 22.

ANTHOLOGY

JOAN SALVAT-PAPASSEIT

(1894-1924)

Salvat-Papasseit is one of the few Catalan poets from a working class background. His father, a stoker on the steamship Montevideo, died in 1901, and Salvat spent most of his childhood in a charity home. In 1914 he began publishing revolutionary political essays in two Castilian-language magazines: Justicia Social (Social Justice) and Los Miserables (The Wretched Ones). Two years later Salvat switched to Catalan, and in 1917 he founded the political-cultural journal Un Enemic del Poble: Fulla de Subversió Cultural (An Enemy of the People: Cultural Subversion Sheet). In 1919, the first of Salvat's six volumes of poetry appeared. A year later he found that he had tuberculosis, and the remainder of his poetic career was interrupted by periods in sanitariums. His death in 1924 deprived Catalan literature of one of its liveliest and most promising voices.

5 4 0 4 5¹

A J.V. Foix

La dinamo turgent mou els priaps de foc

en CIRCUMVAL·LACIÓ

No he vist mai més majestat que en lo stylo de foc

TROLLEY

TROLLEY

TROLLEY

És que jo só igual per cadascú

en el passatge

Fa fàstic

tothom sap estranger

i és segur que aquest vell no coneix el meu nom

Un altre porta ulleres

i els vidres entelats

Ran de nas

Ran de nas

PERQUÈ EL REVISADOR

El cobrador abans tenia la paraula

(de guisa que em feia l'ullet:

5-4-0-4-5)

M'he palpat bàrbarament

ARC DE TRIOMF

si m'han pres la cartera

A fe no en portava

amic

5 4 0 4 5

To J.V. Foix

The turning dynamo moves its burning phalluses
in CIRCUMVOLUTION

I've never seen more majesty than in this pen of fire
TROLLEY TROLLEY TROLLEY

For I am the equal of anyone

in this alley

It makes you sick everyone knows some foreign language
and surely this old man doesn't know my name

Another wears eyeglasses

with dirty lenses

Against his nose

Against his nose

BECAUSE THE TICKET INSPECTOR

The conductor had the floor before

(and winked at me:

5-4-0-4-5)

I searched myself furiously

if they've taken my wallet

In truth I didn't have one

friend

ARC OF TRIUMPH

EPIGRAMA

A Josep A. Font i Cases

Un perfum de colors ha invadit a Margot

S'ha vestida de pressa:

Perquè hom no sabés de la sina l'olor

s'ha posada una flor

damunt la roba fresca

EPIGRAM

To Josep A. Font i Cases

A perfume of colors invaded Margot

She dressed quickly.

Lest anyone know the scent of her breasts

she placed a flower

on her fresh clothes

LA FEMME AUX ORANGES

(REFLEX N° 2)

La cançó del metro, que es mulla el ventre al Sena, a
la vella Cité, traspua tots els sostres i diu:

-- Avui só perfumat
per una grassa impresa.
Porto un braçalet blau,
un altre de vermell
i les anques més nues.

Les sandàlies polides amb brillian~~ts~~s

I així la meva amada
ve assetjada a desdir:
per això és que baixa a Rennes
es deixa la cotilla a Saint-Michel
i s'ajeu al meu bany de purpurina.

Banyera del NORD-SUD:

Finava la cançó quan la femme aux oranges, direcció
Château d'Eau, s'ha descobert la brusa i ha ensenyat els
mugrons

que eren com una llàntia de cremell.

Paris, 12 de març de 1920

LA FEMME AUX ORANGES

(REFLEX No. 2)

The metro's song at the old Cité, which bathes its belly
in the Seine, oozes through all the roofs and says:

-- Today I'm perfumed
with printed grease.
I wear a blue bracelet,
another of scarlet
and my hips are quite naked.

My sandals bright with diamonds.

And so my beloved
comes unspeakably sought-after
and descends to Rennes
leaving her girdle at Saint-Michel
and lies down in my bath of purple.

Bath of the NORTH-SOUTH line!

The song ended when la femme aux oranges, going towards
Château d'Eau, opened her blouse and showed her nipples
which were like smoking oil-lamps.

Paris, March 12, 1920

DRAMA EN EL PORT

A Lluís Escobet

GLOP D'OCEÀ

EN LA NIT

(ABILLAT AMB LA CLAROR DELS HOMES

ARC-VOLTAIC)

ALS MEUS PEUS

LLUMS BLANQUES

VERDES

ROGES

EL MASCLE

T R A N S A T L À N T I C

UDOLANT

LES SIRENES NO HO SABEN

PERÒ XISCLEN

ELS EMIGRANTS S'EMPENYEN

PASSO RAN DE LA D R A G A

QUE ÉS FORÇA I CREIX

LA BOIA INQUIETA

T M A G L
R N O

ARA LES ONES CANTEN EL DESIG D'ENGOLIR.

EL TRO AL LLUNY

DRAMA IN THE PORT

To Lluís Escobet

SLOSH OF OCEAN

IN THE NIGHT

(CLOTHED IN THE LIGHT OF MEN

VOLTAIC ARC

AT MY FEET

WHITE LIGHTS

GREEN

RED

THE T R A N S A T L A N T I C

MALE

HOWLING

THE SIRENS DON'T KNOW IT

BUT THEY SHRIEK

THE EMIGRANTS SHOVE

I WALK TOWARDS THE

D R E D G E

WHICH IS DARK AND RISES

THE UNEASY BUOY

H A W V
E D A E

NOW THE WAVES SING THEIR URGE TO DEVOUR

THE THUNDER

FAR-OFF

SOSPIR DE LES TENEBRES

JO EM VEIG EN L'HORIZÓ

FORA EL PORT LES GAVINES REPOSEN

SIGH OF DARKNESS

I SEE MYSELF IN THE HORIZON

BEYOND THE HARBOR THE SEAGULLS REST

MARXA NUPCIAL

Llum de l'IRRADIADOR camaleònic damunt

l'estrella del Circ encara hexagonal

Exit! Exit!! Exit!!!

CLOWNS equilàters líders romàntics

Això és sa i en les constel·lacions de quatre barrets
cònics

La terra només gira perquè jo sóc aquí i jo sóc un
PALLASSO qui agonitza

Margot amb el MALLOT i els cabells pintats

rojos sembla un ciri que cremi

Només crema per mi:

Davant dels cent centaures que fan faixa a la Pista

DAURADA D'EMOCIÓ

Margot ara m'esguarda fit a fit i en caient del

Trapezi he llegit un anunci a la pantalla:

ESCOPIU A LA CLOSCA

PELADA

WEDDING MARCH

Light of the chamelion RADIANCE above
the star of the Circus still hexagonal

Success! Success!! Success!!!

Equilateral CLOWNS romantic leaders
This is healthy and in the constellations of four conical
hats

The earth only turns because I am here and I am a
CLOWN in agony

Margot with the TIGHTS and her hair painted
red seems like a burning candle
She only burns for me:
Before the hundred centaurs that form a barrier in the arena
GILDED WITH EMOTION

Margot stares at me now and in falling from the
Trapeze I read an advertisement on the screen:

SPIT ON THE BALD
PATE

DELS CRETINS

Aquest home que diu:

-- La música de Circ és tan definitiva com no la va
 conèixer Richard Wagner tanmateix un pompier!

La sombra dels comparses en el sol de les taules
 Moure's i projectar-se no existir:

La VIDA al Dinamisme

Jo protesto que això degeneri també

-- Perquè ara el "domador" vol fer jocs malabars
 i els cavalls amb les potes

Més m'estimo l'

EDISSON

i en CHARLOT que s'han tornat bessons per
 tal d'entrar en sèrio a la glòria del cel

(car ells són ignorants de que venim d'ahir
 d'abans-d'ahir de l'altre abans-d'ahir
 i més d'abans encara)

L'Esfera del rellotge a les DOTZE fecunda les hores
 que vindran que són:

OF THE CRETINS

This man who says:

"Circus music is more definitive than anything Richard
Wagner knew of" a fireman notwithstanding!

The shadow of masquerades in the sun of the tables
To move and project yourself not to exist:
LIFE in Dynamism

I protest that this also may degenerate
-- Because now the "tamer" wants to juggle
and the horses with their hoofs

I prefer



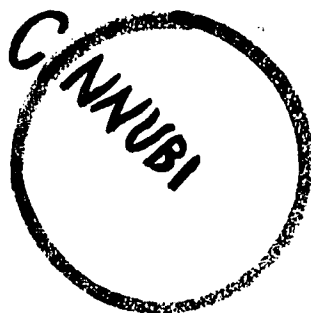
and CHARLIE CHAPLIN who have become twins in the hope of
seriously entering the glory of heaven

(since they don't know that we come from yesterday
from the day before yesterday from ~~before~~ the day before
yesterday
and from even before)

The dial of the clock at TWELVE engenders the hours
to come which are:

una	dues	tres	quatre
cinc	sis	set	vint
nou	deu	onze	

i després el



-- i així seré immortal perquè d'aquí ha nascut el meu
JO dins el TOT

one	two	three	four
five	six	seven	eight
nine	ten	eleven	

and then



-- and so I shall be immortal because here was born my
F in everything

J.V. FOIX
(1894-)

At eighty-three, Foix remains the acknowledged master of avant-garde Catalan poetry. Since 1917, he has been closely associated with the nation's artistic vanguard, including internationally known painters like Joan Miró and Salvador Dalí, both of whom he presented in their first public exhibitions. In the course of his long career, Foix has edited magazines such as La Revista Catalana (The Catalan Review), Trossos (Pieces), and Monitor, and has contributed to many other publications. During parts of the 1920's and 1930's, he directed the cultural section of the Barcelona daily newspaper La Publicitat (Publicity). He represented Catalonia at the 1934 PEN Club conference in Dubrovnik. In addition to his cultural activities, Foix is also the prosperous owner of two fine pastryshops. His customers sometimes ask him if by any chance he has a son who writes those far-out poems with the long titles.

Si pagués acordar Raó i Follia,²
 I en clar matí, no lluny de la mar clara,
 La meva ment, que de goig és avara,
 Em fes present l'Etern. I amb fantasia

--Que el cor encén i el meu neguit desvia--
 De mots, de sons i tons, adesiara
 Fes permanent l'avui, i l'ombra rara
 Que m'estrafà pels murs, fos seny i guia

Del meu errar per tamarius i lloses;
 --Oh dolços pensaments!, dolçors en boca!--
 Tornessin ver l'Abscon, i en cales closes,

Les imatges del son que l'ull evoca,
 Vivents; i el Temps no fos; i l'esperança
 En Immortals Absents, fos llum i dansa!

If I could reconcile Reason and Madness
and in clear morning, not far from clear sea
My mind, avaricious for joy,
Could make the Eternal present. And with Fantasy

-- That the heart inflames and my uneasiness turns aside --
Of words, sounds, and tones, could
Occasionally make today permanent, and that strange shadow
That mimicked me on walls, be good sense and guide

For my wanderings through tamarisks and tombstones;
-- Oh sweet thoughts! Sweetness in mouth! --
They might make the Secret true, and in sheltered inlets

Bring alive sleep's eye-evoked images;
And time might not be; and the hope
Of Absent Immortals, light and dancing!

AL PEU D'UNA MURALLA CICLÒPIA L'HOME DE LA GRANOTA
 BLAVA, MÉS ALT QUE TOTS, ENCEJAVA CORRETGES I AJUSTAVA
 POLITGES. DE TANT EN TANT, DES DE LES PREGONESES D'UNA
 ESTRANYA VISERA, EM MIRAVA, SORRUT. JO FEIA EL DISTRET
 TOT MIRANT EL MAR, AMB UN LLIBRE VELL A LA MÀ

En faula i son conec aquell qui escampa
 Vora la mar, pels rocs antics, oberta,
 Falsos estels, marcits, coberts amb fulls impresos.
 Torxa en mà l'he seguit entre avions bipètals
 Quan, d'amagat, n'ungeix els engranatges
 En el·líptics hangars i garites sagrades.
 L'he vist, reial, en cova marinera,
 Com si vestís draperies de molta
 A sol colgant

—quan les ombres palmades
 S'ajoquen pels torrents i espïen les naixences—,
 O en clos murat

—quan les hores ancoren
 Als ports mentals—

brogent i voltat d'eines,
 Mesurant els avencs estel·lars i llur fronda.

És el menhir de l'alba selvatana
 Remorós de flors d'aigua i llum flairosa,
 El muscle adolescent i sangós del migdia,

AT THE FOOT OF A CYCLOPEAN WALL, THE MAN IN THE BLUE WORK-SUIT, TALLEST OF ALL, WAS POLISHING LEATHER STRAPS AND ADJUSTING PULLEYS. FROM TIME TO TIME HE LOOKED AT ME FROM BENEATH HIS STRANGE VISOR, TACITURN. I PRETENDED NOT TO NOTICE, WHILE WATCHING THE SEA WITH AN OLD BOOK IN MY HAND

In fable and sleep I know that man who,
 Among ancient rocks near the open sea,
 Scatters fake faded stars covered with printed sheets.
 Torch in hand, I've followed him among twin-engine planes
 When in secret he anoints their gears
 In elliptical hangars and sacred watch-posts.
 I've seen him, regal, in a cave of the sea
 As if dressed in moss
 Beneath a stifling sun

 -- when the hand-shaped shadows
 Retire into streams and see births --,
 Or within a closed wall

 -- when the hours anchor
 In mental harbors --
 humming and surrounded by tools,
 Measuring stellar chasms and their foliage.

It's the menhir of forested dawn
 Rustling with waterflowers and scented light,
 Muscle, adolescent and bloody, of midday,

L'ocella de la tarda, exiliada
 Entre hèlices romeves, moridores,
 I evanescents motors, a la pista captiva,
 L'androgín de la nit, generós de semences,
 Ombrant les solituds de prades primitives,
 Present pertot on cobegem els cossos,
 Flama perenne als merlets de les calmes,
 Brisca cantaire a les blavors boscoses,
 Forma ancestral als nocturns de les cales,
 Claror de ~~fr~~eix en el congost del somni.

És l'Etern Inconcret que vaga per les dunes:
 --Llum en ta faç quan em mires i calles--
 O forada els penyals amb punxons impalpables:
 --Obre esguards infinits damunt la mar vermella,
Quan surten fora port les barques de l'encesa
I modulen llurs cants veus pregones i humides--.
 Invoca déus novells per les platges abstractes:
 --El teu nom exaltat per gaies tramuntanes,
Quan grana el goig, defalleixes i preguntes--.
 Crema brossa immortal en els barrancs maresos:
 --Floreix ton cos amb fulla i flor ignorades--.
 Cova obscurs animals en imminents boscatges:
 --Quan l'ombra de tots dos és la Sola Ombra.

Bird of the afternoon, exiled
 Among wandering propellers, mortal
 And evanescent motors, on the captive runway.
 Night's androgyny, generous with seed,
 Darkening the solitudes of primitive meadows,
 Present wherever we covet the body,
 Perennial flame on the battlements of calm,
 A singing breeze in the leafy blueness,
 Ancestral form in the nocturnes of inlets,
 Brightness of ash trees in the passages of dreams.

It's the Eternal Ungraspable wandering through dunes:
"Light on your face when you see me and grow silent"
 Or it pierces the boulders with impalpable drills:
"It opens infinite vistas above the red sea
When the night-fishing boats set sail from port
And deep humid voices modulate their chants."
 It invokes new gods on the abstract beaches:
"Your name exalted by gay northwinds,
When joy runs to seed you faint and you pray."
 Immortal burning speck in the ocean's ravines:
"Your body bursts forth in unseen leaves and flowers."
 It bears secret creatures in immanent groves:
"When the shadow of both is the Single Shadow."

A L'ENTRADA D'UNA ESTACIÓ SUBTERRÀNIA, LLIGAT DE MANS
 I PEUS PER DUANERS BARBOSOS, VAIG VEURE COM LA MARTA SE
 N'ANAVA EN UN TREN FRONTERER. LI VOLIA SOMRIURE, PERÒ UN
 MILICIÀ POLICEFAL SE'M VA ENDUR AMB ELS SEUS, I VA CALAR
 FOC AL BOSC

Escales de cristall a l'andana solar
 On passen trens cap a platges obertes
 Entre murs transparents i corals sarmentosos
 I ocelles d'ull clarós en brogiment de brancs.

¿Ets tu, blanca en el blanc d'aquesta alba insular,
 --Líquid l'esguard, atenta a músiques innates--
 Que escrius adéus humits a la forest dels vidres,
 Amb semença de nit per a un somni desclós?

Te'n vas més enllà del goig, al ribatge encantat
 Amb gegants embriacs a l'espluga gatosa
 I falcons dissecats a les roques senyades,
 A un mar petjat pels déus en els nocturns furtius.

No puc heure't, dorment, orb de llum i de ment,
 Vestit com un infant, sense veu ni bagatge,
 Entre tràmeccs guardat per hostalers biformes;
 Els passaports són vells i sangosos els cors.

T'emportes puigs i rius, i els estanys estel.lars

AT THE ENTRANCE TO AN UNDERGROUND STATION, BOUND HAND AND
FOOT BY BEARDED CUSTOMS OFFICIALS, I SAW HOW MARTA SET
OFF IN A TRAIN FOR THE FRONTIER. I WANTED TO SMILE AT
HER, BUT A POLICELIKE MILITIAMAN CARRIED ME OFF WITH HIS
OWN FAMILY, AND SET FIRE TO THE WOODS

Stairs of glass on the solar platform
Where trains of light leave for open beaches
Among transparent walls and branching corals
And bright-eyed birds in branches' buzzing.

Is it you, white in the white of this insular dawn,
-- Liquid of gaze, hearing inner musics --
Do you write wet goodbyes on the forest of windowpanes?
With seed of night for an open dream?

You go beyond joy towards enchanted shores
With gigantic drunks in the thorny cove
And dissected falcons on rocks marked with crosses,
To a sea where gods walk in night's furtive onset.

I can't reach you, sleeping, blind to light and in mind,
Dressed like a child, without voice or supplies,
Guarded among hoes by double-formed innkeepers;
The passports are old and blood the hearts.

You take mountains and rivers and stellar lakes

I fonts en bacs gelius en profundes valises;
Un guaita tenebrós, des del serrat en flames,
Em crida amb noms estranys i em fa que no amb les mans.

Onegen foramur banderes esquinçades.

Setembre de 1936

And fountains in cool shadows in deep mailsacks;
A shadowy watch from the flaming peak
Calls to me with strange names and says no with his hands.

In the open they wave torn flags.

September, 1936

VAIG ARRIBAR EN AQUELL POBLE, TOTHOM ME SALUDAVA I JO NO
 CONEIXIA NINGÚ; QUAN ANAVA A LLEGIR ELS MEUS VERSOS, EL
 DIMONI, AMAGAT DARRERE UN ARBRE, EM VA CRIDAR, SARCÀSTIC,
 I EM VA OMPLIR LES MANS DE RETALLS DE DIARIS

¿Com se diu aquest poble
 Amb flors al campanar
 I un riu amb arbres foscos?
 On he deixat les claus...

Tothom me diu: --Bon dia!
 Jo vaig mig despullat;
 N'hi ha que s'agenollen,
 L'altre em dóna la mà.

--Com me dic!, els pregunto.
 Em miro el peu descalç;
 A l'ombra d'una bóta
 Clareja un toll de sang.

El vaquer em deixa un llibre,
 Em veig en un vitrall;
 Porto la barba llarga,
 --Què he fet del davantal?

I ARRIVED IN THAT TOWN, EVERYONE GREETED ME AND I KNEW
NO ONE; WHEN I WAS GOING TO READ MY VERSES, THE DEVIL,
HIDDEN BEHIND A TREE, CALLED OUT TO ME SARCASTICALLY,
AND FILLED MY HANDS WITH NEWSPAPER CLIPPINGS

What's the name of this town
with flowers on the steeple
and a river with dark trees?
Where did I leave my keys?

Everyone says "Good morning!"
I go around half-dressed;
some people are kneeling,
another gives me his hand.

"What's my name?" I ask them.
I look at my bare foot;
in the shadow of a barrel
a puddle of blood is shining.

The cowherd lends me a book,
I see myself in a window;
my beard has gotten long.
-- What's become of my apron?

Que gent que hi ha a la plaça!
Em deuen esperar;
Jo que els llegeixo els versos,
Tots riuen, i se'n van.

El bisbe em condecora,
Ja els músics han plegat,
Voldria tornar a casa
Però no en sé els topants.

Si una noia em besava...
De quin ofici faig?
Ara tanquen les portes:
Qui sap on és l'hostal!

En un tros de diari
Rumbeja el meu retrat;
Els arbres de la plaça
Em fan adéu-siau.

Què diuen per la ràdio?
Tinc fred, tinc por, tinc fam;
Llavors compraré un rellotge:
Quin dia deu fer el Sant?

Me'n vaig a la Font Vella:

Such crowds there are in the square!
They must be waiting for me;
I, who read them verses;
they're laughing as they leave.

The bishop decorates me,
the musicians have already stopped;
I'd like to go home,
but I don't know the side streets.

If a girl kissed me...
what would my job be then?
Now the doors close;
who knows where the pension is!

On a bit of newspaper
my portrait flutters;
the trees in the square
wave goodbye to me.

What do they say on the radio?
I'm cold, I'm scared, I'm hungry;
I'll buy him a watch.
What's his Saint's Day?

I'm going to Font Vella;

N'han arrencat els bancs;
Ara veig el diable
Que m'espera al tombant.

Setembre de 1942

they've pulled up the benches.

Now I see the devil

who awaits me around the corner.

September, 1942

"PERE QUART" (PEN NAME OF JOAN OLIVER)

(1899-)

Born into a wealthy mercantile and banking family in the industrial town of Sabadell, Oliver has been an active leftist since the late 1920's. During the Republic, he was director of publications for the Generalitat, Catalonia's autonomous parliament. He also published regularly in a number of Catalan periodicals, including the Diari de Sabadell (Sabadell Daily), which he was editor-in-chief of from 1930 to 1934. With the end of the war, Oliver fled first to France and then to Chile. He returned to Catalonia in 1948 under a government amnesty, but has never been given a passport and therefore cannot legally leave Spain.

Oliver has published translations of Samuel Beckett, Anton Chekhov, and George Bernard Shaw, and has had a number of plays performed in the Catalan lands. He is currently head of Catalonia's unofficial PEN Club.

"Sobre el pecho almidonado
la cabeza."

GARCÍA LORCA

Estels inútils, inútil campana!³

Temps mutilat. Negra nit
oratjosa, cendrosa, oliosa, porosa.
Ja en ton falutx de la vela invisible
--funàmbul d'horitzons onejats--
vogues, vagues, divagues
ran l'abís encoixinat
de flames i gebre,
infern de fred dins ulls closos!

Tu, amb el cap a la mà, caminaves
vers el cim, com un àngel monstruós
aureolat amb pols de tenebra
entre els dies soferts i les nits memorables
per l'amor, la mollesa o el somni.

Tu, amb el cap a la mà, t'escondies
rera els crims d'altres mans sense tara,
generoses del mal, amb carícies horrenes
d'ungles còncaves, roents, farcides
de negror tan antiga

"The head on the stuffed shirt."

GARCÍA LORCA

Useless stars, useless bell!

Crippled time. Black night
windy, ashy, oily, porous.
Now in your felucca of invisible sails
-- tightrope walker of swaying horizons --
you row, wander, digress
at the edge of an abyss
upholstered with fire and ice,
inferno of cold in closed eyes!

You, with your head in your hand, you were wandering
towards the summit, like a monstrous angel
haloed with grimy darkness
of patient days and nights made memorable
by love, leisure, or a dream.

You, with your head in your hand, you hid
behind the crimes of others' spotless hands,
generous with evil, with hideous caresses
of concave nails, red-hot, stuffed
with blackness ancient

com el llot a grumolls de l'Edèn.

Tu, amb el cap a la mà, no sabies
aquell urc aplomat de Benito
en dreçar-se complet, la pitrera gonflada
sota el cap ben posat,
la corona -- robins i maragdes --
de bronze vital. La corona
d'un imperi de bambes camises.

Tu, amb el cap a la mà, ets una ombra maligna
o l'engany de la nit basardosa.
La deixalla d'un dany secular. El terrible memento
d'un gest sobirà que sabia abolir
la pròpia vergonya.

Estels inútils, inútil campana,
llunyà falutx de la vela invisible!

Ning, nang!

as Eden's muddy slime.

You, with your head in your hand, you didn't know
Benito's stiff-backed insolence
in complete uplifting, the chest puffed out
beneath the finely sculpted head,
the crown -- rubies and emeralds --
of living bronze. A crown
for an empire of stuffed shirts.

You, with your head in your hand, you're a malignant shadow
or the frightening night's deceit.
The leftovers from this century's evildoing. The terrible
memento
of a supreme gesture that might have abolished
shame itself.

Useless stars, useless bell,
far-off felucca with invisible sails.

Ding, dong!

PORC

Em cal un règim per amagrir.
La pell em tiba, panteixo massa.
No em moc de casa, menjo a desdir:
és clar, m'engreixo com un garri
-- allò que passa --.
Però, ara sí:
poques segones, gens de carbassa
i les cent passes cada matí.

Ja tothom parla de Sant Martí!⁴

⁴A religious holiday on which pigs are slaughtered.

FIG.

I need a system for losing weight.

My skin's stretched taut, I get too winded.

I scarcely stir from home, I eat unspeakably:

obviously, I fatten like a hog

-- such things happen. --

But, from now on:

no seconds, nothing with pumpkin it it

and a hundred pushups every morning.

They're already talking about St. Martin's Day.⁴

CORRANDES D'EXILI

Una nit de lluna plena
 tramuntàrem la carena,
 lentament, sense dir re...
 Si la lluna feia el ple
 també el féu la nostra pena.

*

L'estimada m'acompanya
 de pell bruna i aire greu
 (com una Mare de Déu
 que han trobat a la muntanya.)

*

A Catalunya deixí
 el dia de ma partida
 mitja vida condormida;
 l'altra meitat vingué amb mi
 per no deixar-me sense vida.

*

Avui en terres de França
 i demà més lluny potser,
 no em moriré d'enyorança
 ans d'enyorança viuré.

*

En ma terra del Vallès
 tres turons fan una serra,

SONGS OF EXILE

One night when the moon was full
we crossed that hill,
slowly, not saying a word...
If the moon was full,
so was our grief.

*

My beloved is beside me
of dark skin and serious air
(like a Virgin Mary
found in the mountains).

*

In Catalonia,
the day of my departure,
I left half my life slumbering;
the other half came with me
so as not to leave me lifeless.

*

Today in French territory,
and perhaps still further tomorrow,
I won't die of longing
but longing will make me live.

*

In my country of Vallès
three hills make a mountain range,

quatre pins un bosc espès,
cinc quarteres massa terra.
"Com el Vallès no hi ha res"

*

Que els pins cengeixin la cala,
l'ermita dalt del pujol;
i a la platja un tenderol
que batega com una ala.

*

Una esperança desfeta,
una recança infinita.
I una pàtria tan petita
que la somio completa.

four pines, a thick wood,
five towns too big a world.
"There's no place no Vallès."

*

Let the pines ring the inlet,
the hermitage on the hill;
and on the beach a cloth to cover fish
beating like a wing.

*

A hope undone,
an infinite regret.
And a homeland so small
that I dream of it whole.

VACANCES PAGADES

He decidit d'anar-me'n per sempre.

Amén.

L'endemà tornaré
perquè sóc vell
i tinc els peus molt consentits,
amb inflors de poagre.

Però me'n tornaré demà passat,
rejoventit pel fàstic.
Per semblar més. Amén.

L'endemà passat l'altre tornaré,
colom de raça missatgera,
com ell estúpid,
no pas tan dreturer,
ni blanc tampoc.

Emmetzinat de mites,
amb les sàrries curulles de blasfèmies,
ossut i rebugut, i lleganyós,
príncep desposseït fins del seu somni,
job d'escaleta;
llenguatallat, sanat,

PAID VACATION

I've decided to go away forever.

Amen.

Tomorrow I'll come back
because I'm old
and have very sensitive feet
with swollen corns.

But I'll turn around the next day,
revived by disgust.
For ever more. Amen.

The day after that I'll come back,
like a carrier pigeon,
as stupid as he is,
not nearly as honest,
or as white either.

Poisoned by myths,
with saddle bags full of curses,
skinny and rebuffed, sleepy-eyed,
a prince naked down to his dream,
Job of the pigsty;
tongueless, castrated,

pastura de menjança.

Prendré el tren de vacances pagades.

Arrapat al topall.

La terra que va ser la nostra herència,
fuig de mi.

És un doll entre cames
que em rebutja.

Herbei, pedram:

senyals d'amor dissolts en la vergonya.

Oh terra sense cel!

Però mireu-me:

He retornat encara.

Tot sol, gairebé cec de tanta lepra.

Demà me'n vaig

-- no us enganyo aquest cop --.

Sí, sí: me'n vaig de quatre grapes

com el rebesavi,

per la drecera dels contrabandistes
fins a la ratlla negra de la mort.

Salto llavors dins la tenebra encesa

on tot és estranger

On viu, exiliat,

el Déu antic dels pares.

pasturage for lice.

I'll take the train of paid vacations.

Holding onto the edge.

The land that was our heritage
flies from me.

It's a stream between my legs
that rejects me.

Grass, piles of stones:
love's signs dissolving in shame.

Oh land without a heaven!

But look at me:

I've come back again.

All alone, almost blind from leprosy.

Tomorrow I'm leaving

-- I'm not fooling this time --.

Yes, yes; I'm going on four paws
like a great-great-grandfather,
along smugglers' trails
right to death's black line.

Then I jump in the burning darkness
where everything is foreign.

Where the ancient God of our parents
lives in exile.

AGUSTÍ BARTRA

(1908-)

Bartra came of age literarily during the Spanish Civil War, in which he served as a Republican soldier. He fled to France in 1939 and was interned in several concentration camps, one of which provides the setting for two poems included here. He remained in exile, mostly living in Mexico, until 1970, and the majority of his books were first published there.

In 1949, Bartra received a Guggenheim Fellowship that enabled him to compile an anthology of North American poetry in Catalan translation. Among his other translations are Castilian versions of William Blake and Adán negro (Black Adam), an anthology of Black French-language poets in Castilian translation. Bartra has also published novels, collections of short stories, and literary criticism.

During his period in exile, Bartra became one of the most internationally famous Catalan poets, yet he remained a half-forgotten figure in his own land. It is only in recent years, with his return to Barcelona and the publication of the first volume of his Obra poètica completa (Complete Poetic Works) that he has begun to receive the recognition due him in Catalonia.

MOLTS⁵

Molts

dels molts que s'aixecaren

no tornaran.

Molts

caigueren fulminats

i d'altres, lentament, com alts

arbres que vacil·len,

es decanten

i es trenquen per les ferides

de l'acer de les destrals.

Alguns caigueren

cara a les estrelles

i d'altres cara al fang.

Anaren a la lluita

no per fer més belles llurs vides,

sinó perquè ho siguin les dels que vindran.

Molts

dels molts que s'aixecaren

han deixat boques i sexes que

els cridaran.

MANY

Many

of those many who rose up

won't come back.

Many

died blown to bits

and others, slowly, like tall
swaying trees,

lean

and crack from the axe-steel's
wounds.

Many died

facing the stars,

others facing the mud.

They went into battle

not to make their lives more beautiful,
but those of the unborn.

Many of

of the many who rose up

left mouths and sexes that will
call them.

Res no sabien

de ciències, arts i lletres;
 miraven e|s llibres
 com un lluminós enigma
 que brillava a l'altra riba

i malgrat no creure en la invenció
 de Déu
 molts dels molts signaven fent una
 creu.

Mai més

no llescaran el pa a taula,
 ni tindran ocell en gàbia,
 ni es colraran a la platja,
 ni xiularan per les voreres.

No es notará

llur absència en els atapeïments
 gregaris dels metros i tramvies,
 ni en els clamors dels camps d'esport,
 ni en les manifestacions dels milers i milers.
 Però empenyeran pels camins que han obert
 i en la consciència col·lectiva

estaran

resents

i vivents.

They knew nothing

of sciences, arts and letters;
they regarded books
as a luminous enigma
shining on the other bank

and though they didn't believe
in the invention of God
many of those many signed their
names with crosses.

They'll never again

slice bread at table,
or keep a bird in a cage,
or get tan at the beach,
or whistle from sidewalks.

No one will notice

their absence from the herded
crush of subways and streetcars,
or the clamor of playing fields,
or demonstrations of thousands and thou-
sands.

But they'll push forward on the paths

they opened
and in our collective awareness

they'll be
present
and alive.

Els mateixos pics i pales

que obriren les trinxeres
han obert les seves fosses,
han cavat la terra negra,
la terra erma,
la terra verge,
que era un somni de relles
i de fecunditats impossibles.

I quan els amagaren

per sempre de la llum del sol
els núvols desfilaren amb ritmes
sincopats de marxa fúnebre,
els corbs eixamplaren
el neguit dels seus cercles
i el vent portà plors
de fonts estroncades.

Molts dels molts que s'aixecaren...

Jeuen

embolcallats amb els sudaris
de llur pròpia sang vessada
esperant els nous dies ardents.
Senten ja el roncar del tractors,
l'estripament de la roturació,
l'oneig daurat de les espigues

The same picks and shovels

that opened trenches
have opened their graves,
have dug the black earth,
the barren earth,
the virgin earth,
that was a dream of plowing,
of impossible fertilities.

And when they hid them

forever from the sunlight
the clouds filed by with syncopated
funeral march rhythms,
the ravens widened
their uneasy circles
and the wind brought weeping
from dried up fountains.

Many of those many who rose...

Lie

wrapped in shrouds
of their own lost blood
awaiting new ardent days.
Now they feel the roar of tractors,
the rip of plowing,
the golden wave of wheat stalks

i la impaciència de la falç.
I per la força d'ignorades
llavors que esclaten
llurs punys closos s'obren
en mans que ajuden pujar a la llum
l'ofrena fervent d'ígnies flors.

No han tornat ni tornaran

molts dels molts que s'aixecaren.

and the scythe's impatience.
And by the power of unknown
exploding seeds
their clenched fists open
into hands that help the fervent offering
of igneous flowers to push towards the light.

They haven't come back, nor will they

many of those many who
rose up.

Gran Camarada del Nord, dolç gegant de rosella i de
boira que dorms, cast i adàmic,
com una jove llegenda a la riba solar dels teus cantos
d'horitzons i banderes:
dóna'm la rosa de ferro
del teu cor!

Great Comrade of the North, sweet giant of poppies and
fog who sleeps, chaste and adamitic
like some young legend on the solar bank of your chants
of horizons and flags:
give me your heart's
iron rose!

"PAVILLION T1". ALBA

S'ha romput el fil d'aigua del meu somni.
Per què aquesta claror de roses trèmules
dolçament embolcalla mon cor de pedra?
Per què vénen del record les falçs antigues
a segar camps, profunds d'anys i rialles?

Aviat cantarà la corneta:

gall de tràgic metall!

Camp d'Agde, 1939

"PAVILLON T1." DAWN

My dream's liquid thread has broken.

Why does this brightness of trembling roses
sweetly enfold my heart of stone?

Why do ancient scythes arise from memory
to mow the fields, deep in years and laughter?

Soon the bugle will sing:

tragic metal cock!

Camp d'Agde, 1939

A molts llocs d'aquest món hi ha grans espais de blat madur
amb cels on les cançons tenen un joiós vol segur.

A molts llocs d'aquest món les fulles són llavis ardents
que besen tots els núvols i parlen a tots el vents.

A molts llocs d'aquest món el dia cau com una poma
--que l'arbre de la nit ha madurat-- de llum i aroma.

A molts llocs d'aquest món hi ha torres negres d'anys i
pluja
amb campanes immòbils que escolten tota veu que puja.

A molts llocs d'aquest món l'amor triomfa amb ses corones,
i els mars alcen, tranquils, la joia blanca de ses ones.

A molts llocs d'aquest món les hores van trenant sa dansa
de tombes i bressols amb peu lleuger que mai no es cansa.

A molts llocs d'aquest món, blat, cançons, fulles i campanes,
amor, bressols i tombes... Oh cor feixuc, què més demanes?

Camp d'Agde, 1939

In many places of this world there are great stretches of
ripe wheat
with skies where songs sustain a sure and joyous flight.

In many places of this world the leaves are ardent lips
that kiss each cloud and speak to all the winds.

In many places of this world the day falls like an apple
-- that the tree of night has ripened -- of light and
fragrance.

In many places of this world there are towers black with
years and rain
with unmoving bells which hear each voice that rises.

In many places of this world love triumphs with its garlands,
and the seas calmly lift their waves' white joy.

In many places of this world the hours go by, weaving their
dance
of tombs and cradles with a light untiring step.

In many places of this world, wheat, songs, leaves and bells,
love, cradles and tombs... Oh weary heart, what more do you ask?

SALVADOR ESPRIU

(1913-)

Espriu is Catalonia's best-known contemporary poet. After a sickly childhood in which he was seriously ill for two years, he began publishing short stories and novels during the early 1930's. During that same period he studied ancient history and law at the Catalan Autonomous University, and was about to take a degree in classical languages when the Civil War broke out. He was then drafted into the army, where he served until 1939.

Espriu's first book of poems, Cementiri de Sinera (Sinera Cemetery) appeared in 1946 in an underground edition. Like many of his stories, it focuses on the small village of Arenys de Mar, where the poet had spent much of his youth and which had been his parents' home town. Espriu's best-known play, Primera història d'Esther (Esther's First Story) was published two years later. It has been performed successfully both in Spain and abroad. In recent years Espriu has received the Montaigne Prize at Tübingen, the Spanish Critics' Prize, and the Grand Prize of Catalan Letters. He is Catalonia's unofficial current candidate for the Nobel Prize.

PLAÇA DE SUBURBI⁶

Aquest vespre de gener,
admirant altes estelles
se'm torçaven els turmells.

Enceten remots manubris
ballables de film sonor
de deliqui de minyona,
compostos per capellans
que gaudeixen del favor
del doctíssim arquebisbe
catòlic de Nova York.

Veig brivalls àgils de mans,
pugilats de pesos-mosca,
feinotes d'amor de fosca,
tavernes al bany maria
pel baf de tertulians
bevedors de ratafia.

Una dona de molsuts
braços nus fins damunt colze
remena cossis on neden
olives en aigua caqui.

Parlo, barliqui-barloqui

SUBURBAN SQUARE

This January evening
admiring distant stars
I twisted my ankles.

Far-off hurdy-gurdies start to turn
dance tunes from a film with sound
to make house-maids swoon,
composed by priests
who enjoy the favor
of the most learned Catholic archbishop
of New York.

I see rascals with agile hands,
boxers -- fly-weight class --
doings of love in the darkness,
taverns like pressure-cookers
with the breath of party-makers
ratafia-drinkers.

A woman, her fleshy
arms naked past the elbows,
shakes basins where olives swim
in khaki water.

I talk, chattering away

solitari, en català,
llengua difunta, d'absoltes,
per posar carn de gallina
a l'ànim de paperina
dels ramats de carnestoltes
que remuguen colomassa
cervantina de Terrassa.

Sóc aquí per defugir
pampallugues, com de borni,
de llums del meu pis glaçat,
nínxol de records, penosos
desordres del pensament.

Dono voltes pel quadrat
de cases de menestrals,
matant temps, mentre se'm moren
les virtuts teologals.

Quan tornen camí dels nius
els que pleguen dels taulells,
comencen, en ple misteri,
assemblees de gats vells
dessota plàtans captius.

to myself in Catalan,
defunct language of funeral chants,
to give goose-bumps
to those with hearts like paper bags,
herds of fools in Terrassa,
grinding Cervantes' language
into pigeon droppings.

I am here,
like a one-eyed man, to shun the twinkling lights
of my frozen flat,
niche of memories,
painful disorders of thought.

I take strolls through the square
round solid citizens' houses,
killing time, while the Christian virtues
die in me.

When those behind the counters
return to their nests,
in great mystery
assemblies of old cats come to order
beneath captured bananas.

DE TAN SENZILL, NO T'AGRADARÀ

Cansat de tants de versos que no fan companyia
--els admirables versos de savis excel.lents--,
i de mirar com passa l'emperador tot nu,
i del gran plany del vent, aquest vell adversari,
i de l'excés de mi, sense missatge,
ara us diré, amb paraules ben clares,
amb crit elemental, lluny d'artifici,
que vull només parar-me en el camí,
ja decantat amic de l'última injustícia,
i ajaçar-me per sempre, sense recança, mort,
damunt la bona terra.

SO SIMPLE YOU WON'T LIKE IT

Tired of so many verses which give no companionship
-- the admirable verses of excellent sages --
and of watching the emperor pass in the nude,
and of the wind's vast lament, that old adversary,
and of too much me, with no message,
now I will tell you, in plain words,
with an elemental shriek, far from artifice,
that I want only to half in the road,
already falling towards this last injustice,
and lie down forever, without regrets, dead,
upon the good earth.

L'aire resplendent
arrelà en el plany.
Ales de la sang
drecen a claror.
De la llum a la fosca,
de la nit a la neu,
sofrença, camí,
paraules, destí,
per la terra, per l'aigua,
pel foc i pel vent.

Salvo el meu maligne
nombre en la unitat.
Enllà de contraris
veig identitat.
Sol, sense missatge,
deslliurat del pes
del temps, d'esperances,
dels morts,
dels records,
dic en el silenci
el nom del no-res.

The resplendent air
took root in the lament.
Wings of blood
lift towards brightness.
From light to dark,
from night to snow,
suffering, pathway,
words, fate,
by land, by water,
by fire and by wind.

I salvage my hateful
number in unity.
Beyond contraries
I see identity.
Alone, without a message,
freed from the weight
of time, of hopes,
of deaths,
of memories,
I say in the silence
the name of the no-thing.

ASSAIG DE CÀNTIC EN EL TEMPLE

Oh, que cansat estic de la meva
covarda, vella, tan salvatge terra,
i com m'agradaria d'allunyar-me'n,
nord enllà,
on diuen que la gent és neta
i noble, culta, rica, lliure,
desvetllada i feliç!
Aleshores, a la congregació, els germans dirien
desaprovant: "Com l'ocell que deixa el niu,
així l'home que se'n va del seu indret",
mentre jo, ja ben lluny, em riuria
de la llei i de l'antiga saviesa
d'aquest meu àrid poble.
Però no he de seguir mai el meu somni
i em quedaré aquí fins a la mort.
Car sóc també molt covard i salvatge
i estimo a més amb un
desesperat dolor
aquesta meva pobra,
bruta, trista, dissortada pàtria.

TRIAL HYMN IN THE TEMPLE

Oh, how tired I am of my
craven old brutish land,
and how I'd like to get away from it
to the north,
where they say people are clean
and noble, learned, rich, free
wide-awake and happy.

Then, in the congregation, the brothers would say
disapprovingly: "Like a bird who leaves the nest
is that man who foresakes his place,"
while I, now far away, would laugh
at the law and ancient wisdom
of this, my arid village.

But I must never follow my dream
and I'll stay here till I die.
For I'm craven and brutish too.
And what's more I love, with a
desperate grief,
this my poor,
dirty, sad, unlucky homeland.

A vegades és necessari i forçós
que un home mori per un poble,
però mai no ha de morir tot un poble
per un home sol:
recorda sempre això, Sepharad.
Fes que siguin segurs els ponts del diàleg
i mira de comprendre i estimar
les raons i les parles diverses dels teus fills.
Que la pluja caigui a poc a poc en els sembrats
i l'aire passi com una estesa mà
suau i molt benigna damunt els amples camps.
Que Sepharad visqui eternament
en l'ordre i en la pau, en el treball,
en la difícil i merescuda
llibertat.

At times it is necessary and unavoidable
that a man die for a people,
but never does a whole people have to die
for one single man:
always remember this, Sepharad.
Keep the bridges of dialogue safe
and seek to understand and respect
the diverse motives and tongues of your sons.
Let the rain fall slowly on the sown land
and the air pass, like an outstretched hand,
gentle and very benign, over the broad fields.
That Sepharad may live forever
in order and in peace, in work,
in difficult and deserved
liberty.

GABRIEL FERRATER

(1922-1972)

Ferrater received an eccentric education that included six months each year in the country and no formal schooling at all until he was ten. In 1938 his family fled to Southern France, where they remained until 1941. During the early 1950's, Ferrater studied mathematics at the University of Barcelona, while also publishing art criticism and essays. His first book of poems, however, did not appear until 1960. In the following decade he established himself as a leading voice in Barcelona, and was awarded the magazine Serra d'Or's Critics' Prize and the Gold Letter. His three books of poetry were collected shortly before his death in Les dones i els dies (The Women and the Days). In 1972, for reasons that remain unclear, he committed suicide.

LA VIDA FURTIVA⁷

Segurament serà com ara. Estaré despert,
aniré amunt i avall pel corredor. Com un minador
que surt d'un pou, em pujarà
des del silenci de tota la casa, brusc,
el ronc del ascensor. M'aturaré a escoltar
el bufeteig de portes de metall, i els passos
pel replà, i endevinaré l'instant
que arrencarà a tremolar l'angúnia del timbre.
Sahré qui són. Els obriré de seguida. Tot perdut,
que entrin aquests, a qui ho hauré de dir tot.

THE FURTIVE LIFE

Surely it will be like now. I'll be awake,
pacing up and down the foyer. Like a miner
leaving a shaft, it will rise
from the building's total silence, brusque,
the elevator's grind. I'll stop and listen
to the clang of metal doors, the steps
in the hallway, guessing the instant
when my doorbell-panic starts.
I'll know who they are. Then I'll let them in. All's lost,
let them enter. You have to tell them everything.

DUES AMIGUES

Tant de sol als turmells,
de mar llisa i daurada.
Agafades de mans,
no es diuen res. Carrers
d'homes rancuniosos
perquè no hi ha cap home
com ells, que elles conequin.
Ara no van enlloc.
Tornen del sol. Travessen
tardes llargues, carrers
de mots incomprensibles.
No s'enduen records.
Volen només saber
que s'agafen de mans
i van juntes, per un
carrer de l'estranger.

TWO GIRL FRIENDS

So much sun on ankles
and smooth, golden sea.
They hold hands,
saying nothing. Streets
of men, rancorous
for these girls know no man
of their kind.
Right now they're not going anywhere.
They return from the sun. They traverse
long afternoons, streets
of incomprehensible words.
They take away no memories.
They want only to know
that they're holding hands
and walk together, down a
foreign street.

PETITA GUERRA

Portaven mines antitancs, inútils
i pesades com un símbol històric,
embolicades a les mantes xopes
d'olors antigues, romaní i suor
de mules. I també metralladores
desmuntades dels caces alemanys
i metralletes de ferralla anglesa.
Per grups de dos o tres, molt separats
els uns dels altres, ínfims i tossuts
com els corcs d'una soca aterrada,
els maquis foradaven Pirineu.
Va ser una guerra de les més petites
que hem conegut. No em va posar al davant
sinó un cadàver. El d'una noieta
pagesa d'Aragó, que va pujar
a un camió militar, i va fer
també de símbol fàcil. Va distreure
el xòfer i el mecànic, i tots tres
es van anar a estimbar d'un pont. La noia
tenia una lesió clara, gens
interessant, però els metges que feien
l'autòpsia, li van trobar al turmell
una deformitat remarcable, d'origin
hereditari, xuclada d'arrels
molt remotes en l'arbre de la raça.

A SMALL WAR

They brought anti-tank mines, useless
and heavy as an historic symbol,
wrapped in coverings soaked
in ancient smells, rosemary
and mule-sweat. And also German
machine-guns taken from fighter planes
and shells of English scrap metal.
In groups of two or three, widely separated
from each other, lowly and stubborn
as termites in a great felled stump,
the maquis bored through the Pyrenees.
It was one of the smallest wars
we've known. I came upon
only one corpse. That of a young
peasant girl from Aragon, who climbed in
an army truck, and also made
an easy symbol. She distracted
the driver and mechanic, and together the three of them
drove off a bridge. The girl
had a simple wound, nothing
interesting, but the doctors who did
the autopsy found a remarkable deformity
in her ankle, hereditary
in origin, drawn from far-off
roots in the racial tree.

I el dolor d'un moment, amb el plaer
que el va portar, perdien importància
davant d'aquell defecte mil·lenari,
sord i establert. Res d'individual.
Va ser una guerra, encara que petita.
I encara que fantàstica, tampoc
tenia res de personal, la basca
que em va agafar, un instant del llarg examen
i amb l'ajuda del sol, que castigava
durament el cobert raconer i l'era
hirsuta d'un rostoll de creus i ossos
que era aquell cementiri de poblet,
quan la fetor de la mort em va semblar
que era l'olor d'un sexe brut. Vol dir
que jo era tan jove com ho són
els que van a les guerres, i la carn
els fa por, i la destrossen i n'abusen.
Tot emblemàtic, immemorial.

And the pain of a moment, plus the pleasure
that brought it, lost importance
before that millennial defect,
deaf and established. Nothing individual.
It was a war, though a small one.
And fantastically enough, there was
nothing personal in it either, the nausea
that seized me, an instant's protracted examination
and with the sun's help, which fiercely
punished the covered nook and coarse
threshing-floor with its stubble of crosses and bones
which was that hamlet's cemetery,
when the stench of death seemed
the smell of some filthy sex. Meaning
I was young like all those
who go to war, and the flesh
frightens them, and they mangle and abuse it.
All emblematic, immemorial.

OCI

Ella dorm. L'hora que els homes
ja s'han despertat, i poca llum
entra encara a ferir-los.

Amb ben poc en tenim prou. Només
el sentiment de dues coses:
la terra gira, i les dones dormen.
Conciliats, fem via
cap a la fi del món. No ens cal
fer res per ajudar-lo.

IDLENESS

She sleeps. The time when men
are already awake, and little light
yet enters to wound them.
With little indeed we have enough. Only
the feeling of two things:
the earth turns, and women sleep.
Reconciled, we make our way
to the end of the world. We don't have
to do anything to help it.

ÚTER

Ja fa unes quantes hores que és aquí.
Parts del seu cos, no les més íntimes
però parts del seu cos, s'han escampat
i repartit pels quatre o vint cantons
d'aquesta cambra. I ara visc
tot encledat dins la cosa que estimo.
Un moviment que faig, i que m'estira
enllà del meu replec, toca una mitja
o una sabata o un jersei o una faldilla:
les partions de la terra que és meva.

WOMB

She's been here several hours now.
Parts of her body, not the most intimate
but parts of her body, are scattered
and divided among the four and twenty corners
of this room. And now I live
at the center of what I love.
Any movement I make, which pulls me
outside my fold, touches a stocking
or shoe or sweater or skirt:
the boundaries of my land.

VICENT ANDRÉS ESTELLÉS

(1924-)

Andrés Estellés is usually considered the best Valencian poet since Ausiàs March. Despite the five hundred years separating them, there are some interesting parallels -- in particular their rough, caustic language and obsessive treatment of sex and death. Estellés' work also reflects the special character of Valencia: more rural, more provincial, and more hotly "southern" than the Principality.

When Estellés brought out his first book in 1953, he was an isolated figure in a region that -- though seventy-five percent of its three million inhabitants speak Catalan -- had produced nothing of interest in that language for centuries. Since 1953 the Valencian situation has changed dramatically, partly through the influence of the folksinger Raimon and the essayist Joan Fuster, whose book Nosaltres els valencians (We the Valencians) provoked a radical shift of consciousness in his country. In the last few years, the number of Catalan language classes, theatrical presentations, and radio shows has doubled annually. It is in this context, and with the publication of the first volumes of his Obra completa (Complete Works) in 1972 and 1974, that Estellés has come into his own, while the poetic resurgence he initiated has given rise to a whole school of gifted young Valencian writers.

ELS AVERANYS⁸

Vell dolor, tornes,
familiar, dolcíssim,
i no em puc plànyer.
Captaires arcaics vetlen
quatre brases insomnes.

AUGURIES

You return, old grief,
familiar, intensely sweet,
and I can't complain.
Archaic beggars watch
over four insomniac coals.

si m'és permés,
evocaré dies de la infantesa.

furtava els fruits dels arbres.
me'ls menjava dins el dacsar,
fresc com un celler aleshores.

i sentia llunyana, pels carrers del meu poble,
la veu del meu pare que venia peix i cridava les veïnes.

era molt grat romandre allí.

m'envaïa una tristesa i una peresa.

de vegades venies tu
i t'agafava els pits, que m'agradaven més,
ens amuntegàvem i rodolàvem dins el solc.

m'oblidava de tot llavors, se'm feia de nit.

ja no oïa la veu del meu pare.
lladrava algun gos en alguna alqueria.

if it's permitted

i shall evoke the days of my childhood.

i stole the trees' bounty

and devoured it in the cornfield,

as cool as a wine cellar in those days.

and i heard far off, through the streets of my village,

my father's voice selling fish and calling the women.

it was real nice to hang around there.

a sadness and a laziness invaded me.

sometimes you'd come

and i'd take hold of your breasts -- that was what i liked best,

we'd mount each other and roll around in the plowed field.

i forgot everything then, night fell on me.

i no longer heard my father's voice.

some dog kept barking in a farmhouse.

HOMENATGE IL·LÍCIT A LLUÍS MILÀ

A Francesc Brines...mas tendran sentidoQUEVEDO

1

és primavera
molt alegre avançaves nua
els arbres de l'aigua

2

murta de negres cabells
per l'aigua retornava milà des de lisboa
oh lluna lluna lluna

3

era d'or el teu cos
les veus dels nens a la placeta
era d'aigua

4

la va agafar brusc dels cabells
l'arrossegà per terra vers el llit
agitava la brisa una cortina

5

tenia uns pit incipients

ILLICIT HOMAGE TO LLUÍS MILÀ

To Francesc Brines

...but they'll make sense

QUEVEDO

1

it's spring
joyous you outstripped nude
the water's trees

2

blackhaired myrtle
through the water returned a hawk from lisbon
oh moon moon moon

3

your body was gold
children's voices in the square
it was water

4

roughly he grabbed her hair
he dragged her along the floor towards the bed
the breeze rustled a curtain

5

her breasts were just emerging

no gosava mirar-se'ls
com els llums del semàfor

6

la va mirar per la darrera vegada
l'hora baixa era plena de colomes i blat
l'havien degollada

7

va entrar la lluna pel balcó
es va asseure al llit
i lentament es va traure les mitges

8

brau que vas solt pel camp brau
verds són els àlbers
i prop hi ha un riu i les llaveneres que canten

9

no entres a la taverna
passen tramvies plens de gent
dos enamorats es besen a la boca sota un paraigües

10

10

arbres verdíssims arbres oh arbres
s'ou una font entre unes fulles
sota el llit les teues sabates roges del tacó alt

she didn't dare look at them
like traffic lights

6

he looked at her one last time
the twilight was full of pigeons and grain
they'd beheaded her

7

the moonlight came in from the balcony
it sat down on the bed
and slowly took off its stockings

8

bull who runs loose through the field bull
green are the poplars
and there's a river nearby with singing washerwomen

9

don't go into the tavern
streetcars pass full of people
beneath an umbrella two lovers kiss on the mouth

10

intensely green trees trees oh trees
a fountain is heard among the leaves
under the bed your high heeled red shoes

11

et vas vessar per terra
damunt la taula hi havia un cistell amb taronges
ens agradava molt escoltar mozart amb la finestra oberta

12

se li'n pujava el tango per les cames
li pessigà el melic
li va brollar una aigua dels dos pits

13

cantava la cadernera mare ai com cantava la cadernera
els infants feien els brumerols del sabó
queia el pa a les paneres

14

el nuvi li va agafar un pit
se'l va posar a la butxaca
i la va abandonar per sempre al cantó de l'avinguda

15

per l'escala de fusta per l'escala aquella
pujava el borratxo duia els relats dels mariners
els graons ressonaven com els taüts buits

16

devallaven els troncs pel riu

11

you spilled onto the floor
there was a basket of oranges on the table
we loved to listen to mozart with the window open

12

the tango rose through her legs
it pinched her bellybutton
water streamed from her breasts

13

the goldfinch was singing oh mother how the goldfinch
sang
the children whipped up the soap into lather
the bread fell in breadbaskets

14

the groom grabbed one of her breasts
he put it in his pocket
and left her forever on the corner of the avenue

15

up the wooden stairs up those stairs
the drunk was climbing carrying sailors' stories
the steps echoed like empty coffins

16

the logs came down the river

bella era la vida bella i molt estimable comprenia el rector
esclataven les roselles més altes que el blat

17

després d'haver comés el crim i d'haver-se llavat
se'n va anar al cine
acabada la sessió se'l van trobar mort a la butaca

18

l'una a l'altra es passaven la guitarra assegudes damunt
l'estora
molt dolçament la polsaven cantaven i l'agrunsaven
ella a les cinc es descordà la brusa i li va donar el pit

19

en quedar-se sola a casa
es treia les mitges i les sabates i anava descalça
l'arbret boig de la vida

20

planxava davant la finestra oberta
fraudulentament evocava una adolescència
ell era fuster d'ofici

lovely was life lovely and very laudable the parson knew
taller than wheat the poppies burst forth

17

after committing the crime and washing himself
he went out to the movies
when the show ended they found him dead in his seat

18

sitting on the rug they passed the guitar
sweetly they strummed it they sang and rocked it
she unbuttoned her blouse for the five and gave her breast

19

alone in the house
she took off her shoes and socks and went barefoot
life's crazy sapling

20

she ironed in front of the window
falsely recalling an adolescence
he was a carpenter by trade

Volgués escriure, ara, un amable poema
parlant de certes coses que encara hi ha, d'amables,
segons crec o m'ha dit el veí del costat.
Vull ser amable, avui vull dir coses amables:
aniria per tota la casa a genollons
buscant coses amables, pregant que avui em siguen
donades certes coses que siguen ben amables;
He perdut el costum de les coses amables;
ja se sap el que són les coses d'aquest món...
He perdut el costum, no sé on les he deixades,
és possible al café, és possible en un banc
d'un passeig qualsevol, és possible, és possible...
Vaja vosté a saber. Ara, però, és de nit
i francament no són hores d'anar buscant
coses amables, coses tendres, coses amables
exactament: està tancat ara el café,
hi ha foscor al passeig, s'hi troben certes dones
que volen certes coses, estic cansat, no tinc
ganes de res de res, serà millor que em gite,
demà serà altre dia i ja se'm passarà
aquest desig, aquesta mania fulgurant
de les coses amables que m'ha vingut de sobte.
Que m'ha vingut de sobte. Vull dir: que m'ha vingut.

Now I'd like to write a nice poem
and talk about certain things you still can find that are nice
in my opinion, or according to the neighbor next door.
I want to be nice, today I want to say nice things.
I'd go through the whole house on my knees
looking for nice things, praying that today I'd be given
certain things that were really nice.
I've gotten out of the habit of nice things;
everyone knows what the things of this world are...
I've lost the habit, I don't know where I left them,
maybe at the café, maybe on a bench
by some promenade, it's possible, it's possible...
How can I know? But now it's night
and frankly it's no time to go out searching
for nice things, gentle things, nice things
precisely. The café's closed now,
the promenade is dark, you can find certain women
who want certain things. I'm tired, I'm not in the mood
to do anything, it's better to go to bed,
tomorrow'll be another day and by then I'll be over
this desire, this flaming mania
for nice things that's suddenly come over me.
That's suddenly come to me. I mean: that's come to me.

Veig, des de les terrasses --les terrasses domèstiques
on s'exposen, per ordre, familiars assumptes,
assumptes conjugals, higièniques coses,
i això amb una sintaxi trèmula, del filferro--,
veig, des de les terrasses, on s'exalta la calç,
la meua pura Pàtria, la meua sola Pàtria,
allà, en l'altra ribera, a l'altra part del vent.
Hi ha xiques eixugant-se les llargues cabelleres
i daurant-se l'esquena, i les cuixes, i els pits.
L'aire és ple de botelles amb missatges de nàufrags.

I see from back porches -- domestic back porches
where family affairs are neatly displayed,
conjugal affairs, hygienic things,
and this with the clothesline's trembling syntax --,
I see from back porches, where starch is exalted
my pure Country, my only Country,
there, on the other bank, in the other part of the wind.
There are girls drying their long hair
and browning their backs and their thighs and their breasts.
The air's full of bottles with messages from the shipwrecked.

Notes for Anthology

¹Salvat's original texts can be found in Poesies (Barcelona: Ariel, 1962).

²Foix's original texts can be found in Obres poètiques (Barcelona: Nauta, 1964).

³Quart's original texts can be found in Obra (Barcelona: Fontanella, 1963).

⁴See note on p. 153.

⁵The text for "Gran Camarada del Nord" can be found in Obra poètica completa (Barcelona: Edicions 62, 1971). All other Bartra texts are taken from Poesia catalana de la guerra d'Espanya i la resistència (Paris: Edicions Catalanes de Paris, 1969).

⁶Espriu's original texts can be found in Obres completes I: poesia (Barcelona: Edicions 62, 1973).

⁷Ferrater's original texts can be found in Les dones i els dies (Barcelona: Edicions 62, 1974).

⁸Estellés' original texts can be found in Obra completa, 2 vols. (Valencia: L'Estel, 1972, 1974).

NOTE ON BIBLIOGRAPHY

This bibliography, which is by no means complete, should be regarded as an initial effort based on the information available in New York City and at Harvard. My section on Estellés is particularly deficient, owing both to his lack of an international reputation and to the inaccessibility of Valencian materials. I have not included magazine and newspaper articles by the poets or short reviews of their books. The only abbreviation used is SdO for Serra d'Or magazine.

My bibliography is divided into three parts. The first of these focuses on the seven poets I have discussed. For each individual poet, I have used the following order: poetry, fiction, theater, criticism and essays, translations of the poet, translations by the poet, criticism of the poet by other authors.

The second part of my bibliography includes general critical works on modern Catalan poetry and anthologies. The third part lists some books not dealing primarily with literature, but which provide background information on areas such as history, economics, or language.

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