

For my Mom and Dad

**POETRY AND POLITICS OF THE FIRST CATALAN VANGUARD:
JOAN SALVAT-PAPASSEIT AND J.V. FOIX.**

by

Dominic Keown

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Preface

In his recent and most complete survey of the Catalan literary Avant-garde, Joaquim Molas reflected upon the innovative movement as providing a "literatura que, malgrat la seva contundència, ha estat fins ara més discutida que coneguda, o, almenys, coneguda amb un mínim de solidesa."¹ The critic is most assuredly correct in his assessment. The investigation of the modern artistic current has been severely hampered for a number of years by arbitrary judgements and categorizations based on erroneous or misinformed preconceptions. The present work is seen as an attempt to clarify the matter in some way with specific reference to the validity of the initial Catalan poetic response.

In the course of the last twenty years there has been much interest and thorough scholarship devoted to the area in question, from Poesia Catalana del Segle XX produced by Castellet and Molas, to Fuster's Literatura Catalana Contemporànea and finally Molas' far reaching anthology, La Literatura Catalana d'Avantguarda. These works, however, have tended to display a literary-historical bias, a hangover, perhaps, from the social realism generation of the 1960s, which has resulted in certain unavoidable limitations. The emphasis has been shifted from the analytical examination of the artefact to a more positivist inspired awareness of the circumstantial context. Biography and other historico-political criteria have been favoured as a means of classification, often from a "committed" critical viewpoint, as opposed to an appreciation of the stylistic expression or the sensitivity displayed by the author.

The net result, given the minority aspect of this renascent culture together with the bourgeois predominance in this area, has been that the local reaction to this subversive "revolutionary" artistic current has been minimised and diluted. Such a conclusion was almost to be anticipated with the direction adopted.

The complications surrounding this point of view have duly come to the attention over the past twenty years and may be summed up by a simple question. If the nature of the Catalan response to the movement was so circumscribed and limited, then how could it produce such outstanding figures in other related fields as is the case with Miró, Dalí and Sert?

Individual studies, particularly those by Ferrater, Terry and Gimferrer on J.V. Foix, and by Beser, Vallverdú and indeed Molas on Salvat-Papasseit, have indicated the significance of the Vanguard affiliation of these authors. It is hoped that by following this vein, with a more textually orientated approximation to the output of these poets, a more complete picture has been achieved of the real extent of the impact of the innovative poetics on the cultural life of the Principality, which had previously been distorted by excessive adherence to socio-political considerations.

That is not to say that the historical aspect is not important. Against the backcloth of national revival, culture and politics became inseparable as studies on Modernisme and Noucentisme by Fuster, Castellet and Molas, Marfany and Yates have clearly shown. A knowledge of the complexity of the background situation is therefore essential. Yet it is felt that

this must in turn be combined with a recognition of the full importance of the expression itself. A successful balance between both sides of this critical equation provides a much less exclusive and entangled interpretation of the phenomenon.

The argument as to the nature and parameters of the Avant-garde movement in Catalonia is far from complete and is sure to continue on its intriguing course. It is hoped that the present work has managed to eliminate various pitfalls which have served to complicate and limit our understanding of the poetic faction of the Catalan Vanguard experience.

Note

1. La Literatura Catalana d'Avanguarda, 1916-1938, p. 11.

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THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Chapter I

Language and Politics

In the early years of this century, the European social hierarchy was plagued by internal pressure and widespread upheaval. Traditional assumptions about the very foundations of society were being severely questioned and, in many cases, totally discarded. Inspired by Marxist critique, the force of Labour now provided a daunting challenge to Capital, as exemplified by the October Revolution. The resurgence of repressed ethnic minorities also shook the established imperialism of the Victorian era in a powerful expression of national identity, which was finally triumphant with the result of the Great War.

The tensions in the socio-political sphere were echoed in turn in the creative field with a wholesale rethinking of the position and function of the artist. The Romantic rebellion continued its revolt into the twentieth century with an impassioned questioning of the whole gamut of traditional values and mores, and with a dynamism and frenzy typical of the new technological age. Peter Faulkner has referred to this spirit of change in his study of Modernism and cites Virginia Woolf to this effect:

All human relations have shifted - those between masters and servants, husbands and wives, parents and children. And when human relations change there is at the same time a change in religion, conduct, politics and literature.¹

It was this climate of critical re-examination which nurtured the growth of the Avant-garde. Contemporary Spain also suffered this unrest on all levels. Its effect was felt most strikingly

in the industrial areas, especially Catalonia, with general strikes in 1902 and 1917, the violent "Setmana Tràgica" of 1909, the revolutionary strike at La Canadenca, 1919, and the period of uncontrolled pistoleroisme from 1920 to 1923.

The instability on the labour front was accompanied by a fierce reaction from these same regions against the decadent, reactionary Castile. In the course of the nineteenth century Spain had lost the remnants of one of the richest and most extensive empires in modern history. After the liberation of the last remaining colonies in the crisis year of 1898 the Catalan textile industry - unable to compete internationally with that of Britain - could no longer rely on the protected markets of South America. Thus economic pressure was brought to bear on the validity of maintaining a subservient union with a regressive centralist state and the movement for national autonomy continued to flourish, now with bourgeois backing and commitment.

The re-acquisition of ethnic consciousness, a common phenomenon in the Imperialist Europe of the last century, had first appeared locally in the 1830s as Catalonia, in the early stages of industrialization, came into conflict with the archaic feudalism which was predominant in the agrarian Spanish state:

Les diferències esclaten, s'enverinen els confrontaments, apareix la "questió catalana". Fins i tot la desamortització de Mendizábal ajudaria a accentuar la diferència entre l'estructura socio-econòmica catalana i la de la resta d'Espanya.²

Initially the Catalan bourgeoisie made a determined effort to influence and update the rest of Spain in the process they had already begun, whilst remaining aware of their singularity and the new industrial basis for its expression:

Aquestes contradiccions, per tant, havien d'afeblir les tendències uniformadores que arrecavaven del segle XVIII: amb el carlisme la Montanya es farà foralista; la ciutat defensarà les particularitats de Catalunya ³ on el pols no bategava amb el mateix ritme.

The attitude of individualism grew as the economy expanded and was to receive its first real coherent programme in the 1850s with the federalist ideology of Pi i Margall.

Pi proposed to let the advanced Catalonia act as a counter-weight to the socially retarded Spain. The liberalizing aspirations of the emergent bourgeoisie would be directed against the outdated structures enforced by the landowning oligarchy who controlled the rest of the country. The support of the proletariat, it was assumed, could also be attracted in this attempted modernization. The policy as a whole was formulated within the context of a progressive united country - Spain until c. 1900 -, with the industrialized areas leading the fight against the static rural system:

Era un intent d'harmonitzar el sentiment català i la consciència d'una ciutadania espanyola; això exigia que la burgesia espanyola fos dirigida per un partit fort que l'orientés en la lluita contra l'aristocràcia terratinent, sense por de la classe obrera, ans al contrari, esforçant-se a obtenir-ne el suport i l'aliança.⁴

The movement gained in strength and enjoyed some measure of success when Isabel II was forced to abdicate in 1868 with the due proclamation of a republic five years later. Pierre Vilar has described the introduction to the new period of rule as "outstanding in character and very democratic".⁵ It proved, however, to be short-lived. The hesitancy and political indecision of the bourgeoisie, reflected in the turbulent leadership crises of 1873, and popular movements to carry through "revolution", soon provoked the intervention of the military which led to the restoration of the monarchy in 1875.

More damaging still was the development of a definite schism within the ranks of the middle classes, the consequences of which were to be felt well into the next century. The more conservative elements reacted against the danger of a growth in workers' power and by giving their backing to the Restoration sacrificed any progressive aspirations for a government of order which would favour the smooth running of business:

El procés renovador que s'inicià amb la Revolució del 68 havia fracassat. Una de les forces principals de la Restauració borbònica és la gran burgesia catalana, la qual el 1868 havia participat en el desterrament d'Isabel II. De seguida s'adonà, però, que la via revolucionària oberta tenia molts perills per als seus interessos de classe ... La Restauració, doncs, fou rebuda amb un sospir d'alieuament.

The federalist current, however, was continued in modified form by Valentí Almirall. He organized the I Congrés Catalanista (1880), collaborated in forming the Centre Català (1882), persuaded conservative sections to join in the II

Congrés Catalanista (1883) and published a compendium of his thoughts in Lo Catalanisme (1886).⁷ Thus the sentiments of regionalism and particularism which had first appeared some fifty years earlier had now developed into a full-blooded nationalist programme.

However, the stumbling block which prevented any concerted Catalanist effort was the political manoeuvrings of the alta burgesia. Their power-sharing alliance at the state level with the reactionary and centralist land-owning oligarchy was anathema to the progressive aspirations embraced by the Liberals. For this reason there could be no united front or pressure group and, starved of initiative, the reformist challenge fell into complete disarray:

Aquesta posició no concordà pas amb els propòsits d'Almirall, interessat en la destrucció de l'Estat centralista i de l'oligarquia que el dominava. Ara bé, si Almirall fracassà, també fracassà amb ell... una esquerra catalana "claudicacionista", en uns casos, i "maximalista", en d'altres, la qual en no percebre les vertaderes dimensions de les maniobres regionalistes deixà perdre l'oportunitat d'un enfortiment que tardaria molt de temps a produir-se.⁸

The incoherence and disorganization of the Liberals left the Catalanist platform open for a man who was to reign supreme in this area for the next thirty years - Enric Prat de la Riba. A more patriotically determined member of the alta burgesia and secretary of the Unió Catalanista, he contributed greatly to his class's rearticulation of national sentiment. In 1892 he played a leading part in the redaction of the Bases de Manresa,

followed two years later by his Compendi de la doctrina catalanista, which coincided with the appearance of that cornerstone of conservative Catalanism La Tradició Catalana by Bishop Torres i Bages.⁹

The defeat of 1898 provided a further fillip to this reawakening of consciousness for the economic reasons mentioned earlier and led to the formation in 1901 of the right-wing Lliga Regionalista. For the elections of 1907 there was a consensus achieved between all the various catalanist political configurations in Solidaritat Catalana though the coalition was to prove short-lived leaving the Right in retention of the nationalist platform. Prat duly became president of the Diputació de Catalunya, having published his ideological doctrine La Nacionalitat Catalana a year earlier in 1906.

The culmination of the Lliga's activities occurred in 1914 with the inauguration of the Mancomunitat; a limited form of autonomy, it was presided over by Prat de la Riba until his death in 1917, being subsequently suppressed by the dictator Primo de Rivera in 1925.¹⁰

It was under this institution and against this backdrop of nationalist sentiment that the Avant-garde first flourished in Catalonia. This same period is of crucial importance insofar as the two most influential poetic exponents of this movement are concerned. Joan Salvat-Papasseit's first political articles appeared in 1914 and his final collection Ossa Menor was published posthumously in 1925. Although the output of J.V. Foix is much more extensive, the year 1918 has proved to be a

focal point, uniting the entirety of his work, as Arthur Terry has explained:

Something like a third of Foix's published work consists of four collections of prose poems grouped under the general title of Diari 1918. The fact that he has chosen to refer this part of his work to a particular year, though many of the individual pieces must have been written later, confirms one's impression that the later work, both poems and prose, represents a steady unfolding of the possibilities implied in his very earliest writing.¹¹

The Importance of the Language.

Just as the first signs of Catalan individuality appear with the incipient industrialization of the 1830s, so too do we see in the same decade the initial attempts at the revival of what, particularly as a consequence of Romantic ideas, has generally been elevated to the status of the most obvious aspect of national identity, the language. A key instance of this inchoate process is Aribau's "Oda a la Pàtria" (1833), and Vallverdú's informative comments on this poem furnish us with a basis for understanding the wider implications of the linguistic question:

En una perspectiva socio-lingüística, la idea-força d'aquest període podria veure's formulada en els famosos versos d'Aribau: "Plau-me encara parlar la llengua d'aquells savis... per a expressar l'afecte més sagrat." El poeta sembla recordar-nos: el castellà és la llengua culta, però el català també ho havia estat.¹²

In this diglossic situation, the critic reveals, Castilian and Catalan fulfilled the function of what Ferguson termed H and L languages.¹³ Catalan was used as the informal lower idiom of family and street whereas Castilian was preferred as the medium for culture and learning. There was evident, however, a definite desire for Catalan to recover its status as an H. language, "la llengua d'aquells savis", reflecting the growth in national awareness that accompanied the economic expansion:

Remarquem, però, no solament l'oposició present/passat, sinó sobretot, el propòsit ("per a expressar l'afecte més sagrat"), idea ja antiga que transferida a la nova època, denota una contradicció realitat/desig, la qual reflecteix les tensions polítiques i socials del moment. Som al temps de les "redescobertes"¹⁴ històriques.

The concern for the upgrading of Catalan to the level enjoyed by Castilian continued at a slow but steady pace. The next major figure in this respect was Rubiò i Ors who between 1839 and 1841 published a series of poems in the Diario de Barcelona under the pseudonym of "Lo Gayter del Llobregat". They later appeared in collected form and Arthur Terry has indicated how a comparison of the preface of the first edition (1841) with that of the second (1858) reveals the growing interest as regards this question:

In the first, Rubiò proclaims the need to create a new literature which will reflect the spiritual independence of the Catalan people. At this point, he admits that he is an almost solitary figure; seventeen years later, in the second preface, he is able to refer to a whole series of new poets who are following his example.¹⁵

The most important event in this context was the eventual restoration of the Jocs Florals in 1859. Although this "eisteddfoddy" was eccentric and ultimately conservative, it provided a focal point for the linguistic aspirations of the collective and facilitated diffusion in this respect. Joaquim Molas has commented on the far reaching significance of these celebrations:

La restauració dels Jocs Florals en 1859, tot i el seu anacronisme, inicià una nova situació de poesia i conferí una garantia de continuïtat de projecció social a l'esforç de franc tirador que fins aleshores havia realitzat l'escriptor en llengua catalana. Gairebé per un miracle, primer en 1865 i després, d'una manera totalment decisiva, en 1877, es convertia d'una dada merament local en una altra de possible utilització europea.¹⁶

Clearly, as Molas proceeds to explain, once communal interest had been aroused to any degree then the Jocs Florals would become ineffective and redundant, being unable to satisfy the exigencies of public demand:

Ara bé, en obtenir la literatura en llengua catalana un lloc clau dins la societat del país i en comptar, ja, amb un equip conscient de lectors, que comportava la possibilitat d'una premsa, d'unes editorials, etc., l'existència dels Jocs Florals deixà de tenir un sentit.¹⁷

The momentum for linguistic recovery correspondingly shifted into the domain of the press. In 1871 the review La Renaixença appeared. It was the first successful attempt by any periodical to employ Catalan as the higher cultural idiom and, once again, the total preoccupation with the language is clearly

evident: "Aquesta revista ha estat considerada com la més interessant i de més prestigi publicada durant el segle XIX. En el primer número justificava la seva aparició dient que 'Catalunya no comptava amb cap revista primordialment dedicada a propulsar i perfeccionar l'ús del propi idioma'."¹⁸

It was around this time that the full implications of a Catalan revival and its relevance to the concept of national identity first came to be fully appreciated. Almirall approached the problems posed by this diglossia quite candidly, demanding co-officiality with Castilian:

Per a tenir llengua pròpia només hi ha dos camins: adoptar completament la castellana ... o conservant la catalana, introduint-la a les escoles, metoditzant-la i completant-la en elles.¹⁹

In this case the only acceptable alternative is the latter because, "mai no ha renegat de la seva pròpia llengua cap poble que s'estimi."²⁰ Almirall took a further step in this direction in 1879 when he launched the Diari Català, the first daily in Catalan. Although it was to cease publication in 1881, La Renaixença assumed this function in the same year. The appearance of these periodicals of a serious character marked another phase in the restoration of Catalan to the status of a higher cultural idiom. They superseded the satirical magazines of the 1860s, in the same language but of a definitely "lower" standing.

As illustrated above, Almirall also appealed for the standardization of Catalan from its many dialectal forms which was an issue taken up later by the group of L'Avenç; "una revista molt modesta ... però destinada a aconseguir molta importància dintre del nostre món literari."²¹ In 1891, as Joan-Lluís Marfany explains, they embarked upon a campaign to normalize the language - a venture in which they received the full support of the Modernistes:

Quan l'any 1913 l'Institut promulgava les Normes feia exactament vint-i-dos anys que "L'Avenç" havia iniciat una campanya de reforma que ja contenia els elements essencials de la definitiva normalització i que fou secundada pels escriptors modernistes.²²

To this end Jaume Brossa had sought a "reforma lingüística ... que ha d'acabar amb l'anarquia gramatical"²³ and Pi de Cabanyes has summarized this basic mentality:

Per al conreu de la narració calia una eina lingüística segura dels seus ressorts, sense vacil.lacions sintàctiques i amb una normativa que només reeixí a imposar-se a partir de l'esforç dels homes del grup modernista de L'Avenç i sobretot de Pompeu Fabra.²⁴

The ramifications of the linguistic re-establishment of Catalan, however, extended far beyond the limits of literary exercise. The standardization and functional normalization of the language was immensely significant in the political context of nationalist aspirations, a point which was readily appreciated by this same generation of intellectuals and Vallverdú cites Alomar to this effect:

Mentre Catalunya s'anés capacitant per l'autonomia la llengua haurà de quedar com l'única de les seves immediates afirmaciones. Per ara, el catalanisme és l'idioma. Res més. Però l'idioma és tot. Quan l'idioma és instrument i medi de les relacions públiques, sobre tot la premsa, i no és merament cosa pròpia de les relacions privades de la família esteu segurs de que l'idioma creerà la pàtria forta, creerà la pàtria que avui no existeix. 25

These sentiments emanating from the liberal sectors of the bourgeoisie were echoed on the Right by Prat who was also fully aware of the wider issues involved. In a speech at the I Congrés Internacional de la Llengua Catalana of 1906 he declared:

els pobles qui reaccionen contra l'absorció d'altres pobles, així que senten la necessitat d'affirmar la seva individualitat, s'agafen a la seva unitat de llengua com a principi salvador i fonament del seu dret. La llengua és la mateixa cultura deien els patriotes hungaresos a mitjans del segle passat. La llengua és la nacionalitat,²⁶ han repetit tots els pobles Renaixents.

Prat was soon to put this concern into action as leader of the Lliga. Elected president of the Diputació in 1907, he created the Institut d'Estudis Catalans and immediately commissioned a body within this, the Secció Filològica, to begin work on orthographic standardization. Although his party represented the more conservative interests, Prat invited figures more associated with the liberal current - Fabra and Coromines in particular - to collaborate on this project. Thus, the Normes Ortogràfiques, when they appeared in 1913, can

be taken as the fruits of Prat's successful stewardship in concerting the efforts of all sections of the bourgeoisie to solve the linguistic problem whilst being mindful of the political implications of this act.²⁷

Language and Culture

With the publication of the Normes, Catalan had reached the first stage in its institutionalization as a stable language of culture. Nonetheless, this synthetic codification had to be universally accepted for real stability to be achieved. Anti-normisme writers, whatever their orthographic preferences or alternative formal systems embraced, must renounce these idiosyncracies of speech and adhere to the dictates of the newly established standard. Vallverdú has summarised the elaboration of this process with reference to Ferdinand de Saussure:

Lliurada a ella mateixa, la llengua no coneix sinó dialectes dels quals cap no s'imposa sobre els altres, i per tant és destinada a un fraccionament indefinit. Però com que la civilització, en desenvolupar-se, multiplica les comunicacions, hom escolleix, per una mena de convenció tacita, un dels dialectes existents per fer-ne el vehicle de tot el que interessa la nació en el seu conjunt.²⁸

What was a natural and largely unconscious process in normal linguistic circumstances, then, was a hurried and determined struggle by the Institut d'Estudis Catalans to codify the "dialect" of català central to fulfil the function of the representative medium - as Prat himself recalled: "La tasca

que les altres llengues podien acomplir reposadament , sense apressar-se, és, doncs, per a nosaltres de la més extremada urgència.”²⁹

Saussure had also pointed out that in order to stabilize the chosen dialect a second convention is undertaken that this official form will remain constant - or nearly so: “La seva dependència de l'escriptura li assegura unes garanties especials de conservació”.³⁰ Prat was quick to appreciate this point and placed it succinctly within the context of language and nationality:

Crear una llengua literària és l'obra cabdal d'un poble. La possessió d'una llengua literària és la consagració de la nacionalitat.³¹

The additional relevance of the literary exponent in this type of situation is apparent. In "normal" monolingual circumstances the author chooses to write for what Vallverdú refers to as "subjective" reasons of the psychological, emotional, personal order, etc. In the Catalan diglossic ethos, however, a set of "objective" considerations also came into play, raised by the simple question of the choice of language. Literary output did not merely reflect an artist's personal sensitivities or insight. If he wrote in Catalan it denoted an adherence to the first convention of using the "official" dialect, català central, and also carried an implicit consciousness of the need to stabilize the language - through literature - with the corresponding political implications of establishing a cultural expression of the national identity.

Already in the late nineteenth century the concept of "catalanisme literari"³² was widely employed and Joan Fuster has remarked most succinctly on the interrelationship of these elements:

En bona part, "literatura catalana" i "catalanisme" han estat inseparables... Llengua, literatura i catalanisme semblen identificar-se per sempre més. 33

A brief illustration is called for in order to achieve a full appreciation of the conscious commitment displayed by the contemporary writer in this area. Carner stated the poet's contribution most forcefully in 1908 when he declared:

En tota la campanya política catalanista es prodiguen als poetes mots de lloança i de gratitud ... Nosaltres els poetes som els constructors dels pobles ... Beneïm els resultats que ja assolí la poesia catalana; prometem-nos-en cada dia de més grans si corre entre nosaltres aquesta saba generosa de l'entusiasme poètic que avui ... obre novament ... les tanques d'or del llibre immortal de l'epopeia catalana. 34

In this respect the working relationship between philologist and creative artist was a crucial issue, as is apparent from Foix's description of a meeting with Pompeu Fabra:

Li he preguntat més aviat poruc, què li semblaven uns poemes en prosa què li havia demanat de llegir ... En demanar-li si hi havia trobat faltes, ha somrigut i ha respost- Què us diré? He comprés que sí i he mig envermellit ... m'ha allargat la mà.
- Aneu fent, els gramàtics enregistrarem. 35

This preoccupation for linguistic purity translated an attempt to normalize fully the situation of Catalan as a national language. On occasions, however, such an obsessive concern was

to exert a detrimental effect on the quality of the artefact.

Vallverdú has cited Badia i Margarit to this effect, who felt that an excessive conservatism came to characterize the contemporary author's idiom, vocabulary and style: "davant els perills que atemptaven contra la puresa de la llengua, preferíem de tancar-nos i així guardar-la amb més seguritat."³⁶

Fuster is also sensitive to the stilted use of language in his reading of certain poets of Carles Riba's generation:

La llengua arribà a ser un material limitat, incolor i rígid ... van escriure un català asèptic d'una diafanitat acadèmica immaculada, fins i tot amb el risc d'allunyar-se fredament del sentit viu del costum col.loquial. ³⁷

In this respect the demotic vitality and grammatical inaccuracies of Salvat-Papasseit make him an immediate exception to the general rule. Nevertheless, a similar type of patriotic concern was registered by Salvat's choice of medium. The eventual change from Castilian to Catalan reflected a development from a conventional internationalism, as in Humo de Fábrica (1918), to the expression of national consciousness in the maternal tongue as exemplified by Les Conspiracions (1921). As a result, we feel that the poet's subsequent preference for Catalan implies the same sort of politico-linguistic commitment that was displayed by the literary circle as a whole. Quite appropriately, the general fixation about the purity of the language is summarised by the reticence of Riba and Foix in recognising the creative stature of Salvat-Papasseit for the very reason mentioned above:

Però per a Foix, tant com per a Riba, el nexe essencial que els unia a una poesia i a un poeta era la llengua. Per ella, per la llengua, i per la coneixença d'ella es distingia sempre el poeta, com a profeta, com a "inspirat", dels poetes en minúscula, de vers "fàcil" i de les proximitats banals de la retòrica i de la carrincloneria. Les reserves que tots dos feien, sobretot Riba, a un poeta tan absolut com Salvat-Papasseit ... venien d'aquí. 38

United by Patriotic Concern

One of the superficial results of this convergence in resolve produced by these "objective" considerations was a drawing together of authors whose difference of individual style and sensitivity might have otherwise proved polemical. The diatribes between Modernistes and Noucentistes have been well recorded,³⁹ but Fuster has also indicated how commitment to the cause of Catalan culture often managed to reduce various differences. Maragall, a "modernista per excel.lència", could congratulate Guerau de Liost on his La montanya d'ametistes (1908): "Ho tinc per un art de decadència, però magnífic."⁴⁰ Similarly in a letter to López-Picó, Maragall wrote in praise of Turment Forment (1910), despite the fact that it ran contrary to his own poetic theory of the "paraula viva":

Vostè ... no vol que la poesia es faci en vostè, sinó que vostè vol fer la poesia. Jo no crec que aquest sia el bon camí però ja sé que vostè em dirà que hi té il·lustres davanters, i reconec que vostè en segueix noblement les petjades. Enhorabona. 41

Similarly Foix, though sharing little in common with the noucentistes in terms of style, sensitivity and expression, can compliment this group on their output:

És per a mi remarcable que en aquests moments de la vera renaixença de la literatura catalana hi hagi cinc poetes tan conscents de llur responsabilitat: En Josep Carner, En Guerau de Liost i En López-Picó d'una banda i, entre els més joves, En Sagarra i En Riba. 42 (my emphasis)

This reference not only indicates the real influence of these "objective" criteria on the creative artist but also demonstrates the unifying effect produced by the collective national preoccupation.

The most serious attempt at polemic in this respect centres around Salvat-Papasseit. In a remark clearly made about the noucentistes in his manifesto "Contra els poetes amb minúscula", he censures them for the lack of commitment in their poetry:

Aquests poetes nostres, s'han penyorat l'espasa pel bastó de passeig, lliberaran un dia Catalunya amb una reverència. La suor que accompanya les comoditats els ha ablanit la lira. 43.

Significantly this criticism stems, once again, from a patriotic and not an aesthetic basis. Despite this attack, Salvat-Papasseit never went further to make any concerted condemnation of this school. Moreover, the radical Gorkiano showed himself fiercely chauvinistic in his defence of Catalan literature in his statement of the blanket superiority of their avant-garde over the Castilian Ultraismo:

L'avantguarda d'aquí no l'han feta els barroers, que l'han feta els sensibles: J.M. Junoy, grumet-guaita, penjat al gallaret més alt; també Joaquim Folguera, que vivia d'agut i moria de fi; J.V. Foix que feia joc diari de l'arbitrarietat que ell ja havia resolt per al seu fur intern. 44

As we shall see in the following chapters, the whole question of the Vanguard affiliation of the authors mentioned here is much more intricate and complex than the poet is ready to concede. Salvat-Papasseit, however, is prepared to play down the internal differences to present a picture of a school of sufficient artistic quality and cohesion as to be deemed worthy of inclusion in the ranks of this international movement.

A further example of this "literary Catalanism" is apparent in the much quoted article by Foix from the Revista de Poesia of 1925. In this he refers quite disparagingly to Salvat-Papasseit, the "fals avantguardista", and compares his calligrams unfavourably with the refined offerings of J.M. Junoy:

Crec que els nostres crítics faran una bella obra d'abandonar tota hipòtesi de filiació d'En Salvat-Papasseit a cap escola ni tendència extrema. No tan solament fracassà en el seu intent d'aportació de formes noves, sinó que demostrà no comprendre'n ni llur significació més elemental. 45

For Foix, the single saving grace of Salvat is clearly in the extra-literary sphere, most notably in the context of patriotism:

És encara un error important establir cap paral·lel entre En Folguera i En Salvat: no hi hagué entre tots dos ni la més petita afinitat literària ni espiritual - salvem naturalment llur contemporaneïtat i llur patriotisme.⁴⁶

In this way, the artistic value on an individual "subjective" scale could be counterbalanced by an equally forceful "objective" preoccupation for its function in the area of national identity. The activity on the literary front, therefore, mirrored that of the philologists. Men of varying persuasions had collaborated under Prat de la Riba to standardize the language, which reflected a blanket concern in this area. Foix disclosed this in his perusal of the list of members at the I Congrés Internacional de la Llengua Catalana:

Déu meul hi és tothom: carlins i republicans, catòlics i lliure pensadors, regionalistes i nacionalistes, provincialistes, federals i centralistes, fabricants i botiguers i gent que parla castellà amb els seus. Això és la veritable solidaritat. ⁴⁷

The authors, in turn, relegated personal preferences to a certain extent, being motivated by the patriotic ideal of linguistic establishment. It is hoped that this briefest of summaries has underlined the commitment and dedication shown by these generations of writers in their endeavours for national reconstruction.

The Politics of Culture: Modernisme vs. Noucentisme.

The implications of creative literary activity, however, extended beyond the mere concern for linguistic consolidation. Cultural output in the vernacular would also contribute on a national and international scale to the expression and recognition of the Catalan identity. This point was not lost on the Modernistes and from their political base of the liberal wing of the bourgeoisie they aspired to achieve for Catalonia a thoroughly modern national culture, akin to that of the other developed European states and in reaction to the regressive traditionalism embodied by the Jocs Florals, and the Renaixença in general. Joan Lluís Marfany has summarised this most aptly:

Aquests homes creien, en efecte, que la cultura catalana del seu temps patia de dos mals bàsics: era, d'una banda, una cultura endarrerida respecte a les cultures nacionals modernes europees i, encara pitjor, una cultura tradicionalista que s'obstinava en aquest endarreriment... Per això intentaven de lluitar contra tots dos per una literatura universal, pels seus temes i les seves ambicions i, alhora, autònoma. Una literatura que no fos una aportació regional a una suposada cultura més àmplia, sinó que fos ella mateixa expressió d'una comunitat autosuficient. I, segons ells, només aspirant a la universalitat i a la modernitat, aquesta cultura assoliria de superar els límits regionals i, alhora, només una cultura nacional autònoma podia aspirar a ser moderna i a tenir un abast universal. 48

Prat de la Riba was also quick to appreciate the necessity to procure the "normalization" of the autochthonous artistic expression along the lines of the cosmopolitan models in vogue elsewhere on the continent, as Fuster explains: "Com observa Maurici Serrahima, 'Prat deia que per a arribar a ésser nosaltres

mateixos ens calia passar pel camí d'ésser com els altres,
com els altres que havien aconseguit d'ésser ells mateixos."⁴⁹

For Prat, however, culture also provided another area for political initiative on the domestic scene: "La literatura és un arbre sec sense la política, i la força que de la política rep, la política té dret a reclamar-hi quan la necessita."⁵⁰ It was in this manner, as Fuster remarks, that he approached it during his presidency of the Diputació and Mancomunitat:

Advertim que Prat de la Riba només veia en el Noucentisme propugnat per Eugeni d'Ors el suport conceptual doctrinari d'un programa d'acció que convergia amb el seu: donar una plena normalitat "europea" a la cultura catalana, i aconseguir-ho, si era possible, com una obra de govern. 51

The full political significance of the "official" ethic of Noucentisme must not be understated. Prat sought to exploit the possibilities offered by culture from the power base of the Lliga, the most successful Catalanist party.

It was for this reason, as Marfany has rightly shown, that between 1906 and 1911 a veritable kulturkampf occurred between the conservative Noucentistes and the Modernistes of the Liberal fold (group of L'Avenç, El Poble Català, etc.):

El que s'esdevé a la nostra vida cultural entre el 1906 i el 1911 no és el canvi que aporta l'emergència d'una nova generació, sinó la divisió dels intel·lectuals en dos camps i el triomf absolut d'un bàndol sobre l'altre, seguit d'una dràstica i espectacular liquidació ... I aquest procés, fixem-hi, coincideix amb la liquidació de la Solidaritat i el control del catalanisme polític per la Lliga. 52

The ensuing disintegration of the Modernistes and their inability to provide any coherent cultural alternative to the ethic of Noucentisme is directly attributable, the critic argues, to the ascendancy of the Lliga and its concerted influence in the artistic field. Marfany cites Fuster to this effect:

"Les temptatives anteriors [dels Modernistes] havien estat insuficients: pecaren d'incoherència, els mancà propòsit clar, resultaren contradicòries o puerils i no foren projectades des del poder". Exactament: no foren projectades des del poder ... allò que distingeix el Noucentisme, el nou fenomen històric que constitueix un canvi significatiu i permet de parlar d'un nou moviment és, diguem-ho sense embuts, el dirigisme cultural. 53.

It was to this effect that Eugeni d'Ors was engaged as aesthetic theoretician, being awarded a daily column in La Veu de Catalunya to propound his philosophy which at all times coincided completely with the line dictated by Prat: "Prat hagué de vigilar-lo molt estretament ... Ors acceptà, doncs, amb totes les conseqüències el compromís ideològic amb Prat i amb la Lliga."⁵⁴

These political directives were translated creatively by a neo-classical reaction against the Nietzschean Messianism which was associated with the Modernistes and their preference for instinct and passion over reason and control:

El Noucents és el contrari del Vuitcents i enfront del "caos"; l'"ordre" enfront de la "natura" la "cultura" i enfront del "rustic" l'"urbà". 55

These sentiments were demonstrated structurally by a re-emphasising of the importance of form over content, which may be typified by an exchange between Eugeni d'Ors and Gabriel Alomar and quoted by Fuster:

Alomar - El tercet com a forma de triangulació no té més que una excusa: La Divina Comedia.
 d'Ors - No, no, La Divina Comedia no té més que una excusa, el tercet. 56

In this respect the Noucentistes were quick to reject the basic tenets of Maragallian poetics. The effusive "paraula viva", epitomised the idealistic excesses of modernista individuality and exuberance: "Segons Maragall la paraula... 'viva' - 'serà senyal de la voluntat divina' i és gràcies a ella que parlardà 'el ritme clar de l'Univers.'"⁵⁷ This was to meet with a rotund negation from d'Ors: "La Paraula no ha estat mai viva... - es tracta d'una perfecció formal."⁵⁸

In this way it was the structure of the poetic statement which took precedence over inspiration and subject matter. On a political level it translated the desires of the alta burgesia for an ordered social hierarchy, civic propriety, decency - the paragon of middle class aspirations.

This theory was put into practice in the work of Josep Carner and Guerau de Liost, wherein metric precision and formal elegance together with a gentle self-congratulatory irony were of prime importance. Carles Riba has described Carner's poetry as "uns versos sense altra finalitat que llur mateixa perfecció somrient."⁵⁹ Riba proceeded to elaborate on the poet's function of seeking to instil this organic harmony within the social context:

La seva pròpia obra, que ha de viure per ella mateixa, orgànicament, segons la seva finalitat, sí, però també segons unes condicions socials dins les quals l'escriptor s'ha trobat i sobre les quals, sense poder-les canviar, té la possibilitat i el deure d'influir. 60.

The basic conflict between the poetics of Maragall and the Noucentistes has been comprehensively summarised in the recent Història dels Països Catalans (1980):

El noucentisme defensava a l'estètica arbitrària de l'artífex enfront de l'estètica maragalliana de la paraula viva, oposava un classicisme racionalista als ferments anarcoides i genialoides del modernisme, imposava el ciutadanisme enfront de la novel.la de drama rural ... El perfeccionisme formal dels noucentistes i el seu intel.lectualisme no obeïen a un esteticisme gratuit, sinó a la convicció nacionalista d'una estètica gairebé oficial per a consumar l'ordenació cultural sota la Mancomunitat. 61

The political manoeuvrings at the basis of this literature provided a peculiar Catalan dimension to the general European current, from Parnasse to poesía pura, which had given priority to the structural excellence of the artefact with the exclusion of all extraneous (i.e. non-poetic) elements.

In the first instance, Noucentisme, with its formalistic obsession and relying on the support of Prat and the Lliga, practically eradicated the Leftist Modernista intellectuals from the important arena of cultural activity, leaving them completely discredited as Marfany has described:

La nova generació modernista els desplaçà ràpidament dels primers llocs de la nostra vida cultural. Brossa, independent, agressiu, superficial, home, en fi, que reunia en un grau molt elevat tots els "defectes" modernistes, fou un dels quals quedaren desprestigiats.⁶²

Additionally, it offered a projection of the social ideal as fantasized by the alta burgesia. The metric precision offered by verse was considered the most apposite medium for the transmission of the "moral" qualities of urbanity, civility and propriety within a rigidly ordered hierarchy. Fuster has summarised these genteel aspirations most fully as they emanated from a class which sought a socio-literary response to the turbulence and revolutionary unrest of the period in question:

En tot el Noucentisme hi ha com una mena de por a la realitat: un recel o desinterès per l'escenari de la vida quotidiana en les seves facetes més amargues. No serà necessari indicar que amb aquestes aprenses la novel.la era impossible ... Recordem, finalment, que l'actitud noucentista se salvava de dissipar-se en esteticismes gratuïts gràcies a la seva forta arrel política. La "política de cultura" que predicava d'Ors i en la qual tothom s'afanyava, era indissoluble de la política tout court empresa per la burgesia catalanista: moviment i acció que, segons Falguera, tendien a "sistematizar i estructurar" la "vida" dels catalans.⁶³

Of course the question of culture is not merely important in the sense of artistic expression. The bourgeoisie as a dynamic force needed to create an atmosphere which would

encourage industrial advancement on all productive levels and allow it to retain its hegemony. It was Prat de la Riba's desire to achieve this end in Catalonia:

El arte, la ciencia, los conocimientos útiles y provechosos se hallan depositados en una escasa minoría; tomemos el mejor médico, el mejor maestro de escuela, el mejor ingeniero y hagámosle enseñar a otros lo que sabe. 64

In this respect we might cite Xènius' frantic appeal, "Ai! de pressa, de pressa!, vinguen Museus, vinguen Acadèmies, vinguen Exposicions, vinga Cultura, vinga Educació, vinga Vida Civil..."⁶⁵ With a view to supplying the basis for this educational progress, Prat instituted a number of specialized schools:- Escola Superior d'Agricultura, Escola d'Aprendentatge, Consell d'Instrucció Pedagògica, Escola de Bibliotecàries, Laboratori Superior de Química, etc. Fuster has cited Alexandre Cirici's explanation of why the alta burgesia considered educational progress so essential for the maintenance of control in all areas of social activity:

Veien el futur com un desenvolupament pròsper de les empreses amb l'aportació dels tècnics i dels treballadors del país, o sia com un millorament de l'esforç i del rendiment total dels catalans, baldament fos a benefici principal del mateix grup hegemònic. Per a aquests fins aquest grup necessitava cultura, formació professional, educació en tots els sentits; necessitava un clima de llibertat professional, necessitava ordre públic, i necessitava el prestigi d'una classe dirigent, respectada d'una veritable aristocràcia. Aquest grup humà que políticament es manifestava amb la Lliga. 66

In this respect the correlation between art, education and government is quite apparent. On the political level the Lliga presented a powerful coherent programme, the driving force of Catalanism. On the other hand the liberal republican opposition reeled in disarray, as summed up by Angel Samblancat in 1916: "Esta gente [la Lliga] representa aquí la inteligencia, el método, la capacidad. Nosotros representamos la incompetencia, la incoherencia, la brutalidad, los malos modos."⁶⁷

Similarly in the creative sphere Noucentisme, with Prat's support, reigned supreme in the face of the inability of the regeneracionistes, Brossa, Alomar, Maragall etc., to propose any viable alternative whose ideological coherence might attract the necessary political backing. Brossa's incapacity to adapt to the change in circumstance and constructively oppose the Lliga, as is described by Marfany, is typical of that of his counterparts:

nodrit en l'irracionalisme nietzchidà
i el seu messianisme anarcoide
d'Ibsen fou incapàç de modificar
les seves posicions culturalistes i
maximalistes i d'adaptar-se com
d'altres, a la lluita contra la Lliga
i el seu muntatge cultural des de les
posicions del nacionalisme republicà. 68

It was against this historico-cultural backcloth that the two most outstanding poetic representatives of the Catalan Avant-garde, J.V. Foix and Joan Salvat-Papasseit grew to maturity. The problems of their classification as Vanguard writers, however, is conditioned by their relative submission to

"objective" criteria which affected the entire creative circle. These tended to circumscribe eccentricity and draw "deviants" (except disqualified modernistes) towards the norm of the establishment (noucentista) man of letters.

In the course of the following chapters we shall attempt to identify the distinctive voices of these two as they emerge from the "chorus", establish their Vanguard identity and then proceed to close analysis of their work which will confirm their status as authentic Catalan representatives of this European current.

NOTES TO CHAPTER I

The place of publication is Barcelona, unless otherwise stated.

1. Peter Faulkner, Modernism (London 1977), p. 45.
2. Francesc Vallverdú, Dues llengues, dues funcions (1970), p. 45.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid., p. 54.
5. Pierre Vilar, Spain. A Brief History (London 1967), p. 60.
6. Vallverdú, Dues llengues..., p. 59.
7. For a fuller account of Almirall's influence and activity see: Un segle de vida catalana (1961), ed. Ferran Soldevila, pp. 690-746.
8. Vallverdú, Dues llengues..., p. 64.
9. For a comprehensive account of the political initiative of Prat de la Riba during this period see: J.M. Poblet, Història Básica del Catalanisme (1975), pp. 130-262.
10. A detailed historico-political panorama of the years 1898-1930 is available in Un segle de vida catalana, pp. 999-1154.
11. Arthur Terry, Catalan Literature (London 1972), p. 105.
12. Vallverdú, Dues llengues..., p. 46.
13. C. Ferguson, "Diglossia" in Language Structure and Language Use, Stanford (1971).
14. Vallverdú, Dues Llengues..., pp. 46-7.
15. Terry, Catalan Literature, p. 72.
16. J. Molas, "Els Jocs Florals", in Un segle de vida catalana, pp. 566-576.
17. Ibid., p. 567.
18. Ibid., p. 438. The best synthesis of the Catalan literary revival is O. Pi de Cabanyes, La Renaixença (1979).

19. Cited by Vallverdú, "Sobre el pensament progressista català de la restauració a la dictadura: Almirall, Brossa, Alomar, Salvat-Papasseit", Actes del II Col.loqui Internacional sobre el Català, Amsterdam 1970, (1976), pp. 329-353.
20. Ibid., p. 349.
21. Un segle de vida catalana, p. 732.
22. J.Ll. Marfany, Aspectes del Modernisme (1975), p. 74.
23. Cited by Vallverdú, art.cit., p. 350.
24. La Renaixença, p. 91.
25. Vallverdú, art.cit., p. 351.
26. Prat de la Riba, La Nacionalitat Catalana, 2nd edition; (1978), p. 139.
27. For a more detailed survey of Prat's activities in this area see Marfany, Aspectes del Modernisme, pp. 61-96.
28. Vallverdú, L'escriptor català i el problema de la llengua (1968), p. 127.
29. Prat, La Nacionalitat..., p. 151.
30. Vallverdú, L'escriptor..., p. 128.
31. Prat, La Nacionalitat..., p. 150.
32. See, for example, Narcís Oller, Memòries literàries. Historia dels meus llibres (1962), p. 1, where use of the term obviously relates to a well established currency and context of modernisme.
33. J. Fuster, Literatura Catalana Contemporànea (1972), pp. 12-13.
34. J. Carner, "De l'acció dels poetes a Catalunya", in Teoria de l'ham poetic, ed. A. Manent (1970), 13-36.
35. JVF., Catalans de 1918 (1965), p. 42.
36. Vallverdú, L'escriptor..., p. 128.
37. Fuster, Literatura Catalana, p. 160. See also A. Yates, Una generació sense novel.la (1975) for an account of the Noucentistes' dilemma.
38. J. Triadú, "L'obra de J.V. Foix", Destino no. 2, 106, 16-23 Feb. 1978, p. 23.

39. See, for example, Marfany, Aspectes..., pp. 75-80.
40. Fuster, Literatura Catalana..., p. 172.
41. Ibid.
42. Catalans de 1918, p. 78.
43. J. Salvat-Papasseit, "Contra els poetes amb minúscula", in Mots Propis i altres proses (1975), ed. J.M. Sobré, p. 82.
44. Ibid., p. 92.
45. JV.F., "Algunes Consideracions sobre la literatura d'Avantguarda", Revista de Poesia, març 1925, 65-70.
46. Ibid., p. 70.
47. Catalans de 1918, p. 22.
48. Marfany, Aspectes..., pp. 16 and 20.
49. Literatura Catalana..., p. 144.
50. Prat, La Nacionalitat..., p. 8.
51. Literatura Catalana..., p. 143.
52. Marfany, Aspectes..., pp. 76-7.
53. Ibid.
54. Ibid., pp. 81-82.
55. Cited by Fuster, Literatura Catalana..., p. 165.
56. Ibid., p. 154.
57. Ibid., p. 44.
58. Ibid., p. 154.
59. Ibid., p. 165.
60. C. Riba, Prologue to Diccionari General de la Llengua Catalana, 2nd edition (1954), pp. 11-18.
61. Ardit, Balcells, Sales, Història dels Països Catalans de 1714 a 1975 (1980), p. 440.
62. Prologue by Marfany to Brossa, Regeneracionisme i Modernisme (1969) p. 21.

63. Fuster, Literatura Catalana..., pp. 165 and 173.
64. Cited by C. Arnau in the prologue to Prat, La Nacionalitat..., p. 9. For illustration of the extent of Prat's application in this area see: Prat, Prat de la Riba: propulsor de la llengua i la cultura (1974) ed. Rubió i Balaguer.
65. Quoted by Fuster in Literatura Catalana..., p. 159.
66. Ibid., p. 144.
67. Quoted by Fuster in Literatura Catalana..., p. 144.
68. Prologue to Brossa, Regeneracionisme..., p. 9.

Chapter II

The Avant-garde and Catalonia

In view of the parallel in socio-political terms between Catalonia and the rest of Europe it is hardly surprising that the artistic climate of the region should prove receptive to the latest vogues and tendencies which had erupted elsewhere on the continent. This process was facilitated by the geographical location of the principality. It is, as C.B. Morris confirms, in an ideal position for the reception of any innovation from abroad:

The cry of "Vive la France!" uttered in 1917 by the Catalan magazine Troços as its "Preliminary profession of faith" publicized a passion for France and its literature so ingrained in Catalonia, that Guillermo Diaz-Plaja has claimed for his native region "a privileged position within the spiritual life of the Peninsula." It has been the watch-tower of Europe. The cultural link when they wrote in 1917:

Paris

"Il n'est question que de Barcelone

Barcelone

Il n'est question que de Paris."¹

As early as 1912, Josep Dalmau, a tireless worker in this field, staged an exhibition of Cubist art with examples by figures of international repute: Duchamp, Gris, Léger, etc. The interest was maintained throughout the decade and in 1922 Barcelona was again at the forefront of activity in the plastic arts with a Picabia exhibition in the Galeries Dalmau, the introductory lecture being delivered by André Breton.²

Dalmau also strove to promote native Catalan artists.

In 1918 he mounted the first showings by Joan Miró and three years later financed an exhibition of this painter's works in Paris.

This creative interaction was also evident on the literary scene. In the first quarter of 1917 Picabia, a refugee from the Great War, published four numbers of his review 391 in Barcelona. In March of the same year appeared Salvat-Papasseit's magazine Un Enemic del Poble, followed in September by Troços, directed by Junoy, before becoming Trossos in the fourth number with the arrival of Foix as co-editor.

Two further reviews inspired by the new expressive modes were subsequently launched by Salvat, though both ventures were short lived, extending to one and two numbers respectively: Arc Voltaic (February 1918) and Proa (January 1921).

The animation in the poetic sphere is reflected by the publication of collections which experimented with innovative devices and techniques. In 1920 Junoy released Amour et Paysage and, as Morris points out, demonstrated such skill as a calligramist that it brought indulgent praise from the inventor of this medium:

Apollinaire, who so infatuated Junoy that the Kaleidoscopic patterns the latter formed with his words in his Poemes i Calligrammes (1920) were a direct and derivative tribute moving Apollinaire to write in his self-congratulatory "Carta-prefaci" that his disciple's work, "permet à l'amitié catalane de s'exprimer si lyriquement, si finement et si délicatement." 3

During the years 1919-1923 Junoy was occupied delivering his "Conferències de Combat", and this period coincides exactly with the appearance of all the work that Salvat-Papasseit saw published in his lifetime: from Poemes en Ondes Hertzianes (1919) to El Poema de la Rosa als Llavis (1923). Óssa Menor (1925), his final collection, was released posthumously.

In this respect J.V. Foix proves something of an exception:- his first collection, Gertrudis, did not appear until 1927. This provides an example of the poet's characteristic tardiness in compilation as his involvement in creative literary activity dates from the earlier period:

My first verse was written in my fourth year of the bachillerat (sic) at fourteen or fifteen. At the age of fifteen my professor of literature said to me: "I see that you read literary pieces and have literary pretensions." Foix: "Yes, maybe." Professor: "I want you to write something, a verse maybe." Foix: "And I wrote a sonnet imitating Ausiàs March." My first verse came out in a publication called La Revista in '16 or '17. My introducer was Joaqin (sic) Folguera; he was in the group running La Revista and was presenting a young new poet... 4

Moreover 1918, as was mentioned earlier, has proved of immense inspiration to Foix. Most of his poetry in prose from Gertrudis (1927) to Tocant a mà (1972) constitutes the idiosyncratic diary of that year, forming the embryonic nucleus of much of the creative writing:

12 d'octubre de 1918

...Jo havia portat per llegir a qui fos diversos fragments del meu Diari 1918 que vaig començar l'any passat ... Si un dia algú m'edita el Diari 1918 (que són 353 poemes en prosa) en dedicaré un a En Riba. 5

The part played by two minor figures should be mentioned in connexion with the importing of Vanguardist techniques into Catalonia. Joaquim Folguera, on the editorial staff of La Revista and held in great esteem by Foix, was instrumental in the translation of much of the latest material which he in turn imitated in Traduccions i Fragments (1921), published two years after his premature death. Sebastià Sánchez-Juan also adopted the innovative vein in Fluid (1924) in an eclectic style reminiscent in parts of the expression of both Salvat-Papasseit and J.V. Foix.

Though France was undoubtedly a major influence in the diffusion of Avant-garde ideology there was, nonetheless, a definite awareness in Catalonia of the various manifestations of this movement in the rest of Europe. Foix has commented on the availability of international cultural reviews relayed to him via Salvat: "em sol guardar tot de revistes italianes i franceses d'avançades que rep amb enginyosa regularitat."⁶ Salvat-Papasseit confirms his avid perusal of this type of literature in a highly charged article, "Fragments de lletres girades", which also indicates the Establishment's disapproval of this activity:

Ells saben que heu llegit una munió
de llibres i que sou subscriptors a
unes revistes boges que es publiquen
a França, a Alemanya i a Itàlia. 7

Folguera, in his capacity as a critic and theoretician, was in turn deeply involved in this area, as revealed by Joan Colomina. In the following paragraphs it is possible to

assess not only the extent of the influence from abroad, but also the stature Catalan letters were beginning to achieve on a European level:

El treball "Notes per a la biografia de Joaquim Folguera on parla [López-Picó] de la correspondència que: Folguera havia sostingut amb Guillaume Apollinaire, el qual havia enviat, a precs de Folguera, un pròleg per a una antologia sobre les aportacions avant-guardistes a Catalunya, llibre que no es publicà. Ens cita la correspondència amb Canterelli, director de la revista "Procellaria"; la correspondència amb Luciano Folgore sobre la classificació de les tendències líriques a la joventut literària, italiana; la correspondència amb Tristan Tzara; amb la mort de Folguera, d'aquest intercanvi n'han quedat guspires d'interés per a les lletres catalanes que feren possibles les recensions sobre aspectes catalans per J. B. Trend a "The Athenaeum" (sic) els anys 1919-1920; les antologies del Dr. Grossman (alemana), d'A. Schneeberger (francesa) i de C. Giardini (italiana). 8

In the first two decades of this century, then, Catalonia was fertile for the gestation of the Vanguard spirit. Ideally situated for the reception of new ideas with a socio-political climate reflecting the same tensions as elsewhere on the continent, the indigenous artistic cadre displayed its new found cultural maturity in its appreciation of and response to the latest creative trends, albeit within the "institutional" setting of Noucentisme. The full impact and absorption of this movement can be appreciated by a comment made by J.V. Foix and put into context by C.B. Morris:

When Foix wrote in 1927 that "Futurism, dynamism, cubism, dadaism, surrealism, etc., are common expressions in our conversations," he breezily summarized the curiosity and cultural breadth of a generation of Spanish writers who in the 1920s and 1930s looked outward to Europe without ever closing their eyes to the achievements of their own country.⁹

Vanguardism, Culture and National Identity.

The emergence of the Avant-garde in Catalonia, however, is not so straight-forward an issue as it was in countries of monolingualistic predominance or normality, such as France or Germany. In this diglossic situation certain objective criteria accompanied and at times outweighed any purely subjective reasons for artistic expression. Topics like the choice of language (i.e. Catalan or Castilian), consciousness of the literary-historical tradition, desire to restore the cultural status of the collective etc., played as important a role as the psychological need for the communication of personal sensitivity.

The question was isolated in the preceding chapter but here it may be related more specifically to our context. The author who used Catalan as his medium was stimulated to do so by both "objective" and "subjective" concerns. We may illustrate this point with reference to Bofill i Mates (Guerau de Liost):

Cal tota una cultura genuïnament catalana, per a obtenir aquella emancipació espiritual que dóna plena personalitat a les nacions. Cal una llengua nostrada i elaborada, base i alhora summitat sacratíssimes de tota cultura. 10

Consequently it was largely impossible for the literary artist to express himself on a purely personal level given the political implications of his craft: the need for linguistic stability and the establishment of national cultural identity.

As a result, many of the Catalan literati were attracted to the innovative modes of the Avant-garde not through any spiritual convergence but because they might thereby enrich the autochthonous creative voice.

Jaume Vallcorba has described this phenomenon in his account of the attraction that Paris exerted upon certain Catalan intellectuals like J.M. Junoy:

S'havia vist dins la cultura francesa el bàlsam que havia de convertir una cultura ruralista, jocfloralesca i provinciala en una cultura "moderna" i internacional. 11

Here again we witness the same preoccupations as expressed by the Modernistes some thirty years previously and which were constantly re-iterated during this period. Cultural "borrowings" or imitations, like that of Junoy from Appollinaire, would duly extend the limits of the indigenous literature, awarding it a more comprehensively European status.

Catalonia would be able to boast of an artistic voice which encompassed all shades of the contemporary aesthetic spectrum from the established Post-Symbolism to the innovative currents of the Avant-garde.

Whilst one may applaud the commitment of these poets it has led to certain inevitable complications. The main problem is, of course, that of evaluation. The critic is presented with the anomaly that various writers made use of an idiom which was totally unsuited to their sensitivities. As a consequence, their expression lacks the required personal involvement, which imbues the product with an air . of hollowness and superficiality - a mere exercise in form. In this respect such activity appears as little more than literary dabbling and duly received short shrift from Castellet and Molas:

Josep M. Junoy era un esteticista i, només per mimesi i esnobisme, reproduí les troballes plàstiques d'Apollinaire ... Foix i Folguera, atents a les inquietuds del dia, reproduïxen els jocs i els desconjuntaments avantguardistes a títol d'experiència de cultura o d'exercici formal... Folguera ... acceptarà les crisis d'avantguarda com un mer exercici formal. 12

This abrupt dismissal is somewhat over-zealous. No recognition is given to the wider implications of the exercise - a point not lost on Joan Colòminas who, with reference to Folguera has stated:

La seva posició als rengles de l'avanguardisme cal prendre-la-i en això dissentim de Joaquim Molas - no només en un mer aspecte formal sinó en un esperit de servei a la poesia catalana; d'introducció de fórmules a l'ús europeu i d'incorporació d'innovacions estilístiques al corpus literari de Catalunya. És veritat que no tenia un veritable sentit experimentador, però estava en la línia de combat per Catalunya. En aquest aspecte J.V. Foix és qui li seguí el rastre des d'una mateixa posició d'observador molt experimentat. 13

To complicate matters still further, Foix's own approach to this question is distorted in turn by these extra-literary considerations. The poet was well aware that with his generation Catalan culture had reached a critical stage in its revival:

Hem discutit ... un tema que a mi em plau: si el primer renaixentista va ésser Mossèn Cinto o En Carner. Jo, que opino que ço que anomenem la Renaixença és, i insegura, una pre-Renaixença, sostinc que En Verdaguer és l'Únic i excepcional poeta pre-renaixentista i que En Carner, d'acceptar aquesta nomenclatura, és el primer representant de la Renaixença. Però ... la poesia catalana de l'any 17 enllà, s'orientarà en els més exigents, que són els millors, a formes vàlides que només Mossèn Cinto ha aconseguit en algunes estrofes dels seus poems. 14

Nonetheless, at a time when we might expect him to applaud the appropriation of Vanguard techniques to broaden the base of artistic expression, he remained surprisingly aloof, devaluing the extent of any subjective response:

Més aviat una joia ingènua,
 un idealisme patriòtic, una
 cura d'aportació per a contribuir
 a la reconstrucció cultural de la
 Pàtria ha donat a la literatura
 contemporànea alguns exemples
 superficials d'avantguardisme. 15

The author's reticence in this case stems directly from a more profound "objective" misgiving about the stability of the language. Foix was aware that the Avant-garde's chaotic disregard for linguistic order might prejudice the restoration of Catalan and correspondingly discouraged any such practices. His concern was so great that he asked: "Hauriem de portar el nostre retrocés fins a negar-nos per a la nostra pròpia salut tota lectura moderna?"¹⁶ In this instance we can appreciate the full importance of the non-literary considerations to which the poet is prepared to subordinate his own very catholic artistic inclinations, as conveyed in the epigram: "M'exalta el nou i m'enamora el vell."¹⁷ Thus the difficulties involved in determining creative motivation and affiliation can be appreciated. Figures like Junoy and Folguera imitated Vanguard techniques through no sense of aesthetic affinity but with a definite desire to enrich the culture. Conversely J.V. Foix, who in terms of style and sensitivity should be most attracted to the innovative modes, warned against their assimilation because of their possible detrimental effect on the language.

This mentality has proved quite disconcerting for the literary historian. The defining lines we should like to draw for regimentation become largely redundant as writers from one current express themselves in an idiom associated

with a rival school. The confusion is exacerbated in turn by friendships within this cadre which straddled the conventional literary divide, resulting in the anomaly that various authors contributed material to magazines of apparently different tendencies.¹⁸

As a result, we are left with the sensation that Vanguard expression in Catalonia offered no real alternative to the literary Establishment, unlike the artistic confrontations which existed in, say, France and Italy. Consequently the assimilation has appeared superficial, sporadic and incoherent:

Hom pot dir, en línies generals,
que l'avanguardisme literari
català no ha arribat mai a
sistematitzar-se; no hi ha
hagut, de fet, figures assenyalades
ni una producció abundant i
coherent, sinó sempre mostres
esporàdiques, intermitents, intents
tan arriscats com efímers. 19

Such are the sentiments voiced in the recent Literatura Catalana - dels inicis als nostres dies (1979), as the authors go to some length to underline the inconsistency and marginality of the experience:

L'avanguardisme català no arriba
a significar, de fet, sinó un conjunt
d'ex-abruptes ideològics, polítics i
culturals... que romanen, propiament,
al marge d'una cultura nacionalista i
mítica, sòlidament burgesa i amant de
l'ordre i la tradició. 20

This interpretation comes in support of Joaquim Molas who further emphasises how the experience unravelled within the framework of Noucentista institutionalism:

N'hi ha alguns que són amics ...
 però llur activitat és més aviat
 individual i vacil·lant, llurs
 idees són poc precises i a la
 llarga, intenten d'integrar-se a
 l'establishment sense aconseguir-ho
 d'una manera definitiva. 21

Foix's reference, cited earlier, to Vanguardism as amounting to little more than a "joia ingènua" would seem to support this impression as do Tomàs Garcés' remarks of 1925, though he does make one important qualification:

L'any 18 [Salvat-Papasseit] edita una revista purament artística "Arc Voltaic" en la qual col·laboren els adeptes i els adiletants de l'avanguardisme; Salvat-Papasseit era dels primers. El que Joaquim Folguera, J.V. Foix, V. Solé de Sojo i J.M. Junoy entenien com un joc, Salvat-Papasseit ho professà molt de temps com una religió. 22

Garcés, then, proposes an alternative to the "aesthetic dabblers" witnessed thus far: a poet who reacted to the Avant-garde on a personal subjective level; whose sensitivity was truly stimulated by the new movement and whose employment of the latest expressive modes betrayed no ulterior motive. Indeed, in Salvat-Papasseit's case "objective" commitment would appear to follow on from "subjective" impulse.

Castellet and Molas, however, consider this attitude completely ephemeral and is, they suggest, soon discarded, to be superseded by the now familiar superficial formalistic concern:

Posteriorment, ja des de L'irradiador del port, evolucionarà ràpidament; els trucs i les necessitats tipogràfiques, l'ús repetit de cal·ligrames a El poema de la rosa als llavis i a Óssa menor no traduiran sinó un avantguardisme estrictament formal. 23

Furthermore, the anthologists claim, this development constituted a conscious effort on the part of the poet to adapt his work to comply with the position adopted by the "establishment" figures:

La gesta constituïa un esforç conscient d'integració a algunes de les formes de la poesia genuïnament burgesa: la cançó, o la fugida cap al somni. 24

This literary about-face, it is argued, is complemented by a similar evolution in the political sphere. Salvat-Papasseit, of humble proletarian origin, made definite attempts to ascend to the ranks of the bourgeoisie. His embracing of Catalan nationalism is indicative of this fact:

Salvat era d'extracció proletària i, tot i que, des de poc temps després de la Guerra Europea, féu veritables esforços per tal d'integrar-se a la burgesia, no trencà mai del tot amb la seva classe ... El poeta anàrquic hi esdevenia compromès amb les lluites que menava el nacionalisme burgés. 25

The figure of Salvat-Papasseit, then, can offer no real alternative. Cardó and Romeu Figueras echo this appraisal of the poet's work, "en la que asistímos a una hipotética adaptación - en todo caso de mero signo externo e inofensivo - de las posiciones de un Apollinaire o de un Marinetti."²⁶

Josep Roca-Pons has summarised the consensus in the following manner:

Salvat shows avant-garde tendencies as evidenced by his use of stanza forms, but according to many critics he was not a real vanguardist, and the similarities are of a formal character only. 27

The overall impression given is that the Avant-garde was imported into Catalonia by a literary élite whose sensitivity did not concur with the subversive spirit of the movement. As a result, unlike elsewhere in Europe, no serious alternative to the artistic establishment was formed and, despite the patriotic motivation, the entire phenomenon amounted to little more than a purely experimental exercise. The only possible exception, Joan Salvat-Papasseit, was soon to abandon his initial radical stance in his attempts to be accepted by the artistic cadre.

Passing Fancy or Positive Response?

As was discussed in the previous chapter, the "objective" criteria of linguistic stability, establishment of cultural identity etc., inevitably tended to unite the contemporary writers under the single banner of noucentista kulturpolitik.

Joaquim Molas has restated the reasons behind the apparent lack of any valid vanguard alternative:

L'escriptor català, a diferència del francés o de l'italià, havia de treballar amb una llengua i una tradició desarticulades per un seguit de circumstàncies històriques. Una llengua i una tradició que, abans de tot, calia descobrir i que, després, calia sistematitzar i assentar. I que, molts cops, fins calia justificar a propis i estranys. D'aquí que, des del primer moment, col.laborés en els plans políticoculturals proposats per la burgesia i, més en concret, per Prat de la Riba i el seu equip. I d'aquí la sèrie de contradiccions que presenta la gent d'Avantguarda.

Una gent que, d'una banda, havia de col.laborar en els plans burgesos per una simple raó d'identitat. I que, de l'altra, per fidelitat a les normes d'Avantguarda, els havia de combatre amb decisió. Així, l'Avantguarda, en principi, hagué de pactar moltes de les seves decisions. I, per tant, hagué de plantejar la seva activitat en termes d'eclecticisme i de moderació. En efecte: els seus militants convertiren la ruptura en una simple experiència anava a dir, de saló. 28

The critic's comments are based on a sound historical analysis of the situation though we feel that the artistic importance is perhaps understated - a somewhat common and understandable failing with this line of approach. One is given the impression that the Avant-garde was a mere trifling affair in Catalonia and that the force and impact of this movement was negligible which, as Arthur Terry has indicated with reference to J. Brossa, was not the case:

sembla necessari començar per considerar la seva relació amb les tendències generals de l'avant-guardisme. A Catalunya, com ja és sabut, aquestes tendències han estat molt fortes en la literatura igual com en les altres arts. 29
(my emphasis)

This is an aspect which is all too frequently overlooked and one need only call to mind the stature of such non-literary figures as Dalí, Miró from painting and Sert from architecture to recognise its full relevance.

The historical bias away from aesthetic consideration also adversely affects our appreciation of the depth of any "subjective" response by the artist. We are often inclined

to disregard the stylistic consistency of Foix, comparable with that of Miró, which locates him so firmly within the ranks of this current, to concentrate entirely on his bourgeois conservative background. Similarly, it seems excessive to imagine the outrageous Dalí or the caustic Salvat-Papasseit of "Contra els poetes amb minúscula" and "Nocturn per a acordiò" as participants in any "experiència de saló."

Accordingly, it is our basic proposition that with a more satisfactory balance struck between literature and history, J.V. Foix and Joan Salvat-Papasseit may be considered as legitimate exponents of a Vanguard artistic school as they constitute a valid creative alternative to the Establishment in terms of style, sensitivity and expression retaining, though, because of the "objective" issues mentioned, some qualifications of rebellion.

In this respect, unfortunately, we encounter the immediate stumbling block of Foix himself. Over the years this poet has consistently refused to be categorized as a representative of any specific tendency. He has repeatedly insisted on the non-committal label of "investigador en poesia", which has suited the general critical desire of minimizing the significance of the Catalan Vanguard. Nonetheless, Foix is an author whose sensibility displays such affinity with the modern innovative mode that in Surrealism and Spain (1972), C.B. Morris is obliged to treat him as one of the leading lights of this tradition in the

Peninsula as a whole.³⁰ The view is shared by Josep Vallverdú, who states in his Història de Literatura Catalana (1978):

J.V. Foix (1893), el patriarca vivent de la poesia catalana actual. Més fidel, de sempre, a l'avanguarda, manté una línia no interrompuda des del 1913. 31

The same impression, which implies a deeper personal involvement by Foix in the Avant-garde, was aired in 1958 by Miguel Arimany:

Paradoxicalment, la personalitat més sobresortiu, més constantment i més conscientment avantguardista entre els avantguardistes actuals, no és un poeta de les noves promocions, sinó algú que ja compta gloriósament seixanta anys: J.V. Foix. 32

An identical line has been followed with reference to Salvat-Papasseit. In his Història de la Literatura Catalana (1954) Ruiz Calonja asserted that "La figura més important sense dubte dels moviments avantguardistes és la del barceloní Joan Salvat-Papasseit."³³

Similarly, Josep Vallverdú sees the author in question as "la figura cabdal de la tendència",³⁴ while Arthur Terry declares him a "crucial figure."³⁵ Arimany has summarized the consensus thus: "el dir popular ... ha volgut veure i recordar amb tota preferència com a màxim avantguardista, Joan Salvat-Papasseit."³⁶

Quite fittingly, in his Literatura Catalana Contemporànea (1972) Joan Fuster centres his study of the literary avant-garde around these two poets:

La petita història de l'Avantguarda catalana mereixeria més espai, ni que només fos per a establir el mapa del seu abast. De fet i en termes absoluts, només Salvat-Papasseit i Foix reclamen consideració a part. 37

The definition of the limits of this movement in Catalonia is clearly the central issue here. Whilst those critics cited above apply the label of Vanguard to this pair without too much reticence, Molas, Castellet and others strive to tone down the indigenous reaction to the current.

As Fuster implies, nonetheless, there is no doubt that Foix and Salvat-Papasseit do stand apart from their poetic contemporaries despite the unifying effect of the "objective" criteria.

In the post-war years both writers have enjoyed something of a revival amongst the "generations" of Social Realism and the New Vanguard, whilst other poets of their era have remained in the background. Terry has indicated their influence, particularly in the case of Foix, on Brossa - "el poeta avantguardista més important de l'època de post-guerra."³⁸ Ruiz Calonja has likewise remarked upon the attraction of Salvat-Papasseit:

El caliu emotiu de Salvat-Papasseit, el seu verb exaltat i afalagador dels sentits, la seva posició d'amor a la vida i a les coses, el fan dels més interessants i, malgrat la seva mort, més influents dels poetes catalans moderns. ³⁹

An examination of the contemporary response to the work of these authors also confirms this notion of detachment. Although the creative circle was united in its patriotic preoccupation with the possibilities of literature there is little doubt that the magnitude of this pair's response to the Avant-garde produced a definite degree of alienation from the Establishment.

In an article from the Revista de Poesia of 1925 -
 the posthumous homage to Salvat - Ovidi Saltor emphasised
 the isolation of this artist in the creative sphere:

El llenguatge del Salvat tan popular
 i expressiu es fa perdonar. Nosaltres
 li perdonàvem a la bestreta. I per
 això sempre li parlàvem sincerament i
 falaguers, d'ell, i mai no li parlàvem de
 nosaltres. La convivència així era tot
 amistat. I si no amb el nostre credo i
la nostra activitat literària, Salvat
es troava, al menys, ben interpretat.
 (my emphasis) 40

A sensitive review of L'Irradiador del Port i les Gavines
 (1921), which appeared in La Revista, underlines the reason
 behind Salvat's alienation. The author (A.G.) is in no
 doubt about the poet's affiliation to the modern spirit
 and dismisses any notion of "cultural dabbling" which might
 be applied to his work:

En primer lloc, Salvat és un poeta;
 en segon lloc, un revolucionari. I
 posseeix les dues qualitats per a
 fer aqueixa literatura sense caure
 en el dilettantisme ni en l'estupidesa. 41

The sense of division between reviewer and poet, however,
 is reaffirmed by the last line which emphasises the artistic
 estrangement: "Salvat-Papasseit és ans que tot un poeta. I
 és per això que hom li pot permetre fer avantguardisme."⁴²
 One senses here an almost implicit distaste for the
 alternative line that the writer is following accompanied
 by a type of grudging toleration of his activity.

A similar attitude is apparent with regard to J.V. Foix.
 Here again the quality of the expression is not questioned yet
 we infer a definite censure of the poet's connexion with the

Avant-garde which indicates a dissociation between artist and consensus. These two facets are evident in Domènec Guansé's review of Gertrudis (1927):

Gertrudis, de J.V. Foix, és un llibre escrit segons la recepta sobrerealista, en un estat passiu, de volguda inconsciència, bo i fent abstracció de la intel·ligència i del cor. Com en el somni és l'únic que compta ... el sobrerealisme de J.V. Foix no és gens inferior al d'un André Breton. I afegim, també, que el seu català, net i pulcre, ens sembla malaguanyat per a aquesta causa. 43

This disparity in attitude will be enlarged upon later in the chapter. We note it here merely to register that the literary reaction to the Avant-garde in Catalonia was not such a wholesale blanket experience of "tasteful" cultural importation as has been widely portrayed.

An important touchstone in this context lies in the question of commitment. Of all those who indulged in the expressive possibilities offered by the innovative forms, only Salvat-Papasseit and Foix display any constancy in terms of style and artistic stance. Despite any evolution which may have been ascribed to his work, Salvat continually refers to himself as "poetavanguardista". Significantly, just as his second collection is subtitled "Poemes d'Avanguarda", the posthumous Ossa Menor is sub-headed "Fi de poems d'avanguarda". Similarly, the penultimate offering El Poema de la Rosa als Llavis (1923) relies on conventional Vanguard devices: - calligrams, paraules en llibertat, ellipsis of syntax, arbitrary use of punctuation, etc. Moreover its overt eroticism makes it uniquely different from the Establishment love poetry as a whole.⁴⁴

In the case of J.V. Foix the consistency is all the more impressive as it spans a period of over sixty years. Central to this remarkable stylistic and thematic unity is the exceptional year of 1918, with extracts from the hermetic diary appearing throughout Foix's creative career. One begins to feel that this year acquires some importance on the collective level as it seems to sum up for the author the spirit of an era. Foix refers to this communal sentiment in Sol, i de dol (1947): "Som el jovent/de 1918" (I, 159).* In 1965 there appeared Catalans de 1918, a short collection of memoirs centring on key figures of the epoch. (It is interesting to note that the individuals selected herein, though from various artistic backgrounds, were united in their function of being instrumental in the recovery of an autochthonous cultural identity. Firstly the more senior pair of Fabra and Carner, and then Foix's contemporaries who in his view gave Catalan letters a definite European status: Folguera, Salvat-Papasseit and Riba). One is inclined to deduce that the poet is proposing a blanket label of generació de 1918 for all those writers deeply involved with national, literary and linguistic re-establishment at that time.

In direct contrast to the constancy exhibited here by Salvat-Papasseit and Foix, we note the modulating postures of certain other initial recruits to this movement. Sebastià Sánchez-Juan had embraced the ideals of the new trend at the outset but, as Ruíz Calonja points out, was soon to abandon his stance:

* All references to Foix's creative work are taken from Obres Completes, 2 vols., (1974 and 1979), Edicions 62.

Representant en principi dels moviments poètics futuristes i surrealistes fou Sebastià Sánchez-Juan (1904), que deixà el camí emprès en els poemes recollits antològicament a Prismes gairebé sense rastres posteriors. 45

A similar trajectory was followed by J.M. Junoy who, once a guiding light in the assimilation of artistic innovations from abroad, soon reverted to a position of orthodoxy:

Poemes i Cal.ligrames és ... el darrer llibre on Junoy fa pràctica avantguardista. Si bé des de 1918 va començar, més o menys ambigusement, el retorn a les essències de l'art clàssic, el canvi es va anar manifestant poc a poc (l'abandó de la Revista "Troços", que hauria de ser dirigida pel poeta J.V. Foix n'és ja un síntoma). Els mateixos Poemes i Cal.ligrames, contenen tot un programa de futur (el desig de permanència de l'art volgudament clàssic enfront la immediatesa de l'art avantguardista) en el poema de Malherbe que clou el volum. 46

Fuster has summarized Junoy's regression with characteristic economy: "el seu avantguardisme quedava oblidat com un pecat de joventut."⁴⁷ Joaquim Folguera had never shown any real conviction in his approach to this movement and Jaume Vallcorba outlines his basic lack of commitment in this area:

L'afegiment, molt circumstancial de Joaquim Folguera al nunisme català es va limitar a la publicació d'unes quantes traduccions de poetes estrangers i a uns pocs, poquíssims, poemes de collita pròpia en aquest sentit. De fet, el poeta Joaquim Folguera fou un home que, provenint del camp del noucentisme i integrat en ell, no podia afiliar-se entusiastament al nunisme. 48

We may conclude, then, that the Catalan response to the avant-garde is more complex than generally suggested. For those authors more connected with the Establishment, the innovative modes provided an intriguing pastime with the added bonus of broadening the basis of indigenous cultural spectrum.

On the other hand Joan Salvat-Papasseit and J.V. Foix clearly stand apart. Their commitment and stylistic consistency reveal a more positive subjective reaction to the new artistic current. We may now move on to examine the individual stance of each poet and reconsider some of the arguments which have been proposed to exclude them from this movement.

The Political Evolution of Salvat-Papasseit

There has been a general critical tendency to envisage a definite dislocation in the direction followed by the work of Salvat-Papasseit and this has been detected on two inextricable levels. In terms of artistic sensitivity, it has been claimed, there is a clear movement away from any concrete affiliation to the Avant-garde:

A Poemes en ondes hertzianes (1919) i L'irradiador del port i les gavines (1921), [Salvat] intenta de potenciar unes actituds de ruptura ideològica amb d'altres de formals, paral·leles, o inspirades, en Apollinaire i Marinetti. Però aviat abandona aquesta doble actitud de ruptura, i a poc a poc deriva cap a unes posicions més moderades ... fins a desembocar en una espècie de dissociació entre una forma, que continua essent experimental ... i uns continguts que no tenen res a veure amb les posicions agressives dels seus primers poemes ni fins i tot amb certes actituds de l'avanguarda literària d'aquell moment, per exemple, els dadaistes. 49

The ideological correlative to this literary development is found in the political context with Salvat's apparent rejection of his early commitment to the proletarian cause. Albert Manent has described how the poet attempted to integrate into the bourgeois circles of the Establishment through an embracing of Catalan nationalism:

El antiguo "Gorkiano" es un tránsfugo de la Barceloneta - et pour cause - el suburbio donde vivió tanto tiempo. Y su turbulencia ideológica que iba de los cantos de la "divina acracia" hasta soflamos socialistas toma en Les Conspiracions otro rumbo al proclamar un Catalanismo duramente anti-jacobino. 50

Castellet and Molas reiterate this view of what we might term politico-aesthetic reaction:

Altrament, Les Conspiracions, escrites en un sanatori del Guadarrama, Fuenfría representen un fet important: un poeta d'extracció proletària, més concretament, un poeta anarco-socialista ... s'integra a les lluites nacionalistes encetades per la burgesia. 51

A full appreciation of this issue is crucial if we are to achieve a valid understanding of the author's work in toto. The poetic implications of this particular interpretation will be scrutinized in our Chapter III. It is our intention here to begin with an examination of the ideological ramifications of this contention.

There is little doubt as to the nature of the politico-literary current followed in Salvat Papasseit's early writings. Joaquim Molas summarises quite comprehensively the initial standpoint:

Salvat, en els seus primers escrits, realitzà una anàlisi de la situació espanyola i proposà unes solucions meitat socialistes i meitat anarquistes que, globalment, coincideixen amb les més típiques del regeneracionisme il·lustrat. 52

In these ingenuous yet impassioned articles the poet echoed the basic sentiments of the older generation of modernistes, who at this time lay in complete disarray due to the ascendancy of the Pratian inspired ethic of Noucentisme. Molas has given a more precise definition with reference to Salvat-Papasseit's first collection of essays Glosas de un Socialista (1916):

En principi la paraula "glosa" podria fer pensar en una relació amb l'ors i el Noucentisme; ara: la tria d'un pseudònim com Gorkiano i el sistema de referències, que va des de Victor Hugo, Tolstoi i Nietzsche fins a Pi i Margall i Joaquín Costa, situen sense possibilitats d'error els dos llibres dins l'àmbit del Modernisme. 53

The critic then sets down a detailed list of the major sources of influence on the early Salvat:

De fet, [els articles] desenrotllen amb molt poca originalitat les idees mestres del regeneracionisme il·lustrat del XIX: Costa, Macías, Picavea, Ramón y Cajal, o, més modernament, Unamuno, el primer Maeztu o el primer Azorín i, en terres catalanes, Valentí Almirall, Pompeu Gener i Jaume Brossa. 54

The names mentioned here are indicative of the character of Salvat-Papasseit's national sentiment. Pi i Margall, Almirall and Brossa, as was seen in the previous chapter, represent the tradition of liberal progressive Catalanism which stands in direct opposition to the reactionary conservatism of the

Lliga, Prat de la Riba and its cultural voice of Noucentisme.

A brief summary of the schism in this movement should clarify the issue and put Salvat-Papasseit's position into perspective.

The first number of L'Avens in 1881 makes mention of the rival tendencies:

En lo catalanisme existeixen avui dos partits completament oposats. Los uns son sectoris de les ideyas més andarrerides y rebuscan per lòpides y pergamins temes antiquats, para qu'els qu'ells creuhen ignorants no las entenguin; los altres vislumbrant lo lluminós astre de la llibertat, se fan càrrec de que las cosas canbian ab lo transcurs dels segles.

Los primers desitjan que'l catalanisme sigua una arma de reacció para usarla quan més convinga; y'ls altres desitjan collocarlo en lo carro de la moderna civilització. 55

Guiseppe Grilli has summarised the differing elements involved here in his recent history of Catalan literature:

Dal punto di vista ideologico codesta opzione politica oscilla tra il radicalismo piccolo-borghese, di destra e di sinistra, ed il corporativismo cattolico e medievaleggianti che, com'è noto, ha fornito parecchie formulazioni al fascismo europeo tra le due guerre mondiale. 56

The expression of Salvat-Papasseit's national sentiment clearly refers back to the modernista current. The final line of Les Conspiracions (1922), "mil sagetes al vent que clamen llibertat" recalls the Liberal aspirations and Joan Fuster has identified the resonances of Maragallian sentiment in the collection⁵⁷, as apparent in the federalism of "Pregó":

Pobles de la Ibèria
 i gal·lecs
 i èuscars
 Castella la Nova
 Castella la Vella
 - si ens donem les mans -
 si ara ens domenyava
 ja no hi tornarà
 (p. 73)*

The problem in this area is to determine to what extent - if any - Salvat-Papasseit betrayed the interests of his class. For the doctrinaire social realist eyes of the 60s it was completely, as Castellet and Molas continually reiterate: "un poeta d'extracció proletària ... s'integra a les lluites nacionalistes encetades per la burgesia."⁵⁸ It was immediately assumed that the acquisition of national consciousness was politically reactionary. Vallverdú, however, has subsequently demonstrated that this was not at all the case in his investigation into the origins of Catalanism and concludes that: "Quant als fragments que hem pogut llegir de Roca i Ferreras (articles de La Renaixença, 1873) no fan sinó confirmar l'origen revolucionari del catalanisme."⁵⁹ Although during the years up until 1925 the nationalist cause was completely controlled by the Right, the more radical current persisted and was eventually to regain control in the 1930s with the triumph of the broad Left under Macià and Companys. It was to this class conscious strain that Salvat-Papasseit was attracted.

The recuperative process was painfully slow and sporadic yet the progress is easily traceable. These more radical

* All references to the poetry are taken from Salvat-Papasseit, Poesies (1978), Clàssics Catalans Ariel, 2, edited by Joaquim Molas.

inclinations were in evidence at the general assembly of the Unió Catalanista in 1904 and are embodied in the figure of the influential president Dr. Martí i Julià who, as Poblet explains:

Una mica tard - i ho diem així perquè el catalanisme fins llavors més aviat havia deixat de banda els obrers - va saber veure i comprendre la importància de la seva incorporació als rengles dels ideals collectius del nostre poble. 60

Although the resolutions for social reform approved by the congress were minimal, due to broad divergence of opinion, we are nonetheless presented with a definite declaration of intent to procure proletarian involvement in the expression of national consciousness.⁶¹

The first significant concentration of Leftist ideas occurred with the formation of the Unió Federal Nacionalista Republicana for the elections of 1910. The necessary popular support was not in fact attracted, though the determination to broaden the basis of the movement continued, as Vallverdú states, in complete accord with the revolutionary founding principles:

Dos noms ben significatius no són esmentats en la meva llista: Josep Narcís Roca i Ferrera (1830-91), el primer autor que, en paraules de Cucurull "va parlar clarament de nacionalisme", i Domènec Martí i Julià, el qual l'any 1915 afirmava que "el socialisme... coincideix perfectíssimament amb el principi nacionalista." 62

Martí i Julià may well be considered as the driving force behind this tendency and Poblet has given an account of his concerted effort to unite the Left through the Unió Catalanista along a programme of international socialism:

Aleshores va realitzar el pla de convertir la Unió en una força nacionalista d'esquerra, sobretot en el sentit social. El nou programa, contingut en el missatge que la Junta Permanent presentà al Consell general de l'any 1915, fou aprovat. La Unió acceptava la forma de govern republicana, la separació de l'Església i l'Estat i els principis del socialisme internacional. 63

This was accompanied by a more concerted strategy on the radical front as a whole. In 1914 Rovira i Virgili founded the Esquerra Catalanista and the following year Layret and Domingo formed the Bloc Republicà Autonomista which was to become the Partit Republicà Català in 1917. 64

More important, this alternative brand of national consciousness was presented with such conviction that it began to attract the interest of the working class. The attitude of the major union, the CNT, had become increasingly more favourable under the direction of its charismatic leader, the popular "noi del sucre" or, in the words of González Casanova, the "catalaníssim Salvador Seguí".⁶⁵ Isidre Molas has described the advances made in this area during the chaotic triennium of 1920-3:

Els intents del grup Layret-Companys per tal de portar el sindicalisme revolucionari a la política revolucionari reprengueren. I en aquest sentit cal entendre les reunions mantingudes a la casa de Lluís Companys al carrer Sepúlveda i, sobretot, l'adhesió del Partit Republicà Català a la III Internacional. Els uns buscaven l'atracció dels dirigents confederals i d'una base social proletària; els altres buscaven aliances i ajut per al moviment obrer. 66

Despite the setbacks suffered with the assassination of Layret and Seguí the resolute attitude continued. The subsequent pactist approach of the PSOE with the centralist government provoked the formation of a party in 1924 which crystallized the socialist yet catalanist aspirations: - the Unió Socialista de Catalunya:

El catalanisme d'esquerra havia de cercar les coincidències amb el federalisme anarquista i amb l'autonomia sindical catalana, per a poder assolir tant la politització de la classe obrera, com la seva comprensió de la solució socialista... La Unió Socialista de Catalunya sorgeix d'aquesta manera com una escissió de la fracció citada [PSOE] i, al mateix temps, com una autonomia recuperada pels republicans catalanistes (antics UFNR i PRC o de la Unió Catalanista, influits per la darrera etapa d'aquesta federalista i pro-socialista, sota la direcció del doctor Martí i Julià). 67

It was this convergence on the Left which was to prove so influential in the next decade. Nonetheless, the fact that this ethnic sentiment is proletarian in orientation and in no way connected with any sort of reactionary bourgeois Catalanism is made patent in the USC's manifesto:

Que no quedí entre nosaltres o entre cap de nosaltres la creença o la illusió que la Unió Socialista de Catalunya és un sector, una modalitat del nacionalisme català. La Unió Socialista de Catalunya és, i no aspira a ser altra cosa, que la fracció catalana del socialisme català ... Nosaltres no som nacionalistes. Som catalans i per tant, socialistes catalans; com a catalans, socialistes, i com a socialistes, catalans. 68

With this rival ideology gaining in coherence and momentum, reflecting a greater degree of national awareness among the populace in general, it is much more satisfactory to consider Salvat-Papasseit as adhering to the patriotic concern of the Left than to a reactionary bourgeois Catalanism.

In fact Joan Cnexell has not only disclosed the poet's personal connexion with figures from this trend⁶⁹ but has also unearthed his contributions to various related periodicals. In February 1919 Salvat-Papasseit published the article "Paraules als joves" in Som...!, parts of which were duly censored by the authorities. The leaning of this review is quite appropriate to our context as the researcher discloses: "El més d'agost de 1918 sortia al carrer el primer número de Som...!, el qual se subtitulava 'periodic nacionalista radical adherit a la Unió Catalanista'."⁷⁰ It is difficult to detect any bourgeois influence in this act.

Moreover, in an earlier study entitled, "Joan Salvat-Papasseit, col.laborador de 'L'Estat Català'". Cnexell had revealed the poet's involvement with Macià's periodical during

1922-23, shortly before his death. Macià, though generally considered more as a figurehead than a bread and butter politician, had been a tireless protagonist on the platform of the radical nationalism of the Left.⁷¹

A further illustration of Salvat's affiliations may be provided with reference to Gabriel Alomar. Molas has already outlined the influence of the Majorcan on the younger poet⁷² and in his most recent work on the Catalan Vanguard explains the politico-literary significance of Alomar's futurism:

Breu: el Futurisme, és a dir el liberalisme, és l'única solució per al catalanisme, o, almenys, per al catalanisme com a força social i política. Un liberalisme que identifica amb les idees de Repùblica i de Federalisme... 73

In effect Alomar's "liberalism" seems to have been much more socialist in orientation, as evinced by his political trajectory. A member of the UFNR, he later became a director of the PRC and leader of the USC. The coherence and commitment of his stance may be appreciated when certain comments he made in 1910 are compared with the sentiments cited earlier from the USC manifesto:

Socialisme icatalanisme són els dos pols d'una mateixa esfera, com a home sòc socialista; com a ciutadà sòc català. 74

J.V. Foix has left us in no doubt of Salvat-Papasseit's admiration for this figure in a passage from Catalans de 1918 wherein Salvat registers his approval of the politico-artistic line proposed by Alomar:

Entre el Futurisme italià del Marinetti i els seus, i la seva cartesiana interpretació parisenca i la versió maragalliana d'En Salvat, hi ha, dic timidament a En Salvat, el futurisme dels vençuts, el dels victoriosos i el dels irredents. "Però n'hi ha un que els guanya a tots" respon En Salvat: "el d'En Gabriel Alomar, social i jacobí." 75

The confusion surrounding the reality of Salvat-Papasseit's sentiments seems to stem from a simple shift in attitude on the part of the poet. In Humo de Fábrica (1918) we are confronted with an orthodox Marxist internationalism:

Yo no he aspirado nunca a ser padre de la patria - ésta, aquella patria, las patrias de los amos - sino un perfecto hijo de la sufrida madre Humanidad. 76

The patriotic concern expressed in Les Conspiracions (1922) might appear to suggest a reactionary revision of the earlier stance yet, as was proposed by Martí i Julià and Alomar, the ideas of socialism and national consciousness are not mutually exclusive and there is no reason to believe that Salvat-Papasseit did not recognise the fact.

In this way a parallel might be drawn between the political evolution of the poet and that of his friend and colleague Àngel Samblancat. The author of "De Profundis" - the introductory foreword to Humo de Fábrica - echoes the staunch internationalism of the young Salvat-Papasseit. Fuster referred to him as "un representant típic de l'esquerra local anticatalanista."⁷⁷ By the 1920s, however, Samblancat had

resolved the apparent incongruity and took his place in the ranks of left-wing Catalanism:

Tot és un moviment que res no podrà alentir... constituït per elements de tendències liberals i esquerranes, com són Jaume Aiguador, Carrasco i Formiguera, Lluís Companys, Josep Sunyol i Garriga, A. Vilanova, Joan Peiró, Àngel Samblancat i Joaquim Maura. 78

It is hoped that this brief survey has eradicated certain basic misconceptions. Firstly, Catalanism, though dominated by the Right for the first quarter of this century, should not be considered as exclusively bourgeois or reactionary in orientation. Its origins are socialist, if not revolutionary in essence, and these ideas were being duly voiced at the time Salvat-Papasseit was writing. Correspondingly, the assertion by Castellet and Molas that the poet's embracing of national concern constitutes a rupture in his political outlook, is quite unconvincing:

Salvat no seguèix cap tradició autòctona, ni política, ni literària, sinó que tradueix les solicitacions del moment: la crisi del nacionalisme burgès.79

Much more cogent an interpretation is that proposed by Francesc Vallverdú: Salvat-Papasseit remained constant in his politico-literary stance and any development can be explained by the simple process of poetic maturing:

En la trajectòria de la vida i de l'obra de Salvat-Papasseit hi ha uns signes d'evolució tan clars que són comprensibles, en primer lloc, la temptació de veure en la seva vida dues etapes excloents, i, en segon lloc, la tendència a analitzar la seva obra com a "inacabada" ... Ara: llegint atentament tota la seva obra i seguint de prop la seva vida, ens adonem que la ruptura no existeix, que aquests indicis de "canvi" no són sinó senyals d'una maduració intel·lectual ... fins a la seva mort no hi ha cap indici ni en la seva obra ni en la seva biografia que pugui testimoniar una traïcició a les seves conviccions profundes ... No hi ha, doncs, en l'evolució de Salvat-Papasseit una tria entre opcions antagòniques, sinó un procés natural i congruent. 80

The artistic side of this equation will be examined in the following two chapters.

J.V. Foix and the Establishment.

Whereas Salvat-Papasseit is quite readily distinguished from the creative circle in terms of class and artistic tradition; the case of Foix is altogether more complex and involved. Though displaying clear affiliation to the Avant-garde in terms of style and sensitivity, Foix's political inclinations and Pratian sympathies are much more congruent with the outlook of a noucentista. Joaquim Molas has underlined the phenomenon with reference to the cultural education of our poet and that of Folguera; the two are "formats en les deus més pures del Noucentisme."⁸¹

Indeed Alexandre Cirici has provided an exhaustive list of Foix's associates which would seem to place him definitely within the ranks of this group:

Poc després de la fundació de "la Revista" per López-Picó (1915), que en principi era cosa de Rocabado, Manuel Reventós, Carles Riba - company també i de la mateixa edat que Foix -, Alexandre Plana i Ferran i Mayoral, la publicació demandà més gent, i amb Foix hi va entrar el grup, polèmicament noucentista, de Martí Casanoves, Joaquim Folguera i dos artistes plàstics, Esteve Monegal i Josep Obiols. 82

Similarly, the early entries in the memoirs Catalans de 1918 display a distanced acceptance and approval of the direction taken by the Lliga under the leadership of Prat de la Riba in both the national and cultural field:

En prendre comiat, En Ribes ha dit que era una victòria del noucentisme. Li he volgut fer veure, no sé si l'he convençut, que era la victòria de la robustesa, la serenitat i el patriotisme d'En Prat de la Riba. Després dels guanys en l'estil per En Carner, la unitat ortogràfica, si va seguida d'unes regles gramaticals, serà un guany superior. 83

The contradiction here is apparent and has proved quite puzzling. Foix is by nature a conservative animal yet he adheres to a stylistic mode which has become synonymous with artistic subversion. Consequently the poet's close involvement with the Establishment and its viewpoint discourages any real attempt to consider him a legitimate exponent of the Avant-garde. Conversely the constancy exhibited in the employment of innovative idiom renders implausible any proposed classification in the other direction.

Arthur Terry has striven to avoid this problem of categorization by regarding Foix as a type of amalgam of the two tendencies:

On the surface, it might seem that noucentisme and the avant-garde tradition were incompatible, yet there is one poet, J.V. Foix, whose work bridges the gap with extraordinary skill. 84

This interpretation is one that has been frequently aired:

Certament, valdrà considerar Foix com un poeta que va estar per damunt de les modes de l'avantguarda, un poeta més pròxim al neoclassisme que protagonitzava al seu temps el grup de noucentistes que no pas addicte, en l'estricte sentit del mot, a l'avantguarda. 85.

An alternative solution has been to overlook the difficulty and follow the poet's lead by adopting Foix's own facile label of convenience:

To this day, Foix refuses to classify himself as a "Surrealist" a "super-realist", or an "avant-gardist". He does not even call himself a poet; rather, he continues to assert that he is an "investigator of poetry". (Investigador en poesia). 86

Such was the attitude adopted by Castellet and Molas who were inclined to approach the topic in this fashion:

Foix és un "investigador en poesia" molt culte que recull, per a la seva personal aventura artística, tant les troballes gregues i trobadoresques com les més arriscades d'avantguarda. 87

The net result is that Foix is presented as an eclectic figure who exists in a type of literary limbo pertaining to no group in particular and thereby defying classification, as is evidenced by the comments of Cardó and Romeu Figueres: "A J.V. Foix (Barcelona 1894) ~~y~~ no le afiliaría a ningún movimiento concreto."⁸⁸ Moreover, the tendency not to ally Foix with any specific school has had a moderating effect. The writer is located firmly at the centre of the creative spectrum, far removed from the extremes of Vanguardism and Noucentisme.

Nonetheless, in this respect literary classification on the basis of political criteria is quite unsatisfactory. The Avant-garde was riddled with contradictions and wildly variant ideologies. The movement encompassed the entire gamut of opinion and any exclusive correlation between artistic and social revolution is erroneous. Renato Poggiali has highlighted this common misconception in his analysis of the nature of Italian Futurism:

La hipótesis ... de una alianza entre radicalismo estético y radicalismo social, entre revolucionarios del arte y revolucionarios de la política, es retórica e históricamente errónea, como lo demuestra, al menos en parte, la relación entre Futurismo y Fascismo, y también la persistencia de opiniones políticas reaccionarias en el fondo de tantos movimientos de vanguardia a fines del siglo pasado y principios del nuestro. 89

The phenomenon of the Avant-garde comprising dialectically opposed positions may be further illustrated by a comparison between Russian and Italian Futurism - the former revolutionary, the latter reactionary.⁹⁰ A similar, though not so extreme schism is apparent in our context with Salvat-Papasseit and Foix representing the liberal and conservative tendencies, though each is configured by the specific background of Catalan politics and by individual temperament. In the wider Hispanic circle we might adduce the progressive element of Alberti, Cernuda and, to a lesser extent, Lorca, in contrast to the figures of Borges and the literary theorists and subsequent fascists Giménez Caballero and Ledesma Ramos.

Consequently there is no reason to assume that political affiliation should in any way exclude Foix from the Avant-garde and have him associated creatively with the Establishment. Similarly, we would do well to appreciate the artistic alienation which ensued from the poet's constant employment of his own inimitable stylistic idiom. Pere Gimferrer has summarised our initial incomprehending response to the exhilarating enigma of Foix's artistic genius:

El problema, ara per ara, de la poesia foixiana és la seva dificultat de comprensió per al lector comú - i fins i tot, més d'un cop, per al lector professional. Unànim es l'hora de valorar-ne l'excel·lència estètica, tots els comentaristes n'han reconegut la dificultat. 91

It would be appropriate to bear this reaction in mind, especially when we attempt to assess the impact of the poetry on the Catalan reading public of the 1920s, which, as Joaquim Marco has explained, would have proved even more sensational: "Les audàcies de Foix no són avui tan espectaculars com ho foren en el seu temps."⁹²

It is clear that the type of subversion Foix represents is confined exclusively to the artistic field. Joaquim Molas has afforded his usual comprehensive summary of the significance of the stylistic syndrome of syntactical disorder:

Aquests grups ... introdueixen una colla de tècniques noves, com les paraules en llibertat, el cal.ligrama o el collage; sotmeten la sintaxi a una sèrie d'ellipsis brusques i detonants, prescindeixen de la puntuació o la utilitzen d'una manera aparentment arbitrària; proposen nous camps de relació per a les imatges i les metàfores, i, sobretot, els assignen una funció distinta dins el poema. 93

In addition, one should not underestimate the effect of these ideas on the literary establishment, especially when conveyed in the charged manner of J. V. Foix. Arthur Terry has given a complete and sensitive appreciation of the intricacy and power of Foix's expression:

La preocupació per la llengua que afecta : tots els poetes importants de la seva generació es tradueix, en el seu cas, en un lèxic de proporcions verdaguerianes, al qual ha sabut incorporar una quantitat d'arcaïsmes i de neologismes que tot reflectint les afinitats literàries del poeta, han eixamplat notablement les possibilitats del català modern. Aquest lèxic, però, correspon a les exigències d'una poesia a la qual el sentit de les paraules no es pot separar d'altres procediments: del ritme, tan singular en

el pes que dóna als
ïncisos i als mònolis,
i de la repetició, emprada molt
sovint com a principi de construcció.⁹⁴

The contrast with the noucentista ethic of semantic clarity, structural precision and restrained ironic delicacy could not be more defined. Joaquim Marco has underlined the definite rupture between the two expressive idioms and how this detaches Foix quite definitively from the Establishment standpoint:

Alguns poemes de Foix trenquen amb tot allò que un poeta de la Renaixença hauria considerat sagrat: imatge, rima, ritme, vers, paraula, lògica. ⁹⁵

Thus the divergence is practically total. Joan Fuster has been more explicit in his summary of the variance on this stylistic issue:

Aquesta "especulació", Foix l'emprèn sobre el català amb agúcies i savieses inqüestionablement actives. Joan Teixidor ha explicat amb sagacitat el sentit més visible d'aquesta maniobra: "J.V. Foix ha fet la singular proesa de contradir la tendència natural de l'idioma cap als mots polisíl.labs i l'accentuació plana - l'obra de Carner, amb la seva suau i incerta modulació, és decisiva en aquest aspecte -, intentant de restaurar un arcaisme de monosíl.labs abruptes i contundents." ⁹⁶

Though the expressive singularity has been duly noted, the implications of the rift have not been adequately elaborated. To the refined noucentista palate, Foix's output must have proved uncommonly distasteful with its initial inaccessibility, apparent indecipherability and charged emotive presence.

The basic disapproval was evident in Guansé's review of Gertrudis, cited earlier: "el seu català net i pulcre, ens sembla malaguanyat per a aquesta causa."⁹⁷ Indeed Foix was so perturbed about the general lack of understanding towards his poetry as to devote the opening article of KRTU to dealing with the problem:

En publicar, en 1918, les meves primeres proses, un critic il·lustre, per qui sento profunda afeció, em digué: Per què escriviu "això"? Aquesta pregunta decidí, per molt de temps, la sort de diverses petites proses - poemes? - que escrivia a guisa de dietari ... Per què escriviu "així"? Entre els meus amics totes dues preguntes m'han estat fetes, alternativament ... Per què escriure "això"? Per què escriure "així"? 98

In conclusion, we would propose that this isolation in the creative sphere acts as a counter to any suggestion that J.V. Foix embodied a type of link between Noucentisme and the Avant-garde. His politics may have been essentially conservative and coincide with the Establishment viewpoint yet this provides no basis for artistic assimilation - or exclusion. On the other hand, in his stylistic expression the poet may better be seen as representative of the modern innovative mode as his work constitutes a complete rupture from the noucentista ethic. Our attention should focus on what should surely be the essential determining factors for artistic classification:- sensitivity, expression and creative position within the cultural ethos, an approach exemplified by Joan Fuster:

Ell, pel que ha dit, mai no s'ha sentit còmode amb l'etiqueta d'avanguarda, però de fet, li escau amb més dret que a cap altre, en el sentit més ampli de la paraula. En "la lluita contra allò que hom anomenà, genèricament, passatisme" J.V. Foix va situar-se sempre a la primera línia: a l'avant-guarda. I des de la seva més extrema joventut, ha estat una guaita atent a qualsevol interessant trepidació intel·lectual - suau o brusca - que s'hagi produït en qualsevol latitud, i la seva obra de creació

..... i els seus comentaris crítics es fan ressò i fins i tot anticipen alguns fenòmens estètics i ideològics fonamentals de l'època. Ben mirat, Foix va ser "surrealista" abans que André Breton i els seus adlàters inventessin l'"escola", i ell insinuà la primera participació indígena en les simpaties pel feixisme, detall, sense dubte - jutjat a posteriori - poc falguer, però que denota la hiper-sensibilitat de l'escriptor davant les més diverses "inquietuds" del seu temps... "Avanguardista" a la seva manera, en definitiva. 99

Unfortunately, such a comprehensive and balanced critical appraisal has tended to be the exception rather than the rule. The impressive creative and stylistic constancy of Foix has encouraged the literary historian to approach the poet's theoretical utterings with a similar degree of veneration. The author's reticence to be classified - even in the widest sense - has induced many, without Fuster's contextual discernment, to take Foix at his word without further consideration:

The significance of the dialogue between Dalí and Foix, in which Dalí refuses to be classified as either a Surrealist or a Cubist is a reflection on Foix's attitude about his own artistic work; he does not wish to be classified or categorized, and hence will later begin to refer to himself as a "poetic investigator" or "investigator in poetry". He has sensed this in the Dalí selection and given a rare indication of the lack of awareness being shown to the avant-garde...

- " - Surrealism?
- No, no.
- Cubism?
- No, not that, either: painting,
painting if you please."

In other words, poetry, pure poetry [1], Catalan experimentation and not adherence to a specific literary movement is what Foix produces. 100

Certain other more thematic considerations as to why this poet might not be taken as an exponent of the Avant-garde, in particular his fixation with the classics and submission to the ideal of Reason, will be discussed in the following chapter.

The Political Stance of J.V. Foix.

As has been seen, the tendency not to ally Foix with any specific artistic school has had a moderating effect. The writer is located firmly at the centre of the creative spectrum, far removed from the "extremes" of Vanguardism and Noucentisme. Despite Fuster's astute perception of fascistic sympathies in this author there has been, in general, a political correlative to this procedure which has sought to remove Foix from any concrete ideological standpoint. Joaquim Molas provides us with a prime example of this syndrome:

Polític en el sentit més especulatiu i noble de la paraula i investigador constant en poesia, Foix se situa més enllà del temps per adoptar una actitud alhora relativista i absoluta en què tota fusió de contraris és vàlida i possible. 101

The correspondence between literary and political stances

has been re-emphasised by Patricia Boehne:

The years after World War I were years of great political unrest and ferment. It was a period of agitation, politicizing and terrorism which ended only with the victory of Franco. We must recall that Foix always was, and always has been apolitical – neither a rightist nor a leftist, but rather a journalist, an owner of pastry shops, and an investigator in poetry. These events swirled around him, but he steadfastly refused to become involved. 102

The adjective "apolitical" used in this context is quite

amazing. The political import of culture was summarized in

Chapter I and crystallised in Fuster's phrase "Erlengua,

literatura i catalanisme semblen identificar-se per sempre

més."¹⁰³ Its full significance may be reiterated here by

the comments of Josep Murgades on the contemporary climate:

"Fer política equivalia a fer cultura i fer cultura equivalia

a fer política".¹⁰⁴ Cultura was recognised as a tool for

linguistic stability and an agent for the expression of national

identity. Indeed Foix acknowledges his own commitment in this

area in a retrospective declaration on the death of his friend,

Obiols:

En un dels més bells moments de la nostra renaixença col·lectiva es va projectar a la ment dels fidels la imatge d'una comunitat on el concret substituïa el mite, arcaic o futurista. Hi va haver un Polític, un Poeta, un Glossador, un Pintor, un Gramàtic que, una vegada, ença o enllà de llurs volences personals van coincidir, en llurs investigacions i en la pràctica de llur art, a fer vivent a les ments joves la idea d'una comunitat nacional on, per una conjunció feliç d'orientacions, el mite no era cap faula ni la universal una teoria. 105

There can be few statements more revealing of the "objective" considerations which confronted the Catalan artist and in this respect Molas' view of Foix as "polític en el sentit... més noble de la paraula"¹⁰⁶ seems much more fitting. The poet, motivated by pure patriotic concern, acted on a higher ideal plane far removed from the base party level which Salvat-Papasseit had referred to as "la lucha de la calle que da nombre y fortuna en la política."¹⁰⁷

Such a description is clearly accurate of the early Foix as described in Catalans de 1918. The love of Catalonia is of utmost importance and it is to this ideal that any specific ideology must be subjected:

Un vespre fredós i clar, jo sostenia que els partits polítics haurien de subordinar-se a un organisme superior al qual haurien d'inscriure's, més enllà de totes les tendències, els catalans afectes els quals es comprometrien d'adaptar llurs conviccions a llurs activitats particulars i civils. 108

By the 1920s, however, the poet's confidence in the state of affairs had been severely shaken. The Lliga still retained

overriding control of Catalanism yet with the death of Prat de la Riba in 1917 had lost that dynamism and efficacity which had typified the first president of the Mancomunitat.

Against a background of social unrest, revolutionary strikes and street violence the Lliga suffered a series of setbacks in their negotiations for autonomy with Madrid. In the second Assamblea de Parlamentaris of 1917, the new leader Cambó had refused to participate in any governing body until this question had been satisfactorily resolved. Shortly afterwards, however, he was persuaded by Alfonso XIII to abandon this intransigent stance and accept a ministerial portfolio. Cambó's acquiescence smacked of a sell-out which was compounded by his miserable failure to have the Estatut of 1919 instituted. In addition, his continued collaboration with the centralist government alienated much of the Lliga's rank and file support. The widespread disillusion was to form a schism within the party and the convocation of the Conferència Nacional Catalana which, in 1922, led to the founding of a rival entity - Acció Catalana.¹⁰⁹

Though Foix had initially attempted to remain idealistically aloof from base politicking, concern for Catalonia and disenchantment with the machinations of the Lliga stimulated him into action. The appearance of the newsheet Monitor (1921-3), of which Foix was political editor, represents the abandoning of the previous patriotic detachment and marks the poet's attempt to infuse his mentality on the day to day political scene.

The progression is described in an early and isolated number of this magazine: Monitor: el discurs d'En Cambó: Iberisme i Política Nacional. The editors - Foix and Carbonell - had considered themselves patriots in the loftiest sense of the word. They referred to their former status as that of "senzills catalans, nacionalistes: patriotes."¹¹⁰ The dangers facing Catalonia, however, are considered so immediate and grave that they must take up the fight in the lowest sense. Their review, subtitled "gasetta de política art i cultura", is the result of this concern.

This was accompanied by the participation of the pair in the Conferència Nacional Catalana¹¹¹ and their subsequent adherence to Acció Catalana. Foix was in fact appointed editor in chief of the initial party organ Acció Catalana and was duly elected to the consell d'administració of La Publicitat when this replaced it towards the end of 1922.¹¹²

Though Acció Catalana has been regarded as a broad based movement rather than a pressure group¹¹³ there can be no doubt as to Foix's right-wing sympathies. One of the cornerstones of Prat's ideology had been a yearning for Catalan expansionism as the poet Guerau de Liost explained:

En Prat, qui no obliga lo que és
estada Catalunya, somnia amb una
pàtria més gran ... amb una pàtria
integral, reconstruïda amb tota les
regions de parla catalana, una pàtria
on hi entrarien València, Mallorca,
Roselló ... que arribaria, fins a les
estribacions dels Alps, fins a mitja
França i ... fins a les boques del Loire,
fins a l'Atlàntic. 114

Josep Murgades, has indicated how these rather fanciful aspirations were translated in noucentista expression by an insistence on the word imperi.¹¹⁵ The same sentiments are prevalent in Foix's political writings of the early twenties. In his article on Cambó's Iberisme the poet exclaims: "Som nosaltres, joves de Catalunya, qui havem d'ordenar el nou imperi."¹¹⁶ Similarly, in La Revolució Catalanista (1934), which calls for an Hispanic "Confederació Imperial", Foix issues the following censure of the advocates of separatism:

El major nombre de partidaris del separatisme catastròfic no admetrien una vegada obtinguda la nostra independència nacional, una jerarquia que permetés la instauració d'un govern d'ordre que orientés la nació cap a un esdevenir de grandesa imperial. 117

Oriol Pi de Cabanyes has outlined the conscious link between Foix's ideology and that proposed by Prat de la Riba, which locates the author firmly in the right-wing current of conservative nationalism:

A través de Foix i de Carbonell, de "Monitor", es va creant l'estat d'ànim necessari per una reacció renovadora del catalanisme polític, reacció que plantejada a la Conferència Nacional Catalana ... es materialitzà en Acció Catalana ... es troben en Foix les formulacions darreres del que només era insinuat a La Nacionalitat Catalana com a doctrina nacional burgesa "conseqüent" ... Com Carbonell i Foix podien creure que l'hauria desitjat Prat de la Riba. 118

The nature of Foix's Catalanism and his activity in the lower political arena have been frequently overlooked or disregarded. At the basis of the poet's thought lay the inspiration of Italian Futurism with all its corresponding fascistic implications:

J.V. Foix escrivia a la "gaseta" (1921) que l'únic avantguardisme amb validesa era el futurisme italià, dinàmic, optimista, nacional i militarista. 119

As has been seen, Foix was to retain these views even during the days of the Republic. In his Revolució Catalanista we again encounter the ideals of national expansion, severe order and discipline. Pi de Cabanyes leaves us in no doubt as to the nature of the sympathies shared by Foix and Carbonell:

El 1934, a Revolució Catalanista ... insisteixen encara en les propostes teòriques que feren des de la revista amb anterioritat al cop d'estat de Primo de Rivera. J.V. Foix hi exposa uns "punts de meditació catalanista" ... "La Revolució Catalana i catalanista és, per essència, futurista, això és antitradicionalista, actual i europea" ... "Llatino-romà en la seva concepció d'ordenació política de l'Occident, és antidogmàtic en ço que afecta les activitats de l'esperit" ... No som lluny, doncs, del "vivere pericolosamente" de F.T. Marinetti que, adherit al feixisme mussolinià publica el 1931 Spagna veloce e toro futurista. I no pas gratuitament, les publicacions satíriques de l'etapa republicana en complaïen a bescantar el "foixista Feix". 120

A central issue of this philosophy, and one typical of contemporary right-wing nationalism, was the subordination of specific social concern to the ideal of the state. Foix displays his approval of this posture in his rejection of any socialistic preoccupation about the class struggle. Such issues were of minor importance when compared with the overriding factor of patriotic concern:

L'exemple feixista d'Itàlia domant la lluita de classes i superant-la amb la idea nacional, no li deia res? ... Davant la nació no hi ha lluita de classes. ¹²¹

Pi de Cabanyes has again summarised these sentiments: "En nom de l'ordre, J.V. Foix i J. Carbonell combaten per la 'Catalunya ideal' des de 'Monitor'; per divisa, 'amb ella i per ella a ultrança'." ¹²²

A number of sonnets from Sol, i de dol display such sympathies of nationalism coupled with some vague reactionary yearning for severity and rigidity in the social order:

No sóc esclaú, ni iber, ni semita,
Entre bromalls, tu ets. Doncs venceré!

Oh llebetjol, oh dolça faç - ni bus:
Sé pirinenc, del cim clarós. Invita
Oh mar - oh mars - l'Invicte, no el cuguç.

("Entre el cordam..." I, 133)

Clos segellat, la perfecta estructura
De la mar a Ponent, i a l'alta serra
- Forests dels Pirineus -, on ma gent erral:
A Ella els cors en la justa futura...

Oh vigorós estirpl! Esclava indigna
Que cobeges viltats: Sagna, i signa
El teu rescat, i el retorn a la Idea.

("No pas l'atzar..." I, 109)

This overt display of chauvinism was quite typical amongst the Right of the time. Culture, as Prat might have fancied, would have its part to play in this whimsical imperialist dream, as is outlined by Bofill i Mates:

La cultura és necessària, no sols per a tenir dret a reclamar o exercir dignament la nostra autonomia, per a reconstruir política i socialment la Nacionalitat Catalana, sinó també per a desenrotllar la futura acció imperialista dins i fora d'Espanya i per a aconseguir el reconeixement del nostre valor o del nostre crèdit en el mercat cultural universal. ¹²³

We may now add a further element to the "objective" criteria discussed thus far. Culture would complement these expansionist aspirations as well as being an agent for linguistic stability and the projection of national identity, a point clearly appreciated by Foix in 1927:

Compartim sobretot aquest punt de vista d'aquells que creiem que la nostra originalitat radical no serà pas crear una Art o una Literatura autòctones sinó la realització d'una Política. 124

Accordingly, the view of this poet as a noble patriot uncommitted and aloof from any specific ideology must be questioned. Foix embodied a nebulous yet dynamic strain of idealistic nationalism and supported a conservative expansionist tendency which had much in common with the patriotic fanaticism evident in the confused morass of bourgeois proto-fascist inclinations in the Europe of the 1920s and early 1930s. This outlook, together with the author's concrete political commitment, is expressed in a series of writings ranging from the early Monitor (1921-3), to L'Amic de les Arts (1927-9) and Revolució Catalanista (1934), all of which display a consistency of style and purpose. We would do well to acknowledge the writer's full participation in this process, distasteful though it may be to the post-war reader, and confirm the aptness of that dubious yet revealing tag of "el foixista Feix".

In this way we can make a clear distinction between the national sentiment expressed by the two poets in question.

Foix, in league with the Right, and Salvat-Papasseit following the growing radical republicanism whose attitude was exemplified by Macià, Alomar and Companys.

Pi de Cabanyes has indicated how this pair are legitimate representatives of the two rival currents:

Els entessos farien bé de discernir netament l'avanguardisme revoltat i anarcoide de Salvat-Papasseit i el neonoucentista i cívic ... de J.V. Foix. Ambdós cercaven la renovació de les actituds dominants al país (i per tant de la producció artístic-literària que se'n tradueix) a partir de les premisses futuristes. Però mentre l'un n'agafava l'esbravament individual i profètic, l'altre la voluntat de lluita a ultrança per un ideal col·lectiu vertebrador: entre l'anarquisme i el feixisme, Salvat-Papasseit i Foix temptegen camins alternatius al moderantisme regionalista. 125

It seems feasible to propose, then, that this Catalan poetic school offers something of a microcosm of the world wide Vanguard experience with the figures of Salvat-Papasseit and Foix reflecting to some extent the revolutionary and reactionary extremes of this movement.

* * * *

The basic aim of this contextual chapter was to remove those extraneous politico-historical issues which have served to distort classification and prejudice our appreciation of these poets even before any particular textual analyses of their work were undertaken. We hope to have shown that by the

very nature of their artistic constancy J.V. Foix and Joan Salvat-Papasseit provided an alternative to the line dictated by the literary establishment and that the currents and trends which they pursued were not incongruous with Vanguard preoccupations as expressed elsewhere in Europe. The remainder of this study will concentrate on a more detailed examination of the poetry and personal stance, in order to judge how far the sensitivity of these authors and their creative products is consistent with the spirit of the Avant-garde.

NOTES TO CHAPTER II

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10. J. Bofill i Mates, Prat de la Riba i la cultura catalana (1979), p. 32.
11. J. Vallcorba, "Professió de fe preliminar: Vive la France" L'Avenç (2a Època), set. 1979, pp. 26-30.
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13. La Poesia, un combat..., p. 121.
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24. Ibid., p. 73.
25. Ibid., pp. 66 and 73.
26. Cardó and Romeu Figueras, Tres Estudios sobre la Literatura Catalana (Madrid 1955), p. 139.
27. J. Roca-Pons, Introduction to Catalan Literature (Indiana 1977), p. 74.
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30. Surrealism and Spain, passim.
31. J. Vallverdú, Història de la Literatura Catalana (1978), p. 150.
32. M. Arimany, L'Avantguardisme en la poesia catalana actual (1971), p. 55.
33. J. Rufí Calonja, Història de la Literatura Catalana (1954), p. 599.
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35. Catalan Literature, p. 104.
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47. Literatura Catalana..., p. 225.
48. "Professió de fe preliminar: Vive la France", L'Avenç (2a Època), set. 1979, p. 28.
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50. "Poeta con Mayúscula", La Vanguardia Espanola, Aug. 6, 1974.
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57. "Introducció a la poesia de Joan Salvat-Papasseit", prologue to Joan Salvat-Papasseit, Poesies (1962), pp. 37-84. Reproduced in Contra el Noucentisme (1977), pp. 13-60.
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59. "El pensament progressista català...", pp. 332-3.
60. Història Básica del Catalanisme, p. 217.
61. For a more detailed panorama of this issue, see Poblet, Història Básica..., pp. 201-255.
62. "El pensament progressista català...", p. 332.
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68. Ibid.
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86. Boehne, J.V. Foix, p. 9.
87. Poesia Catalana..., p. 54.
88. Tres Estudios, p. 139.
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92. J. Marco, "M'exalta el nou i m'enamora el vell", in Sobre Literatura Catalana (1968), pp. 59-62.
93. "La literatura catalana i els moviments d'avantguarda", p. 19.
94. Terry, "Sobre les obres poètiques de J.V. Foix", Serra d'Or març 1968, pp. 47-52.
95. "M'exalta el nou...", p. 60.
96. Literatura Catalana..., p. 235.
97. "Cròniques Catalanes", p. 530.
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108. JVFC., Obres Completas, II, p. 254.
109. For a detailed perspective on these events, see Poblet, Història Básica..., pp. 279-312 and Balcells et al., Països Catalans 1714-1974, pp. 479-484.

110. JVFC. and J. Carbonell, Monitor i el discurs d'En Cambó: Iberisme i Política Nacional, 1920, pp. 1-3.
111. JVFC.'s active participation in this exercise has been recorded in J. Casasses i Ymbert, Jaume Bofill i Mates (1980), p. 256.
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124. JVFC., "Algunes consideracions sobre la literatura i l'art actuals", L'Amic de les Arts, XX, 1927, pp. 104-106.
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THE POETRY OF JOAN SALVAT-PAPASSEIT

Chapter III

It is true to say that the Avant-garde was in many ways as notorious for the outlandish eccentricities of its exponents as for the innovative nature of its expressive modes; outrageous behaviour, the desire to shock and appal conventional bourgeois mores provided a social correlative to the revolutionary shift in artistic perspective. Ideas of decency, good taste and propriety were as much targets for vilification as the eminent figures of the creative establishment. One immediately recalls Alberti's scandalous lecture in the Lyceum "club Feminino" which culminated in the summary execution of his pet pigeon,¹ and Dalí's offensive appropriation and liberal application of the epithet con in a speech which horrified the audience of the Barcelona Ateneu in 1930.²

In the main, this attack on the Establishment went hand in hand with the assault on its morality. The Surrealists poured scorn and abuse in a most irreverent fashion on their bête noire, the much revered Anatole France, on the occasion of his death in 1924,³ and similar disrespect was directed, in the same speech by Dalí, at one of Catalan literature's most cherished personages, Àngel Guimerà:

res no pot semblar-nos més
baix més innoble més digne
d'oprobi, que els "bons sentiments"
del gran porc, el gran
pederasta, l'immens putrefacte
pelut l'Àngel Guimerà. 4

In the Catalan artistic sphere Dalí was clearly the most controversial protagonist and had collaborated with Gasch and Muntanyà on the notoriously offensive fulls grocs released in 1929.⁵

Nonetheless, such vitriolic censure is apparent, though in much diluted form, in some of Salvat-Papasseit's articles dealing with his poetic contemporaries, the "homes senyoretes". The extent of the affront, however, is tempered by that ingenuity and sincerity typical of the poet:

tants poetes coneix que parlen de
l'amor sense gota d'amor i passegen
llurs llibres sota el braç com ells
passejarien en cotxe de lloguer,
fatxendes sense to. Així les
senyoretes pinten flors, ells fan
llibres de versos. I quin cromo
perfecte l'obra d'unus i altres. 6

Joan Fuster has also noted the keen edge to Salvat-Papasseit's criticism of the noucentista dilettante:

Això era suficient per a enfocar-lo amb el to mitjà de la poesia noucentista, i en el seu manifest contra els poetes amb minúscula ataca decididament els seus col·legues: "Aquests poetes nostres s'han penyorat l'espasa pel bastó de passeig, alliberaran Catalunya un dia amb una reverència. La suor que acompaña les comoditats els ha ablanit la lira."7

As might be expected, Foix's close connexion with Junoy, Folguera and Riba restrained him from any type of gratuitous indulgence in such polemic. Later, during the sequence of

the outlandish and offensive extravagances inspired by Muntanyà, Dalí and Gasch, towards the latter period of L'Amic de les Arts, Foix again maintained a dignified distance, refusing to involve himself in the now conventional behavioural excesses of this section of the creative clan.⁸

Nevertheless, violent censure was not only reserved for those on the other side of the artistic fence. It is not surprising that in a mode which relies so heavily on the individual and individuality there should be so many fierce exchanges between artists who claimed allegiance to the same movement. One need only recall the disparity between Mayakovsky and Esenin, or the internal feuding of the Surrealists. This phenomenon was also apparent in Catalonia, especially in the relationship between Foix and Salvat-Papasseit..

There was a definite bond of friendship between the two poets. Salvat-Papasseit had dedicated a poem to Foix in Poemes en Ondes Hertzianes and the warmth of their companionship is recalled by Foix in Catalans de 1918:

Quan En Salvat m'ha vist que
plegava el paraigua ha rigut,
sorneguer, i m'ha dit burgès.
Sosté que el paraigua és el
símbol del règim capitalista i
de la banca internacional... Li
he dit que si els futuristes
italians als quals ingènuament i
mig en secret admira, havien
inventat cap adminicle impermeable
que tot substituïnt en la seva
divina perfecció el paraigua l'avant-
atges en emoció estètica... Hem rigut
tots dos. 9

As might be expected from this, Salvat's criticism of Foix's work is conducted in a light-hearted vein. In "Lletra d'Itàlia" the jibe at the complexity and erudition of Foix's prose poetry is couched in good humour, Foix's hermeticism being contrasted with the colloquial simplicity of Salvat's language:

Aquí a Roma es murmura que per a comprendre En Foix de Sarrià hom deu llegir Sòfocles primer. La Laïeta ha plorat, car haurà de tornar a començar pel Narro.... perqué no el sap llegir. (p. 6)

Astonishingly, Foix's response to Salvat was not delivered in a similar mirthful tone - of which we know the poet capable from his celebrated reply to Joan Ferraté's "Cobles en honor de J.V. Foix".

In an article written shortly after Salvat-Papasseit's premature and tragic death, Foix is cruelly dismissive about the role his friend had played in recent literary activity - especially in connexion with the Avant-garde:

En rigor les tendències extremes no han influït pas gaire en la literatura catalana contemporània. És un error citar en Salvat-Papasseit. S'hi enganyà ell i ha enganyat els altres. Aquest malhaurat poeta mai no fou avantguardista ni en la interpretació directa ni en l'equívoca donada a aquesta activitat literària. 10

The full force of this callous dismissal can be appreciated when we recall the deep significance that the label of Vanguard held for Salvat-Papasseit, as Fuster points out:

Salvat volgué ser avantguardista. "Poemes d'avantguarda", és com subtitulà L'irradiador del port i les gavines i s'autoqualificà amb una sola paraula, "poet-
avantguardistacatalà". 11

Furthermore, Salvat-Papasseit was always keen to display his allegiance to this movement in the strongest terms.

The three "Divises" in La Gesta dels Estels (1922), repeatedly bring home this point: "Fem l'escamot dels soldats d'avantguarda", etc. The posthumous Óssa Menor (1925) is even subtitled "Fi dels poemes d'avantguarda".

Moreover, Salvat-Papasseit's adherence to this vogue was not on the basis of a superficial and whimsical intrigue with new forms, as was the case, say, with Junoy and Folguera. These revolutionary modes of expression reflected in Salvat-Papasseit an enthusiastic revolt against established and decadent social morality:

En el fons...l'actitud avantguardista no era més que l'equivalent poètic del mateix impuls rebel que inicialment el portà a professar l'anarquia, el culte a la "divina Acràcia". 12

This rebellious instinct noted by Fuster is in no way gratuitous but has a definite moral end, which is, in turn, conveyed in Vanguardist terms. Salvat-Papasseit makes this clear in his manifesto Concepte del Poeta which recalls quite strongly certain Maragallian attitudes and the influence of Alomar and Ruiz:

Dir Poeta vol dir exultament, sentir goig en copsar el bé de la blasfèmia. El mal no ha existit mai ... Però existeix la nosa, que es la massa ignorant de la civilitat. Aquesta massa enorme tota la humanitat esporuguida i tonta, qui viu perquè ha establert com norma social la hipocresia, és ço que el Poeta blasma. 13

This attitude is expressed poetically in the first two collections. "Lletra d'Itàlia" brings out the moral aspect of this sense of revolt or blasphemy: "Didac Ruiz ... ha escrit que la blasfèmia és la rosa de foc de la virtut." "Canto la lluita", the opening poem of L'Irradiador del port i les gavines, emphasises this sentiment.

Só jo l'incendiari de mots d'adolescent
 Blasmo els déus a ple vol:
 l'arraulit bestiari
 tem el fuet del meu cant.
 (p. 27)

Foix, nevertheless, does not merely limit himself to casting aspersions on his friend's integrity, but also denigrates Salvat-Papasseit's poetry and his basic intellectual capacity:

Els seus cal.ligrams són infelicíssims
 ... No tan sols fracassà en el seu
 intent d'aportació de formes noves sinó
 que demostrà no comprendre'n ni llur
significació més elemental. (my emphasis : 14)

It is not too difficult to disagree with the first evaluation here. As we shall see later on in this chapter, Salvat-Papasseit's calligrams are at worst adequate, and at best exceptional - as in the case of "Marxa Nupcial". Foix's second allegation is, however, much more serious. If Salvat-Papasseit did not understand the basic significance of the calligram then he would not have appreciated the wholesale artistic innovation which occurred with the appearance of the Avant-garde. In this type of poem the words, or paraules en llibertat, are released from their traditional syntactical function to acquire new meaning in a pictorial sense. It is a literary equivalent of the shift in perspective heralded

by Cubism and therefore central to the Vanguardist way of thinking.

Contrary to Foix's assertions, however, Salvat-Papasseit shows more than an elementary grasp of the new forms and their implication. He is clearly aware of this essential change in perspective, as evinced by the choice of device for his first collection of poetry "L'Art commence où finit l'imitation" (Pierre Albert-Birot). This is accompanied by a complete appreciation of the relevance of the calligram to this movement:

¿Però allò de Chénier; de que les coses noves i les emocions vives de tot temps, es poden expressar amb versos ja resolts? 15

Salvat-Papasseit's knowledge of the modern French theoreticians is complemented by a definite understanding of essential ideas proposed by Italian Futurism:

El Poeta d'avui és el Poeta d'avui
i no el d'ahir... Homer si va cantar els remes de la victòria, fou perquè en el seu temps per la força dels remes s'obtenien victòries; en Marinetti avui cantarà els cuirassats, els aeroplans frenètics i les boques de foc dels monstruosos canons. -
¿Lliurarem Catalunya per la força dels remes? 16

The general approach adopted by Foix in 1925 to the recently deceased Salvat-Papasseit and his work was quite brutal and unfounded. It certainly calls into question the validity of the impression of mutual friendship and respect which Foix is at pains to point out in Catalans de 1918,

"... un company pur i excepcional com és ara En Salvat-Papasseit de les Laïetanes, poeta."¹⁷

The Avant-Garde, however, was typified by intensely emotional friendships and rivalry - one need only think of the sudden changes in friendship and attitudes among such figures as Dalí, Lorca, Buñuel, the Surrealists, etc. Subsequently, Foix's attitude has mellowed dramatically, and the "Lletra a En Joan Salvat-Papasseit" is one of the most resigned and sympathetic examples of his prose work, with the author clearly intent on excusing himself for his earlier intransigence in this area, though one still senses a hint of rivalry or a wounded sense of being misunderstood:

¿Recordes, Salvat, la darrera
vegada que ens vam veure?...
Tu que, mal informat em feies
fill honorífic de burgès, ambigu
i amorós de troballes, vas dir-me: -
Mireu, Foix: jo només sóc poeta,
són els darrers mots que he escoltat de
tu. Estic content de dir-t'ho ara,
al cap de tants anys exiliat amb tants
d'altres a la pròpia contrada. 18

Though not written until almost forty years after Salvat-Papasseit's death, the near confessional tone of this piece goes a long way to redressing Foix's initial unjust and unfeeling censure. Foix's rather piqued response here to the late Salvat-Papasseit and his work may be reminiscent of many of the internal differences which pervaded the Avant-garde.. It does, however, raise the question of the reliability, or full objectivity of Foix as a literary critic. The excellence of his poetic craft has led to his theoretical remarks being

treated with a similar indiscriminate reverence, as was highly typical of the general response to this author's dubious political sentiments of the twenties and thirties which were described in the previous chapter. In the course of this thesis we shall have occasion to reconsider the real validity of this author's basic judgement and analysis in various artistic and non-artistic areas.

As was seen, unhappy with the label of vanguardist, Foix has repeatedly endeavoured to reject any type of classification, no matter how general. He has continuously insisted on the title of "investigador en poesia" and his intransigence on this issue has indeed succeeded in having the critics react to him in this way:

En efecte: Foix... és un
"investigador en poesia" molt
culte que recull, per a la seva
personal aventura tant les
troballes gregues i trobadoresques
com les més arriscades d'avant-
guarda. 19

The assessment made here by Castellet and Molas in the early sixties finds support in the present day, as was seen in the previous chapter:

Certament, valdrà considerar Foix
com un poeta que va estar per damunt
de les modes d'avanguarda, un poeta
més pròxim al neoclassicisme que
protagonitzava al seu temps el grup dels
noucentistes que no pas addicte, en
l'estricte sentit del mot a l'avanguarda. 20

The implication in this case, and one commonly applied to Foix, is that an interest in the classics somehow excludes him from the ranks of the Avant-garde, given the wholesale "anti-passatism" advocated by the Italian Futurists. Such

an evaluation, however, may be taken as rather inconclusive. As Renato Poggio[1] has summarised, an element common to the Hispanic and English modern experience was their reference to certain key figures of traditional literature. In this way a predilection for the classics in itself provides no basis for exclusion from this movement:

It is well known that some exponents of the modern movement have suggested this same relation between modern and baroque art. Many contemporary poets in England and Spain have done this, making the school of Donne and Góngora their model, seeing it as a historical precedent for their own vision and method. 21

The alignment of Foix with noucentista:expression is equally fallacious for the reasons afforded in the previous chapter. With the subliminal appeal of his imagery, the bizarre surreal settings and the apparent illogicality and incomprehensibility of the action expressed not in verse but in emotionally charged prose poetry, Foix was the antithesis of all that the Noucentistes held dear. As was seen earlier, Foix was correspondingly censured for his approach to creative writing by Domènec Guansé and, in his memoirs, the same critic emphasises the dissociation between this poet and the Establishment:

Però de tots els amics de joventut per qui [Foix] sentí una més vera predilecció fou per Carles Riba. Ell i Bofill i Ferro foren dels primers a conferir-li la més alta jerarquia intel.lectual i poètica. Dóna més valor a aquesta admiració jovenívola el fet d'haverse'n sentit, des del principi, radicalment

distint d'haver-se proposat seguir altres camins. Riba, des dels inicis fou tant com poeta, professor fidel al passat, a la tradició i a les regles, decentat al classicisme; ell, en canvi, ha volgut ser-i ho repeteix - un investigador en poesia i assajar fins on podrien arribar ell i l'idioma. 22

The classification of Foix, then, has proved something of an enigma.

The most complete and satisfactory analysis of this particular subject, however, has been provided by Fuster. His excellent definition removes those apparent contradictions and difficulties which have, for so long, confused the issue and induced critics to avoid classifying Foix and Salvat-Papasseit as Vanguardist writers:

Però, ací i ara, fóra impertinent d'aturar-nos en discriminacions de doctrina o de disciplina. Durant uns anys, a l'Europa occidental, en deien "avantguarda" d'una serie d'actituds i d'obres literàries i plàstiques que tenien en comú una voluntat de repte i de negació enfront de les formes i dels criteris consolidats per la tradició cultural immediata. Es tractava d'un gest "revolucionari": en principi en el clos de les lletres i de les arts, però, de retop, de cara a la societat sencera. No cal dir que la major confusió regnà en la seva jurisdicció. En el sac de l'Avantguardisme hem de ficar alhora el futurisme de Marinetti, precursor i després aliat de la reacció feixista, un Guillaume Apollinaire professional de l'aventura literària, i els primers surrealistes, com Breton, Aragon, Eluard, sincers en la seva desafiant fe anarcoïde. Si de la literatura passem a la pintura, per exemple, l'embolic és encara més gran, ja que convindrà arrenglerar sota la mateixa etiqueta artistes tan contradictoris com Picasso... Roualt, Picabia, Joan Miró i Max Ernst. Tanmateix, a pesar d'aquestes dissemblances irreconciliables l'Avantguardisme era una realitat. (my emphasis.: 23)

The real relevance of this passage with regard to the Avant-Garde has been largely overlooked. Fuster, like Poggiali, dispels the basic misconception that aesthetic revolution reflected a corresponding desire for left-wing insurgence and subversion. This was the criterion employed by Castellet and Molas to exclude these two poets from this movement. Foix was a "burgès molt culte" and Salvat-Papasseit, they believed, had become involved in the struggle of bourgeois nationalism.²⁴

Moreover, Fuster's assessment is not found deficient with respect to the complexity of the Vanguard spirit. This ranged from the staunchest "anti-passatism" of the Italian Futurists and Dada, to an intense interest in the classics as can be seen by the response of the Lorca-Alberti generation to Góngora. In this area, Foix, with his passion for the Catalan troubadors and poets of the dolce stil nuovo, clearly reflects the sensitivity of the wider Hispanic current. The essential ingredient which is characteristic of the Avant-garde, as Fuster rightly argues, is the idea of rupture from the immediate creative tradition and the constraints and limitations of this were considered in our Chapter II. In the case of Salvat-Papasseit the issue is quite straightforward, first of all, in terms of politics and class. Moreover, his insistent employment of the innovative modes translated a basic literary rebellion against the "homes-senyoretes" and "poetes amb minúscula" of the socio-cultural establishment.

As far as Foix is concerned, this break occurs on a purely creative level as the poet was of similar background and persuasion as many of his noucentista friends and contemporaries. The extent of this stylistic distinction, nonetheless, should not be underestimated. It would be difficult to conceive of a writer whose output was more opposed to the noucentista ethic of technical precision, clarity and semantic exactitude as exemplified initially by Josep Carner and later by Carles Riba.

Domènec Guansé has indicated the full latitude of this divergence in his reflexions on the impact of Foix's work on the young Riba: "els seus primers textos devien ser força suspectes per a aquell mestre precoç"²⁵. and further emphasises this difference in his revelation of Riba's catholic approach to the artistic experiment; "Estimula òdhuc els que prenen rutes diferents, i no l'inquieten els que divergeixen, com J.V. Foix, per exemple."²⁶

A further element of distinction may be adduced in this respect in the context of sensitivity. One of the hallmarks of established noucentista verse was, of course, restraint and decorum with an emphasis on artifice:

El Noucentisme pretenia de realitzar una poesia "antiinterjeccional": una poesia que, en lloc d'esportaneitat, erigís l'artifici com a valor bàsic del seu propi sentit. La poesia, més que "inspirada" - romànticament inspirada - , serà "construïda" - clàssicament construïda - ; el que per a Maragall havia de ser el residu d'un "estat de gràcia", il.luminació o febre, ara és resultat d'una "recerca" tècnica, deliberada i astuta. 27

Here Fuster has elucidated a fundamental divergence between Modernisme and Noucentisme. Nonetheless, that same Romantic vitality displayed by Maragall was also embraced by the Avant-garde with frenzied dynamism becoming something of a Cubo-Futurist commonplace.²⁸ We find this mentality reflected in Salvat-Papasseit's projected persona of the "home-entusiasta" and also in Foix's obsession with the idea of "risc". In the following chapters we shall deal more specifically with the relevance of these items to the poetics of each writer. We mention them here as a further illustration of that basic subjective disparity which existed between these authors and the Establishment.

In conclusion, if we concentrate on aesthetic dislocation as being the central determining factor in this issue, then Fuster's definition provides us with a framework for the examination of this topic which eliminates those critical misconceptions and prejudices about the nature of the Avant-garde, yet is sufficiently flexible to accommodate the various contradictions which were evident in the movement as a whole. What is more, we may now propose that Joan Salvat-Papasseit and J.V. Foix constitute a legitimate autochthonous poetic response to this experience given their clear stylistic dissociation from the ascendant ethic of Noucentisme.

With the theoretical obstacles to seeing these poets as Vanguard artists now removed, we can proceed to assess the extent of their involvement with the overall mood of this movement on the more intimate level of individual creativity.

The Early Poetry of Salvat-Papasseit

Despite Foix's assertions to the contrary, there is little doubt about the affiliation and promise of Salvat-Papasseit's first two collections. Poemes en Ondes Hertzianes (1919) is basically an exercise in futurist stylistics. The subject matter is also typical of this school, especially in its eulogy of the machine age. It is here that the poet first explores the possibilities of typographical innovation, afforded by the paraules en llibertat, with which he achieves a certain amount of success.

In "54045" the power of the tram is succinctly conveyed by the use of capitals, with the repeated TROLLEY producing a forceful onomatopoeic effect:

La dinamo turgent mou els príaps de foc en CIRCUMVAL-LACIO	No he vist més majestat que en lo style de foc TROLLEY TROLLEY TROLLEY (p. 22)
---	--

Both the typography and the interchange of high and low case cause the eye to jump across the page evoking the jerky movement within the tram.

In this example the actual lay-out is used to enhance the description of a specific scene. In other cases, however, it fulfills a more significant function and becomes an essential part of the poem's structure. This can be seen with "Plànol" and "Columna vertebral: Sageta de Foc", where the meaning is conveyed both verbally and graphically.

"Plànol" requires little explanation as its message is quite apparent and immediately accessible. It is a straightforward social critique which in poetic terms is flat and

uninspired. The lay-out simply provides a pictorial equivalent of the unjust social structure.

In "Columna vertebral: Sageta de Foc" this political censure becomes imbued with a greater urgency and poetic subtlety. It is an impassioned acratic censure on society's morality and institutions. As with "Plàanol", the poem is straightforward and clear - so much so that the relevance of the structure to the expression of the theme is easily overlooked. The piece may seem at first to be rambling and disjointed - a suitable echo for the basic anarchistic sentiments. Nonetheless the poem also develops graphically, which makes the pictorial lay-out of essential importance.

The first and final stanzas are thematically related. They describe a frenetic desire for greater heights of fulfilment on a personal and political level:

LLUITA x BELLES GESTES I ACCIONS: Eterna espiral vers l'Infinit
VOLUNTAT x UN DESIG BOIG DE CORRER: i córrer sempre als cims...

- NO VULGUEU GOVERNAR

Amunt! Amunt! Encara més

SEMPRE AMUNT!

SAGETA DE FOC

(pp. 8-9)

Movement upwards, with Salvat-Papasseit appropriating Maragall's last words, becomes emblematic of this frenzied struggle for greater individual and communal experience, symbolised by the fire arrow.

In stark contrast to this dynamism, and separating these two excitedly charged sections, there is a list of negative elements which amount to a criticism of society from an anarchistic standpoint:

Hi ha un HOME a la presó...
 traieu-li l'embaràs que li oprimeix les mans
 PERQUE FACI CAMI...

Experiència,
 Moral,
 Sistemes de govern,
 Sistemes filosòfics,
 religions:
 SOFISMES

(pp. 8-9)

To enhance the expression of the failure of these established values, movement comes to a halt - with the man trapped in prison. Moreover, the upward trend of the first and final stanzas is reversed: "Un jaç arran de la carretera/per als vells i els que cauen", exemplified in the heading "SOFISMES" which significantly points down.

Thus the poem may be appreciated in pictorial terms. The ascendant forces equated with revolution and personal liberation are being held in check by conventional morality and institutions. We may now understand the significance of the title. The social hierarchy, the "COLUMNA VERTEBRAL", is nullifying the subversive tendencies of the purging "SAGETA DE FOC". This is displayed graphically in how the arrowhead ^{VICTORIA} JOVENTUD in the first stanza is separated from its shaft in the final verse. The implication is quite apparent. For fulfilment to be achieved the first and last sections must be united which will require the elimination of the current order and what it represents.

In this poem Salvat-Papasseit's sentiments are expressed quite straightforwardly. The meaning is apparent from the very words used. However, if the structure is not examined it may seem little more than a series of unconnected exclamations and not a piece whose significance is conveyed as much pictorially as verbally, which thereby enhances its impact.

On the whole, the world described in Poemes en Ondes Hertzianes is a cold and solitary place, as Molas correctly points out: "De fet, l'home, és un ésser solitari i desvalgut. Un ésser temerós que va perdent la seva individualitat dins un muntatge uniformatzador, oressiu."²⁹ The sterility of the environment is evoked in "Interior" by the artificial flowers and the spectre-like "maniquí de fusta"; and again in the solitary ramblings of "Bodegom".

Damunt la taula Poe S6 tremol6s	<u>I'Arthur Gordon Pym</u> obert al sostre m'esguarda de veure'l (p. 7)
---------------------------------------	--

The exterior scenes are no more cheery. In "54045" the last word, "amic", stands isolated at the end of the poem emphasising the lack of personal contact. There is a type of melancholic pleasantness about the solitude of "Passeig", but once again the absence of human warmth is apparent.

Jo somric I mil llums em sonriuen Són mil llums	no pas homes (p. 11)
---	-------------------------

The problem of youthful solitude is, however, resolved early in the next collection with such poems as "Encara el tram", "Encara el port", "Tot l'enyor de demà", "Nadal", etc. which display an immanence of human warmth and fullness:

Els de casa a la cuina
 prop del braser que crema
 amb el gas tot encès han enllestit el gall
 Ara esguardo la lluna que m'apar lluna plena
 i ells recullen les plomes.
 (p. 44)

The most evocative poem of the first collection - and certainly the most important in terms of Salvat's stylistic development - is the "Record d'una 'fuga' de Bach". The reference to the circus and the attempt to eliminate barriers between art forms - here music and verse - is essentially vanguard in inspiration; a reinvigoration of these motifs from their Symbolist and Romantic sources. Surprisingly, the conventional overpowering vitality of expression is absent. Also missing is the bleak anonymous reality evoked in many of the other poems, as Salvat-Papasseit's rambling flights of fantasy capture the tone of many of Bach's fugues, a process typified by the inclusion of a haunting folk-air.

"la lluna
 la bruna
 vestida
 de dol"
 és més vídua i més clara.
 (pp. 20-1)

This indicates a propensity in Salvat-Papasseit to be selective in terms of style and theme and a reticence to be governed by any rigid adherence to futurist doctrine. Indeed this delicate and imaginative poem exemplifies one of the features

of Salvat-Papasseit's creative process; a continuous adapting, remoulding and re-articulation of topics to comply with his own particular poetic sensitivities.

The Poemes en Ondes Hertzianes may be raw and unpolished in the main, but they are nonetheless important in the context of Salvat-Papasseit's work as a whole, an issue which Molas has observed most succinctly:

En conjunt, els Poemes constitueixen la liquidació de les inquietuds de joventut, descruien una crisi de fons i al capdevall, descobreixen una sortida positiva que, de fet, conté en germen tota la producció de maduresa. 30

In the "Record d'una 'fuga' de Bach" Salvat-Papasseit reveals an imaginative artistic sensitivity, which, when harnessed to the technical ability of "Columna vertebral: Sageta de Foc", will form the stylistic basis of the poet's mature work.

By the time that Poemes en Ondes Hertzianes was published in 1919, Salvat-Papasseit's poetic consciousness had already developed along the lines mentioned above. The poet was now concerned with a more conceptual brand of expression which abandoned the bleak realism of the first collection. These sentiments were reproduced on the political level as Salvat-Papasseit strayed from the immediate social commitment of his early writings in search of something more general and abstract, as was made clear in a letter to Pompeu Gener in July 1918:

Jo aniré més enllà de l'Esperit,
lluny de les baixes lluites socials
i polítiques d'avui. Seré a les
altes lluites que abarquen tots els
temps. 31

The poet is more specific about the direction that this process will take in the final chapter of Humo de Fábrica (1918), which is again conveyed in terms of a rejection of immediate political activity; a progression, as we have seen, converse to that of the contemporary Foix:

Quiero ver si es posible la verdad absoluta - ésta es gran pretensión - acerca del espíritu del pueblo. Esto me obligará a un estudio profundo y me alejaré acaso de la lucha de la calle que da nombre y fortuna en la política. 32

These comments reveal a definite inclination or attempt to penetrate beneath the surface of the everyday reality which had been so prominent in many of the Poemes en Ondes Hertzianes.

This tendency, as Miklos Szabolski explains, reflects a general preoccupation of the vanguard artist:- a desire to concern himself with the deeper, more essential qualities of existence, approaching the problem in a variety of ways:

Il aspire à révéler des correlations inconnues, à découvrir l'Essentiel soit à l'aide de la passion extatique, soit de la spéculation intellectuelle. 33

This account might be expanded to summarise an elementary preoccupation of the modern spirit from the Symbolist quest for the Absolute to the Vanguardist search for the Essential. There appears to be a definite overlapping in motivation though the creative channels adopted in an attempt to solve the enigma were notably variant.

More specifically, in our immediate area of study Szabolski's general analysis of the spirit of the Avant-garde complies perfectly with the Catalan context. The "passion extatique" seen as accompanying the artistic experiment is patently evident, as mentioned earlier, in the work of both Salvat-Papasseit and Foix. Margallian vitality is a basic ingredient of every collection from Poemes en Ondes Hertzianes to Ossa Menor. Moreover, Salvat deems it a necessary attribute of every poet: "El Poeta serà, donc, l'home entusiasta."³⁴ Joan Fuster has summed up this point most comprehensively:

Salvat-Papasseit reserva al "vers"
el paper suprem de vehicle de la
màxima energia humana: l'entusiasme.
Confessa aspirar a una obra que "es
doni de consol als homes", i una tal
obra no pot nàixer sinó d'una
exaltada "sinceritat": ... I el
"consol" que promet en la seva poesia
com una vocació, l'"heroisme", es
tradueixen, en el seu cas en una força
exultant. 35

J.V. Foix, on the other hand, seems to combine both elements detected by Szabolski which are crystallised in a collection of great intensity, Sol, i de dol (1947). Here the weighty "intellectual speculation" of the opening sections is followed by the frenetic ecstasy of IV and V. The stylistic relevance of this issue to the actual poetic expression of this pair, however, will be discussed in subsequent chapters.

L'Irradiador del port i les gavines.

In a metaphor of characteristic ingenuity, Salvat-Papasseit referred to L'Irradiador del port i les gavines as his poetic

"pantalons llargs".³⁶ This volume constituted his coming of age as a creative writer. It is in this work that we detect the first real signs of that necessary balance between form and content in such excellent pieces as "Totul'enyor de demà", "Marxa Nupcial" and "Vibracions". However, in certain cases that force and control we would associate with poetic maturity is not forthcoming.

This imbalance is apparent in what is the thematic lynch-pin of the work, "Res no és mesquí", which displays these positive and negative attributes. Here Salvat-Papasseit has discarded the speculative dimension to hammer out a series of assertions through the indicative mode. The poem is a statement of the "totality" of things. Apart from the repeated negative "res no és mesquí", the poem is a sequence of axioms which celebrate the richness and multifaceted interconnection of things:

...el sol surt i s'ullprèn
i té delit del bany:
que s'emmiralla el llit de tota cosa feta.
(p. 53).

All creation shares the same underlying essence, "La cançó canta en cada bri de cosa", and also enjoys an inherent promise of futurity, which is expressed with great force in natural terms:

I l'onada del mar sempre riu,
Primavera d'hivern - Primavera d'istiu,
I tot és Primavera:
i tota fulla verda eternament.
(p. 53).

The capital letters indicate the metaphoric attribute of spring - rebirth. The poet perceives this quality, even in other seasons, which provides us with a firm impression of

continuance. Death may occur on an individual level but the life-cycle is eternal and it is this assurance of perenniability on the general scale which accounts for the poet's exuberance:

-Avui demà iahir
s'esfullarà una rosa:
i a la verge més jove li vindrà llet al pit.
(p. 54).

The fusion of the three time scales governed by a verb in the future tense underlines this point most emphatically. The reference to the fecundation of the young virgin is purely symbolic and is used repeatedly in this sense throughout the work as a whole. The uninterrupted succession of the reproductive cycle is crystallised in the image of the repeated journey of the youngest girl to motherhood which again emphasises the basic theme.

In this respect it is appropriate to dwell on the success of the line "I l'onada del mar sempre riu", which is brought about by the ambiguity of the last word. If "riu" is taken as a verb, then it would suitably describe the joy which this vision of the repeated cycle holds for the poet. However, if read as a noun then the sea - the symbol of death in the Hispanic poetic tradition - is seen as "sempre riu" - always a river, which, in the same convention, represents the life-flow. Consequently in this one line Salvat-Papasseit has provided us with a conceptual image which sums up the repeated life-round:- the sea as always a river.

Unfortunately the poet is unable to maintain the intensity of expression seen hitherto, and much of the intricacy and force of the poem is lost in the third stanza:

Res no és mesquí,
perquè els dies no passen:
i no arriba la mort ni si l'heu demanada
I si l'heu demanada us dissimula un clot
perquè per tornar a néixer necessiteu morir.
(p. 53).

What was previously expressed so intensively and succinctly, now comes across as laboured and unconvincing. The second line quoted here is simplistic; the third and fourth are forced and the fifth is quite definitely platitudinous and uninspired.

"Res no és mesquí", then, besides providing the clearest account of the poetic vision to be expressed in L'Irradiador del port i les gavines, is also indicative of the basic unevenness in the quality of the poems as a whole.

The Symbolic Significance of the "Cançó".

From the earliest poems written by Salvat-Papasseit, a clear musical quality is apparent. "Passeig" and "Drama en el Port", from Poemes en Ondes Hertzianes, display aspects of this. More obviously, "Record d'una 'fuga' de Bach" is inspired by a piece of music and actually recalls a fugue in its thematic construction which includes a snatch of folk-song.

In the later collections this topic becomes more organically linked to the expression of the basic poetic message. This is revealed quite straightforwardly in "Res no és mesquí" where the song becomes emblematic of the quintessence of creation, "la cançó canta en cada bri de cosa" recalling, as we shall see,

Carlyle and the Romantic tradition. Correspondingly the "cançó" is inextricably associated with the idea of perenniability, which is frequently conveyed through the theme of sex, and this leads to the common juxtaposition of these two motifs throughout the collection.

Such is the case in "Poema sense Acabar", the penultimate piece of the work and a fine example of Salvat-Papasseit's delicate and evocative style. The question of time is immediately brought up, firstly, in the general cyclical sense in the symbol of the fountain, and then the specific and anecdotal:

Quin doll d'aigua a la font
ara que és vespre,
(p. 58).

The break in this repeated line clearly indicates that the poet is drawing our attention to the distinction between these two aspects of temporal progression, as the poem's meaning is dependent upon the relationship between the two.

The passage of time is evoked on the anecdotal level by reference to a definite location, "la masia quieta", which is further limited by a linking of related elements; "grills, cleda, pins, romanins, pou, cigales, ginesta etc". The specific change from evening to night is rendered by the journey of the moon to its zenith:

i la lluna s'afanya a pujar la carena... (verse 1)
i la lluna ha assolit les cimes cobejades..(verse 3)
ara que tot és nou perquè la lluna és plena(verse 4)

(pp. 58-9)

However, the action on this particular scale has a relevance which extends beyond the individual level. The repeated "Quin doll d'aigua a la font..." makes it patent that this isolated sequence has some connexion with the temporal cycle in general.

This aspect is first alluded to in the opening stanza through the motif of sex. Sex, of course, carries implicit connotations of reproduction and renewal. It is in this sense that Salvat-Papasseit makes it emblematic of the eternal life-round. Initially, we see this in the specific sense:

perquè al seu amo capricíos i destre
plau-li besar l'amada sota la lluna al vol,
(p. 58);

by the penultimate stanza, however, this has been enlarged to encompass all humanity:

i als confins de la terra
tots els enamorats es besen i s'estrenyen,
de l'una a l'altra serra.
(p. 59).

The process is not limited to man alone. In the second verse various natural elements are anthropomorphised and participate in this process:

I els romanins només, desperts, escolten,
perquè demà al matí puguin parlar d'amors
amb les farigoleres fins l'hora de la sesta.
(p. 58).

The vision of permanence and repetition in the scene is quite apparent; "perquè demà" has a quite explicit sense of futurity and the idea of continuance is underlined by the enjambement, which is well used throughout this poem to achieve this effect.

Significantly, anthropomorphism as a device may also be employed to illustrate the basic quality all things share - much in the same way as metamorphosis - and this technique is used extensively throughout the collection.. It concurs exactly with the poetic insight expressed in "Res no és mesquí" of the quintessence and permanence of creation - the "Poema sense Acabar". It is not surprising that the symbol of this vision - the song - should appear at this moment: "i canten les cigales esguardant la ginesta".

"Poema sense Acabar", however, is a much more delicate and suggestive offering than "Res no és mesquí". The tone is more controlled, and the pace more relaxed. The frenzied staccato outbursts of the previous poem are replaced by a flowing rhythm - evocative of the temporal flux - and smooth expression which, though subtle, is nonetheless open and accessible. A contrast between these two pieces provides us with a suitable illustration of Salvat-Papasseit's maturing as a poet.

The function of the cançó as emblem of Salvat's weltanschauung is one of the features of this collection. In "Vibracions", a series of thirteen highly condensed tercets, this process appears at its most intense and evocative and anticipates the stylistic force of El Poema de la Rosa als Llavis:

cada mot de l'esposa, una rosa
tota balba de flames:
la sardana-cinyell de l'esposa.
(p. 36).

Music is again at the centre of this very dense poem which reiterates the theme of the underlying essential unity of creation. It is also implied in the first line through metaphor. Two

discrete elements are fused together into a single image, which is further enhanced by the union of opposites in the second line; balb is normally associated with coldness, but here it is yoked to flames. Similarly, in the last line two unrelated concepts, the dance and waist, are merged together in the powerful "sardana-cinyell".

The main technique employed here is compression. Individual objects or ideas coalesce in order to bring out the basic quality they share, and the emblem of this is music. The song, however, is also symbolic of the perenniability of the universe, and this is apparent in a later tercet:

volves de zèfir
sonorants ones verdes:
la Primavera
(p. 37).

Here the spring - and the continuous rebirth it represents - is described in musical terms: "sonorants ones verdes". The synesthesia recalls the intensity of expression of the earlier section, and the dual function of music as a symbol.

The leitmotifs of the cançó and sex become so closely linked in L'Irradiador del port i les gavines that they are often difficult to extricate. Such is the case with "La Femme aux oranges". This poem is also interesting as it is a fine example of Salvat-Papasseit's reworking of a Vanguard topic to make it comply with his own personal vision.

In "54045" from Poemes en Ondes Hertzianes, Salvat's eulogy of the machine age was quite conventionally futurist. However, in "La Femme aux oranges" the poet takes the metro as a specimen of technological wonder, but describes it in his own particular manner in terms of music and sexuality:

La cançó del metro...traspua tots els sostres i diu:

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

(p. 31).

As in "Poema sense acabar", humanization of the inanimate brings out the quality of essential cosmic unity. Moreover the sensuality of the piece underlines the idea of perennity, as may be seen from the actions of the femme aux oranges:

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

(p. 31)

She responds to what Salvat-Papasseit sees as implicit in the scene, and by displaying her breasts enhances the connotations of reproduction. Once again the poem has the quality of a song which intensifies the whole process.

The poet, of course, is not attempting to be original in his choice of the cançó as a motif by which to express his own vision. He is rather amplifying a conventional Romantic view of the nature of the artist's particular insight - as was expressed by Carlyle, introduced to Salvat-Papasseit by Gabriel Alomar:

A musical thought is one spoken by a mind that has penetrated into the inmost heart of the thing; detected the inmost mystery of it, namely the melody that lies in it; the inward harmony and coherence which is its soul, whereby it exists and has a right to be here in this world... The meaning of song goes deep. Who is there that, in logical words, can express the effect that music has on us? A kind of inarticulate unfathomable speech which leads us to the edge of the Infinite, and lets us for a moment gaze into that. 37.

The originality of Salvat-Papasseit lies in his combining of this leitmotiv with that of sex to provide a lyrical and yet charged mode of expression.

The Motif of Sex.

In this collection it is noticeable how strikingly Salvat-Papasseit's treatment of sexuality differs from the various traditional stand-points. The carpe diem may urge the pursuit of carnal pleasure, but this is inspired purely by the thought of impending death. In contrast sex, for Salvat-Papasseit, is an entirely positive experience. Not only does it bring excitement and enjoyment on a physical level, but it also becomes symbolic of the perennial life-cycle. Any idea of the inevitable destruction of the flesh as contained in the baroque version, exemplified by Góngora's "en tierra, en humo, en polvo, en sombra, en nada", is completely and utterly absent.

Moreover, the sexual act itself may even act as a catalyst for the acquisition of this poetic insight. This is apparent in "Dona'm la mà" and, as we shall see, this same idea is echoed by Foix in the third section of Sol i de dol:

Dona'm la mà que anirem per la riba
ben a la vora del mar
bategant,
tindrem la mida de totes les coses
només en dir-nos que ens seguim amant.
(p. 57)

In this poem the whole scene participates in the lover's act of union, which again emphasises the underlying unity of creation as animate and inanimate elements all have a definite role in the cycle:

Les barques llunyes i les de la sorra
 prendran un aire fidel i discret...
 I les palmeres ens donaran ombrat...
 (p. 57)

This communal participation on a similar plane is also apparent in "Vibracions", but is expressed with greater force and tension.

Ara el cel és tot blau dins el matí.
 Només un petit núvol blanc - molt blanc:
 una verge s'ha deixat el coixí.
 (p. 38).

The structure is so tightly compressed here that the human and celestial become inextricably bound together. In this respect the rather enigmatic device of the collection may also be appreciated:

S'estimen a les roques
 els irradiadors
 amb les gavines boges.
 (p. 25)

In this case the natural, inanimate and artificial are all joined together and governed by the same verb. The intention is clearly to look deeper behind surface appearance and we are left with a basic picture of the essential oneness and interrelation of the universe.

The most inspired articulation of this topic, and arguably, the finest poem in this collection, however, is "Marxa Nupcial". It may also be taken as constituting a further stage in the poetic maturing of Salvat-Papasseit, for although in terms of stylistic control it is far superior to anything in Poemes en Ondes Hertzianes, it clearly goes further down that same line which was undertaken in the "Record d'una 'fuga' de Bach". The last line of the earlier poem reads "- L'estel hexagonal de

colors en el circ enclou totes les síntesis del món".

"Marxa Nupcial" correspondingly begins:

Llum de l'IRRADIADOR cameleònic damunt
l'estrella del Circ encara hexagonal
(p. 39)

The similarity in the vocabulary is clearly deliberate, and it is through an analysis of this calligram that we will be able to illustrate the progress of Salvat-Papasseit's artistic development.

The poem is full of Vanguard commonplace. The setting of a circus, the poet as a clown and the frenetic vitality are favoured topics of this movement. So too is the feeling of antagonism and the wonder of technological advance - all of which are expressed with conventional typographical tricks, and a total disregard for syntax in order to enhance the confusion and excitation::

Escopiù a la closca
pelada
dels cretins...

La VIDA al Dinamisme...

Més m'estimo l'EDISSON... etc.
(p. 40).

If the poem went no further than this, then it would be little more than a gratuitous regurgitation of futurist precepts. However, it is against this backcloth and consistent with this style, that Salvat-Papasseit unveils his own particular message. This may be deduced from the very title "Marxa Nupcial" which again unites two of the poet's most favoured motifs: la cançó i el connubi.

At the start of the calligram the autobiographical figure of the clown finds himself in a world of utter confusion and frenzy whose irrationality is conveyed by the nonsensical language:

CLOWNS equilàters líders romàntics
 Això és sa i en les constel-lacions de quatre
 barrets
 cònics...
 (p. 39).

The lack of meaning is also heightened by the illogical syntax. The protagonist is at the centre of a scene of total absurdity. This is suggested by the tragicomic persona of a clown and emphasised by the ridiculous make-up of his girl friend:

Margot amb el MALLOT i els cabells pintats
 rojos sembla un ciri que cremi
 Només crema per mi.

(p. 39).

The clown's view of Margot is basically egotistical - "Només crema per mí" - and this is then extended to include his outlook on life and the world in general:

La terra només gira perquè jo sóc aquí i jo sóc un
 PALLASSO qui agonitza.
 (p. 39).

The egocentric approach, however, is quite unsatisfactory. The poet finds himself near to death, "PALLASSO qui agonitza" - an ironic contrast to the statement earlier of "això és sa" - and this precarious state is underlined by the fall from the trapeze which marks the end of the first section signalled graphically by the stage sign, "Escopi a la closca/pelada/dels cretins".

The first part, then, presents us with a figure in apparently absurd surroundings in the perilous state of being close to death. A solution to this quandary - which is basically representative of the problem of the Western creative psyche earlier in this century - is now proposed along the lines of conventional Vanguard criteria; firstly dynamism, "Moure's i projectar-se no existir", and then antagonism, "Escopiau a la closca/pelada/dels cretins". However, this provides no solution. Confusion still reigns as the lion tamer inexplicably wants to juggle, which causes the protagonist some consternation again well conveyed by the non-causal syntax of the last line:

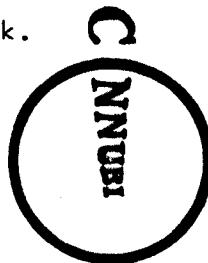
At this point the poem changes in direction, which is illustrated pictorially by the typography of EDISSON. The return of vitality is heralded but now in a positive sense - without the gratuitous aggression of the previous section. The negative clown figure of the first part is in turn replaced by the affirmative qualities of the much admired Chaplin. The answer to the anguish of solitude and death is now at hand and is expressed - as in "Res no és mesquí"-through the motif of sex.

The poet becomes aware of the repeated cycle of existence, emphasised by anaphora:

venim d'ahir/d'abans d'ahir de l'altre abans d'ahir
i més d'abans encara

(p. 41)

and the sexual act, with the implicit notion of reproduction, becomes symbolic of this. Sex is expressed in terms of time in the figure of a clock.



This constitutes a fusion of the temporal and natural cycles, which further underlines the perennial nature of existence:

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

(p. 41).

Just as time will continue so too will life, and it is the poet's realization of this fact, together with his participation in the process, which assures him some sense of immortality.

The build up to this climax is quite appropriate:

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

(p. 41)

Sexual consummation gives the individual identity and location in this repeated continuum - "el meu JO dins el TOT". It fixes him at a given point from which he can refer back to the past - "venim d'ahir, d'abans d'ahir" etc., and forward to the future: "i així seré immortal". The metaphorical use of "néixer" is forceful in this respect. It alludes to the birth of the poet's consciousness and awareness of this fact, compared to the agonic egotist of the first part of the poem;

when linked with intercourse it is also a forceful expression in the sense of actual physical rebirth with the cyclic renewal of life.

When compared with "Res no és mesquí", this calligram shows Salvat-Papasseit's poetic skills at their best. Despite its apparent confusion the lay-out is well defined. The various sections stand out clearly and compactly, which might be anticipated from the structural awareness displayed in "COLUMNA VERTEBRAL...". This poem is in itself the best possible response to Foix's unwarranted dismissal of Salvat-Papasseit's calligrams as "infelicíssims".³⁸

Nonetheless, Molas has reacted coolly to this piece. "El poema, que ve a ésser una condensació ampliada - i exacerbada - de totes les seves tècniques anteriors...". The critic quite nonchalantly states the basic message of the poem, "En aquest paisatge, el poeta obté la seva immortalitat a través de l'amor o, més exactement, de la communio carnal",³⁹ without explaining the nature of this insight and its thematic relevance to the collection as a whole. The rest of the composition is merely a hodge-podge of futurist commonplace: "Per a Salvat, com per als futuristes, (el circ o) la vida és acció i dinamisme. ...Com els futuristes mostra el seu interès per la màquina i la seva oposició radical al passat."⁴⁰

The critic clearly does not take Salvat at his word, as to the structural significance of the exercise: "Fèiem alexandrins d'exacta perfecció constraint un cal.ligramma"⁴¹ and

ignores the clear progression and changes in direction which are so essential to the meaning. More important, with Salvat-Papasseit's poetic expertise having not been fully appreciated on occasions - not least by Foix - we feel it is necessary to point out the facility of the poet's assimilation of Vanguard topics and style, and his ability in adapting them to express his own particular weltanschauung.

It seems relevant at this juncture to consider certain important aspects of El Poema de la Rosa als Llavis (1923). Although separated chronologically from L'Irradiador del port i les gavines (1921) by Les Conspiracions (1922) and La Gesta dels Estels (1922), the treatment of the leitmotiv of sex has much in common with the earlier collection. This work has been rightfully considered as one of the finest erotic poems in the Catalan language⁴² and here again the idea of connubi retains a dual function. On a lower level it is evocative of the pleasure, beauty and excitement of life itself, as in "Sota el meu llavi el seu":

- i l'espalla ben nua
 ben blanca
l'ombra corba
 incitant
 de l'esguard
encara un altre bes
 un altre
 un altre
- quin perfum de magnòlia el seu pit odorant!

(p. 146)

More symbolically, as is suggested by the final line in this example, the sexual act remains emblematic of the general continuation of the natural life-round, as is made patent in "I quan confiats els arbres":

I quan confiats els arbres es vesteixen
 ignoren els seus ulls
 nit dia sol estelada plena...

vas de l'amor
 llet i mel en son clos
 flor d'atzabeja:

- quan confiats els arbres es vesteixen
 Ella és la Primavera.

(p. 191).

This collection in its conception - it is essentially one single poem - recalls the controlled intensity and subtlety of the earlier piece "Vibracions" which dealt significantly with the same theme. Though we note its unquestionable literary value, it is not our intention to embark upon any detailed analysis as that is a task which has already been most sensitively and comprehensively undertaken by Joaquim Molas in his prologue to Salvat-Papasseit's Poesies.⁴³ Nonetheless, throughout our study we shall have occasion to consider the stylistic and thematic significance of this work in the context of the poet's output in toto.

A further poem which anticipates the artistic excellence of the mature Salvat-Papasseit is undoubtedly "Tot l'enyor de demà". It has been correctly regarded as one of the finest poems but has for long been interpreted as little more than a nostalgic evocation of urban life by a man isolated from his environment and close to death:

Salvat descriu amb detall la
 suma de realitats mínimes i
 directes que l'esperen si
 aconsegueix de deixar el llit
 de malalt; ara: si no ho
 aconsegueix accepta sense
 recança que d'altres gaudeixin
 de la vida. 44

In this case Molas has opted for a very flat and superficial explanation to this piece. The relationship between the specific and the essential is one of the features of L'Irradiador del port i les gavines. Nonetheless, not even the mention of such key words as "realitats mínimes", and the final two lines of the poem "i la Vida/i la Mort" - evocative of the life-cycle in general - can persuade the critic to delve for a more substantial explication.

There is far too much control and intricacy in the construction of this composition to suggest that it is merely a simple exercise in sentimentality. The poem is divided into two distinct sections. The first, the main body of the narrative, is a detailed account of a particular day. The second, the last four lines, in response to this, refers to life in a more universal sense.

The description of the individual day-scene is achieved through a whole host of technical devices: pleonasm, metaphor, zeugma, and typographical detail to enhance the idea of movement whose rapidity is underlined by polysyndeton:

I encara aquell vailet que cridardà el diari,
i qui puja als tramvies
i els baixa
tot corrent.
(p. 49).

These are coupled with a carefully conceived structural progression and time sequence: - exterior to interior, dawn time quietude to morning animation, to afternoon restfulness. The changes are successfully evoked through modulations in rhythm

and pace as evinced by the following six lines which describe one of the moments of transition:

I tota la quitxalla del veïnat
qui mourà tanta fressa perquè serà dijous
i no anirà a l'escola.

I els cavalls assenyats
i els carreters dormits
sota la vela en punxa:
que dansa en el seguit de les roderes.
(pp. 50-1)

The commotion is well conveyed in the first tercet here by the three verbs of the last two lines. In contrast the single finite verb of the second tercet emphasises the stillness of the early afternoon. The future tense of the first three verbs also tends to imbue the proceedings with greater dynamism, which is accentuated by the enjambement. This is thrown into relief by the static effect of the past participles "assenyats" and "dormits", and the inertia is further enhanced by their position at the end of the broken line, which prevents any type of running on because of the stress.

However, it is the intensity of the last four lines which explain this detail and precision as the poem is lifted from the bounds of banality to reiterate the basic message of "Res no és mesquí". The capitals underline this change in direction:

Vosaltres restareu
per a veure el bo que és tot
i la Vida
i la Mort.
(p. 51)

Salvat-Papasseit looks upon the life-round "i la Vida/
i la Mort", yet realises its permanence and continuity in the

general sense, "Vosaltres restareu" - in direct contrast to the "vosaltres" mentioned earlier who were the poet's own particular friends. It is this insight which explains the joy that Salvat feels when confronted with existence "el bo que és tot", which is demonstrated in the first half of the poem by his sheer delight in trivial everyday occurrences.

The connexion between the two sections is of utmost importance. We are presented, first of all, with a specific scene, yet the technical precision of the description suggests a meaning which extends beyond these limitations. The second part of the poem relates the full relevance of these insignificant events to the totality of the life-cycle, lifting the meaning far beyond the realm of sentimentality to which Molas had dismissed it. It is a further example of Salvat's insight as the poet intuits the general and universal in the individual and anecdotal.

The technical precision of this poem makes us aware that we are dealing with more than a series of nostalgic meanderings. However, the actual devices used also fulfil an organic function which reflects and enhances the basic message. The anecdotal is repeatedly imbued with a deeper, more essential relevance which anticipates the poem's conclusion. Pleonasm achieves this effect; "Unes places lluentes de claror/... i d'un altre cireres vermelles". It not only underlines the visual impact, but also tends to point to the quintessential quality of the thing itself, and its significance on the more general level. Zeugma is employed for the same purpose:

I la noia que porta la llet
que té un capet lleuger
i duu un davantalet
amb vores fetes de puntes de coixí,
i una rialla fresca.

(p. 49)

The yoking adds to the overall sensual impression which is obtained by cumulation. Moreover, in this context, the linking of disparate elements which are dependent on the same verb induces a type of blurring which serves to tone down superficial barriers of distinction and emphasise the underlying similarity.

In the same way, polysyndeton enhances this binding process. As seen above, the repeated "i" successfully conveys the bustle of the morning rush. However it also joins together various unrelated actions:

The underlying essential quality of all things is brought out here by the abstract interaction between the girls' smile and the actions of the grocer. The metaphoric, "somriure clar" - complementing the earlier "rialla fresca" - also mirrors the idea of dissembling surface divisions - in this case those of sensorial distinction.

It is this compactness that makes "Tot l'enyar de demà" one of the finest examples of Salvat-Papasseit's poetry, and one of

the most thematically important poems of L'Irradiador del port i les gavines. Rambling and sentimental in appearance, it has a tight thematic structure and is extremely intense. This can be seen by the fact that various poetic devices have a dual function; they contribute to our impression of the particular scene described, yet they also reflect and enhance the expression of the deeper meaning of the poem as a whole.

Unfortunately, Salvat-Papasseit was unable to sustain this standard of poetic intensity throughout this collection. "Encara el Tram" and "Nadal", which are as well known as "Tot l'enyor de demà", lack the thematic substance of the latter and drift into the realms of sentimentality. "Canto la lluita" and "L'Absurd" translate an orthodox futurism with their antagonism and dynamic vitality:

Blasmo els déus a ple vol:
l'arrault bestiari
tem el fuet del meu cant!
(*"Canto la lluita"*, p. 27).

(Damunt la taula el vas
i la pàllida imatge de l'absenta)

I el meu company i jo
de suara perjurats a jugar-nos la vida amb el misteri.
(*"L'Absurd"*, p. 29).

Placed at the beginning of L'Irradiador del port i les gavines, they correspondingly represent a period of transition, before the poet succeeded in adapting these topics to comply with his own particular vision.

The Technical Chorus.

Nonetheless, what is impressive about this collection is Salvat-Papasseit's awareness of the possibilities offered by various technical devices, in the main those evident in "Tot l'enyor de demà", to provide an echo to the basic theme of the work. There are numerous instances which exemplify this in the poems of secondary importance. This may not even attract the attention when applied to isolated pieces, but when the book is viewed as a whole they form a definite backcloth which complements those more outstanding statements of the poet's intentions and anticipates the stylistic unity of a collection like the Poema de la Rosa als Llavis.

In this respect synaesthesia is employed to a great extent. We have already seen its use in "Tot l'enyor de demà" to break down sensual definitions and thereby insinuate the basic unity of creation. This same direction is followed in a number of other poems, such as "Encara el Port":

si la barca no es queixa,
ran de l'angle més negre
i la cançó més blanca,
 italiana
 (p. 33).

It is also apparent in "Epigrama" where "un perfum de calors ha invadit a Margot" and later in "Diumenge": "Sota la bola d'or/ou el dring transparent de llurs ales quietes".

A similar condensing of sense impressions appears in "Nadal", where touch and hearing are conveyed by the same verb, with a synaesthetic adjective in the same line:

Sento el fred de la nit
 i la simbomba fosca.
 (p. 44).

This type of compression is taken still further in what is the most intensely sensuous piece of the collection, "Vibracions". Here two disparate concepts are fused together to form a single whole: "als tarongers florits, la promesadonzella.../la sardana-cinyell de l'esposa; ¿Què són fets els estels-oronells?"

Humanization of the inanimate is also used extensively to underline the essential cosmic unity. In "Encara el tram", the book blushes, "i el full s'irisa/en veure's cobejat". The metro not only sings but "es mulla el ventre al Sena". The dreamy steamboat in "Diumenge" "...passeja els bells somnis atlàntics", and its mast is "el pal més jove i prim". The same technique is also employed to illustrate the interaction of diverse elements on the same basic plane. "Vespreja i neva" sees cosmic and telluric matter on an identical level:

Les estrelles xerraires són fetes a tallets
 i despreses del cel
 una a una
 disperses
 besen les parets fosques i s'estenen a terra
 sempre ran de les portes
 per guarir-se del fred.
 (p. 47).

A final example - though many more appear throughout the collection adding background and atmosphere - is "Posta":

Del vaixell de les veles de zèfir
 l'irradiador de proa
 ha xuclada la sang del sol
 morent al mar.
 (p. 42).

As we have noted, Salvat-Papasseit referred to L'Irradiador del port i les gavines as his poetic "pantalons llargs". This description is quite apt. It is here that the orthodox futurism of Poemes en Ondes Hertzianes gives way to a more intimate and personal expression, along the lines anticipated by "Record d'una 'fuga' de Bach". It is in this collection that the poet registers his first successes, as exemplified by "Marxa Nupcial", "Tot l'enyor de demà" and "Vibracions", and demonstrates his ability to achieve optimum effect from technical devices. On the other hand there is a certain disequilibrium in the quality of some of the poems - as seen in "Res no és mesquí" which ranges from the excellent to the unconvincing - and shows that Salvat-Papasseit had still not attained the consistency which was to typify his mature work.

NOTES TO CHAPTER III

1. As recorded in R. Alberti, Prosas (Madrid 1980), pp. 24-41.
2. As described by C.B. Morris, Surrealism and Spain (Cambridge 1972), pp. 232-35.
3. As described by M. Nadeau, History of Surrealism (London 1968), pp. 255-8.
4. Cited by Morris, Surrealism..., p. 233.
5. For a compendium of relevant Vanguard manifestoes, documents and writings see Ilie, Documents of the Spanish Vanguard (Valencia 1969).
6. Salvat-Papasseit, "Fragments de lletres girades", in Mots Propis i altres proses ed. J.M. Sobré (1975), pp. 85-6.
7. Fuster, Literatura Catalana Contemporànea, p. 229.
8. An account of JVFs aloofness in this area is given by Castellet and Molas, Poesia Catalana del Sègle XX, p. 54.
9. JVFs., Obres Completes, II, pp. 284-5.
10. JVFs., "Algunes consideracions sobre la literatura d'avant-guarda", Revista de Poesia, I, no. 2 (març 1925), pp. 65-70.
11. Fuster, Literatura Catalana..., p. 434.
12. Ibid., p. 229.
13. Salvat-Papasseit, Mots Propis..., p. 80.
14. JVFs., art.cit., p. 69.
15. Mots Propis..., p. 13.
16. Ibid., p. 148.
17. JVFs., Obres Completes, II, p. 287.
18. Ibid., p. 148.
19. Castellet and Molas, Poesia Catalana..., p. 54.
20. Carbonell, Espadaler, Lloret, Tayadella, Literatura Catalana, p. 442.

21. R. Poggiali, The Theory of the Avant-garde (Harvard 1968), pp. 209-10.
22. D. Guansé, Abans d'ara, p. 157.
23. Fuster, Literatura Catalana..., p. 222.
24. Poesia Catalana..., pp. 71-3 and 53-55.
25. Guansé, Abans d'ara, p. 158.
26. Ibid., p. 91.
27. Fuster, Literatura Catalana, p. 166.
28. A full synopsis of Vanguard vitality is afforded by Szabolski in "L'Avant-garde littéraire et artistique comme phénomène international", Actes du Vième Congrès de l'association internationale de literature comparée (Belgrade 1967), 317-334.
29. Molas, prologue to Salvat-Papasseit, Poesies (1978), p. XVI.
30. Ibid., p. XV.
31. Ibid., p. LXV.
32. Salvat-Papasseit, Humo de Fábrica, 2nd edition (1977), p. 194.
33. Szabolski, art.cit., p. 324.
34. Salvat-Papasseit, Mots Propis..., p. 79.
35. Fuster, Literatura Catalana..., p. 222.
36. Salvat-Papasseit, Mots Propis..., p. 86.
37. T. Carlyle, Hero Worship and the Hero in History (London 1926), p. 98. Molas has indicated Alomar's role in acquainting Salvat with Carlyle in his introduction to Salvat-Papasseit, Poesies, p. IX.
38. JVF., art.cit., p. 69.
39. Molas, Prologue to Salvat-Papasseit, Poesies, p. XXI.
40. Ibid., p. XXII.
41. Salvat-Papasseit, Mots Propis..., p. 92.
42. A point initially made by J. Teixidor in "Joan Salvat-Papasseit" Revista de Catalunya, no. 80 (1934), pp. 313-52.
43. See, for example, pp. XXXIX - XLVII.
44. Molas, prologue to Salvat-Papasseit, Poesies, p. XXV.

CHAPTER IV

From Vanguardism to the Literary Fold?

The critics have been unanimous in their response to the process of poetic development of Joan Salvat-Papasseit. Each of the major commentators has detected a definite shift in posture by the poet with regard to his status within the Avant-garde movement. Joan Fuster has remarked upon how Salvat forsakes an initial dogmatic adherence in favour of experimentation with other more conventional forms of expression:

Salvat renuncià a un avantguardisme que si no arribà a saber-se'l postís tampoc no degué trobar mai completament satisfactori. La seva veu n'aprofità l'experiència, però va afanyar-se a assajar d'altres recursos, d'altres oportunitats, d'altres avantatges, i fou aleshores que es reconegué en plena eficàcia. El Joan Salvat-Papasseit avantguardista ... és episòdic. 1

Josep Maria Castellet and Joaquim Molas have also sensed this change in the poet's attitude though, unlike Fuster, they see the renunciation in less absolute terms and locate it quite precisely, as heralded by the appearance of La Gesta dels Estels:

Posteriorment, ja des de l'Irradiador del port, evolucionarà ràpidament; els trucs i les necessitats tipogràfiques, l'ús repetit dels cal.ligrames a El Poema de la Rosa als Llavis i Óssa Menor no traduiran sinó un avantguardisme estrictament formal. 2

Molas re-emphasises the point that Salvat's connexion with the Vanguard should be seen in merely formalistic terms:

Amb tot, Salvat retingué, més o menys diluïts, molts ingredients d'avantguarda: la tècnica de la juxtaposició, la supressió de les majúscules o de punts i comes, la ruptura del vers, etc. 3

This movement away from the Avant-garde appeals to the critic's sensitivities, who considers the poet's later work more forceful and technically pure:

En conjunt, La Gesta i La Rosa constitueixen la sintesi més brillant i depurada de les propostes elaborades en L'Irradiador... La Rosa és l'expressió més pura de la poètica salvatiana. 4

This opinion, however, is not shared by Dolors Oller, who while accepting that Salvat-Papasseit is returning to adopt a more conventional poetic position, considers this detrimental. For her, the earlier work is an "esplèndida mostra de poesia avantguardista ... Àgil, suggeridor, vitalista amb una gràcia natural i plena d'originalitat". Nevertheless, once there is an abandoning of this stance, then a definite deterioration is detected:

Però a partir d'ara i fins a l'últim llibre, Óssa Menor, el poeta anirà oblidant aquests recursos i s'anirà acostant als recursos produïts pel modernisme i el noucentisme més establerts i tradicionals ... Aquest acostament a la tradició i a la norma establerta perjudicarà Salvat. 5

The reaction to the poet's change in direction may be varied among the critical community, but the important point remains that this certain development has been perceived as occurring after

L'Irradiador del port i les gavines - with the appearance of La Gesta dels Estels. Furthermore, this shift has been attributed to Salvat's rejection of his initial adherence to Avantgarde criteria. The aim here is to attempt a more detailed analysis of this apparent about-face in sensitivity, keeping always in mind the poet's claim to be an exponent of the Vanguard movement and also Vallverdú's interpretation that any sense of rupture in the politico-literary trajectory of Salvat-Papasseit is more apparent than real:

Llegint atentament tota la seva obra i seguint de prop la seva vida, ens adonem que la ruptura no existeix... No hi ha, doncs, en l'evolució de Salvat-Papasseit, una tria entre opcions antagòniques, sinó un procés natural i congruent. 6

Salvat's Incantation to the Technological World

A touchstone for the evaluation of Salvat-Papasseit's attachment to the Avantgarde has been his eulogy of the mechanical wonders of the modern age. This aspect of Italian Futurism captured the poet's imagination, as is evident in the very title of his first collection Poemes en Ondes Hertzianes, and is displayed in typical form in poems like "Drama en el port" and "54045" which extol the magnificence of machinery:

La dinamo turgent mou els príaps de foc en CIRCUMVAL.LACIO	No he vist més majestat que en lo stylo de foc TROLLEY	TROLLEY
	TROLLEY	TROLLEY
		(p. 22).

As was pointed out in the preceding chapter, this initial gratuitous homage to technology underwent a significant reworking

in this second book, and was adapted to comply with the basic thematic pattern of the collection. Machinery - as in the case of the Paris metro - became imbued with a sexual quality, which acts as a motif in the rest of the work to express the innate promise of reproduction and futurity which all things - including inanimate objects - share. The metro sings:

- Avui só perfumat
per una grassa imresa
Porto un braçalet blau,
un altre de vermell
i les anques més nues.
(p. 31).

As is to be expected, the treatment of this theme acquires greater subtlety and intensity as Salvat's poetic skills develop. In La Gesta dels Estels, the tram which was previously the scene of the sensuous description of the young girl in "Encara el tram", now provides the setting in "Bitllet de Quinze" for the expression of the poet's view of the recurrent temporal cycle, while a definite sexual aspect is still maintained.

The poem begins with the account of a nurse and baby boarding a tram. Once they are inside we are given a touching picture of the infant:

el nadó és més petit que la mamella d'ella
més petit i més bru:

- tot ell sembla una O

de joguina que riu...
a dintre de l'autòmnibus el nadó té l'olor de la
llet matonada
(p. 106).

The child becomes the centre of attention of the whole tram, assuming a role similar to that of the young girl of the earlier piece: - "i tot el tram ets tu". At this point, however, there is

a sudden change in direction and theme, as Salvat-Papasseit presents us with another scene which is equally as vivid and intimate:

vet aquí que - altre temps -
jo també era un nadó...

- recordeu el retrat on sóc dalt de cavall
un cavall arrogant
alt i net
de cartró

i era com al cartell de l'Obiols
aqueell que diu

JA SOU
DE L'ASSOCIACIÓ PROTECTORA
DE L'ENSENYANÇA CATALANA?
(p. 107).

The two scenes, though temporally isolated, are brought together within the framework of the poem and placed upon the same level. Their essential similarity is underlined by sensual criteria. In the first case the child "té l'odor de la llet matonada", but more important is that he is represented pictorially by the letter O. This visual aspect is amplified in the second quadre by the word placing which evokes the well known photograph, and then by the reference to Obiols' poster which depicts it more emphatically.

Indeed the allusion to Obiols and the celebrated snapshot of the poet as a child imbues the description with an added element of realism which, when considered with the typographical and stylistic similarities involved, has the result that both scenes are juxtaposed and display the same degree of immediacy. This leads to a breaking down of the time barriers which should divide the two, and leaves us with the impression of witnessing a yoking of the two accounts on the same plane, not one which is present and the other which is distant in the past.

In this way the poem comes to sum up Salvat-Papasseit's view of time as expressed in L'Irradiador del port i les gavines. It is in fact a very graphic representation of what was quite bluntly stated in "Res no és mesquí" by the line "Avui demà i ahir/s'esfullarà una rosa". Conventional temporal distinction vanishes, just as that which should separate the two scenes in this poem, and we are left with the promise of futurity. This is conveyed in the earlier poem: by the tense of "s'esfullarà", and in the latter, by reference to infants, one past and one present, but who on this scene have just begun the process of living.

A comparison of the tone and general approach of these two poems can offer us an insight into the poetic development of Salvat-Papasseit. "Res no és mesquí" constitutes a forceful yet quite blatant statement of the poet's views on the question of time. In "Bitllet de Quinze", however, we are provided with a more subtle and intimate evocation of scenes that actually depict this vision, which is more effective than mere straightforward expression.

It is difficult to concur in any way with Dolors Oller's wholesale dismissal of La Gesta dels Estels, exemplified in her reaction to this poem which she considers little more than the best of a bad lot:

Només en un poema "Bitllet de Quinze"
ho recupera [tot el que tan bé havia
utilitzat abans] i encara amb poca
fortuna de manera que el pretext -
l'emoció i nostalgia del poeta en
contemplar, dins d'un atòmnibus
(sic) com una dida dóna el pit a
un nadó - donat sense cap malícia
ni elaboració poètica, queda
abandonat a la seva sort d'escena
quotidiana, la banalitat de la qual
no queda redimida per l'entranyabilitat
del fet. 7. (my emphasis)

Such a disparaging approximation to the output of a mature artist is perhaps more a case of the critic's myopia than a faltering of the poet's skill. The special treatment of the theme of time must surely take precedence over any "emoció i nostàlgia" which might be sensed on an individual level, especially as this is completely consistent with Salvat's general approach to the subject.

In fact it is quite legitimate to propose that as far as the poet's liking for machinery in concerned, La Gesta dels Estels echoes quite coherently the sentiments voiced in the earlier works. The metro with its sensuality is replaced by the ship in "Passeig pel Port", which is envisaged in very similar terms:

Verge del Carme mostra un peu tot nu
que la sandàlia se li desprenia:
els gallarets s'omplenaven de llum.
(p. 94).

The most concise reiteration of this sexual quality which is seen as inherent in technological subject matter is evident in "Crítica". The structure of this poem is simple, yet to the point. On three occasions the poet's would-be seductress reveals certain attributes which should entice any machine-loving vanguardist:

- volia enamorar l'avantguardista
amb una lampreta de butxaca ...
- destriava la ropa i ensenyava un cosset
dé vímets d'alumini...
- li brillaven les dents
tot d'argent viu.
(p. 80)

The brilliance of her offerings serves to emphasise the superficiality of these charms. Rather than be allured by any gratuitous surface

attraction, the poet looks deeper and perceives beneath this technological radiance that same sensuous property which he has consistently described in the mechanical world of trams, ships, metros etc. so far:

jo no veia la nitra
però veia els seus ulls ...

jo veia les cireres del seu pit...

però jo mossegava el seu llavi de carn
(p. 80).

Castellet and Molas take this to be a straight-forward rejection of any futuristic affiliation to the machine in favour of more natural attraction: "un poema, 'Crítica' ... ens exposa el desencís davant les formes fantasmals de l'avanguardisme ... el mecanisme fantasmal ha esdevingut carn"⁸. This interpretation is later restressed by Molas:

"Crítica", un dels primers poemes, estableix una oposició teòrica entre dues realitats, la de la màquina i la de la naturalesa, que resol, al capdevall, a favor de la segona ... Però, lliure, ja, de programes, el poeta veu els ulls i no la lampareta, les cireres del pit i no els vimets*, ignora el bell parany de les dents i mossega la carn dels llavis. Així, el poeta expressa amb tota decisió la voluntat de trencar amb els designis avantguardistes/maquinistes i, alhora, de cantar una realitat natural i senzilla.⁹

We do not believe that this poem tends towards the blatant dualism which Molas suggests. We are not presented with a contrast between two distinct realities but rather with a depiction of two aspects of the self-same figure. The woman reveals certain ostentatious effects which the poet ignores.

* There is nothing in the text to substantiate Molas' claim that the poet did not see the lampareta or the vimets d'alumini

He then delves deeper to discover the underlying nature. There are, nevertheless, two sides of the same woman; the superficial and the essential. This unity is enhanced in turn by the syntactical yoking of natural and technological elements such as "vímets d'alumini" and also "dents/d'argent viu" which implies union rather than separation.

In this way "Crítica" is quite typical of Salvat-Papasseit's approach to the question of machinery. The sensuous qualities he sees as inherent in the wonders of the technological age are once again apparent. This is not achieved by simple description - as was the case in "Passeu pel Port" or "La femme aux oranges" - but is more subtly evolved in the figure of a woman, whose attraction is described in scientific terms, whilst the underlying sexuality is continuously stressed. A revealing poem in this respect is the delightfully subtle "Deixaré la ciutat" from El Poema de la Rosa als Llavis which seems to imply a similar unity to "Crítica". In this case we encounter the poet apparently resolving to leave aside the wonders of the technological age to direct his attention to more courtly matters:

Deixaré la ciutat que em distreu de l'amor
 la meva barca
 el Port
 i el voltàmetre encès que porto a la butxaca.
 (p. 131).

The amusing phallic quality of the pocket voltmeter anticipates the playful ambiguity of the ending. It is important to underline, however, that the mechanical world has lost none of its attraction; it is merely that questions of the heart are for the moment more important:

I l'autómnibus brunzent
 i el més bonic ocell
 que és l'avió
 i temptaré la noia que ara arriba...

In this respect we are not so much dealing with a rejection as a change in emphasis. However, the sting in the tail of this would-be dismissal comes with the final verse as the poet dwells upon the beauty of the girl's mouth:

i diré maliciós
 - com un pinyó és la boca que em captiva.

The "maliciós" here sums up the whole tenor of the piece, as "pinyó" may refer to the natural pine nut as in the popular saying, or in a violently futuristic twist of it, to the mechanical pinion or cogwheel! Consequently the total ambivalence prevents it being adduced as a concrete rejection by the author of the technological world. On the other hand the ambiguity seems to indicate the same type of fusion or union of the natural and mechanical as was apparent in "Crítica".

The general critical approach to this topic has been singularly inflexible. There has been no appreciation of the development of modulations in tone in the poet's dealing with this subject, from the awestruck and vibrant "54045" to the light-hearted "Deixaré la ciutat", where Salvat-Papasseit seems to be poking fun at himself. The compression of "Crítica" and the subtle ambiguity of "Deixaré la ciutat", however, tend to imply that any shift in direction which has been perceived as regards the author's relationship with the technological world is surely more apparent than real. The theme is handled in a more succinct and restrained fashion, as may well be expected with the maturing

of the poet's style. The attraction and sensitivity, however, remain constant.

The Emergence of the Hero-figure

For the reasons suggested above, the incantation to things mechanical in La Gesta dels Estels is imbued with much less gratuitous vitality than in the earlier works. That is not to say that the collection is presented with any lesser degree of energetic conviction. Salvat-Papasseit is not so totally concerned here with the promotion - or exhaustion - of this theme which now falls into the background. At this point the poet directs the brunt of his customary enthusiasm at what becomes the lynch-pin of his later work: the creation of a mythic reality and the evocation of an archetypal hero. A short résumé of this figure's role may prove helpful to our appreciation of the significance of this theme.

Salvat's wayfarer is depicted as a warrior, as seen in "Prometenca":

si jo anava a una guerra
portaria l'espasa com els guerrers d'abans
duien l'arc de sagetes.

(p. 104).

and also as a naval adventurer as in "L'Home bru ros del port":

rosa dels vents
la vostra banderola!
un passaport vers totes les nacions
mentre que tinguin mar:
(p. 102).

In each case, however, he is presented with a zeal which is totally unmercenary: "Sense el ressó del dring i el brill de l'or malvat/voldria anar pel món":

A further attribute is the hero's amatory prowess and fecundity which is almost boundless: "donrig a les noies el meu cor i el

tornaria a prendre/per donar-lo altre cop", which is further emphasised in "Si jo fos pescador":

Si tingués un vaixell m'enduria les noies,
Si volien tornar deixarien llurs cors:
I en farien fanals
I per a prendre'n de nous.
(p. 114).

The whole quest is undertaken with an extreme vitality which is evident in all of the poems on this subject:

Si jo fos pescador pescaria l'aurora
Si jo fos caçador atraparia el sol:
Si fos lladre d'amor m'obririen les portes.
(p. 114)

This personage does not just suddenly spring from out of nowhere. He clearly has his roots in the vitality of Poemes en Ondes Hertzianes and of two figures who appear in L'Irradiador del port i les gavines; the sailor in "Vibracions", "Bru mariner d'amor/de peu dret a la proa/quina noia no el vol": and the blasphemous rebel of "Canto la Lluita": "Cavaller d'un corser/qual crinera és de flames/só jo l'incendiari de mots d'adolescent l'arraulit bestiari/tem el fuet del meu cant". The origins of this mythical persona are apparent in the Nietzschean Messianism of Maragall and in particular the "Comte Arnau", though in this case the figure is autobiographical in projection.¹⁰

The three essential qualities of the hero described, i.e. the fight or struggle of the warrior; the sexual capability of the pirata d'amor, and boundless zeal, are crystallized in the three "Divises" which form the thematic structure of the collection:

la guerra i l'amor
la sal de la terra
(p. 79)

viatjar terres
no quedar-se en cap
amar en totes una noia verge
(p. 109)

Fem l'escamot dels soldats d'avanguarda
el primer bes que s'ens doni als primers
(p. 121).

The conciseness of these three poems adds force to the expression - just as with "Crítica" there is nothing superfluous, and the importance that Salvat attaches to this theme is evident in the fact that over a quarter of the entire collection is concerned exclusively with it.

Art or Biography?

The commentators have once again been unanimous in their response to the evocation of this topic. The creation of such an adventurous persona has been adjudged an attempt, by the tubercular Salvat-Papasseit, to escape the constraints imposed by his physical invalidity. Castellet and Molas interpret this as a total flight of fantasy away from the cruel reality of the sick-bed:

la fugida de Salvat cap al somni només visible des de la Gesta, fou, de fet, un intent estrictament personal de completar les pròpies deficiències d'orque prematur, de pobre i de malalt. Així sorgiren els mites de lladre i de pirata d'amor.¹¹

Fuster quite clearly concurs with this view that the adventure poems offered Salvat-Papasseit some sort of release from the inadequacies of his tragic life:

Malalt, feble, delicat, Salvat-Papasseit se sabrà incomplet. I li'n quedà com una recança, que voldria suplir ni que fos en l'innocu vagabundeig de la fantasia.¹²

In a comment which refers specifically to the Poema de la Rosa als Llavis, but which can be taken as symptomatic of this same critical syndrome, Dolors Oller attributes the poet's pursuit of sexual gratification to the same cause:

El que és innegable és que en aquest llibre hi alega una frisança neguitosa, un deler frenètic de plaer i felicitat que el converteix en una metàfora de la malaltia que portà Salvat a la tomba.¹³

Finally, Joaquim Molas is again at pains to impute the entire process of mythification which is developed in the later work to the poet's illness and isolation from the real world:

En uns poemes prodigiosos, converteix els somnis d'infant/ de malalt en mites bèl·lics o mariners i per tant, amplia la llista d'aventures més o menys fantàstiques que, amb timidesa, havia obert en L'irradiador.¹⁴

Such wholesale reliance on positivist criteria for the analysis of the work of any creative artist must be called into question. Indeed, many recognised literary theoreticians have remarked upon the danger of considering the created artefact as a direct result of a biographical cause. Wellek and Warren have spoken out strongly against this practice:

The relation between the private life and work is not a simple relation of cause and effect. ... Even when a

work of art contains elements which can be surely identified as biographical, these elements will be so rearranged and transformed that they lose all their specifically personal meaning and become simply concrete human material, integral elements of a work. 15

This point is more specifically defined by Leo Spitzer who is more precise in his warning against this critical approach as far as textual interpretation is concerned:

It is a quite illegitimate procedure, one most detrimental to any explication de texte (although widely current with our academic positivism) to utilize indiscriminately what we know of the poet's biography; because this may destroy the artistic framework carefully devised by the poet: the boundary between art and life which he perhaps may have wished to erect (my emphasis.: 16)

T.S. Eliot had earlier spoken out against such procedure in his contention that to "divert interest from the poet to the poetry is a laudable aim: for it would conduce to a juster estimation of actual poetry, good and bad."¹⁷ The critic illustrated this point further in his statement that:

the poet has, not a personality to express, but a particular medium, which is only a medium and not a personality, in which impressions and experiences combine in peculiar and unexpected ways. Impressions and experiences which are important for the man may take no place in the poetry, and those which become important in the poetry may play quite a negligible part in the man, the personality. 18

Consequently, Eliot concluded that it is the creative expression of these combinations of experiences and sensations -

the "structural" emotion implicit in the artefact - which should be examined as it is "the emotion which has its life in the poem and not in the history of the poet."¹⁹ This should be borne in mind especially as far as Salvat's adventure poems are concerned. Until now, they have been set aside and classed under the title of "fugida cap al somri", and their purpose has been explained merely in terms of the poet's attempt at escapism. The net result of this attitude has been a total disregard for textual examination, and as yet, no appraisal of their artistic value outside this personal context has been undertaken. Indeed, the possibility of them having any meaning at all outside their limited sphere has not even been considered.

Wellek and Warren take this issue still further, which has a definite relevance to our study here. This "vagabundeig de la fantasia" which the critics are keen to emphasise in Salvat-Papasseit, is, they disclose, consistent with Freud's view on the psyche of the creative artist in general:

The artist... is originally a man who turns from reality because he cannot come to terms with the demand for renunciation of instinctual satisfaction as it is first made, and who then in fantasy life allows full play to his erotic and ambitious wishes.

But he finds a way of return from the world of fantasy back to reality; with his special gifts, he moulds his fantasies into a new kind of reality, and men concede them a justification as valuable reflections of actual life. Thus by a certain path he actually becomes the hero, king-creator, favourite he desired to be, without the circuitous path of creating real alteration in the outside world.²⁰

The implications here are twofold. First, it is unfair to single out any individual - in this case Salvat-Papasseit - and spotlight his inadequacies as having great bearing on his work when, as Freud has it, the recourse to the fantasy world for fulfilment is common to all artists in general. Secondly, and more important here, the final product of this creative process is to achieve an objective persona in this new kind of reality. It is surely this completed artefact which should be examined, for the reflection of life it may offer us, and not the cause or reasons for its evocation on an individual level. This aspect of the artistic process is lucidly explained by Otto Rank:

The productive artist also begins ... with that re-creation of himself which results in an ideologically constructed ego; this ego is then in a position to shift the creative will-power from his own person to the ideological representation of that person and thus render it objective.²¹

In the adventure poems, Salvat-Papasseit has clearly effected a new reality with his irrepressible wanderer taking up the rôle of the ideological ego which Rank refers to here. This implies in itself a certain amount of regimentation of subject-matter which, as was explained in the résumé of the hero, is so succinctly and consistently expressed in La Gesta dels Estels. To ignore the direction that this poetic unravelling takes - as has been the case in general - is to miss much of what the poet is striving to achieve. Without

wishing to promote to excess the cause of the New Criticism one does feel that a more text-centred approach to this question would present the output of Salvat-Papasseit's mature years in a much more creatively positive light.

Consequently the most appropriate way of evaluating, in aesthetic terms, the elaboration of a hero figure and use of mythification, which is so extensive in the later work, is to examine it within its own context and history, and thereby assess how relevant and effective it proves to the overall statement of Salvat-Papasseit's particular cosmovision.

Salvat-Papasseit and the Mythic Tradition

In an excellent survey of the fundamental ingredients of this tradition, Joseph Campbell describes the elaboration of the figure of archetypal hero as it evolves within the solitary depths of the artist's psyche:

Willed introversion, in fact, is one of the classic implements of creative genius and can be employed as a deliberate device. It drives the psychic energies into depths and activates the lost continent of infantile and archetypal images. The result, of course, may be the disintegration of consciousness ... but on the other hand, if the personality is able to absorb and integrate new forces, there will be experienced an almost superhuman degree of self-consciousness and masterful control.²²

The total self-assurance mentioned here is quite typical of that which Salvat-Papasseit displays in every aspect of his work. The "willed introversion" might be more appropriate in this case than the isolation enforced by illness which Molas suggests, may account for the appearance of this technique of mythification:

I, a poc a poc, la distància oberta entre els programes i la realitat i, d'altra banda, la malaltia que, de manera progressiva, l'aillava en un món d'insuficiències/

records convertiren, programes i realitat, en una elegia i, al cap devall, en un mite.²³

Nevertheless it is only by an examination of Salvat-Papasseit's reworking of the actual subject matter that we will arrive at a satisfactory appreciation of how he adapts it to suit his own particular view.

It was Sergi Beser who first remarked upon the mythical qualities of Salvat's hero and commented on one of the central characteristics revealed earlier: el desig de lluitar:

L'affirmació d'aquesta voluntat de lluitar en Concepció de Poeta, no podia ser més terminant. "Només són poetes aquells que canten en la lluita i blasmen en llurs cançons". El poeta s'ha transformat en l'heroi mitològic que es dirigeix serè cap al combat. ... La sinceritat i l'entusiasme resulten les qualitats inseparables del vers.²⁴

The violence and force of this enthusiasm, which Beser refers to in the prose, is also evident in the poetry, as we have already seen. The critics, however, have been unable to offer any reasonable explanation for the imbuing of this figure with such complete rebellion. Fuster has sensed that Salvat-Papasseit was intent upon evoking a mythical hero, yet, shocked by the blasphemous element involved, he does not continue to accept the logical conclusion. Such a sincere ingenuous author, the commentator argues, would not possibly condone wanton blasphemy:

Lluita i entusiasme: però aper què i perça què?.. En algun moment creuriem que lluita i entusiasme es justifiquen en una actitud prometeica: l'home aixecat contra els déus. Cantar serà blasmar-blasfemar en definitiva. "Dir Poeta" escriu Salvat "vol dir exultament, sentir el goig en copsar el bé de la blasfèmia ... Blasmo els déus a ple vol afirma en el poema "Canto là lluita". Però prendre aquestes declaracions al peu de la lletra fóra grotesc. En part, perquè no hi ha poesia menys blasfematòria que la de Salvat-

Papasseit. I, en part, perquè tot això de "el goig de copsar el bé de la blasfèmia etc" és un simple i inofensiu galimatias.²⁵

The approach here again displays a complete unwillingness for textual examination as Fuster turns away from what is actually written on the page. The explanation he offers for the poet's rebelliousness is totally unconvincing. Moreover, if we were to accept this interpretation it would reduce the use of mythification to the level of a redundant component: "un simple i inofensiu galimatias", which would reflect very badly on Salvat's poetic craftsmanship. In the end, we are still left with the same question which Fuster asked right at the start; what is the purpose of this rebellion?

Castellet and Molas sidestep this problem quite neatly. For them this leitmotiv is the simple eulogy of struggle in its absolute and isolated form. "La revolta salvatiana és químicament pura: lluitar per lluitar; per res més".²⁶ The point is pursued no further, implying that this whole area, a constant in the mature work, adds nothing to the poet's basic message, and thereby fulfills a mere decorative function (which is hardly a compliment to poetic concision):

En aquesta reclusió optimista i mítica, la lluita, despullada de tot objectiu immediat o remot, adquireix valor per ella mateixa. "Creure en la guerra perquè és bò el combat".²⁷

Beser attempts to offer some insight as to the exact object of Salvat-Papasseit's struggle, but only in very vague terms. He suggests, without any specific reference to the text, that it is a fight against the constraints that the world in general imposes upon man: "la seva actitud de rebel·lia davant d'un món que opprimeix l'home i el priva de realitzar les seves possibilitats."²⁸

This proposal, however, is far too nebulous to instil any great

conviction. It may be applied to the early prose and Poemes en Ondes Hertzianes where there is a definite and particular attack on social injustice, but as the poetry develops the whole process is made more essential, general and unspecific. Furthermore, a contradiction arises in the fact that there is no poet more determined than Salvat-Papasseit to sing the beauties of this world as he does throughout his later work, and even in his prose: "Només és home bò aquell què sap comprendre çò bell i çò grandiós que es troba arreu del món."²⁹

If this topic is considered more specifically in the mythological context with the wayfaring adventurer assuming the conventional rôle of the archetypal hero, we are presented with a much more feasible alternative, and one which totally conforms to Salvat-Papasseit's poetic vision. Joseph Campbell explains what this figure symbolises:

For the mythological hero is the champion not of things become but of things becoming; the dragon to be slain by him is precisely the monster of the status quo: Holdfast the keeper of the past. From obscurity the hero emerges, but the enemy is great and conspicuous in the seat of power; he is enemy, dragon, tyrant, because he turns to his own advantage the authority of his position. He is Holdfast not because he keeps the past but because he keeps.³⁰

The hero then is the emblem of the continuous life-cycle - this never ending force of "things becoming". In his rising up against the established order he is a representative of the eternal recreative process; the very embodiment of what the poet stated with such forceful simplicity in L'Irradiador del port i les gavines, as Campbell goes on to specify:

Briefly: the ogre-tyrant is the champion of the prodigious fact, the hero the champion of creative life.³¹

Northrop Frye has since restated the basic significance of the quest-romance adopted here by Salvat-Papasseit, and the revitalising quality of the hero:

In the dragon killing legend of the St. George and Perseus family ... a country under an old feeble king is terrorized by a dragon who eventually demands the king's daughter but is slain by the hero. This seems to be a romantic analogy (perhaps also in this case a descendant) of a myth of a waste land restored to life by a fertility god. 32

In standard mythology the hero has a foe he must overcome - the ogre-tyrant or epitome of the status quo. As this chapter progresses, however, we shall see how the antagonism embodied by Salvat-Papasseit's figure follows a clear vanguard current and develops from the immediacy of social confrontation to a wider sense of revolt on a cosmic plane.

Throughout the entire work, Salvat's autobiographical hero never encounters any resistance which might in the least way prove insurmountable - certainly not in the case of the warrior: " - Fem l'escamot dels qui mai no reculen", as seen again in "Prometença": "montaria un cavall de crinera lluenta/i el meu nom s'alçaria/més alt que la congesta ... prendria les ciutats...". The same is also true as far as the pirata d'amor is concerned. "Bru mariner d'amor/de peu dret a la proa:/quina noia no el vol" ("Vibracions") a sentiment which is reflected and amplified in "Si jo fos pescador":

si fos lladre d'amor m'obririen les portes...
-els carcellers del món no em sabrien mai l'ombra
si fos lladre:i bandit no em sabrien el vol

(p. 114)

This is quite consistent with the standard portrayal of this figure who enjoys the total self-assurance which was mentioned earlier:

To a man not led astray from himself by sentiments stemming from the surfaces of what he sees, but courageously responding to the dynamics of his own nature - to a man who is, as Nietzsche phrases it "a wheel rolling of itself" - all difficulties melt and the unpredictable highway opens as he goes.³³

Salvat-Papasseit's hero then, complies with the qualities of his mythological counterparts. This masterful control and self-consciousness is again part and parcel of the expression of the eternal renascent process of which this character is the symbol.

Joseph Campbell continues to explain:

With a gesture as simple as the pressing of a button, he annihilates the impressive configuration. The hero deed is the continuous shattering of the crystallizations of the moment (my emphasis: 34)

The poet, however, also extends this great prowess to encompass the sexual sphere, as is conveyed by the "pirata d'amor" poems. It is perhaps surprising that, unlike El Poema de la Rosa als Llavis, eroticism here is kept to a minimum. In "El Berenar a les Roques", the poet talks merely about giving his heart:

donaria a les noies el meu cor
i el tornaria a prendre
per donar-lo altre cop.
(p. 85)

The courtship routine is described in similar terms in "Si jo fos pescador".

Si tingués un vaixell m'enduria les noies,
si volien tornar deixarien llurs cors
i en farien fanals
per a prendre'n de nous.
(p. 114)

Indeed in this context the most forthright physical allusion is merely to that of the kiss, as seen in "Sense el Ressó del Dring"

que trobés pel camí la noia jove i bruna
i la pogués besar
- l'altra, després de l'una
(p. 98)

This is reached in the final "Divisa" where the word 'bes' appears on every second line: "el primer bes que s'ens doni als primers"; etc.

The technique employed here achieves the desired affect most smoothly. It is not sexual attraction upon which the poet wishes to dwell, but rather its symbolic quality evoking the repeated nature of the life-cycle, as emphasised by the words "tornar; altre cop; de nous; l'altra després de l'una", all of which imply this recurrence.

The process is taken still further in "Divisa" where the beloved is described as a virgin: "amar en totes una noia verge". This produces the same result as the last line of "Res no és mesquí": "i a la verge més jove li vindrà llet al pit". The entire human reproductive order, which Salvat-Papasseit sees as unending, is crystallised in this instance with reference to the transcendence of the youngest girl from virginity to a state of fertility.

In this way the evocation of the hero's ability in the sexual area reflects and enhances the basic poetic message. In his enthusiastic struggle this figure is the symbol of the creative life-force and this is quite graphically underlined by the account of his unswerving resolve for repeated amatory adventure.

The Struggle for Coherence

- a solution through conventionality?

It is with La Gesta dels Estels, that Salvat-Papasseit first shows himself capable of exerting full control over his subject-matter. This boundless enthusiasm and revolt, though still highly charged, is skilfully redirected through its alignment with a symbol which embodies certain essential aspects of the poet's cosmovision. The hero-figure offers a coherence of expression lacking in the

unrestrained poorly directed eruptions of vitality which were characteristic of the earlier work.

Sergi Beser has reflected on the solution that this collection provides but explains this fact in the same terms as those proposed by the critical body thus far. The poet, he argues, has rejected his former avantgarde stance and has adopted a more conventional approach to facilitate expression:

en descobrir amb la seva pròpia experiència la protesta gratuita, inútil, quasi joc de clan que representen aquests moviments, Salvat-Papasseit reacciona per cercar la seva expressió en una forma poètica - la de Maragall - que encara que la podríem qualificar d'arxiburgesa, expressa la totalitat d'una societat en ple desenvolupament de les seves forces de producció tot aproximant-la més al poble en ampliar el ritme de cançó que ja portava a dintre.³⁵

It is quite correct to point out how the protest element of Salvat-Papasseit's work is representative of a current within the avantgarde. It is, however, inaccurate to label this as gratuitous as can be seen with reference to Renato Poggiali, who sums up certain characteristics of this movement:

Experience teaches us that the gratuitous is not the most common type, or is at least not so frequent as the movement formed in part or in whole to agitate against something or someone. This something may be the academy, tradition; the someone may be a master whose teaching and example, whose prestige and authority are considered wrong or harmful. More often than not, the someone is that collective individual called the public. However, and whenever this spirit of hostility and opposition appears, it reveals a permanent tendency that is characteristic of the avantgarde movement. We shall call it antagonism or the antagonistic moment.³⁶

The first phase of Salvat's protest is clearly directed against social injustices, which is quite evident in the periodicals Los Miserables, Un Enemic del Poble etc., and the book Humo de Fábrica. This also

receives poetic expression in "Plànol" and "Columna vertebral", both of which appear in Poemes en Ondes Hertzianes.

The poet also shows a typical disdain for the uninspired moronic mass of the public in general. In "Divisa de Combat", he refers to those who are spiritually stagnant as fools and cowards:

espiritualment, tota intel·ligència capaç de prescindir de la legalitat acceptada pels homes en comú és fora de l'abast dels covards i dels tontos. 37

The same kind of scathing insult is levelled at the dilettantes and dabblers of the established literary hierarchy, as evident in "Fragments de Lletres Girades":

tants poetes coneix que parlen de l'amor sense gota d'amor: passegen llurs llibres sota el braç, com ells passejarien en cotxe de lloguer, fatxendes sense to. Així les senyoretes pinten flors, ells fan llibres de versos. I quin cromo perfecte l'obra d'un i altres. 38

It is these people who are the object of his attack as they are seen as responsible for the "tifisme", or stultification of Catalan artistic expression:

Tota la meva acció ha estat contra el tifisme, els homes-senyoretes que mai no es resoldran en poesia ni en res; però no contra uns pocs... Ah, però del tifisme n'hem de parlar molt més i encara hi tornarem, perquè no és poca cosa. 39

The same vicious tone is employed in a later article where Salvat-Papasseit again censures these "homes-senyoretes", and imagines them to be the only people who would consult a recently published rhyme dictionary, in order to write poetry. A true poet, of course, would not need this:

Ens atrevim a dir que servirà [el diccionari] als cretins i als mediocres. Sobretot als cretins, perquè es tracta d'un llibre clandestí. Un llibre clandestí no el devem acceptar sinó quan ens purifiqui

quan no ens sigui permesa la purificació. No així un llibre immoral, que sols ve a propulsar l'extensió del tifisme. Tifisme va lligat a la santa hipocresia i a vici solitari. 40

It is clearly with this class in mind that Salvat-Papasseit unleashes the vehement remark of "Marxa Nupcial": "Escopiu a la closca/pelada/dels cretins". The poet is also quite consistent with the avantgarde in his choice of vocabulary - in this case pompier which was used to describe the conventional or commercial artist who sought to pander to public taste:

Fèiem alexandrins d'exacta perfecció constraint un cal·ligrama i quan encara exposen tots els nostres pompiers, ja ha passat aquell temps en que el gros públic reia o volia indignar-se d'avant d'un fauve autèntic. 41

It has been commonly assumed that after this initial phase, wherein Salvat-Papasseit's caustic hostility is quite exemplary, there follows a definite movement away from a vanguardist standpoint, with any sense of revolt becoming too nebulous, departicularized and general. Renato Poggioli, however, has proceeded to disclose that the early period of immediate antagonism, with which our poet is so consistent here, is duly transcended by deliberation on a much more cosmic plane:

Naturally, avant-gardist antagonism cannot always be reduced to such simple and elementary postures; nor is it always limited to the psychological or professional problem of the relationship between artist and tradition or between artist and public. At times the socio-psychological dialectic is left behind altogether, and the antagonism is elevated to a cosmic metaphysical antagonism; a defiance of God and the universe. Thus, for example, Rimbaud commands, "le poète doit être voleur de feu". 42

The account of this phenomenon in Promethean terms could not be more appropriate to our context. As was made patent in "Canto la lluita"'s "Blasmo els déus a ple vol", the autobiographical hero projected by Salvat-Papasseit in La Gesta dels Estels and Óssa Menor crystallises

this continuous metaphysical revolt. In this case, however, there is no need for any symbolic ogre-adversary, as the idea of struggle is implicit in the act of rebellion. Northrop Frye has summarised the emblematic quality of the dragon:

The dragon is especially appropriate because it is not only monstrous and sinister but fabulous, and so represents the paradoxical nature of evil as a moral fact and an eternal negation. In the Apocalypse the dragon is called "the beast that was, and is not, and yet is".⁴³

Opposed to this, we are presented with the "heroic deed", not as an individual fight, but a timeless combat against "els déus" - the established fact - and representing the eternally recreative life process, as Salvat-Papasseit indicates: "La lluita no és finita; fou l'acció en el principi, i de suara i per sempre".⁴⁴

It is only when considered in this tradition that the full significance of the antagonism and rebellion can be genuinely appreciated and its real relevance to the poetic message accurately related. Moreover, the treatment of this topic links Salvat-Papasseit not only to a definite current within the Avant-garde but also to a wider European trend. Poggioli mentioned Rimbaud, yet in the more cosmic sense of revolt one instinctively thinks of the work of Camus and, to a lesser extent, Sartre.

Popularism and the Avantgarde

Sergi Beser noticed the change from the initial specific hostility of artist against public and tradition etc., but failed to appreciate that the development of this leitmotiv onto a higher level was also typical of the Avant-garde. Consequently he was inclined to interpret this progression as indicative of the poet's rejection of vanguardism. In addition he considers, as was quoted above, the evocation

of everyday reality, popular festivals - this "aproximació al poble" - so evident in the later work, as a further pointer to a return to conventional Maragallian poetics.

The assumption that these criteria in fact substantiate such a conclusion is somewhat questionable. As Miklos Szaboliski explains, the trend towards popularism or cult of the people is indeed representative of a further vanguard tendency. With specific reference to Lorca's Romancero Gitano, the critic disclosed the connection between the psyche of the modern creative artist and folk-culture. He speaks of:

L'unité de l'image moderne et des profondeurs de la vie populaire, de la construction associative et de la poésie folklorique, de l'entrelacement de l'inconscient et du conscient et de l'évocation des mystères de la vie quotidienne des masses.⁴⁵

There are two points to be drawn from this, one of a quite superficial nature, the other more relevant to the artistic inclination of Salvat-Papasseit. Firstly, the resorting to lo popular does not necessarily constitute a rejection of the Avant-garde. In his use of the cançó and evocation of ritual, Salvat-Papasseit is not simply following the lead of the literary establishment, i.e. Carner, Maragall, Sagarra, Garcés, Manent. Recourse to expression of the volkgeist must require a popular medium and so, in the context of the Vanguard movement, just as Lorca is attracted to the romance, Salvat-Papasseit is drawn to the cançó in the same way that Miró, feeling the artist should be in close contact with "la sabiduría profunda del pueblo, origen y destinatario final de toda empresa realmente humana",⁴⁶ will experiment with the popular creative media of tapestry and ceramics.

In addition, the process of mythification which the poet employs reflects on a psychological level the very relationship between the

individual and community, as elaborated by Joseph Campbell:

Dream is the personalised myth, myth the depersonalised dream: both myth and dream are symbolic in the same general way of the dynamism of the psyche. But in the dream, the forms are quirked by the peculiar troubles of the dreamer, whereas in myth the problems and solutions shown are directly valid for all mankind.⁴⁷

Northop Frye has linked these ideas in the same way but has also brought out their relevance to the individual's "quest-romance" and ritual which is of still greater importance when related to Salvat-Papasseit:

The quest-romance has analogies to both rituals and dreams, and the rituals examined by Frazer and the dreams examined by Jung show the remarkable similarity in form that we should expect of two symbolic structures analogous to the same thing. Translated into dream terms, the quest romance is the search of the libido or desiring self for a fulfilment that will deliver it from the anxieties of reality but will still contain that reality.⁴⁸

The insistence on the presence of reality here refers us back to Freud's view of the creative process, quoted earlier by Wellek and Warren, and the corresponding illegitimacy of dismissing the adventure verse as purely escapist. Moreover the evocation of popular festivals is not merely nostalgic or decorative but a definite poetic counterpoint to the solitary emblem of the hero. Wellek and Warren have stressed the significance of ritual within the sphere of mythification, underlining their association. Myth is: "the spoken part of ritual: the story which the ritual enacts. The ritual is performed for a society by its priestly representatives in order to avert or procure; it is an 'agendum' which is recurrently permanently necessary, like harvests and human fertility."⁴⁹

The relevance of Salvat-Papasseit's use of seasonal festivals may now be appreciated. They provide an anonymous and collective response to what is symbolised in the individuality of the hero. The

treatment that this topic receives requires examination at greater length.

Seasonal Celebration: the thematic chorus.

The poems on this subject provide an accurate reflexion of the major issues discussed so far. The impression of total communal participation is achieved by use of the indefinite first person plural, as is evident in "Pasqua Granada":

Pasqua Granada
 Alcem el crit
 prenguem la fruta de l'hort veí
 (p. 86)

The recurrence of the life-cycle is forcefully conveyed by reference to natural and human fertility:

lladres de fruites
 lladres d'amor
 temeu la fuita
 saltem a l'hort
 (p. 86)

These two aspects become so closely associated that we are soon presented with a confusion, or yoking of the two elements, as soon in "Flor d'Ametller":

pètal de galta
 - quin toc que té
 pètal de galta de noia en rosa
 (p. 105)

This technique is taken still further in "Quin dia clar", where cosmic, seasonal and natural elements are humanised to enhance our idea of their participation in the eternal universal life cycle:

Quin dia clar que el cor s'esvera
 ha dit l'abril missa primera
 i el sol és dolç i l'arbre riu ...
 I cada noia com adés
 per primavera té promès-
 (p. 108)

The vitality of this repeated process is transmitted by the charged

enthusiasm displayed by the participants, well expressed by the fast-moving rhythm and frequent interjections:

Sant Joan
 noça i bateig de sang!
 Les noies riu en amb llur galant
 Quina vesprada
 festa pel cor
 cada abraçada deixarà enyor
 cada besada un infant nou.

(p. 91)

The real significance of Salvat-Papasseit's evocation of seasonal festivals becomes much clearer if they are considered in the mythological context as is elucidated by Joseph Campbell:

The tribal ceremonies of birth, initiation, marriage, burial, installation, and so forth, serve to translate the individual life-crises and life-deeds into classic impersonal forms. The whole society becomes visible to itself as an imperishable living unit. Generations of individuals pass like anonymous cells from a living body, but the sustaining timeless form remains; ... seasonal festivals open a larger horizon. As the individual is an organ of society, so is the tribe or city - so is humanity entire - only a phase of the mighty organism of the cosmos ... the dominant motif in all religious (as opposed to black magical) ceremonial, is that of submission to the inevitables of destiny ... the wonderful cycle of the year with its hardships and periods of joy, is celebrated and delineated and represented as continued in the life round of the human group.⁵⁰

Northrop Frye has commented further on the social implications of this type of metaphoric projection:

As for human society, the metaphor that we are all members of one body has organized most political theory from Plato to our own day. Milton's "A Commonwealth ought to be but as one huge Christian personage, one mighty growth, and stature of an honest man" belongs to a Christianized version of this metaphor ... Themes of loyalty, hero worship, faithful followers and the like also employ the same metaphor.⁵¹

Thus these poems are not merely allusions to popular festivals per se and indeed they do much more than act as reflections of the style and

thematic content of the rest of the collection. On this wider level they provide a forceful restatement of Salvat-Papasseit's poetic vision. The celebration of these rituals demonstrates society's submission to the eternal cosmic round; by participating in these ceremonies the poet re-emphasises his message of the infinite universal cycle, not as the individual archetypal hero, but as a member of the community. The significance of the relationship between communal celebration and the solitary hero may be elucidated with reference to the theme of exile. Salvat-Papasseit's protagonist continually dwells on the idea of never returning, as evident in certain poems from La Gesta dels Estels. In "El berenar a les roques" the narrator boasts: "NI SABRIA ELS MEUS FILS QUAN/TORNARIA A TERRA". "L'home bru ros del port" has a "desig de no tornar", and in "Divisa" we see "Viatjar terres/no quedar-se en cap". In Óssa Menor these sentiments are again apparent in "Ara no es fa, però jo ho faria": "i anar tan lluny que no pugués tornar". Joseph Campbell explains the relevance of this topic to the fundamentalistic poetic vision:

The essence of oneself is the essence of the world; these two are one. Wherever the hero may wander, whatever he may do, he is ever in the presence of his own essence - for he has the perfected eye to see. There is no separateness. Thus just as the way of social participation may lead in the end to a realization of the all in the individual, so that of exile brings the hero to the self in all.⁵²

Northrop Frye has in turn made mention of the basic thematic interconnection between hero and ritual:

Translated into ritual terms, the quest-romance is the victory of fertility over the wasteland. Fertility means food and drink, bread and wine, body and blood, the union of male and female ...⁵³

It is this type of contrapuntal consistency that makes the later work of Salvat-Papasseit so powerfully terse.

Extension to the Everyday

Salvat-Papasseit develops this leitmotiv, however, and is quite consistent with the phenomena described by Szabolski. Harvest festivals are depicted side by side with poems evoking the "vie quotidienne des masses". This begins, on the one hand, with the simple account of repeated daily occurrences, as in "Si jo em llevava de bon dematí", and "Quan de bon dematí" which describe the awakening of the city:

Si jo em llevava de bon dematí
el sol encara a pleret s'hi arronsava;
tresca que tresca, si feia camí
a cada pas un fanal s'apagava

(p. 89)

In other examples, nevertheless, such banal subject matter is given more transcendent treatment which leaves the impression that for the poet, as the critic suggested, these everyday events have something in common with the seasonal festivals, but on a lower level.

This effect is achieved with great subtlety. "Pasqua Granada" and "Vetlla, revetlla" depict the celebration of the rituals of Pentecost and Midsummer. In "Passeu pel Port", however, the poet transfers the feasting and all its associated themes to the setting of the port. Indeed, he goes so far as to emphasise the pagan quality of this metropolitan scene:

Passeu pel Port,
que és la festa pagana! ...
i els mariners ubriacs tots cantaven:
Verge del Carme, doneu-nos l'amor

(p. 94)

The flowing rhythm again conveys the characteristic vital enthusiasm and the question of fertility is expressed in natural, human and inanimate terms:

Ara florien els pals boles d'or ...
 Verge del Carme mostra un peu tot nu
 que la sandàlia se li desprenia
 (p. 94)

The process of humanization is pursued to a great degree, and against this background we witness the interaction of maritime, atmospheric and cosmic elements:

Verge del Carme cantava en els núvols ...
 no hi ha vaixell que la guanyi en dansar;
 alceu els ulls que vereu la corona
 com va ruixant tot d'estrelles la mar
 (p. 94)

Their participation in a ritual of such sexual nature points not only to the underlying essence shared by all creation but also to the promise of futurity which Salvat-Papasseit sees as inherent in the universal whole, as was the case with say, "La femme aux oranges" and "Dona'm la mà" from L'Irradiador del port i les gavines.

It must be remembered, however, that there is no specific reason given for this celebration. The ceremony takes place in the port with a ship as protagonist - some form of fecundation ritual is implied in the name and sexual context - with the sailors and vianants chorally representing the community. This constitutes a clear attempt by Salvat-Papasseit to transpose the significance of the seasonal festivities as evoked in "Pasqua Granada" and "Vetlla Revetlla" onto an everyday level and location.

This effect is achieved more specifically in "Vora Mercat". In this poem the relationship between the banal or anecdotal and the universal is forcefully elaborated, with the structure as succinct as that of the "Divises".

The atmosphere of neighbourly gossip is well established in the first two stanzas through particularity; the first is light-hearted in tone,

el vigilant del meu barri
estava mig perdut per mor de l'opereta.

per això és que s'ha casat
amb una noia grassa com una boia plena

ell treu l'aigua del pou
i és ella qui gemega
(p. 97);

the second possesses a great deal of colloquial vitality in the account of Rosa's fate:

Però ja se li veia que tenia una pena;
no féu res més de bo des de que el seu marit
[li tustava l'esquena
malviatge faci ell!
(p. 97)

The third stanza, however, introduces a much more mysterious element on a higher deterministic plane, which is underlined by use of capitals.

UNA GITANA PRENYS
PORTA VENTURA NEGRA
(p. 97)

These two levels, nonetheless, are fused together by the refrain which is repeated after every verse "vet aquí les veïnes com masteguen llur dèria". This provides an objective response to the individual quality of the anecdote. There will always be particularity, such as the vigilant's love for operetta, Rosa's misfortune etc., and this is conveyed in the anonymous and general formula of the refrain, whose repetition implies continuation.

Thus the treatment of the everyday ranges from the simple description of "Quan de bon dematí" and "Si jo em llevava de bon dematí" to acquire a more ritualistic aspect in "Vora Mercat" and "Passeu pel Port". The poet has succeeded in imbuing the everyday, though in somewhat diluted form, with the same significance of the repeated seasonal festivals. Sergi Beser has noticed this upgrading of banal criteria?

El món pel fet d'existir, d'anar repetint
els seus quotidians i vulgars fenòmens,
es transforma en quelcom de meravellós. 54

His comments lack direction, however, unless they are considered within the context of ritual, which is used so forcefully to convey the poetic vision. The promise of eternity, expressed in the idea of cyclic renewal and man's celebration of this fact, is envisaged as including the lowest possible level of the particular and everyday, which emphasises the consistency of Salvat-Papasseit's expression.

Given the general lack of critical appraisal of the later work outside El Poema de la Rosa als Llavis, it is perhaps appropriate at this point to mention the technical expertise which the poet displays over his medium in "Vora Mercat". The poem has a free but regular heptasyllabic structure which is maintained throughout, thus facilitating balance and control while evoking the recurrent nature of the action of the neighbours. The assonantal e-a rhyme enhances this in the first two stanzas, as does the internal consonantal rhyme of the line "una noia grassa com una boia plena" with the syntactical equality adding to the overall effect. The metre of the refrain underlines the repetition that the line suggests, and is finally broken for rhythmic variance by the spondee and pyrrhic of the last two feet.

A Return to Paganism

The celebration of the seasonal rituals is imbued with a definite heathen undercurrent which is developed in this collection. It is first apparent in the atavism of the festivities with their emphasis on inebriation, fertility and sex, as seen in "Vetlla Revetlla":

El cèntir s'ompli
d'aigua amb anís
que es vessi tota
 sines endins
No hi haura festa si el foc no és alt
si molt no es besa
i l'amor es plany
(p. 91)

This is again quite evident in "Passeu pel Port" - the festa pagana:

Verge del Carme, cantava en els nívols
 a cada u bé llançava un esguard
 els mariners ubriacs la miraven
 i convidaven tots els vianants

(p. 94)

There is an implicit contrast evoked in these scenes between Christianity as suggested by the names: Verge del Carme; Sant Joan; Pasqua Granada, and the pagan ritual, which is the way in which the proceedings are conducted. This dichotomy is dwelt upon in "Llegenda" in what appears to be some type of compilation of the two. There is an immediate comparison achieved in the first stanza with the Christian figure of the Virgin Mary transposed into a pagan setting:

Ran mateix del camí
 hi ha una cripta tot d'heura
 i una Verge tan bella tan'bella
 que no sembla del cel
 sinó de pagania
 - però els pagesos li diuen Maria

(p. 113)

This heathen personage enjoys the same qualities of succour and protection as her Christian counterpart:

el xaval s'hi ajaça i seu vi
 i la Verge se'l mira i l'advera
 - Mai s'ha dit que un moltó fos ferit

(p. 113)

It is clear that Salvat-Papasseit is removing religion from its orthodox framework and relocating it within the pagan context which is so suitable for the expression of his fundamentalistic poetic vision.

This process is more explicitly attempted in "Deu-me una santa", where the poet constructs his own heavenly hierarchy:

Deu-me una santa, enc que no sigui al dogma
 a qui pugui pregar: Jo pecador d'amor;
 deu-me una santa que hagi estimat força
 que per pregar-li calgui un bes i una cançó.

(p. 115)

The virtues extolled here are far from those embraced by conventional morality as Salvat-Papasseit's idea of a saint is more reminiscent of a fertility goddess. It is noticeable that the traditional Christianity offers no solution, and merely becomes incorporated - in this case by the vocabulary - into the heathen approach which pervades the whole collection.

Indeed the only poem which can be taken as dealing with the relationship between God and man in any recognisably religious fashion is "Pregària". This is tagged onto the end of the collection and so is clearly meant to be held up in comparision with the rest, as "Divisa" is the natural end to the work providing a reflection of the basic themes.

"Pregària" is a bleak, bitter poem, as the opening suggests, which contrasts greatly with the warmth and excitement of the rituals described earlier:

¿Quin plan tenui, Senyor,
que feu que hom cregui en vós
en el dolor només?

(p. 122)

The tone is one of sharp questioning which enhances the idea of bitterness. Salvat-Papasseit in no way humbles himself before the supreme figure, who he sees as responsible for suffering, and turns away from Him.

Jo us oblidó el favor,
pobre mesquí que sóc,
per un bocí de pler.

(p. 122)

In fact God can have no grudge against the poet as it was He who created man the way he is "Vós així m'haveu fet". The tone here is almost one of menace, as the repetition of the question underlines the incomprehensibility of God's working.

Quin plan teniu, Senyor,
 si us dec dolor i plor?
 (p. 122)

The conclusion is stark and self-explanatory. Salvat-Papasseit's fundamentalistic outlook cannot comprehend the concept of a supreme being. Any reference to this is correspondingly located outside the thematic body of the work, and subjected to the bleakest of accounts.

The sentiments expressed here are perhaps the closest that Salvat-Papasseit comes to the spiritual honesty and sincerity of a Cont Espiritual. Nevertheless, whereas both March and Maragall round off with some type of submission to the divine will, Salvat-Papasseit stands critically aside and thereby re-emphasises his scepticism.

The inclusion of religious figures and events upon a completely pagan background, together with this bare-faced questioning of God and his workings, makes La Gesta dels Estels the poet's most coherent rejection of orthodox Christianity.

It may be appropriate here again to draw a parallel between the line adopted here by Salvat-Papasseit and that of J.V. Foix. Foix's fundamentalistic vision of the world as expressed in Gertrudis and KRTU, can likewise find no place for the presence of a supreme being. As will be seen, the question remains unsolved even in Sol, i de dol, whose last section is a painful examination of this subject. It was not until Onze Nadals i un Cap d'Any published in 1960, though written over a period of twelve years, that God is finally included in Foix's weltanschauung after a long and hard struggle. Nonetheless, both poets seem to suggest some type of primeval religious quality at the basis of creation: Salvat-Papasseit with his recourse to ritual and his "alternative" sacrilegious hierarchy and Foix's pantheistic "L'U clarós", especially as expressed in Gertrudis and KRTU.

The Poet as Hero

The emergence in Salvat-Papasseit of the autobiographical archetype complies completely with the modern view of the poet and his function. Joaquim Molas has indicated the Romantic influence upon our poet, particularly in the case of Carlyle:

Per a Fichte i, en general, per a la tropa romàntica, el poeta era el conductor de masses. Un profeta. "He is the light of the world", diu Carlyle; "the world's priest:- guiding it like a sacred Pillar of Fire, in its dark pilgrimage through the waste of Time". Segons Montoliu, don Manuel, Alomar havia pres la definició de Carlyle per donar títol a la seva Única col·lecció de poemes ... Uns quatre o cinc anys després, directament de Carlyle o a través d'Alomar, Salvat recollí la definició, l'amplià de manera prou significativa, i la posà en el centre mateix del seu programa. 55

Salvat-Papasseit responds to the moral dimension of the poet's charge to such an extent that in "Contra els poetes amb minúscula", he suggests that one is not ordained a poet for one's verses, but for one's deeds.

Si tinguessim poeta, aquest seria, amics, un home independent. Potser, potser i tot, fins ni escriuria versos ... Cada gest, cada mot d'aquest home seria com un vers ... I si voleu rimar, podeu rimar: però sigueu Poetes. Poetes amb majúscula: altius, valents, heroics i sobretot sincers. 56

Clearly Salvat-Papasseit's wayfarer combines all these heroic qualities of an uncompromising and mystical independence. In "Concepte del Poeta" the author continues to expound on the vocation and social function of the poet in terms highly reminiscent of those cited from Carlyle:

La manifestació gràfica, àdhuc moral, de què el Poeta viu és la sinceritat. El Poeta es mou sol entre les multituds i és una meravella en la seva època per tal que és sincer. En el clos del seu puny que no es jeu mai, té el pervenir de tot. Perquè el Poeta és vate, és a dir: adiví. - Aquells que són al món i no un espai només, però una Eternitat, saben que quan el Poeta obre les mans una Era inconeguda és començada. 57

In his enunciation of these three essential attributes of the poet:- a) his special insight b) his power to exert social change c) his basic alienation, Salvat-Papasseit is proposing an attitude which is central to the modern vision of the artist's rôle. Renato Poggiali has illustrated this isolation and perceptive superiority with reference to Rimbaud; the artist has become "le grand malade, le grand criminel, le grand maudit, et le suprême savant."⁵⁸ Miklos Szabolski has in turn summarised the moral contribution to the social function of the writer in this tradition:

L'individuel est un individu privilégié de la société parce qu'il peut acquérir une importance communautaire exceptionnelle. Le nouveau type d'écrivain crée quasi de soi-même, le précurseur de la société nouvelle dans son esprit, son comportement et sa morale.⁵⁹

In this context the positions adopted by Foix and Salvat-Papasseit are almost exactly identical. As we shall see throughout Foix's work, though especially apparent in Les Irreals Omegues and On he deixat les claus, the poet presents himself as a hierophant, or man apart with a message. The dissimilarity, of course, is to be found in the manner in which the two artists fulfil this social rôle. Salvat-Papasseit projects the moral significance onto the objective "ideological ego" of the archetypal hero. It is he who will express symbolically the poet's moral vitality and insight of the perenniarity of the life-round, the force of a more general and permanent nature that lies behind the surface of everyday reality whilst evoking the fundamentalism of paganist ritual to complement this. Foix as vates however, acts, as we shall see, in a much more immediately personal fashion as priest in the community. Nonetheless there is one instance where Salvat-Papasseit comes extremely close to the position adopted

by Foix and this occurs in his most celebrated offering "Nocturn per a l'acordiò". This masterly poem unwinds against the familiar background of Barcelona docks and we are made immediately and repeatedly aware of the superiority and isolation of the poet:

Heus aquí: jo he guardat fusta al moll.
(Vosaltres no sabeu

què és

guardar fusta al moll:

(p. 225)

The narrator as vates is clearly in possession of some secret and sacred knowledge. The vocabulary underlines the religious quality: "els cedres sagrats"; "com un miracle"; "l'oraciò dels fanals"; as the poet officiates over some mystical pagan ceremony:

i he fet un foc d'estelles dins la gola del llop
vosaltres no sabeu

què és

guardar fusta al moll:

però totes les mans de tots els trinxeraires
com una farandola
feien un jurament al redós del meu foc.
I era com un miracle
que estirava les mans que eren balbes.

(pp. 225-6)

The transformation of reality, different in tone and mood to that of "Passeu pel Port", is effected through metaphor and simile in a combination of the everyday and banal with the exotic and supernatural. The enigma and mystery is enhanced by the esoteric narrative voice and the ponderous varying rhythm, which is crowned by the haunting illogicality and oracular quality of the last four lines:

Ni sabeu l'oraciò dels fanals dels vaixells
- que són de tants colors
com la mar, sota el sol:
que no li calen veles.

(p. 226)

Our reaction to this piece reiterates Salvat-Papasseit's view of the poet. An initiated figure, separated from the rest of society -

"Vosaltres" - through his gift of insight, removes the veneer of surface reality to reveal the vibrance of a more profound cosmic order.

Again Salvat-Papasseit's concerns reflect those of the author in the modern Romantic tradition as summarised by Carlyle - though not in any Christian sense here:

The open secret - open to all, seen almost by none! That divine mystery which lies everywhere in all Beings, the Divine Idea of the World, that which lies at the bottom of Appearance as Fichte styles it ... This divine mystery is at all times and in all places; veritably is ... That always is his [the poet's] message; he is to reveal that to us.⁶⁰

One is made further aware of the suitability of myth in the expression of such a viewpoint. Here we refer not only to the emergence of a heroic figure, but also to the presentation of reality on a higher metaphorical or allegorical plane which serves to emphasise the homogeneity of all its elements. Jung and Kerenyi have elucidated the connexion:

The philosopher tries to pierce through the world of appearances to say what "really is", but the teller of myth steps back into primordiality in order to tell us what originally was. Primordiality is the same thing for him as authenticity ... this procedure gives us some idea of mythological fundamentalization.⁶¹

Despite the position of superiority enjoyed by the narrator of "Nocturn per a acordi6", one does detect a certain amount of regret at the solitude that this estrangement understands. A type of nostalgic desire for communion with others is a current which pervades Salvat-Papasseit's work, from the solitary musings of Poemes en Ondes Hertzianes, "Tot l'enyor de demà", "Pantalons llargs", "Marxa Nupcial" of L'Irradiador del port i les gavines, to "Omega" and "Tarda d'Istiu" of Ossa Menor. A general sense of isolation was, in itself, quite

typical of the Vanguard experience, as Miklós Szabolski explains with reference to the propensity for black humour:

la base commune de ces tendances est à mon avis, la dislocation des rapports entre l'écrivain, l'artiste et le public ... l'artiste, l'écrivain ne voient plus de fonction, de but, de sens de place à leurs activités. L'une des marques de son impuissance est le grotesque, l'humour noir qui le dominent; le ricanement désespéré, le rire exaspéré, le cri inutile en poésie ... représentent une préoccupation qui s'imposera pleinement de nos jours, exprimant l'aliénation, la solitude, l'abandon au sein de la société et l'exprimant en subissant les affres de l'angoisse, en les divulgant de manière aliénée ..⁶²

In this respect Wellek and Warren have affirmed the relevance of the recourse to myth as an attempt by the creative artist to counter this social abandonment:

To speak of the need for myth, in the case of the imaginative writer, is a sign of his felt need for communion with his society, for a recognised status as artist functioning within society.⁶³

Thus we return quite conveniently to the starting point of our examination of the mature verse of Salvat-Papasseit. It was generally suggested that the evocation of popular ritual and the emergence of an archetypal hero translated the attempt of a consumptive to escape the dreadful limitations which ill-health imposed upon him. As a consequence the later work, apart from El Poema de la Rosa als Llavis which exists on a distinct thematic level, has attracted little critical attention, being interpreted as a mere flight of poetic fantasy.

We would argue, however, with reference to Northrop Frye, that there is a more solid and profound reason for the sense of ingenuous yearning which typifies the poems of adventure:

Yet there is a genuinely "proletarian" element in romance too, which is never satisfied with its various incantations, and in fact the incantations them-

selves indicate that no matter how great a change may take place in society, romance will turn up again, as hungry as ever, looking for new hopes and desires to feed on. The perennially child-like quality of romance is marked by its extraordinary persistent nostalgia, its search for some type of imaginative golden age in time or space ... The essential element of plot in romance is adventure ... At its most naive it is an endless form which a central character who never develops or ages goes through one adventure after another until the author himself collapses.⁶⁴

One is immediately struck by how smoothly Salvat-Papasseit complies with the general characteristics of the current described - in particular the "proletarian" dimension that the critic has envisaged.

Consequently, we would propose that the tone of nostalgia and naivety at the heart of the heroic verse can be explained more acceptably in terms of convention dictating the most suitable vehicle for the expression of this poetic sensitivity than any simple personal attempt at escapism.

This may be substantiated by the fact that a more detailed textual analysis reveals that the slant adopted latterly by the poet in his employment of myth and ritual provided a cogent amplification to that same fundamentalistic insight which was first fully propounded in L'Irradiador del port i les gavines.

Moreover, the personal preoccupations voiced by this author extend beyond the realm of individual circumstance and clearly relate to that common neurosis shared by the artistic cadre of the Avant-garde. The re-appraisal of the poet's function in society, the embracing of the vocation of vates, the enunciation of a privileged world view are issues which typified the modern creative mentality. In this respect, Salvat-Papasseit's recourse to mythification, as Wellek and Warren pointed out, denotes more than the effort

of an isolated invalid to commune with his beloved urban environment. It also registers the artist's need for recognition of his status in society - an obsession among this century's creative elite to alleviate the sense of alienation and lack of purpose which had been a by-product of those dramatic shifts in social relationships that accompanied the cataclysmic start to our age. Clearly, to approach this topic uniquely on a specific level of Salvat-Papasseit's immediate individual concern represents an incomplete and deficient approximation to a consciously modern and European author.

The Ever-present Cançó

Although the expression of La Gesta dels Estels relies greatly upon mythification, there are certain motifs and stylistic traits which are very reminiscent of L'Irradiador del port i les gavines. The cançó was used extensively in the earlier collection as emblematic of the underlying essence shared by all creation. In "Res no és mesquí" the poet states quite bluntly that "la cançó canta en cada bri de cosa", and never shows reticence in employing certain other devices - identical to those seen in L'Irradiador del port i les gavines - to enhance his basic expression. Allegory is once more evident to emphasise homogeneity as the human, inanimate and cosmic are seen to function on the same plane:

Les veles que voleiessin
aprendrien la cançó,
i els gallarets que escoltessin
però sense fer remor ...
vaixells per la mar estesos
la sabrien com un plany.

(p. 101)

The interaction of these different elements is most subtly handled in "Quin dia clar":

Quin dia clar que el cor s'esvera:
ha dit abril missa primera
el sol és dolç i l'arbre riu ...

Ara comença la cançó
i la tenora afina el to:
(p. 108)

As was mentioned earlier, this can also be applied to "Passeu pel Port", though it is perhaps "Estampa Japonesa" which is most reminiscent of the stylistic force and control of the earlier collection's successes. It is in essence a collage wherein a mixture of cosmic and concrete matter is presented against the same background:

l'ull és profund
i l'esguard groc llis de vetllar la lluna -
damunt paper d'arròs imperial
(p. 93)

Metaphor ("esguard groc i llis") and later, simile, combine to underline the interaction as Salvat-Papasseit interjects the song motif and centres the poems on the individual level of the exotic Perla-en-la-Rosada:

i la làmpara crema com un silenci viu:
com aquella cançó
que cantava la Perla-en-la-Rosada, filla del samurai
(p. 93)

The paradox in the simile "silenci/cançó" also serves to emphasise the basic identity of the subject matter through a fusion of opposites. The topic of time passing is now introduced: "i recomptant les hores que deixava i prenia", which is immediately countered by the concept of futurity implied by the clear natural reproductive vocabulary:

vestia llis i vestia el pol·len de la flama
i el de l'amor perfecte
(p. 93)

This is most forcefully compressed in "el pol·len de la flama", a metaphor which combined two diverse elements achieving the same effect as the fusion of two words into a single neologism in

"Vibracions", while suggesting that the flame will be reproduced. The cosmic element is now reintroduced as the poem returns to its point de départ, as Perla-en-la-Rosada "veia néixer el gran astre al seu costat". Again this is significant in two ways; astral and human components are depicted side by side on the same plane without sense of perspective (this points to the underlying unity they share), and just as with the flame and the girl, the reproductive aspect is here re-echoed in the wider universal context, which emphasises the continuance of the life-force.

In conclusion, and once more with reference to Northrop Frye, we would like to point out the complementary nature of the metaphoric reality created in the manner described here and the evocation of a mythical world, together with their relevance to Salvat-Papasseit's fundamentalistic insight of continuance and identity. It is a firm indication of that completeness of vision and fullness of expression that are associated with the work of the mature artist:

The world of mythical imagery is usually represented by the conception of heaven or Paradise in religion, and it is apocalyptic in the sense of the word already explained, a world of total metaphor in which everything is potentially identical with everything else, as though it were all inside a single infinite body ... and as realism is an art of implicit simile, myth is an art of implicit metaphorical identity.⁶⁵

Much of this statement could be applied to J.V. Foix's view of the cosmos. The remaining chapters will comprise an examination of this poet's individual artistic revelation of this picture.

NOTES TO CHAPTER IV

1. "La Poesia de Joan Salvat-Papasseit", in Contra el Noucentisme (1977), p. 24.
2. Poesia Catalana del Segle XX, p. 55.
3. Prologue to Salvat-Papasseit, Poesies, p. XXXI.
4. Ibid., pp. XXXI and XXXIX.
5. "La Poesia de Joan Salvat-Papasseit", L'Avenç (2a època) set. 1979, p. 42.
6. Vallverdú, "Sobre el pensament...", pp. 329-53.
7. Oller, art.cit., p. 42.
8. Poesia Catalana..., p. 73.
9. Prologue to Salvat-Papasseit, Poesies, p. XXXVIII.
10. An account of the influence of Maragall in this area is provided by Molas in La Literatura Catalana d'Avanguardia, pp. 44-46.
11. Castellet and Molas, Poesia Catalana..., p. 73.
12. Fuster, art.cit., p. 44.
13. Oller, art.cit., p. 43.
14. Prologue to Salvat-Papasseit, Poesies, p. XXXVIII.
15. Wellek and Warren, Theory of Literature (London 1959), pp. 70-71.
16. L. Spitzer, Essays on English and American Literature (Princeton 1962), p. 128.
17. "Tradition and the Individual Talent", in Selected Essays (London 1932), pp. 13-22.
18. Ibid., p. 20.
19. Ibid., p. 22.
20. Theory of Literature, p. 76.
21. Cited by J. Campbell in The Hero with a Thousand Faces (New York 1949), p. 64.
22. Ibid.
23. Prologue to Salvat-Papasseit, Poesies, p. LIII.

24. "El contingut alliberador de l'obra de Joan Salvat-Papasseit", El Pont, no. 24 (1961), pp. 19-26.
25. Fuster, art.cit., p. 26.
26. Poesia Catalana..., p. 58.
27. Molas, prologue to Salvat-Papasseit, Poesies, p. XXXIX.
28. "El contingut alliberador...", p. 26.
29. Mots Propis..., p. 24.
30. The Hero..., p. 337.
31. Ibid.,
32. Anatomy of Criticism (Princeton 1957), p. 137.
33. Campbell, The Hero..., p. 345.
34. Ibid., p. 337.
35. "El contingut alliberador...", p. 20.
36. The Theory of the Avant-garde, p. 25.
37. "Divisa de Combat" in Mots Propis..., p. 85.
38. Mots Propis..., p. 87.
39. Ibid., p. 86.
40. Ibid., p. 87.
41. "La ploma d'Aristarc", in Mots Propis..., p. 92.
42. The Theory of The Avant-garde, p. 33.
43. Anatomy of Criticism, p. 149.
44. Mots Propis..., p. 52.
45. "L'Avant-garde littéraire...", p. 329.
46. From an interview with the artist in La Vanguardia Española, Oct. 3, 1979, p. 21.
47. The Hero..., p. 19.
48. Anatomy of Criticism, p. 193.
49. Theory of Literature..., p. 195.
50. The Hero..., p. 383.

51. Anatomy of Criticism, p. 142.
52. The Hero..., p. 386.
53. Anatomy of Criticism, p. 193.
54. "El contingut alliberador...", p. 21.
55. Prologue to Salvat-Papasseit, Poesies, p. XI.
56. Mots Propis..., p. 82.
57. Ibid., p. 80.
58. Theory of the Avant-garde, p. 110.
59. "L'Avant-garde littéraire...", p. 319.
60. Hero and Hero Worship, (London 1926), p. 98.
61. Introduction to a Science of Mythology (London 1951), p. 10.
62. "L'Avant-garde littéraire...", p. 321.
63. Theory of Literature, p. 197.
64. Anatomy of Criticism, p. 186.
65. Ibid., p. 136.

THE CREATIVE GENIUS OF J.V. FOIX

Chapter V

The Early Work

Our approach to the output of J.V. Foix does not entail the same type of difficulty as was encountered in our study of Salvat-Papasseit. In the latter case our line was one which diverged from the main drift of considerable recent work on Salvat-Papasseit and attempted to extend the alternative angle as proposed by Francesc Vallverdú.

With Foix, however, it is more a question of building on a consensus of interpretations and coherent analyses, the foundation of which have been laid down in the recent, largely convergent work of commentators such as Arthur Terry, Gabriel Ferrater, Castellet, Molas and Pere Gimferrer.

Given the volume and density of Foix's work, nonetheless, there is still much scope for the refinement of the main lines as established by the critics to date and we propose to provide a revaluation and, at times, a re-elaboration of those ideas which have been rightly seen as central to Foix's expression thus far.

We may illustrate this by taking Gimferrer's La Poesia de J.V. Foix (1974), acknowledging its perceptiveness but also indicating the limitations of such detailed interpretation when the focus is narrowed. In this work, the first extensive survey of its type, the critic was forced to be necessarily selective in his concentration on individual collections and his separation of poetry from creative prose, all of which involved various inescapable limitations. On occasions Foix may display a propensity to express certain topics in verse rather than prose poetry. At times, specific works do have their more dominant motifs yet, for us, Foix's art

is so thematically dense and inter-related that we now see no reason to isolate any one part from the whole. Arthur Terry has already pointed out this remarkable consistency:

Something like a third of Foix's published work consists of four collections grouped under the general title of Diari 1918. The fact that he has chosen to refer to this part of his work to a particular year, though many of the individual pieces must have been written later, confirms one's impression that the later work, both in poems and prose poems, represents a steady unfolding of the possibilities implied in his very earliest writing.¹

Consequently our study will fall quite naturally into two related sections. We shall begin with a revision of certain key issues in the output up to Sol i de dol, followed by a reassessment of the development evident in the later offerings. Although it was not published until 1947, it is legitimate to consider this collection of sonnets as part of the early work, as Gimferrer has explained: "el pròleg d'aquest llibre, datat a l'octubre de 1936, dóna com a terminus a quo el 1913 i com a terminus ad quem el 1927".² Its thematic relevance to Foix's production in toto will be considered in the following chapter.

An examination of the various aspects of this coherent "unfolding" perceived by Terry should bring us back to the very kernel of the poet's vision and give a clear indication of the basic unity behind the expressive variety of Foix's art.

The general critical response to the world presented in Foix's first two volumes Gertrudis (1927) and KRTU (1932) has been quite uniform. It is a singularly hostile violent and unattractive place, as is outlined by Gimferrer:

El tema de la clausura, i la claustrofòbia, el del món natural envaint, poderós, el món artificial ... l'amenaça de les forces hostils al poeta, com a individu (gelosia, traïdoria amorosa: poema inicial de Gertrudis) o com a poeta ... ens mena a considerar el tema potser més important i característic de Gertrudis: l'empetitament, l'aclaparament davant un món immens i enemistós, la por del retorn a la infància - i, en darrer terme, del retorn a l'Úter i encara més, al no-res: la pèrdua de la pròpia individualitat, la castració[!], la destrucció, l'anorreament. Tema profundament tràgic, que dóna raó de la incertitud fonamental de l'home davant un univers que li resulta estrany, aliè, misteriós.³

These sentiments have been subsequently echoed by various commentators.

Carme Arnau has spoken of the ever-present violence in relation to the leitmotiv of mutations:

A la primera prosa de Gertrudis, l'autor exposa dos temes que seran constants al llarg de la seva obra: el tema de la personalitat, relacionat amb el de les mutacions ... i el tema del tancament i de la claustrofòbia, relacionat, comunament, amb el sentiment d'angoixa ... La violència present a Gertrudis no fa més que augmentar a KRTU, on sovintegen les amputacions de tota mena.⁴

In turn, Patricia Boehne has reflected on the topic of the poet's isolation and solitude which is again taken to be inextricably linked with the question of physical menace:

The reappearance of the stage curtain of Gertrudis and the isolation of the poet are immediate. In Gertrudis there was a more participatory feeling of an adolescent with his companions. Here, in KRTU, a physical distancing has occurred, a first step towards the intense isolation of Alone and in Mourning ... Not only is he isolated, but increasingly smothered, imprisoned, maimed, paralyzed.⁵

With his characteristic economy, Joaquim Molas has summarised these aspects in a matter of lines:

els fragments del Diari 1918 ... transformen la realitat quotidiana de Sarrià, o del Port de la Selva, en un món oníric, ple d'estranyes associacions i substitucions i, a la llarga, de violentes mutacions. Un món que, a través, de símbols, i d'objectes, trets a la vegada, de la pintura de Chirico - torres, castells, guants, maniquins, etc. - i de la poètica surrealista - cavalls, sabates,

paraigües, pneumàtics, carrers tancats o murs altíssims, etc.-, tradueix la solitud i la indefensió del poeta en el context d'una humanitat hostil: brutal. Una humanitat que l'identifica amb un disminuit.⁶

In this way, three major elements typify the early poetry and are repeatedly singled out for comment: i) the alienation of the auto-biographical protagonist, ii) a sense of claustrophobia iii) a variety of mutations - all of which contain some implicit notion of hostility or violence.

If Foix's world is depicted in such adverse terms, however, how can it be that the reader finds it so compelling and stimulating? One is inclined to suspect that there is some attraction more wholesome than a perverse sado-masochistic fascination. There is undoubtedly a sense of cathartic exhilaration which accompanies the foreboding and terror of this allegoric reality. A detailed, comprehensive analysis of these topics will reveal a more positive dimension to the experience described, a more complete reaction to the poetic environment - one not unlike the classical concept of admiratio - an impression of awe and wonder when - the author is confronted with the enormity of the cosmos.

Alienation

As was seen in the previous chapter with regard to Salvat-Papasseit, it had been a long-standing tradition to view the poet as a type of mystagogue - a man apart with a privileged insight and message to deliver. This attitude was re-echoed in the 1800s by the Romantics and Nietzsche, and was in turn embraced by the Avant-garde. The estrangement that this rôle entailed was exacerbated by the social cataclysms of the beginning of the present century which brought

about a further severe questioning of the creative artist's function in the modern industrialised ethos.

The detachment, self-examination and general loss of direction are all evident in Foix's early work. In the third poem of Gertrudis, we encounter the poet alone, abandoned and unable to find his way:

M'assegurava que eren dos-cents els joves del poble que tenien un cavall negre com el meu. Però vaig espiar, una a una, llurs estables i vaig comprovar el seu engany. Les estables són buides i són buides les cases. Al poble només hi som jo i el meu cavall que errem de nit i de dia pel laberint de les seves ombres. (11:20).

It is true to say that this solitude brings a certain amount of anguish to the protagonist, made patent by his desire for social communion, as evident in two passages from KRTU:

Nois i noies del meu poble ... juguen cada cap vespre a la plaça. Llur veu hi ressona com en un celler ... L'altre dia, tot estraient la veu amb un megàfon, vaig intentar barrejar-me en llur joc; però, nois, noies i ocells, eren ombres entre ombres. Davant meu, entre la plaça deserta i el cel, s'elevava, tràgicament delator, un filferro en espiral. (11, 56)

Pere, Lluís! On sou? Sento les vostres veus de joc a la placeta. No sóc orb, però em resteu invisibles. Veniu ... Joan, Ernest! No voleu jugar amb mi? (11, 61)

Nonetheless, the effects of this isolation are by no means exclusively negative or destructive. The poet often finds comfort in being alone, as in "M'assegurava que eren dos-cents ..." from Gertrudis: "O és que tants de milers d'estels que guspiregen en la negror celeste no exaltem la joia de la meva solitud?" (11, 20)

Similarly in "Sense Simbolisme. Gertrudis", solitude brings real solace to the author as he moves, in a matter of lines, from the emotional extreme of jealousy when with his horse and beloved, to a state of joy when by himself. This development is enhanced

by the lyrical force of the image describing the dew, contrasted with the initial morbid vocabulary:

Desllorigat d'esglai, vaig sentir la lamentació d'un moribund amb l'expressió del darrer espasme d'una placa tarada de gramòfon:

Després d'haver alliberat el cavall de la meva servitud, caminava a l'atzar meravellat de saber-me sense remordiment i amb una placidesa al llindar de la serenitat que em calia per a cercar un cotxe de punt que em tornés a casa.

En tombant la cantonada d'un vila desconeugut, em sorprengué el matí amb el joiós esbatanar de persianes. Una corrua d'algutzirs obrien les aixetes de la rosada, i aviat un xàfec em féu frifar d'un deler quasi immaterial.

(11, 27)

The poem which affords the most complete insight into the ambiguity of this theme is "On aniré tot sol", from KRTU. Here the poet expresses a sense of alienation which borders on the paranoid:

Els infants m'insultaven i em llençaven, furiosos, grosses boles de neu ... Però só geperut i, de dia, la gent del carrer riu quan passo i diu que só boig.

(11, 66-7)

On the other hand the protagonist is by trade a "pintor de parets" - by extension a creative artist - and it is precisely when he is alone that he receives not only comfort but intense inspiration:

(on aniré tot sol! ... A la torre del portal nou de la carretera pintaré un rètol que dirà COTILLAIRE i, tot posant-me el barret ben de cantó i amb un pot de vernís a cada mà, m'amagaré darrere l'atzavarar de cal Canet per a escoltar al fons de mi mateix les cançons que em sangloten a la gorja i que moren a flor de boca.)

(11, 66-7)

It would therefore be incorrect to ascribe a totally negative quality to the question of estrangement. Foix may be alienated from the rest of society, as the artistic convention demands, yet it is precisely this isolation which is the catalyst for the inspired imaginings which form the backbone of his creative expression. This is nowhere more apparent than in Sol, i de dol, where solitude provides the basis for

creative activity. In "Bru i descofat, i descalç, d'aventura", the poet:

Errava sol. Imaginava inertes
Formes sense ... aura i nom, i llur pintura.
(1, 45)

A further example from the same collection is "Jo tem la nit". Once again a certain element of fear is evident yet the poet is "tot sol" and this provides a basis for the unravelling of the artistic process with a metaphor of haunting force:

I en erm desert imagín una porta
La fosca nit m'aparenta pissarra
I, com l'infant, hi dibuix rares testes,
Un món novell i el feu que el desig narra.
(1, 51)

The same type of tension between apprehension and inspiration is re-echoed in the prose of Del "Diari 1918" (1956) and Darrer Comunicat (1970). In "D'amagat del senyor Bisbe" from the first collection the poet senses he is being spied upon and is later attacked by the inhabitants of a town. Here again his response is expressed in the context of artistic activity. The general mood of mystery and threat, however, is well evoked by the uttering of curses and the pristine earthy texture of the vocabulary:

Tothom ha tancat portes i finestrons amb forellats medievals; però "sentiem" que ens sotjaven, i hem pintat ulls hostils a les parets ... Flaires d'espluga humida, han omplert els cossis de caça morta i cendres calentes i, amb mots incitatius, ens han maleït.
(11, 109)

The use of the first person plural here will be discussed when we examine the emergence of a communal sentiment in the poet, particularly as regards the question of anonymity. Nonetheless, in "La meva descoberta dels mobles hipnagògics" from Darrer Comunicat, Foix, with

characteristic panache, displays his penchant for thematic symmetry by disclosing that same duality in attitude to this topic as was apparent in Gertrudis and KRTU. The poet is, as before, isolated from and ridiculed by the rest of the community - just as was the case in "On aniré tot sol":

Em creia sol, com abandonat i enganyat en aquella exhibició de fardams; i exiliat al meu propí país.
 De sobte, vaig sentir algú que reia, tot guaitant-me, i que potser em coneixia. Miro enlaire increible.
 Terrats, terrasses, balcons i finestres eren plens de gent. Milers de veïns ... tota la ciutat, vaig creure jo ... Quan els aglomerats ciutadans es van adonar que els mirava, la riallada va ésser comuna. Era un riure col·lectiu ... un riure de tempestat dalt la muntanya. Jo, tot sol en una pista morta, intrigat i gairebé petrificat.

(11, 373)

As in the earlier prose poems, however, the solitude brings about adequate compensation with a corresponding artistic uplift together with a heightening of personal experience:

He mirat enlaire, als terrats, als balcons: no hi havia ningú ... Com més a prop hi era, més els dibuixos en descobrien la fecunda elegància, l'esveltesa i el refinament ... Si feia memòria dels vells estils i comparava, l'estil dels mobles d'ara els resumia enginyosament tots, sense assemblar-s'hi gens ... En el tràgic silenci del meu carrer, passat el record de les vexants riallades dels veïns de la gran avinguda, vaig viure el bell i el moment. Quan vaig tocar amb dit lleuger i escrupulós els mobles, en vaig descobrir la real, efectiva i definida immaterialitat.

(11, 375)

In this example the tone is more measured, the style less frenetic and abstruse than the earlier piece though the basic sentiment is exactly the same.

A significant variation on this theme appears when the artistically creative function witnessed thus far becomes imbued with a more "sacred" dimension. In Les Irreals Omegues (1949), the poet again experiences a sense of acute estrangement as in IX, where he reacts

most fearfully when confronted with an enormous multitude. The images of menace and repulsion enhance our impression of this phobia:

Deixeu-me sol...
Us veig alcats per semblar més encara,
Tinta la faç i amb fatídics coturns ...
Els ulls sagnants en bacines de fang.
(1, 219).

Nevertheless, in his isolation Foix will fulfil some type of priestly function, a rôle not dissimilar to that played by Salvat-Papasseit in "Nocturn per a acordi6":

Cantaré sol per orris i calelles
El cant de tots, amb aire antic i plors.
(1, 216)

An identical stance is adopted in On he deixat les claus (1953) which presents the same dichotomy, as evident in the opening poem, entitled significantly: "Vaig arribar en aquell poble, tothom em saludava i jo no coneixia ningú ...":

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

Que gent que hi ha a la plaça!
Em deuen esperar;
Jo que els llegeixo els versos,
Tots riuens, i s'en van. (1, 231)

The whole question of the poet as visionary will be the subject of a more detailed analysis in the next chapter. We mention it in the present context merely to underline that as far as the topic of alienation is concerned Foix's reaction is not as unidimensional as has been suggested. The isolation does produce a sense of fear and foreboding yet it also provides the basis for more profound artistic creativity and experience whilst being intrinsically relevant, as we shall see, to the fulfilment of the poet's function of magus in the community.

b) Claustrophobia and Confinement

There is no doubt that enclosure is a recurrent motif in the early work of Foix. The second passage of Gertrudis begins: "Aixequem ben alts els murs del meu carrer." (11, 19). Similarly the opening prose poem from KRTU starts: "mil ales rosa cobrien el cel. Portes i finestres eren closes, i de cantonada a cantonada voleiaven banderes i gallardets." (11, 55)

Nonetheless, the question remains as to whether fear is the exclusive response to this leitmotiv as implied by Gimferrer in his repeated reference to this topic as, "el tema de la clausura i la claustrofòbia",⁷ and re-iterated by Carme Arnau in her comment: "el tema del tancament i de la claustrofòbia, relacionat comunament, amb el sentit d'angoixa".⁸

As was the case with the idea of alienation, it does appear that the critics have tended to overstate the oppressive aspect of this theme. In an attempt to demonstrate this, we shall take the examples that Gimferrer adduces and locate them in their full context in order to achieve a more balanced appreciation. One of the first instances selected by the critic is taken from "La Vila" in Gertrudis, and we emphasise the fragment quoted by Gimferrer:

No sap de ningú que hagi anat més enllà de la plaça i tothom ignora què hi ha més enllà dels murs que tanquen els carrers. No cal dir com de segle en segle augmenten les llegendes que fan més paorosa l'existència exterior.

(11, 29)

It seems quite patent here that, not only is there no hint of apprehension in this confinement, but it also has a clearly positive value in providing protection from the "paorosa existència exterior".

Gimferrer continues to indicate the rôle of the sky in this process: "És assimilable amb aquest tema un d'encara més pròpiament claustrofòbic: el cel aclaparador, reduït a la dimensió d'una campana pneumàtica".⁹ The first two examples he cites, however, do not necessarily suggest this: "L'ombra dels ocells prisoners de l'ampla claraboia celeste". Here the adjective "ampla" would seem to suggest quite the opposite:

El cel descendí fins a acotxar-nos, i les muntanyes veïnes ... feren un bell clos que limità l'horitzó de guisa ... que el firmament alenés com si l'univers s'hagués reduït al nostre racó solaçívol.

Gertrudis, distreta de la meva dilecció, desenganxava els estels ...

(11, 26)

Once again, "bell clos" does not imply any unease at the enclosure. Moreover, the tone and mood of the passage is light-hearted and jovial, with the poet pleased by the reduction of the universe and the ensuing events.

The final extract adduced by the critic has a different aspect when examined in its full context:

De l'interior de les cases sortien rares músiques com d'un estoig de cigars harmònic. El cel de pur cristal es podia tocar amb les mans. Blava, vermella,verde o grøga, cada casa tenia hissada la seva bandera. Si no hagués anat carregat d'un feixuc bidó de vernís, inelegant, m'hauria estret més el nus de la corbata.

(11, 24)

If anything it is an impression of beauty or enjoyment which is offered by this confinement. In this instance in particular, the setting is colourful and harmonious, so much so that the protagonist is induced to try to improve his appearance to blend in better with the elegance of the scene. It is this tone of gaiety and playfulness which relates closely to a central and yet much underestimated

element of Foix's work - humour. As this study progresses we shall have occasion to examine this aspect more closely.

Similarly in KRTU, enclosure provides the same type of protection as was seen previously in "La Vila". In "Vindré més tard demà", the author is terrified by the grotesque disguises worn by the mother of his girl-friend:

- Vindré més tard demà. Em fa por de trobar ta mare, com cada vespre, a cada portal del teu carrer, amb una disfressa diversa ... i un maquillatge esporugidor.
(11, 65)

The poet, nonetheless, manages to find shelter from this horrific situation:

Passada mitjanit, ta mare, amb les altres dones del veïnat, miola per les teulades per desvetllar l'eco esgarrifós que agonitza al fons de les xemeneies. Tu i jo aleshores, darrere el mur de desferres rovallades que jauen darrere l'hort, contemplarem, callats, com s'amaga la lluna darrera la negra muntanya inaccesible que tanca la vila.
(11, 65)

As before, the close offers some type of protection and, in addition, a clearly uplifting experience as the couple watch the moon set behind the mountain.

It would seem, then, that in dealing with this theme the critics have tended to overemphasise the more undesirable aspect of confinement. In Foix's first two prose collections we have found only one genuine example of claustrophobia. It appears in the section "Retorn a la natura" from KRTU:

Fugir ... Hi ha una mà a cada estança, hi ha uns llavis al llindar de les cabanes, hi ha uns braços darrere els troncs caiguts. Hi ha un cel tan baix que no em deixa passar. Fugir ...
(11, 60)

In the other cases, as we have seen, enclosure has a much more positive value. It affords protection and also lends itself to the achievement

of some sort of emotional uplift. On occasions the account is even light-hearted and this theme, as is common with Foix, pervades the entire creative output. This may be illustrated with reference to the final poem of Tocant a mà (1972), with that cryptic dry humour - so typical of the later work - which accompanies the narrative. The inhabitants of the poet's village decide to pull down the ancient and mysterious town-wall in order to ascertain what wonders lie behind it. Once this is completed and the neighbours are confronted with a mere void, "un tot clar sense forma ni color", they resolve immediately to re-erect the structure. The wall clearly provides the same protection and security as offered by its counterpart in "La Vila" from Gertrudis. Even those brave enough to have determined to set foot on the other side were duly persuaded against such an act and the fate of those who crossed over by accident is quite amusingly recounted:

Aquells o aquelles qui es decidien o resolien a fer-ho, [penetrar-hi] s'aturaven, es plantaven arran del límit d'aquell buit-ple sobirà, i, espardits, reculaven com si algú els empenyés, més fort que ells. El veïnat va cuitar a aplegar-se per acordar la reconstrucció. Va apilar materials tot aprofitant la runa; però tantost algú petjava la terra allà on la Paret havia topiat, d'aquell costat, la vila, imaginava quimeres i fugia cap a la plaça on hi ha l'església, la fleca, la taverna i l'apotecari o s'enfilava per la drecera del puig. Aquest fet, ja registrat als arxius, va fer que, a la terra dels meus, posar-se de cara a la paret té un sentit divers al del càstig escolar.

(11, 404)

The basic re-reading of this theme brings home the full importance of relating any extract to its context and also underlines the necessity to be fully sensitive to the subtle modulations in tone and mood which are such a feature of Foix's poetic art.

c) Mutations

This motif is one employed most extensively and successfully by Foix and is central to the expression of his basic poetic message. Metamorphosis, from mythological and classic times and renewed by surrealism, has been a favoured means of conveying the essential indestructible and perennially self-renewing quality of creation. Pere Gimferrer has applied this criterion most penetratingly to Foix's early work:

Bé que a Gertrudis dominiò encara netament els elements quotidians i els efectes màgics recolzin principalment en dades de la vida més simple i domèstica ja ens és possible de veure-hi allò que propiament definirà el caràcter visionari de la poesia foixiana: les transicions, les brusques mutacions; que constitueixen l' argument de la major part dels poemes ... són metàfores del caràcter canviant d'una realitat que constantment es veu ultrapassada per les seves secretes forces latents.¹⁰

This is, of course, central to Foix's weltanschauung and will be the subject of closer examination in the next chapter. However, it is of particular relevance here with relation to the changes in size experienced by the author/protagonist, and how this effects our impression of the poetic reality which he creates.

Patricia Boehne has been quick to point out the harrowing nature of these mutations, tying in with the elements of fear and violence which the critics have felt predominant in the poet's early work, and is quite correct in interpreting them as translating the traumatic transition from adolescence to manhood:

Rites of adulthood are exquisitely expressed in "Christmas Story" ... This smallness constitutes a dominant theme of this first book, the alienation of a poet and his solitary and distorted perceptions during rites of adulthood. The props for these rites are horses, mountain heights, village architecture,

the shoes, stockings and garments of Gertrudis, gifts of watercolours, cloaks, flowers, and weapons which result in malevolence and mockery. There are large, masked authority figures: messengers from the king, guards, trolley conductors, band directors, outright rivals in a duel, mythological monsters, and inspectors.¹¹

This theme, then, is taken as crystallizing the horror and brutality which has been seen as characteristic of Gertrudis and KRTU. Pere Gimferrer had earlier reached a similar conclusion with reference to this same poem:

podem considerar que el "Conte de Nadal" és el poema cabdal de Gertrudis, i el que millor pot resumir-ne el sentit. El fil conductor del poema és l'empetitament, el retorn a la infància, i, més enllà, la por del buit, la por de ser engolit per un món advers.¹²

It is quite correct to point out that apprehension and anxiety are integral parts of this phenomenon, as can be appreciated from this prose poem in particular:

Els estels eren més alts que mai. ¿Per què a la meva gorra de mariner deia Pelayo? ¿Com és que jo duia els pantalons curts de quan era infant? Per què tant de fred, tanta de soledat? Em vaig, posar a plorar.
(11, 42)

However, the question is much more complex than this, as a whole gamut of emotions are associated with the poet's reduction in size. Though the author may feel afraid when he assumes the physique of a child, the giants or homenassos who confront him often acquire a positive quality. In "Conte de Nadal", the enormous vigilant offers assistance and protection:

Fou aleshores quan vaig topar amb el vigilant nocturn del meu barri, que anava de gran uniforme com per ofici: de la festa major, però amb les clauasses de cada nit a la mà, el fanal i la llança. Em digué que m'acompanyaria perquè el camí era llarg i perdedor ... Vaig sentir-me petit, petit davant aquell home que em deia de vós, i vaig tenir fred, molt de fred. El vigilant, amatent, em cobrí - oh, sorpresal - amb un gruixut abrigall multicolor que jo havia regalat a Gertrudis ...

Vaig agafar-me instantívolament de la mà del vigilant cada vegada, als meus ulls, més homenàs.

(11, 41)

Similarly the giants, who initially frightened the protagonist, often afford the poet something positive by the end of the poem. This can be seen from two passages from KRTU. "Palplantat a la porta ..." begins with the poet's movements being restricted:

Palplantat, a la porta i de cara al carrer, aquest homenàs no em deixa passar ... Faré tard a l'Institut; em cal examinar - Faré tard a l'oficial - M'esperen a casa ...! - Em poso a plorar.

(11, 58)

His reaction is one of panic, yet by the third and final paragraph Foix recognises the homenàs and relates to him in a much different way:

- Et coneix, maniquí, restaré sempre més sota la teva guarda. Cada vespre, quan tanco els ulls per a adormir-me per l'obertura de l'angle que dibuixen el teu coll i la teva espatlla dreta les verges passen en caravana en mig d'un silenci rosa ...

(11, 58)

This idea is expressed more succinctly in the penultimate piece of the collection:

L'Home-Que-Ven-Coco s'ha posat un bigoti postís tan gros que m'ha fet plorar de por. M'ha agafat de la mà i m'ha fet entrar al fons de l'establa on dormen els cavalls negres. Perquè, callés m'ha mostrat, a través d'una escletxa enterenyinada el vague paisatge on mil rius d'argent moren al mar, i m'ha omplert les mans d'olives.

(11, 79)

Terror soon gives way to a concerned paternal reaction on the part of the coconut vendor which leads on to the rewarding vision of the silver rivers. The gift of the olives underlines the fullness of this experience.

In the same way there are certain aspects in an earlier piece - "Sense simbolisme. Gertrudis" - which indicate that Pere Gimferrer's

reference to this topic as "el tema ... de l'empetitament davant un món hostil" is far too general a statement. Here, the shrinking process actually exhilarates the protagonist:

el meu cos havia esdevingut el d'un infant ... Una agilitat mental em feia ubicu al traspàs de les passions humanes i una agilitat corporal em permetia de lliurar-me al màxim plaer: arronsar-me al pas de la gent i refugiar-me sota la crosta de les grans ciutats per a copsar la melodia que les seves passes ferrenyes entonen en oblació a la meva poquesa.

(11, 28)

In addition, in "Sense Simbolisme - Gertrudis", the author's size actually increases in relation to the universe which also produces an uplifting effect, emphasised by the breezy tone which Foix adopts:

El cel descendí fins a acotxar-nos ... i que el firmament alenés com si l'univers s'hagués reduït al nostre racó solacívol.

Gertrudis, distreta de la meva dilecció, desenganxava els estels d'un a un i es esbaldia amb esgarifança d'infinit en un aiguamoll verd-argent, tot lliurant-los als gripaus, els quals, reconeguts, iniciaren una cridòria infame que vaig cuitar a harmonitzar mitjançant un sistema de pedals que havia disposat la meva amada provident.

(11, 26)

Much in the same way as the theme of alienation, this topic recurs throughout Foix's work with this same multi-faceted quality. In "Com que les velles fetilleres" from Del "Diari 1918", the poet seeks protection and goes to his mother like a frightened child: "Jo he passat la nit a la falda de la mare ..." (11, 131). However, in "De pujada pel carrer del Mig" from L'Estrella d'En Perris, the scene described by the vet is attractive because of its augmented size: "... el bell espectacle de lesombres d'home i cavall alegantades i allargades, vistents a tots racons de la vila". (11, 162)

As with the vigilant in "Conte de Nadal", the author finds comfort in the security afforded by his giant companion in the passage "Lo

Pep Boig" from Darrer Comunicat: "És alt, caraplé i galtavermell, i m'empetiteix. Li diuen lo Pep boig, i això em conforta i m'encoratja." (11, 366)

The autobiographical protagonist also enjoys similar physical aggrandisement as to that evident in "Sense Simbolisme. Gertrudis". In "Com que les velles fetilleres ..." from Del Diari 1918, the poet stands up to those who terrorise the town and threaten his family. "Jo alt i corpulent, he protegit els meus" (11, 131). Similarly in "Tots som vacarissos" from Tocant a mà, Foix is actually a giant himself "Nosaltres érem ja uns gegants nodrits per insòlita saba ..." (11, 412)

Pere Gimferrer has been sensitive to the treatment of this theme in the later work and with reference to the above passage he states: "notem que en aquest cas l'empetitament es transfereix als éssers de l'entorn, mentre que els narradors esdevenen gegants: aquest episodi confirma i fa explícita la intercanviabilitat del tema d'empetitament i el dels homenassos." ¹³

However, the critic fails to mention that there are examples of this recurrent motif from the first collection onwards. He also neglects to draw the logical conclusion that if shrinking induces fear then increase in size should achieve the opposite. This would be essential in order to give us a complete appreciation of the workings of Foix's imagination. In any case, as has been seen, this theme is far too complex and delicate, with all its subtle nuance and variation, indeed its humour, to be filed in the two simple categories of empetitament and homenassos.

Fear as a Positive Force

As has been suggested, when these three major themes of J.V. Foix's early work are given closer examination the significance of terror is not as overwhelming as has been previously suggested. We do not wish, however, to play down too much the relevance of fear. It is clearly evident in both poetry and prose, though a detailed reading of this topic gives a more complete picture of a very complex emotional spectrum.

There is no doubt that at times in Gertrudis, the author is scared out of his wits. The frenzied tone of "Que hagin aparedat portals ..." conveys this most forcefully:

que els arbres per damunt els murs s'estenguin en rares floracions vermelles i que tots els carrers donin a la mar abocats en esculls temibles ... que els ocells s'occeixin en topar amb el cel arran del sostre; que el cel sigui només un trist miratge de la mar. ¿Què em pot sorprendre si avui he vist saltar de cop els lloms dels meus llibres i he descobert la putrefacció cancerosa que destrossa llurs entranyes?

(11, 22)

Similarly in "Vindré més tard demà" from KRTU, the poet is terrified by his girlfriend's mother:

ahir, asseguda a l'entrada de la carnisseria, tota de negre, en passar jo, alçà els braços enlaire per dibuixar, amb llur ombra ... no sé quin ocell malèfic, dues portes més amunt ... m'amenaçava amb lúbric esguard i, en veure'm fugir, se'm presentà, en tombant la cantonada, vestida de gran senyora, per provocar la meva sorpresa.

(11, 65)

Yet, in the main, this phobia also has a more positive quality. As was apparent with relation to the theme of alienation, the sense of fear can be counterbalanced by one of exhilaration. This is made patent in a sonnet from the first section of Sol, i de dol:

Jo tem la nit, però la nit m'emporta ...
La fosca nit m'aparenta pissarra
I, com l'infant hi dibuix rares testes,
Un món novell i el feu que el desig narra.

(1, 51)

Here, we have a clear statement of apprehension in the first line which is accompanied by a definite spiritual uplift. This is subsequently associated with inspiration for the creative experience as Foix draws the mysterious heads and a new reality.

A similar combination of emotions is again expressed in two further poems in Sol, i de dol; "En tendre prat ..." and the later "Seguir de nit ...":

En tendre prat gaudir el paisatge estricta
Però trèmer amb el blat i la rosella.
(1, 87)

I tenir por, com si ens colpis la llosa
d'un destí sense flam. Però gaudir
de l'unic só
(1, 101)

The same mixture appears in a much more recent poem, "Jo mirava, joiós" from Desa aquests llibres al calaix de baix (1964). The opening lines of the first stanzas indicate pleasure which contrasts with the fear of the final verse. The repeated structure of the lines emphasises the link:

Quin goig sentir cantar les que insten aiguats ...
Quin pler quan garbineja tastar el most ...
Quina por tocar el pèl del Fonedís ...
(1, 337)

In this way we can see that the reaction to Foix's world has been too straightforward. Terror is indeed a dominant theme, but it is presented in a more complex multifaceted manner than hitherto suggested. In this particular case we again notice that the poet's response to his fantastic world is not unlike the classical concept of admiratio - awe and wonder - the self-same emotion of "Jo tem la nit"; "M'en maravell, i tem - o nit que afines/Astres i seny ..." (1, 51)

In Gertrudis and KRTU then - as may be deduced from our analysis of alienation, claustrophobia and mutations - the author-protagonist

is not merely apprehensive in his created environment, but experiences a combination of excited simultaneous sensations which point out the wondrous nature of existence. At the age of 80, C.G. Jung gave a more prosaic account of the state of spirit which Foix conveyed with such poetic force:

The world in which we are born is beautiful and cruel ... man must sense that he lives in a world which in some respects is mysterious ... I am astonished, sad, pleased with myself, fed up, joyful. I am all these things at once.¹⁴

As will be seen in the next chapter, the expression of these sentiments becomes much more concise as Foix matures as a poet.

Humour

The general critical tendency to dwell on the more unsavoury aspects of the poetic reality in Gertrudis and KRTU has led to the fact that much of Foix's sardonic humour and stylistic wit has been overlooked. As can be deduced from the work of Kafka and Miró, the absurdity of existence may prove to be assuring in some ridiculous aspect. This, of course, was a characteristic of the Avant-garde, as is explained by Miklos Szabolcski:

Et l'ennemi majeur, le plus suranné, le plus petit bourgeois est le sentiment, l'émotion, en remplacement de quoi on exige passion, vouloir et, surtout, rire, gouaille, rendu grotesque "humeur noir".¹⁵

The relevance of humour to the poet's function as a magus will be duly analysed in the next chapter. In this instance we merely wish to point out how it tends to act as a counterbalance to the hostility of the world that Foix presents us with in his first two collections. In "Pepa, la lletera" from Gertrudis the milkmaid is so tired after a night out that she is unable to finish her round. However, assistance is offered to her from a certain unexpected supernatural source:

Sor Roser la renyà: era tan tard! Deixà els pots al graó i entre reny i reny, els ulls se li tornaren a cloure. Aleshores, tots els balcons i totes les finestres del Clos s'esbatanaren, se sentí un bâtec d'ales dolcíssim i de cada obertura en sortí un àngel ... i omplien llurs petits gerros argentats. En descloure els ulls, els pots de llet eren buits i el carrer era ple d'un perfum de roses.

(11, 35)

These benign forces must be taken into account, along with those elements of violence and destruction, if our understanding of Foix's poetic vision is to be complete. In addition, the lightheartedness of this piece with its humourous ending contrasts sharply with those more emotionally charged passages which have been selected as representative of the early work:

El diumenge següent en sortint, a les tres de la matinada, del ball de "La Violeta", li vaig dir:-
Pepal Quina son aquest matí. Em va respondre que els dilluns santa Eulàlia li feia la feina.

(11, 35)

Similarly in KRTU, there is a whole section entitled "Presentacions" which comprises three long passages that are written in the same playful manner. They do, nonetheless, tie in with the basic thematic pattern. The return to infancy, a feature associated with the topic of mutation, is evident in the piece "Artur Carbonell". The tone of the passage is quite comical as exemplified by the schoolboy jargon employed by the poet and his friend:

¿Opoi quepet dipius Apartupur Caparboponepell? Va acostar totes dues ales al pit i amb una gran reverència va respondre: Sipil! Ens vam donar les mans i riba enllà, ens vam posar a garbellar sorra amb els dits de dues mans entrecreuats. Jo que li dic:- Què fàrds, tu, quan seràs gran? ... Aleshores ell em diu:- I tu? ... el nom - Caparboponepell - començò jo. I ell respon:- Fopoix.

(11, 75)

The question of the individual's perception of reality was, of course, a common Vanguard preoccupation and, as Professor Böhne points out, is

central to Foix's poetry:

The most startling revelation, a classic statement in his poetry, is the description of his crisis of reality - or unreality - involving his duped and distorted perception of real objects and persona.¹⁶

The critic, then, quite rightly, continues to disclose the peril and distress caused by the poet's "duped and distorted perception" with reference to the first passage from Gertrudis:

He malferit en duel el teu amant. Però perquè duus el vestit carmesí, t'en rius. I perquè, amb la teva perfidía, has substituït l'amant pel tramoista. Jo puniria la teva malifeta si el perruquer no hagués estat el teu còmplice en disfigurar-me grotescament la faç.

(11, 19)

Nonetheless, just as in the above case of the return to childhood, there is also a lighter approach to this subject:

En percebre de lluny el meu rival que m'esperava, immòbil, a la platja, he dubtat si era ell o el meu cavall o Gertrudis. En acostar-m'hi, m'he adonat que era un fal·lus de pedra, gegantí, erigit en edats pretèrites.

(1, 22)

The humour of this piece is quite reminiscent of Kafka. It is produced by the tension in the style between the poet's incredible inability to differentiate between his rival, horse, lover and gigantic phallus, and the very matter-of-fact tone he adopts to describe this to us - as if it could be considered a normal occurrence.

A similar example is to be found in the passage "Joan Miró" from "Presentacions" in KRTU. Again the initial premise seems to be so gross as to be unbelievable, but by the end, it is accepted in an ordinary fashion.

Sou un impostori! No passeu d'ésser el marit de cadascuna d'aquestes dames - que ja són 30, 38, 49, 97, 100 ...- i us heu deixat un bigoti com el d'En Joan Miró. Ni sou inspector ni sou En Miró. Però. Déu meu ¿i si fóssiu el pintor Miró, marit de cadascuna,

d'aquestes dames? Però En Miró fa temps que s'ha afaitat el bigoti. Si no portéssiu aquest bigotàs, jo diria que sou En Miró... Sou En Miró, és cert, En Joan Miró, el pintor Joan Miró. ¿Què tal Miró com esteu, perdoneu, i cadascuna de les vostres mullers ...?
 (11, 74)

The whole situation is quite ridiculous, but, narrated in this carefree gay manner this topic is treated with a refreshing frivolity in marked contrast to the other instances we have seen.

There are further examples, not strictly related to any particular theme, where there is a sudden shift in tone and mood by the poet, which produces a definite humourous response. This is generally achieved by lapsing into the realms of absurdity in the description of the action. In "Conte de Nadal" Foix feels cold and alone as, childlike, he finds himself in a menacing situation:

Em vaig posar a plorar. El vigilant ... per conhortar-me feia saltar les claus, alçava i abaixava el fanal amb la punta de la llança i s'esforçava per mirar-me amb dolcesa. Impotent per a vèncer la meva rebequeria, amb veu de falset es posà a cantar velles nadales populars tot acompañant-ne el ritme amb rars picaments de peus.

(11, 42)

The image of the falsetto voiced night-watchman singing carols accompanied by some strange foot-tapping is quite ludicrous. However, the desired end is achieved and the mood of fear is entirely dissipated.

"On aniré tot sol" is written in a similar amusing vein, though it deals with the author's alienation from the rest of the community. In this example the poet is a signpainter, yet he only ever paints the same thing: "pinto rètols a totes les cases: COTILLAIRE, COTILLAIRE, COTILLAIRE, COTILLAIRE". The choice of corset-maker is frivolous enough to provoke a smile, yet this becomes more exaggerated, as the baker scolds the author for omitting the letter T from his sign:

Però el flequer que m'havia contractat ahir, em per-seguí llanterna en mà fins a la placeta i m'obligà a acabar la T del rètol a casa seva.

(11, 66)

This same type of humorous absurdity typifies the section "Notes sobre la mar" in Gertrudis. It is not our intention here to discuss the theme of time or the symbolic import of the sea in Foix's poetry; time will be examined in the next chapter. We merely wish to indicate the continuous modulations in tone and mood throughout the early work, which puts a different complexion on our appreciation of the subject matter.

This whole section is imbued with a light-heartedness which is apparent in the Anglican vicar's reaction to the poet's false nose in the second poem:

Era un pastor anglícà, i em volia demostrar com els miracles més bells s'han esdevingut a la mar. En adonar-se, però, del meu nas arbitrari, tingué la polidesa de calar-se el seu.

(11, 37)

Clearly the ecclesiastic carries one round with him in case of such eventuality. The fourth passage continues in this jocular vein, judging by the incessant laughter of the author and his friends.

"- Vosaltres també per ací? I riguèrem follament ... a grans riallades ... tots de negre, i rient ... ". (11, 38)

Finally, the closing image of the penultimate piece is of a similar frivolity:

Només entre la mar i el cel, solitàries, les mitges vermelles de Gertrudis pengen, com un parrac de bandera mil·lenària de l'arbre d'un vaixell-serpent d'Oscher, el wíking famós.

(11, 38)

This brand of humour, though light-hearted in places, is on the whole, quite uninhibited, which makes it typical of the Avant-garde. Needless to say, as Foix matures as a poet a greater degree of subtlety becomes apparent than is evident in the output examined here.

In this elementary revision of Foix's early work we have attempted to afford a more rounded interpretation of the nature of the poet's created reality. Until now, the general critical tendency had been to see violence, hostility and terror as being the predominant - if not exclusive - components. These aspects are undoubtedly present but there are also other equally important ingredients to this author's intensely charged allegorical world. As was evident from our re-appraisal of the major themes of alienation, confinement and mutations, the more positive dimension of artistic inspiration, security and emotional uplift is also part and parcel of the overall experience which correspondingly presents us with a more complete response, on the part of the poet, to his situation.

In this respect the question of humour is also of importance. In the following chapter we shall examine its relevance to the artist's condition as communal hierophant; in Gertrudis and KRTU it recalls that "humour noir" which translated the Vanguard vision of the apparent absurdity of existence. Once this ridiculous element is appreciated then much of the implied tension is released from the work, which allows for a more distanced and objective approximation to the intricacies and nuances of the expression itself.

It is through this type of exercise in critical re-appraisal that one recognises the necessity to be fully sensitive to the sudden shifts in tone and mood and also aware of the need to be consistent in one's relating of the extract to its context in order to avoid a biased or prejudiced response to the subtle complexities of Foix's art.

NOTES TO CHAPTER V

1. Catalan Literature, p. 105.
2. La Poesia de J.V. Foix, p. 34.
3. Ibid., p. 16.
4. Prologue to JVF., Diari 1918 (1981), p. 11.
5. J.V. Foix, pp. 41-43.
6. Prologue to JVF., Obres Completas, II, p. 14.
7. Poesia de J.V. Foix, pp. 11-37.
8. Prologue to JVF., Diari 1918, p. 11.
9. Poesia de J.V. Foix, p. 15.
10. Ibid., p. 20.
11. J.V. Foix, p. 30.
12. Poesia de J.V. Foix, p. 18.
13. Ibid., p. 90.
14. C.G. Jung, interview with BBC Radio, July 24, 1955.
15. "L'Avant-garde littéraire et artistique comme phénomène international", p. 320.
16. J.V. Foix, p. 26

Chapter VI

The Fullness of Poetic Vision

In any type of thematic analysis of Foix's creative work one is continually referred back to Arthur Terry's proposition that implicit in Gertrudis and KRTU is the chrysalis of the entire artistic expression. Patricia Boehne has reacted in a similar manner:

For the careful reader and student of Foix, there is present [in the early output] the embryo of Foix's later ideas on poetry, his style and dramatic material.¹

As might be expected, after KRTU, that stylistic flamboyance so typical of the first two collections is superseded by a much more controlled and terse idiom, as evinced by the submission to the formal demands of the sonnet in Sol, i de dol. The effects are not a dilution of Foix's expressive energy but remarkably a concentration of it, as evidenced in the charged vitality of sections four and five of this collection.²

The writing still retains that same vibrancy so characteristic of the Vanguard movement. Nonetheless, the dynamism is now harnessed to the precise elaboration of a coherent artistic creed to which the poet will remain faithful throughout the remainder of his career.

In this respect we might compare the development of Foix with that of Salvat-Papasseit. Just as Salvat's "entusiasme" subscribes initially to Vanguard antagonism and then adapts to express the more cosmic quality of his poetic vision, so Foix combines the weight of his intellect with the vitality or "risc"³ of his early work for the transmission of his own particular insight. It is this unravelling of a cogent, systematic artistic voice from the extravagancies of Gertrudis and KRTU that we shall endeavour to record in this chapter.

The cohesive force at the centre of this creative constancy might be described in terms of the development or amplification of a communal sentiment in the writer himself from the initial basis of Gertrudis, KRTU and Sol, i de dol. This consists of three principal elements which are seen as a natural sequel to those themes discussed in the preceding chapter:- 1) Foix's basic poetic vision 2) the stylistic communication of this weltanschauung 3) the function of the artist in his ethos.

Once again, given the intensity of Foix's craftsmanship, it is quite impossible to extricate these items for any real individual analysis. Consequently, as before, a certain amount of cross-reference and overlapping will be inevitable. Nonetheless, it is hoped that by focusing our attention on these central issues we may achieve a greater appreciation not only of Foix's insight but also of the actual mechanics of his art, whilst avoiding the limitations which would be imposed by an examination of the idiosyncrasies of the various collections.

Foix as a Visionary

As was established in the last chapter, the topic of alienation is intrinsically linked with the question of the poet's activity as a creative artist, as seen in "On aniré tot sol" (KRTU) and the sonnet, "Jo tem la nit, però la nit m'emporta" (Sol, i de dol). We also mentioned the more "sacred" implications of this estrangement concerning the actual rôle of the literary genius in society. It had been an ancient convention, one resurrected by the Romantics, to view the poet as a type of mystagogue - a man apart with a privileged understanding and message. This attitude was in turn adopted by the Avant-garde, as explained

by Miklos Szabolski, and it is this tradition that is followed by Foix and Salvat-Papasseit:

le poète est un individu privilégié de la société, parce-qu'il peut acquérir une importance communautaire exceptionnelle. Le nouveau type d'écrivain crée, quasi de soi-même, le précurseur de la société nouvelle dans son esprit, son comportement et sa morale.

From his earliest offerings onwards Foix has displayed a definite tendency to portray himself as a visionary. Even amidst the adolescent traumas of the journey to manhood as described in Gertrudis this quality still comes to the fore. In "Conte de Nadal", we see the poet trying to officiate at some type of religious ceremony:

Vet ací els vigilants formats, vet ací el meu guia;
vet ací el garatge que cercàvem: tothom s'agenolla
i jo intento, inútilment, de cantar. Hossannal Hossannal
(11, 45)

Similarly in KRTU, the narrator reads a hauntingly vibrant litany which conveys the "sanctity" of this fundamentalistic vision:

Jo llegia: "e'ls pexos són feits a imatge e semblaça
de Déus: e'ls pexos en paradís volen e'ls ocells,
caiguts dins les aigües negres dels pous de l'infern,
s'hi neguen sense morir mai. E la faç humana és
semblant a peix. E Déus és peix."
(11, 70)

The elaboration of an archaic oracular idiom to complement the ancient priestly function is a further ingredient of this phenomenon. In this respect we might also mention Foix's passion for the language⁴ which was harnessed to a consciousness of the indigenous and Mediterranean literary tradition. The references in Sol, i de dol to LLull, March, the troubadours and dolcestilnovisti⁵ illustrate this admirably. The poet's imitation of these earlier styles produces what Fuster refers to as an "orçaic ... medievalisme"⁶ which enhances the effect of the hierophantic register elsewhere in the work. In poem IX of Les Irreals Omegues we again see Foix celebrating a sacred ritual with the antiquated element evident once more in the expression of the oracular vision:

Sóc el qui fou per clares torrenteres ...
I petjo ferm en nits d'eternitat ...

Us sé dorments en inclemnts pagodes
Jo, l'aigüaneix d'un planell sobirà ...

Cantaré sol per orris i calelles
El cant de tots amb aire antic i plors.

(1, 215-6)

The gifted perspective on the mystery of creation conveyed through a quasi-obsolete medium is central to the "pastoral cure" that Foix has pledged himself to fulfil and these three items reappear throughout the work as may be seen in "Vagava a galop tirat ..." and "Els Assalariats del somni ..." from On he deixat les claus:

Jo sò l'orat, segrest, amb vesta d'ungles ...
Qui, si no jo, n'és Sacerdot Suprem?

(1, 243)

Sóc el proscrit en pròpia solana
I a l'endeví vaig pels barrancs extrems;
Aprenc el cant novell dels rocs dements
I l'alfabet de les Medes pirates...
Però em negueu l'ullastre, i les argiles
Del penitent, i en un desert de plors
Clameu l'Absent ...

(1, 260)

This theme also finds response in the prose, as in "Qui vol, pot..." from L'Estrella d'En Perris, though in this particular case there is a good deal of humour apparent:

- Qui vol pot, he dit ... M'he enlairat, cama estirada i peus junts, i braç rígid i mans ajustades al cos, passa de cinc metres damunt la carretera. Ni al camp ni a la ciutat no hi ha obstacles, per a mi. Salvo els éssers i els objectes amb un acte senzill i natural de levitació. Em sorprèn la resistència que la gent d'ací, i la d'altres contrades ... oposen a l'exercici de la més noble, humana i franca de les facultats: alçar-se uns quants pams d'en terra.

(11, 197)

A similar case is "Tots som vacarissos" from Tocant a mà, recounted, as the title suggests, in the same jovial tone. Here, levitation is coupled with an inexplicable obsession with taking measurements, which leaves the inquisitive cowherd - by extension the reader - completely and utterly perplexed:

el que jo vull que em digueu és per què, quan no
 fa lluna, quan les negres negròrs acumulades, us
 aixequen tres pams damunt d'en terra, fiteu terres
 i terrancs que poc són vostres. No avui sol: fa anys,
 jo diria segles que dura. A cada lluna nova ...tresqueu,
 sense fer brogit, pels rocs i les comelles altes, i
 amideu, amideu amb cintes d'un vermell foguejant ...
 Nosaltres fèiem el sord i, ara amidàvem, ara mesuràvem,
 fidels a la consigna, gairebé en trànsit. - Mesurar ^{és}
 fer. Ja les cintes de foc arrenyalaven un poblat novell
 on anem a l'alba, on exaltem el Sol, i avaluem cosees,
 cossos i somnis.

(11, 411-12)

In this instance there is a slight variation in that Foix is not alone but is surrounded by a group of fellow initiates who enjoy the same position of privilege. The change from the first person singular to the plural is an important development in the later work and will be discussed in the final section of this chapter. However, in this instance we return to the basic point at issue which is that humour, together with a sense of inspired alienation, is a further integral attribute of the poet's priestly function. The key themes of Gertrudis and KRTU are thus repeated.

The pristine nature of the persona of the seer and the full significance of the oracular idiom will be examined after a brief but necessary explication of Foix's insight. As for the question of playfulness, it is not only relevant to the artist's rôle but, as we shall see, is also central to the actual expression stemming from an inherent tension in the poetry between the simplicity of the message and the complexity of the style.

L'U Clarós de J.V. Foix

If the reader's initial reaction to Foix's art is one of bafflement when confronted with its apparent indecipherability, the same cannot be said about the actual poetic vision, which is both simple and straightforward. We are informed of this fact

at various intervals, the most obvious example being the celebrated reply to the epistle from Joan Ferraté:

E si mos llibres cars - e tant - studiàs
 Esdevindria altr'home a trebayl e solaç.
 E viuria l'Etern a tant d'instant de pas,
 Colria Déus pertot, e.n l'Univers feraç
 Veuria l'U clarós; e si l'il.lumindàs
 La fe que leva'ls monts, no tembria traspàs.
 (1, 282)

Each discrete particle of creation, then, is taken as an integral part of the greater eternal unit - "l'U clarós" - a monad of the entire cosmos, as Arthur Terry has summarized:

Es tracta, evidentment, d'una teoria que pressuposa la idea d'un ordre transcendental, d'un univers divinalment estructurat en el qual tot objecte pot ésser una representació de la Unitat fonamental?

Consequently, although man may be confronted with a multitude of different or even opposing forms, he may look deeper and recognise their essential similarity and thereby conclude that all things are basically and perpetually identical. Foix explains this process in sonnet X from Sol, i de dol:

Amb ulls carnals opòs núvols i mars
 I n'hec l'encís que em treu de tants de llots,
 I de l'advers renasc. I amb tant de brots,
 Aigua i clarors, i el fosc i el roig de l'orç
 Faig l'U divers i múltiples les arts ...
 Tants de glans, doncs, i un sol Gla, i del vinyet
 Un Cep etern;

(1, 55)

Castellet and Molas have, in turn, given a concise and comprehensive elucidation of this procedure:

La Natura no és sinó un complex caòtic d'aparences contradictòries, que el poeta formula d'acord amb la gran tradició de la lírica trobadoresca, petrarchista i autòctona però a la base del qual hi ha un Tot - un U - irreductible que, Etern, li dóna sentit. El llibre, doncs, com bona part de la seva obra lírica, és un desplegament, prodigiós i optimista - més: esportiu -, d'aquesta Natura i, alhora, de l'esforç d'ordenar-la

intellectualment i de descobrir-ne la Unitat i l'Eternitat Últimes ... Les concretacions solen concretar-se, és lògic, en diversos jocs d'opòsits: Raó-Follia, Voluntat-Indolència, Art nou-Art vell, etc ... Realitat-Ficció ...⁸

One can readily appreciate why in this excellent definition the commentators centre on the question of esportivat. The "jocs d'opòsit" which they correctly infer to be the nexus of Foix's output, reveal an underlying and implicit conceit in the expression of the poetic vision. If all creation shares the same essence then even independent and opposing elements are not disparate but basically similar. Moreover, the juxtaposition of these entities will not, therefore, manifest their difference but will rather accentuate their identity. This affords the poet the opportunity to employ the most unexpected of associations and the most powerful and daring of metaphors to convey a message which is essentially quite straightforward and simple.

There are, of course, countless examples of this technique throughout Foix's work, though it is particularly noticeable in Les Irreals Omegues with the fusion of the "opposites" of light and darkness. It is used so extensively in this collection that it becomes something of a motif:

I fórem U, Alba i Nit en un crit:

(II, I, 197)

La llum m'aombra i puny;

(III, I, 201)

Alba del dia total, i crepuscle!

(VII, I, 211)

-- En fer-nos nit en nit profunda oberta
A l'albaneix de la Nit immutable -.

(VIII, I, 213-14)

I us projecteu a l'obrador dels somnis
A un enllà esvaït, en negre i blanc.

(IX, I, 215)

(Quan dia i nits són uns, ...)

(X, I, 218)

It is upon this device of fusion that Foix relies heavily throughout his work and it becomes quite evident that the apparently indecipherable chaos of his expression:- the non-causal action, the random illogicality of his metaphors, the nonsensical behaviour of the created reality etc-, radiates from an extremely clear and concise base of artistic reasoning. If we penetrate the superficial disorder, we should arrive at an appreciation of the coherent thematic framework which supports it, and thereby gain insight into the consistency of Foix's poetic reconstruction of reality.

Animal, Vegetable and Mineral

The interaction and inter-relationship between the natural, artificial and inanimate worlds is a constant in all Foix's creative writing and provides a fine illustration of the unifying process which the poet adopts for the transmission of his particular vision. The underlying identity is evoked primarily through the interchangeability of attributes between representative elements of these three domains. In "Notes sobre el Port de la Selva" from KRTU Foix makes extensive use of this powerful synthetic device:

Els nostres peus eren un teixit d'escata, i per damunt l'horitzó desert s'aixecava un estel de corall immens.
(11, 69)

Gimferrer has again envisaged some type of menace or ^{hindrance} evident in this mutation:

la metamorfosi ... es presenta com a causa que impedeix [al protagonista] ... de deixar l'empremta de la seva voluntat en l'univers exterior; d'incidir-hi, de transcendir-hi, de superar el clos de la individualitat amenaçada..

The critic is once more over exclusive in his reaction to this topic. We may see this with reference to the following passage taken from the same section, where the integration is described in

a carefree, if not enjoyable manner. More important, we should emphasise the relevance of this stylistic syncretism to Foix's fundamentalistic vision:

el meu cos era un teixit estès de caragols petris,
de petxines antidiluvianes, de delicioses miniatures
peroxidades d'animals desapareguts. Al fons de rars
intersticis, una membrana transparent descobria mera-
vellosos paisatges submarins, per on els signes del
zodíac flotaven lluminosos. Pel passadís obscur que
travessa la roca Teiera ...avançava una insòlita pro-
cessó de monstres: pops amb potes de camell, gegants
amb testa de cavall, mans hercúlies sostingudes per
finíssimes potes d'estruç, ulls de còrnia fosforescent
entre enormes pestanyes d'escata.

(11, 70)

As was mentioned earlier, this interchangeability pervades the entire work, but is particularly apparent in: Del "Diari 1918", Darrer Comunicat, and Onze Nadals:

un arbust precolonial o un aeròdrom en procés d'ossificació ...
(11, 103)

Els rocs de la terra s'han reclòs sota llurs tímides
ales de mica i els he sentit respirar.

(11, 110)

Del "Diari 1918"

Si sóc dalt els Morunys quan tot, masos i munts i
ocells són aurora, i miro la vall i la conca, tot és
una mar d'escumes silencioses ... em giro a mirar
el mar, tot és un bosc frondós amb espessor de branques:
També quan sóc amb tu, ara ets la nit amb plugim
de pol·lens i crits ... ara ets un camp assolellat, sota
un cel net, amb flors als cims i càntics.

(11, 351)

El comboi ha sortit amb ella sola i els astres ...
(11, 345)

Darrer Comunicat

Ja En Marbre, dret us anomena clar ...
I Na Fontana us allarga les mans ...
Us dóna el braç Na Canya mitjancera ...
En Fred s'alzina i les pinyes s'escuen,
Na Boira us dóna el ram: ja sou a prop.
Canta N'Arbre tremós ...

(I, 318)

Onze Nadals

As is apparent from these examples, the poet has become more stylistically restrained in the use of this technique than was the case in the early work. We may illustrate this with a comparison between the passage quoted earlier from KRTU, which is impressive albeit extravagant, and an extract from 97 Notes Sobre Ficcions Poncianes (1974), where the tone of the passage is so low key that the poet seems to be mocking himself and his use of this device:

Potser hi ha de tot en aquest reialme de la por sense basarda, de l'home abans o després le l'home, de la confusió - o de la fusió - en imprudent barreja dels tres regnes naturals. Un roc és un home, una palmera té aletes de peix, i un mol·lusc vola pels cims d'una muntanya envellutada.

(11, 326)

All in all it seems that Foix has hit upon a most suitable and successful formula which allows him to have his cake and eat it. The poet can produce a stunning impact with these remarkable associations and extraordinary metaphor, whilst retaining a congruent and extremely logical concept at the basis.

As our analyses progress we shall continue to appreciate that the startling facet of Foix's work is the fact that the superficially senseless, disjointed series of referents are in essence a chain of coherent and systematic representations of a central purpose. This makes the poetry a virtual artistic image of the author's fundamentalistic perception of the enormous diversity of the universe.

Art and Reality

This propensity for fusion was, of course, quite characteristic of the modern spirit. We infer this from the many attempts made to eliminate the barriers which separate the various art-forms themselves, as Renato Poggiali explains with reference to the general European trend:

The experimental aspect of avant-garde art is manifested not only in depth, within the limits of a given art form, but also in breadth, in the attempts to enlarge the frontiers of that form or to invade other territories, to the advantage of one or both of the arts ... Such inquiries had also been preceded by Wagner's experiments with music drama, aspiring, as it did, to a syncretism of the arts ... But later experimentalism wished to be or, better, dreamed it could go far beyond that ... Starting from the theory of typographical emphasis, dear to Mallarmé in his later phase and to the futurists, which gave a page of poetry the guise of a poster or a musical score, 'In Apollinaire's footsteps... Reverdy went so far as to postulate a plastic lyricism.¹⁰

Without elaborating any concrete theory to this effect, Foix comments extensively on the relationship between painting and literature in 97 notes sobre ficcions poncianes (1974) in a similar manner:

Si no saben llegir la pintura ¿com volen que mirin i vegin la poesia?

(11, 317)

La vostra pintura, Ponç, no tapa les meves?

(11, 337)

Els bells camins es multipliquen allà on creien que acaba la carretera. Un artista, músic, pintor, poeta o arquitecte neixen de nou, cada dia, amb l'aurora.

(11, 331)

On a more immediate level, Molas and Gimferrer have indicated the influence of Chirico on our poet:

Un món que a través de símbols, i d'objectes, trets, a la vegada de la pintura metafísica de Giorgio di Chirico - torres, castells, guants, maniquins, etc. - i de la poètica surrealista.¹¹

Ultra les possibles connotacions psicoanalítiques d'aquesta imatge, cal remarcar que és típica de la "pintura metafísica" de Giorgio de Chirico, produïda, en els any (1912-1917) immediatament anteriors o contemporanis a la redacció dels textos inicials del Diari 1918.¹²

Patricia Boehne has also been sensitive to this aspect but finds it more reminiscent of the work of Dalí and Miró:

This surreal landscape, a painting in words, is in accord with the paintings of artists such as Dalí and Miró, whom Foix admired and introduced to the public via art columns in this period.¹³

A certain amount of Foix's subject matter may be taken from Chirico and his poetic scenery quite often recalls a Dalí landscape, but in terms of overall inspiration and expression the similarity with Miró is quite striking.

Our initial incomprehension and intrigue when confronted with an artefact by either craftsman imbues the object with an aura of mystery and enchantment. The coarse texture of a Miró canvas corresponds closely to the harshness of Foix's trobar clus language, as does the sense of primitivism they share. Their reaction of awe and wonder in the face of the enormity and eventual unity of creation is conveyed analogously by the juxtaposition of cosmic and telluric elements on the same place. The most impressive correlation, however, lies in the area of stylistic constancy. Each of the two artists has remained - and remains - faithful to an individual idiom which was adopted as early as the 1920s.

The significance of Art in Foix's work, nonetheless, is more profound and constitutes another of the poet's major themes. Pere Gimferrer has remarked pertinently on how often in the prose work the poet's environment becomes a theatrical setting, and has cited assiduously to this effect. We give here a few of his examples:

El cel, amb el sol, la lluna i els estels, es mou
suavament com una bambolina.

("La Vila" ll. 30)

Entre bambolina i bambolina oscil·lava el primer estel
(Conte de Nada ll. 40)

[from Gertrudis]

hem pintat el mar.

... He hissat bambolines velles, amb complaença ...

("He recolzat la bicicleta ...

(ll. 141)

[Del "Diarí" 1918]

In L'Estrella [En Perris], as the critic points out, we have the re-elaboration of the moving wood scene from Macbeth:

Mira com s'acosten tumultuosos els soldats que assetgen el crepuscle amb armes fulgents al puny.
Són a milers, amb casc i cuirassa negres. M'has estret, dolça la mà, i has repost que era la roureda que avançava i creixia.

(11, 167)

Gimferrer, however, does not comment on the metaphoric union between art and reality which the poet is trying to achieve by this process. Indeed it is only in his observations on "Tot és u?" from Tocant a mà, where Foix makes his intentions quite patent, that the expositor draws the logical conclusions:

En la primera part, s'ens presenta un univers que ja coneixem per l'obra anterior del poeta: el món escenogràfic, de decoració teatral. A la segona part, es produeix una transició: l'aparició del Mar, "real i irreductible", desplaça els accessoris i les bambolines. A la tercera part, la brusca irrupció d'un bus ... fa que esdevingui dubtosa la realitat del mar, que pot arribar a confondre's amb una decoració més. La sortida del bus deixa els protagonistes immergits en una sèrie de preguntes sobre la unitat del real i del fictici, de la percepció i del somni, e el monisme final, que concilia els contraris:

¿Bambolines i bastidors de ficció de natura són uns? ... Llums de l'encesa, del reguener i de la bateria ¿són estels en la vasta bambolina celeste?
¿Gertrudis és Pilar, Sumpta. Elvira o Constança?¹⁴

By neglecting to expand here and relate this phenomenon to the rest of the poet's work, Gimferrer understates the import of this recurrent theme. In this case it is the theatre that imposes itself on reality whereas in Sol, i de dol it is painting. In sonnet XV from the first section of this collection Foix discloses his perception of the world in terms that we would associate with an artist:

Quatre colors aparien el món
On em dissolc i on la beutat consir
Si de la mar faig el meuelixir
Dels quatre tints assaig el joc pregon

Bru del teu nu i del teu ésser abscon
Blau de la mar, i dels ulls on en mir
Blanc de l'hostal i, puix que em plau el gir,
l'ardent vermell que el teu llavi difon

(1, 65)

Showing his characteristic concern for integrity, Foix duly presents us with the other half of this procedure as reality becomes Art. The poem "Jo tem la nit ..." from the same section has a particularly enigmatic last line:- "I una veu diu: 'Plou sang a les codines'." Pere Gimferrer unravels the mystery, though he does not relate the full significance of the trait to its context:

Aquest final, aparentment hermètic o esoteric és, de fet, si ens hem de guiar pel testimoniatge personal del poeta, un collage: es tracta d'un frase sentida al carrer que, isolant-la del seu context quotidià, Foix incorporà al poema ... Aquest procediment - la quotidianitat, que, en isolar-la, esdevé insòlita - és essencial en algunes parts de Sol, i de dol i en els poemes en prosa de Foix: vegeu, per exemple, "Vós, sou el vostre pare?" a Tocant a mà ... on el procediment comprèn una anècdota sencera.¹⁵

Clearly, in this respect Foix is not just rendering the commonplace prodigious; he is poeticising various aspects of everyday life without transforming them through his process of creative reconstruction. In this way he manages to achieve the fusion of actuality and its poetic representation.

As Gimferrer pointed out, this technique is quite recurrent in Foix's work though it is at its most explicit and forceful in Quatre nus (1964). If painting was selected for the treatment of this theme in Sol, i de dol and Quatre colors m'aparien el món (1975), in this collection it is sculpture. This is suggested by the title, manner and direction of the passages. In each instance the nude is discovered in the same way. The poet perceives a confused form, which is then eroded and analysed into a recognisable object - just as a sculptor would start with a block of stone and hew it into the desired shape:

guaito, captivat, un cim, on, sola entre velles devastacions braceja - objecte, imatge, o miratge - alguna cosa ... Se m'ha desvetllat una estranya amor vers un estrany simulacre. Quasi alejant, arribó el peu ventós de la immòbil silueta. És un arbre.

I (11, 228)

Al cim ... hi havia una forma d'aparença confusa. Guanyant un codinar vaig aconseguir d'arribar, sense gaire esforç a la vall on germinaven les frescors de la seva presència: Era un monòlit ...

II (11, 230)

vam veure una figura que sorgia, amb frescros humanes, de les aigues bressadores d'estels. Ens hi vam acostar, difidents ... Era una noia que s'havia banyat.

III (11, 232)

vam veure un cos, estrany a primer cop d'ull, que adés s'aixecava dret i projectava, allargassada, una ombra que jugava amb les nostresombres ... El cos, de divina aparença, era el d'un cavall que renillava suavament.

IV (11, 234)

The actual physical presence conveyed by the description underlines the fact that the object portrayed is three dimensional and statuesque:

És un arbre ... Un tronc altívol amb dues branques esteses, enamorades o suplicant, que es projecta en un airecel extenuat. És un arbre en l'espai i en els segles.

I (11, 228)

Moreover, the direction taken by the whole passage reflects the unveiling analytical process mentioned above. At the beginning the poet is wandering on some aimless excursion, but is inexorably drawn to a recognition of the structure in question.

Però, irresistible, un cruxir amorós de conquilles em distreu d'avanscar cap a l'augusta finestrella i guaito ... alguna cosa que assajo de concretar i a la descoberta de la qual he partit.

I (11, 228)

m'hi vaig perdre ... En esquivar, de cap, unes gatoses per passar enllà, vaig descobrir ...

II (11, 230)

It is with the last two sentences of each passage, that the meaning becomes apparent as Foix achieves a further juxtaposition and fusion between Art and reality:

- És l'arbre nu. És un Nu d'Arbre.
I (11, 228)
- Era una pedra nua. Era un Nu de Roc.
II (11, 230)
- Era una noia nua: Un Nu de Noia.
III (11, 232)
- Era un cavall nua: Un Nu de Cavall.
IV (11, 234)

The structure and language here emphasise the double nature of each of the items. The banal idiom of the first sentence and the natural location of the subject-matter (the country and not a museum) underline its reality. The technical register and capitals of the second phrase and the contrived poetic composition of the passages restate the artistic quality which is the other essential component.

In the epilogue the author reveals that these objects are not artistic in the academic sense of the word, but on a much deeper quintessential level:

Doncs: pedra, arbre, cavall, púgil, o donzella, nus, no són ni casts, ni mutilats, ni acadèmics; ans, per a qui sap contemplar-los en llur fons permanent de galzeran, purs.

(11, 234)

Thus Foix fuses Art and Reality as a means of expressing the basic underlying quiddity: the "fons permanent" shared by all creation. This, of course, corresponds to the stance adopted by the poet in the "Lletra a Clara Sobirós":

Si em llegeixes a mi - i temo que t'hi penses com qui vol contravenir el semàfor - recorda sempre que jo sóc un testimoni del que conto, i que el real del qual parteixo i del qual visc, amb tremors a les entranyes, com saps, i l'irreal, que tu et penses descobrir-hi són, el mateix.

(1, 28)

Consequently Foix not only removes the distinctions between the various art forms but also eliminates the barrier separating the natural and the artefact.

Reason and Passion

Sol, i de dol, to which the treatment of this theme is almost totally limited, is generally considered to be Foix's first masterpiece. This is possibly the reason why Gimferrer, in his most penetrating survey, was induced to view the six sections of the book as forming a complete and rounded whole. Familiar with Foix's devotion to the classics, the critic proceeded to conclude that the poet would also be in total sympathy with their ideals of exactness and restraint:

els temes de l'equilibri vital de la tensió asserenada entre l'art com a aventura del misteri i l'art com a realització harmoniosa del món, un món on ha estat reestablert l'ideal dels antics. El poeta n'invoca els símbols - "L'Home i el Bou i l'Arada immortals" (20, 14) - en contrast amb l'àmbit negatiu i desarrelat de la vida ciutadana; en formula el cànon: "El tot sotmès al Tot, i l'Home al seny".¹⁶

This balanced arranging of Nature based upon reason allows the author to perceive the deeper divine order behind creation, which becomes apparent in the final section:

el tema de l'ordre, el seny i l'equilibri es retroba aquest cop sotmès a la voluntat divina - "L'Absolut que ordena Vosstra Ment" (64, 4) ... El llibre, així, clou el cicle: la meditació ha accomplert la seva trajectòria. Des de la reflexió inicial, el poeta ens ha mostrat l'afany d'ordre l'equilibri entre aventura i contenció, l'arrelament, l'acompliment en l'amor, els jocs efímers de la joventut, la dramàtica requesta final de l'absolut davant el no-res.¹⁷

However, a closer examination of the final part of the collection reveals that the concepts are not as straightforward, nor the structure as symmetrical as has been suggested.

Rather than being dialogues with "un Déu que encarna l'Absolut"¹⁸ as Gimferrer proposes, these sonnets are more like impassioned outbursts to some biblical god with whom the poet wishes communion, but whose significance he is unable to incorporate onto his world picture.

This is reflected in the repeated refusal to follow the path laid down by the supreme being:

Si el vostre Buf don' Nord, m'en vaig a l'Est.
("A quin bivac ...", I, 177)

Exalt el bell
D'on sou exclòs, i dic que el negre és neu;
("Això és ver i no ...", I, 171)

Us clam per tot on Us voldria absent ...
("Cerc el que lluu ...", I, 179)

Diu, Senyor Déu, que sou temible saig,
Però em crec sol recklos en murs més alts.
("A l'endeví vaig ...", I, 181)

The tension is increased as this rejection is accompanied by desperate pleas for God to intercede and help to provide some solution to this dreadful situation:

... obriu al Vostre ròs/La meva ment!
("Feu, Senyor Déu...", I, 167)

Fixeu, Senyor, el meu límit i els confins,
Cenyiu-me tost, i reprendré la vesta ...
("Miser i trist ...", I, 169)

Déu i Senyor: dispergiu la host vil
Dels falsos nats, i cel i estel i aire
Torneu-m'els purs, i só el Vostre captaire!
("Si el cel és alt ...", I, 183)

Senyor: feu aspra i forta
L'Única Veu, la Imatge i el Seu Nom!
("Les mans en creu ...", I, 185)

Indeed this difficulty is not overcome until Onze Nadals, where Foix finally manages to perceive some type of divine nature at the basis of his poetic reality. "Tot és ací" reveals the boy Jesus as the symbol of the unity of creation with the diverse elements of the universe being summed up in him:

Quan bufa el nord, i el món real atansa
A l'U clarós...

... i tot en Vós. Tants de cors, i una Mare;
I Un sol infant entre tots j i a l'estiba
De tants de reis, Una corona viva;
Un Arbre al cim, brogent, que res no assola,
I ombra, la llar de tots, quan l'Hora arriba,
I en astres, fars i esguards, Una llum sola.
(I, 291)

Consequently the final part of Sol, i de dol gives the collection an aura of incompleteness, or open-endedness which puts a different complexion on the work in general. If the idea of a Supreme Being was incompatible with the poet's weltanschauung, then certain other elements of Foix's classicism may not be as orthodox as hitherto implied.

Gimferrer has suggested that the author was keen to subject passion to reason. However, it would seem that what Foix eventually achieves is not the subordination of one of these topics to the other, but rather a fusion of the two, which again displays a consistency in direction and style.

The two initial sections of the book elucidate the distinction between these concepts as the poet shows himself in favour of the conventional standpoint:

Oh! Si prudent i amb paraula lleugera
 Sabés fixar l'imperi de la ment,
 I amb hàbils mots la passió naixent,
 Del meu estil pogués fer presonera;
 ("Oh! Si prudent ... I, 39)

Similarly, as was seen earlier, in "Si plauen a l'esguard" we are presented with the preference for "El tot sotmès al Tot, i l'Home al seny". (I, 81).

Nonetheless, the force of passion or risc is equally strong in the poet and cannot really be played down, as seen in the opening poem of KRTU:

-
 ¿A quin indret, oh ma follia emportes
 Aquest cos meu que no tem els oratges ...?
 (II, 49)

These sentiments reappear in the early part of Sol, i de dol, and underline the depth of these desires:

Saber narrar en llenguatge vigorós
 Deler i desig, i plors i sense esforç
 Rimar bells mots amb el ritme dels cors
 Amants o folls;
 ("Saber narrar" . . I, 41)

Puix que un deler m'empeny; i tants d'atzars
 Em fan fruit, sense albir, alba i nits,
 Els rierols morents en prats florits,
 ("No pas iròs.", I, 47)

The inability to strike a balance between these two causes Foix great anguish as is indicated by the title of the second section "Si pogués acordar Raó i Follia". His state of mind is well brought out in "Com el macip errabund ...":

però no sò feliç
 I, penitent, assaig un compromís
 Entre el Seny, clar, i el deler de mes fibres.
 (I, 63)

There is the suspicion here that the classical precept of reason dominating passion is not entirely efficacious as the poet searches merely for a "compromís". This attitude is underlined in "Si en golf d'argent ...":

Si la Raó
 M'alimenta el coratge, i l'intel.lecte
 M'és brúixola i guió, per què el traüt
 De volum i color em dóna desvari
 I en terra, ferm, colg un dogma arbitrari ...?
 (I, 91)

A satisfactory solution is finally achieved in the next section which though the shortest in the book with only six poems, is in many ways the most intense. The repeated motif in these love sonnets is that of fusion which will become emblematic of the yoking of reason and passion.

The first union transpires, of course, on the physical level:

A quin abís tots dos, a quin repòs, ...
 Ens vam conèixer en equívoca imatge
 I en cels innats junyíem cos i plors.
 ("A quin abís ..." . . I, 119)

This procedure, however, becomes more intricate as the poet and beloved represent a unity which embodies concrete and intangible elements, conveyed very forcefully by the syntax:

Qui em viu en tu amb joia inseparable ...
 Qui en mi et gaudex i al teu misteri atansa ...
 I quan ma carn al teu desig s'avença ...
 ("Qui em viu en tu ..." I, 123)

The dichotomy extends to the figure of the beloved herself. As seen above, she is at once a real person - further underlined by the title "Chi e questa que ven, ch'ogn'om la mira" - yet also incarnates beauty of a more spiritual kind:

En port obert ets boira marinera ...
 ("En port travat ..." I, 115)
 A les cales secretes dels teus ulls.
 ("A quin abís..." I, 119)

Moreover she comes to symbolise the actual fusion of reason and passion:

Rael i flor d'una incorrupta natura,
 Forma uniforme amb semença de ment,
 Ets en ma carn l'Immutable Present.
 ("Entre els morats ..." I, 113)

The extent of the integration is emphasised in the last two lines with the mind being given form and the concept of "l'Immutable Present" made flesh. This is further enhanced by the phrase "semença de ment", semen with its connotations of passion and sexual enjoyment is joined to the mental process of understanding.

A similar occurrence is evident in "A tu, reflex d'un altre tu ..." where, in the last tercet, fire, traditionally evocative of passion, is totally linked with the mind:

En tu i en mi, externs, a l'hora tensa,
 Solc d'absolut d'una Alta Complaença
 Crema el Perfet amb flamejar de ment.
 (I, 117)

The fusion of these two elements clearly acts as a catalyst for the poet's very complete insight - a perception of the "Immutable

Present" and experience of the "Alta Complaença".

The majority of these sonnets are in question form and Gimferrer has seen this as detracting from the fullness of the sentiment:

"L'acte amorós és insuficient i en la mateixa plenitud del goig s'hi desvela una interrogació".¹⁹ However, Foix seems to follow a conventional sonnet formula of having the tercets answer the initial speculation of the quatrains. This allows the doubt to be dissipated by a very strong affirmation as is apparent in "A quin abís ..." where the poet enhances the response by holding back the vuelta till line 12.

The totality of the insight is once again apparent:

En la sopor de l'alta coneixència
Veig Arbre i Fruit, Serpent i Paradís
A les cales secretes dels teus ulls.

(I, 119)

There was a definite indication earlier in the collection that Foix was contemplating a symbiosis of reason and passion. The title of the second section, "Si pogués acordar Raó i Follia", shows a definite leaning towards this if we take one of the basic meanings of acord, as provided by Fabra: "Unió harmònica, justa correspondència, entre dues o més coses".

Similarly, in the poem "En tendre prat ..." there is a continuous interplay between the senses and the mind, which eventually combine in the final line:

I coldre la Natura, el cor convicte
Davant la Ment, que la mesura dicta ...
Els senys goluts - olfacte, tacte i ull
Que em fan el viure gai ...
Copsar el Present fet de ment i de Tu.

(I, 87)

The balancing of elements here manifests the co-participation of mind and body which is further asserted by the interchange of capitals.

Foix is also able to quibble with the word senys, which he can hold up in comparison to the more frequently employed Seny so as to underline the union.

Thus the problem of the conflict between reason and passion is solved with typical Foixian consistency. What is more, given the actual structure of the work one is inclined to conclude that this newly conceived fusion is the cause of what Gabriel Ferrater described as the "exhilaració frenètica"²⁰ of the next two sections "Tant ai mon cor ple de joia" and "M'allegro e canto nella stagion novella".

Indeed this topic is given such a complete solution that it never really arises again in the rest of Foix's work. The only other poem we have found which makes mention of this theme, reiterates this basic unity. It is once again set in the sexual context and appears in On he deixat les claus:

Qui, de tots dos, és carnal ...
 Oh flam encès de cap a cap de riba
 Oh dolç cremar d'esperit i de ment!

(my emphasis: I, 251)

Time

As was the case with the poets of the Romantic-Symbolist tradition, Foix's work is imbued with an attempt to rescue some notion of eternity and permanence from Mallarmé's "shipwreck of time". Salvat-Papasseit had envisaged a promise of futurity in the interminable continuation of the life-round and the individual's participation in this process. Foix's vision, however, is much more specific and definite and may be appreciated once more by analysis of the impressive stylistic system which the poet constructs in order to draw our attention to the very heart of the matter.

The idea of fusion is again the essential ingredient as temporal division is abolished, with the past, present and future being compressed into a synchronic whole which is repeatedly reiterated as being eternal.

It is in the expression of this theme that we see Foix at his most forthright, straightforward and unequivocal. The delivery is clear and precise, as may be seen in Sol, i de dol, where the author experiences "L'Immutable Present" (I, 113), "l'Etern Permanent" (I, 123) and lives "enllà del Temps, l'altre Element" (I, 121). In "Amb Sacs Balders ..." from Del "Diari 1918", a voice rings out with similar clarity: "-L'etern és pertot, i ara" (II, 124), and a later passage from the same collection begins: "Res no és moridor, tot és etern" (II, 129).

Again Foix employs the same consistent expressive framework for the transmission of this message. Elements from all three temporal stages combine and interact on the same plane, as evident in Gertrudis: "Què hi feia aquella cadira Lluís XV al portal de ca l'espadenyer?" (II, 23). The superimposition of past on present is continued in Sol, i de dol,

Diu que és ciclista i vol anar a la URSS
Amb els pneumàtics prenys de texts obscurs
Del segle IV,

(I, 155)

and in "Havíem deixat la moto ..." from Del "Diari 1918", the motorcycle is "esmaltada amb figures mitològiques" (II, 116).

This technique is repeated throughout the work but we may adduce a further example from Onze Nadals, where the Nativity, with its connotations of everlasting life, is updated to a setting of modern Catalonia. In poem VI the original scene is removed from Bethlehem

as Joseph's house becomes "a cal fuster", with the native work force proclaiming the birth:

Els de Banyuls i els de Portvendres
 Entren amb llanes de mars tendres ...
 Res no s'acaba i tot comença.
 Vénen mecànics de remença ...
 Una veu canta en recompensa:
 Que a cal fuster hi ha novetat.

(1, 300)

Nonetheless, this stylistic feature is used most evocatively when applied to basic human experience as in poem V of Les Irreals Omegues, where generations from the past, present and future are placed in the same frame:

VAM ARRIBAR EN AQUELL POBLE I NO HI HAVIA NINGÚ,
 PERÒ PER PLACES I PASSATGES SENTÍEM LA FRESSA DELS
 QUI FOREN I DE LLURS DANCES. I LES ESQUERDES
 DELS MURS ESBOSSEAVEN LA FAÇ DELS QUI VINDRAN.

(1, 205)

In "De nit els carrers", from Del "Diari 1918", merchants from all ages and all countries mingle in a communal experience in the street:

Només al correr gran cremen els petrolis diürns i
 s'omple el tràfec de centenars de mercaders de tots
 els temps i països. Van i vénen, callats ... Si
 aleshores miro el carrer ... reveig el tràgic de la nit
 i oeixo remors de ferralla de mecanismes futurs.

(11, 123)

A further example appears in "No et girisi!" from Darrer Comunicat, though in this instance the idea is conveyed in military terms:

Guerrers de tots països, novells i veterans, arquers
 i alabarders, dragons i cuirassers. Trepitjaven
 neus novelles i ossaments prehistòrics ... abandonaven,
 cascós i vestits, galons i cartutxeres. Els creuats
 de tots temps ...

(11, 356)

This temporal fusion is continued in the lowest personal level, with the syncretic bonding of age and youth into a single timeless unit.

In "Jo só l'apòcrif" from Sol, i de dol, the poet refers to himself

as "minyó i vellard" (1, 143), as is also the case in "Els de la Coromina de Dalt ..." :

Nosaltres
vells i novells alhora ...
llegim versos antics i escrits dels qui vindran ...
Lloem el permanent i exalcem el constant.
(1, 422)

In "Els barbosos minyons ..." from Desa aquests llibres al calaix de baix, the compression of life stages into a state of "old youth" is repeated in each stanza:

ELS VELLS ADOLESCENTS, ELS FLORITS SEIXANTINS ...
Quan els vells de vint anys amics ...
Els vellards de vint anys.
(1, 336)

Variations on this device also highlight the underlying synchronism as evinced by poem V of Les Irreals Omegues and the first prose of Del "Díari 1918":

Escrivim versos nous amb signes fòssils!
Pintem en fulls arcaics nueses immatures!
(1, 202)

els monjos que hi venen ... pinten damunt retaules
velles estructures noves
(11, 103)

More strikingly, Foix's poetic style, in terms of language, orthography and grammar, reflects and enhances this theme. This preoccupation is first evident in the second sonnet of Sol, i de dol, where the poet reveals his desire to write in the manner of Llull and March for the benefit of the future reader:

Si, fugitiu de la faisó estrangera
Arromancés ... / ... a l'aspriva manera
Dels qui en vulgar parlaren sobirà,
- Oh Llull! Oh March! -, i amb claredat de signes,
Rústec, però, sever, pogués rimar
Pels qui vindran;
(1, 39)

In this respect we recall Foix's own adage of "m'exalta el nou i m'enamora el vell" and Pere Gimferrer has explained how the fusion of past and present is mirrored in the very style and morphology of the poetic register:

El tret de llengua que hi crida inicialment l'atenció és la relativa preferència ... amb què el poeta empra les formes verbals arcaiques, amb elisió de la vocal final. No es tracta, però, d'un recurs d'arcaisme ..., sinó d'un dialectalisme, designi d'utilitzar formes genuïnes dels clàssics que es poden trobar活es encara en determinades àrees de la llengua.²¹

This preference for archaism, as has been seen, does have a deeper significance when considered in the context of the elaboration of an oracular idiom to complement the poet's function of a magus. Nonetheless, the critic is absolutely correct in pointing out the importance of this linguistic device in relation to the theme of time, which applies mainly to Sol, i de dol, though it is also relevant to much of the remainder of the work. It is particularly evident in two of the more recent offerings. In "Tota amor és latent en l'altre amor ..." Ramón el Foll and John XXIII are juxtaposed on the same setting, with the archaic speech incorporated into the body of the modern text, to hilarious effect:

i passats sis-cents anys
 renova, venturós, el clam i la requesta:
 "Un Concili vull començar
 per ço que faça enamorar."
 Joan riu, i somriu amb campaneigs de festa,
 i el beneeix. I Ramón dicta amb seny d'orat:
 "En concili lo pec moltó
 enganya el llop i lo lleó
 i la volp enganya el capó"

(1, 414)

More evocative, however, is a poem dated 1973: "Ella es diu Eu i m'anomena Vós". Here, the Provençal maiden comes to sum up the past for the author:

La noia provençal passa a veure'm sovint
 al temps que les acàcies s'esfloren.
 Ve a cavall muntada a la gal·lesa,
 amb vestits d'altre temps i guarniments pomposos.
 (1, 431)

She represents a bygone era both in her dress and language, "Ella es diu Eu i m'anomena V6s". To illustrate this Foix awards her an ethereal quality; like the past she is quite unsubstantial and yet clearly part of the scene:

Els arreus del cavall són de boira ronsera
 esllenegant-se a la boira dels cims.
 (1, 431)

There is, nonetheless, a converse tendency to make her more real and immediate. She frequently comes to visit the poet. Her register, though apparently archaic, is still to be encountered in that specific region of modern day France. Moreover, the writer has had physical contact with her and she wears his gift which has a precise and definite origin:

Els esperons, pungents en passades contesses,
 vaig donar-los-hi jo, d'una barata feta
 un vespre aiguós amb lluors de llanterna,
 a les caldes estables d'En Serni, de Sants.
 (1, 431)

Here we have what is arguably Foix's most lyrical expression of this theme. The past, symbolised by the girl with her aura of antiquity, is implicit and active on the present within the framework created most evocatively by the poet.

Metamorphosis

Though Foix's reality is synchronic, or atemporally static, the dynamism of the cosmic force is brought out most forcefully by various leitmotifs and stylistic devices.

The possibilities offered by the topic of mutation have been fully appreciated and exploited throughout the history of literature, from

mythological tales through the classics to the Renaissance. It was in turn revitalised by the Avant-garde - one immediately thinks of Kafka - and Foix relies heavily upon it to convey the basic ebb and flow of creation. In Gertrudis and KRTU it is at its most stark and straightforward as the poet gives a simple though powerful account of the amazing changes which he imagines, as in "Notes sobre el port de la Selva" from KRTU:

He pretès, en va, d'aixecar-me; pseudo-morfitzat, el meu cos era un teixit espès de caragols petris, de petxines antidiluvianes, de delicioses miniatures peroxodades d'animals desapareguts ... una membrana transparent descobria meravellosos paisatges submarins, per on els signes del zodiàc flotaven lluminosos ... avançava una insòlita processó de monstres: pops amb potes de camell, gegants amb testa de cavall, mams hercúlies sostingudes per finíssimes potes d'estruç.

(11, 70)

We may immediately appreciate, here, the intensity of Foix's expression as the metamorphosis not only evokes the essential universal vibrance but also implies the poet's fundamentalistic vision in a fusion of the natural and human, the animate and inanimate, the past and present, the cosmic and marine with its basic wonder being rounded off by the bizarre procession of monsters.

As Foix matures, however, the extravagant metaphorical flourishes are cuttailed as the expressive bravura gives way to a more precise account of the relevance of metamorphosis in a far more succinct, explicit and apposite idiom. In "Ahir tarda, després completes ..." from Del "Diari 1918", the poet and his companion are confronted with a statue in a state of continuous change:

Pels volts de les sitges ens ha semblat que clarejava una bella estàtua de Venus. Tot acostant-nos-hi, la imatge, en metamorfosi, modificava la seva aparença.

Adés era un Mercuri seu alat, o un mercader de llotja,
 enfurrunyat amb una brossa de sous contra el pit.
 També dèiem si era un càndid Llimona o un faune de
 terra cuita.

(11, 104)

The more relaxed, matter-of-fact tone of the narrative is immediately noticeable, and Pere Gimferrer has given a most comprehensive summary of the poet's intention in his employment of this theme:

les brusques mutacions, que constitueixen l'"argument"
 de la major part dels poemes ... són metàfores del
 caràcter canviant d'una realitat que constantment es
 veu ultrapassada per les seves secretes forces latents.²²

The culmination of this process occurs with La Pell de la Pell (1970), something of a poetic short story and dealing principally with the subject in question. While out walking in the country the narrator is accosted by a woman who directs his attention to her posy of flowers:

- Observeu - va dir - quina metamorfosi. - Era cert:
 a ple sol o a l'ombra, tots i cadascun dels elements que
 componen una flor, en els de l'espècie ignorada que havia
 collit la meva amiga, es produïa un canvi constant però
imperceptible per als qui en consideren només la forma
 ... no em vaig saber estar de contar-li el que m'havia
 passat amb la senyora de la pell de serp, la qual
 m'havia fet conèixer les característiques i virtuts
 latents.

(my emphasis: 11, 305)

What we are presented with here is an elucidation of Foix's basic poetic insight. The poet, when confronted with the "shock" of reality, is induced to look beneath the surface of things and appreciate not only their latent natural force, but also their essential unity as both these ideas are conveyed by the topic of metamorphosis.

In this respect there is an immediate parallel established between the author and his public. The reader, startled by the apparent indecipherability of the poetry, embarks on a more rigorous analysis

and perceives a central theme behind what is subsequently seen as a coherent and systematic expressive framework. Just as Foix looks beneath the superficial diversity of creation to perceive a unique essentiality, so the reader can regiment the apparent disorder of the poetry into a coherent expression of this insight.

Arthur Terry has remarked how the rhythm and pace of Foix's prose are also evocative of this universal dynamism:

Així la crítica francesa Suzanne Bernard parla de la "suite d'accents vigoureux", que caracteritza les Illuminations de Rimbaud, frase que també es pot aplicar a les proses més característiques de Foix. De fet, aquests 'accents vigorosos' demostren, a través de llur força rítmica, una vitalitat, i fins, una voluntat, que són al cor mateix de la visió foixiana. És a dir, en els poemes en prosa el dinamisme del ritme correspon a un dinamisme de les coses pel qual la realitat queda alliberada de les abstraccions convencionals i restaurada a la seva natura concreta i activa.²³

These attributes, of course, will have been noted in much of the prose poetry quoted thus far. Nonetheless, "Ahir a la nit ..." from L'Estrella d'En Perris illustrates the poet's ability and control in this area. The accents vigorosos are enhanced by a certain assonance in the opening sentence:

Ahir a la nit, al desguàs de les barques al peu
del Rec de Canet, miràvem, escafandrers nedfits, les
noies apaïades en un planell submarí d'algues lascives.
Les arponàvem, inhàbils, quan la lluna, amb frescors
de llàntia, ens va fer encauar tots tremolosos. Vam
perdre els guants de nit a la timba cremosa de llurs
cossos.

(11, 177)

The cadence, both here and in the rest of the work, is without doubt extremely suggestive. Furthermore, the overall impact is accentuated in turn by the startling sequence of events. There seems to be no logicality governing the chain of amazing occurrences which creates in the reader an impression of both shock at what is transpiring and

intrigue to look deeper and understand. The journey from initial confusion to comprehension, as we shall see again later, reflects the progression of the poet himself when he is first confronted with the enormity of creation.

The Poet and Death

As might be expected, this topic is dealt with most solemnly in the later work although throughout his literary career Foix has consistently retained the same attitude towards death. Indeed it is with regard to this subject that his thoughts are most clearly expressed.

The cosmic force is eternal. Life may end on an individual level but this is in no way final. It merely heralds existence - participation in the U clarós - in some other non-human capacity. Here again the relevance of mutation can be appreciated, as death is in no way conclusive, it simply denotes change.

The poems in memory of Riba and Ferrater bring out this idea most comprehensively. In "Ahir es va escaure ..." from Desa aquests llibres al calaix de baix, the poet and his friend calmly sit waiting for death, "Ella", to arrive. There is no need for a lachrymose or elegiac tone as nothing has been definitely lost. Furthermore, Riba was clearly aware of the promise of permanence as envisaged by Foix:

Cada branca és l'Etern i on brega
 L'Instant per a néixer i romandre ...
 ... tu mories, sabent

(1, 340)

However, "Tots hi serem al port amb la desconeguda" is delivered in an idiom which is significantly different. In contrast to Riba's assurance, Gabriel Ferrater's despair was clearly a source of distress to Foix who tries to convince his friend of his error:

Deies - no ho deies tot! -
que aquella nit amb tremolars d'espiga ...
era una torre amb remolins de gralles,
un clam de ganivets damunt la gola nua,
el crit d'un paper escrit amb cendra i carbonissa
o la porta enreixada que dóna al pati mort.

No ho deies tot!

The cumulative effect and repeated explanation underline the poet's concern as he attempts to explain to the suicide that the universe does have beauty and ultimate reason:

No ho deies tot! Si haguéssim sabut!
T'haurièm ensenyat els miralls de la clota
passada la contrada on qui es té dret, l'escapcen ...

I quan el primer estel espurna al pic més rost
hauríem escoltat, on els còdols floregeuen
la passada dels vents amb brogit de tenora
i el clam esperançat de les formes captives.

Nonetheless the poem ends with a reaffirmation of Foix's vision which is expressed with great lyricism and simplicity:

La ment capta l'etern en l'ampla pau
i un no res grana i creix en un somriure.

Ésser i traspàs fan un: tot muda i tot roman;
tots hi serem al Port amb la desconeguda.

(1, 428)

Such perspicuity - so uncharacteristic of Foix - is typical of his treatment of this particular theme as a whole. In "Miràvem, de bona hora, el mar ..." the penultimate line reads: "Res no fou i tot és; res no mor i tot resta" (1, 419), and a passage from Del "Diari 1918" begins, "Res no és moridor, tot és etern -" (11, 129).

The poet is never reticent to apply this sense of immortality to himself and there are numerous instances of this in Sol i de dol alone, "Sol, sóc etern" (1)*; "als segles só present" (9); "A cada instant i en els segles em moc" (18); "Són ... solc immortal d'una estranya semença" (42) etc.

* Sonnets numbered in their order of appearance in Obres Completas, I.

A related motif is the juxtaposition of the words birth and death. In the end they become so confused that the difference between them is blurred as they combine to represent the same concept - the continued nature of existence:

Tot just el disc pol·lid morirà en el nostre horitzó
per a renéixer a l'altre vall.

("Vindré més tard demà" KRTU.)
(11, 65)

Quan l'or dels àlbers mor i neixen les estrelles ...

(IV, Les Irreals Omegues, 1, 203).

A l'Alba de la Naixença
Tu i jo voldríem morir.

("Sé un poble lluny de Provença"
On he deixat les claus, 1, 265)

On l'ombra neix amb frisances de pluja
I on mor la nit al veremar dels càntics ...

("Pel camí dels olis diürns"
On he deixat les claus, 1, 269)

Cada branca és l'Etern, i on brega
L'Instant per a néixer i romandre ...
... tu mories sabent.

("Ahir es va escaure ..." Desa
aquests llibres al calaix de baix
1, 340)

Foix approaches the question of death with such conviction, sincerity and straightforwardness, that the vision of athanasia - along with his faith in it - becomes one of the most important and impressive features of his work.

The Poet as Vates

As was noted in the first section of this chapter, Foix's view of the function and relevance of the artist in society carries on a long tradition. The poet is a man apart with a message or insight which separates him from the level of ordinary mortals. However, the most impressive feature of this persona is its essential atavism and a closer examination of this point may lead us to a better understanding of the machinery of Foix's creative process.

Gabriel Ferrater was quick to recognise the element of primitivism in the writings of our author. "S'ha volgut girar cap a formes de la cultura anteriors a la formació de la idea del caràcter personal, i usar-les per expressar la seva experiència posterior a la fe en aquella noció."²⁴

In his explication of this trait, Gimferrer in turn selects two most pertinent passages from Del "Diari 1918". "Quan he sabut que el meu oncle" sees the poet return to the toponymic region of his forebears and, inspired by a heathen shepherd, assume the ancient hieophantic rôle of his ancestors:

li he demanat que em deixés els més vells dels seus vestits de pastor, els hi he canviat pels meus i, bastó en mà recorro dia i nit, amb bous magres i cabres deslletades el vell reialme del Cardoner on, durant segles, els meus han plantat l'ullastre.

(11, 111)

This activity is repeated in "Si venteja, corro, adelerat ..."

Si venteja, corro, adelerat, els camins irresolts de la carena. Cobejo grandeses i, amb els braços submergits a les blancors fulloses i els peus esquivant tolls, declamo més olts que la polseguera, noms de sants, de reis i d'herois.

(11, 110)

In his trance-like state of inspiration, enhanced in these two pieces by the rhythm and pace of the prose, the poet recalls very strongly the deportment of his pristine counterparts, as Huizinga explains it:

the true appellation of the archaic poet is vates, the possessed, the God-smitten the raving one. These qualifications imply at the same time his possession of extraordinary knowledge ... Gradually, the poet-seer splits into two figures of the prophet, the priest, the soothsayer, the mystagogue and the poet as we know him ... Their function is eminently a social one; they speak as the educators and monitors of their people. They are the nation's leaders, whose place was later usurped by the sophists.²⁵

Foix repeatedly refers back to the more primeval significance of the poet, as in the third issue of Poesia, where he expresses his preference for this status:

Amo, però, com mai, dels poetes d'avui, els qui creuen encara i per sempre en la permanència de la deessa, del foc i de les vestals ... I, més que cap, els qui en veu baixa, tonada lleugera i a cau d'orella, narren, balbs de llengua i de mans, de la por del misteri i de la fredor de l'alba, tants de divins secrets com la Natura lliura als elegits que creuen en la màgia de la seva presència i en els móbils simulacres zeladors de símbols eterns que nodreix amb saba inestroncable.²⁶

The strident liturgical tone and archaic language of the extract from KRTU, quoted earlier in the chapter, underlines the nature of the function adopted by Foix:

Jo llegia: "e'ls pexos són feits a imatge e semblança de Déus: e'ls pexos en paradís volen e'ls ocells, caiguts dins les aigües negres dels pous de l'infern, s'hi neguen séns morir mai. E la faç humana és semblant a peix. E Déus és peix."

(11, 70)

What is more intriguing about the treatment of this topic, however, is the element of humour implicit in what might be expected to be a serious matter. In the previous chapter we pointed out the playfulness in Gertrudis and its relevance to the rôle of the creative artist in "On aniré tot sol" from KRTU. As the work progresses, this is extended to encompass the condition of the vates. This is apparent in "Quan he sabut ..." from the manner and motive of the uncle's death:

Quan he sabut que el meu oncle havia mort d'una guitza de mula - li donava terrossos per farratge - he deixat l'Hostal ...

which is accentuated by the colloquial vivacity of the earthy description and register of the shepherd:

m'ha assenyalat, amb un ditàs d'on brollaven herbes nodrides amb fang adobat, un paràgraf on el meu nom es repetia, amb insolent prestigi, a cada ratlla

- Tot això, ha dit, és d'un tal Foix, hereu d'una
nissaga morta i que ningú sap on ronca.

(11, 111)

Foix, following the ancient tradition, clearly sees himself as the descendant of a tribe of prophets, and the poem is rounded off with the ludicrous image of the narrator, crook in hand and draped in shepherd's clothing, running amok amidst emaciated goats and oxen.

This mood of "sacred diversion" is complemented by the preceding passage in Del "Díari 1918":

De nit, quan les muralles de la vila bateguen convulsions,
segueixo, a les palpentes, placetes i carrerons, i amb
llaunes velles imito el soroll de les tempestes. Del
pregon dels rònecs s'ouen dolços gemecs ... I prego a
Déu, i ric.

(11, 110)

Huizinga has elucidated the relevance of this type of playfulness to the original function of the vates which affords this aspect in Foix a much deeper importance than commentators have hitherto perceived.

All antique poetry is at one and the same time ritual, entertainment, artistry, riddlemaking, doctrine, persuasion, sorcery, soothsaying, prophecy and competition ... the archaic poet, whose function at all times was both sacred and literary. But, sacred or profane, his function is always rooted in a form of play ... Poetry, in its original culture making capacity, is born in and as play - sacred play, no doubt, but always in its sanctity, verging on gay abandon, mirth and jollity ... This denominator, which makes for the astonishing uniformity and limitations of the poetic mode in all periods of human society, might perhaps be found in the fact that the creative function even more primordial than culture itself, namely play ... The play-mood is one of rapture and enthusiasm and is sacred or festive in accordance with the occasion. A feeling of exaltation and tension accompanies the action, mirth and relaxation follow.²⁷

Indeed Foix himself refers to his poetry as "el joc etern"²⁸ and a line from Sol, i de dol reads: "Del bell concret faig el meu càlid

joc'. This probably accounts for the "esportivitat" that Castellat and Molas perceive in the many "jocs d'opòsit", though in this respect there is clearly a further dimension evident.

The structure of Sol, i de dol in itself reflects the trajectory described above by Huizinga. The tense and brooding speculation of the first two sections gives way to the "inspired" mystic exuberance of the third which is followed by the euphoria of parts four and five, brought out, as Gimferrer has remarked, by the numerous puns on words.

Seré loquaç: la mar, Marcel·la! Cela (46); ... dius i t'en rius, que ets d'Atenes / ... jo sò romà. I dic i en ric. (50); Jep i gepó i gepic, o-i (57); etc.

The hermetic use of language and complexity in expression is also significant, as has been mentioned earlier, in the elaboration of an oracular idiom:

Archaic thought, brooding in rapture on the mysteries of Being, is hovering here over the borderline between sacred poetry, profoundest wisdom, mysticism and sheer verbal mystification. It is not for us to account for each separate element in these outpourings. The poet-priest is continually knocking at the door of the Unknowable, closed to him as to us.²⁹

The enigma of Foix's trobar clus is representative of the essential riddle of existence which the poet and reader must unravel on their respective levels. The author illustrates this procedure in his remarks on poetics:

[El poeta] ... cerca entre les runes o els monuments de cada civilització els elements del Misteri. A cada època, sota els règims més oposats, vetlla pel Misteri, per la seva permanència, conrea la màgia i fa ombres xineses damunt el mur de l'eternitat amb els elements materials que li proporciona la trista i móbil "realitat". Cerca la vera realitat, l'"altra realitat" (el suprareal, el surreal o el sobrenatural).

(11, 12)

The view of the more permanent nature of creation, "l'altra realitat", is thus rendered through an obscure medium and in this Foix is again complying with the ancient convention.

For archaic man, doing and daring are power, but knowledge is magical power. For him all particular knowledge is sacred knowledge - esoteric and wonder working wisdom, because any knowledge is directly related to the cosmic order itself. The orderly procession of things ... is safeguarded by nothing more potently than by the knowledge of holy things, their secret names, and the origin of the world ... Only he who

can speak the art-language wins the title of poet. This art-language differs from ordinary speech in that it employs special terms, images, figures etc., which not everybody will understand. The eternal gulf between being and idea can only be bridged by the rainbow of the imagination.³⁰

In this way the relationship between Foix's expression and vocation can be more readily understood. The poet seeks to delve beneath the surface form to perceive the permanent eternal qualities of creation - l'altra realitat - which will then be communicated to the initiated through an esoteric poetic idiom. Again the poet and reader are thus on a parallel course. The former unravels the mystery of Being just as the latter solves the enigma of the verse in order to understand this insight. Humour and complex expression are therefore not merely superficial games - esportivitat - but organically functional in the conveyance of Foix's message.

The idea of "otherness" is central to the propounding of this topic throughout the work, and is taken to be more concrete than everyday superficial reality. In "Algunes reflexions sobre la pròpia literatura", the author refers to his own name as "les quatre consonants i les dues vocals del meu fals pseudònim:" (11, 53) in contrast to the more profound alphabet evident in "Vós sentiu sempre veus pertot ..."; "tinc en privilegi, i de naixença, gravades al clot de les mans, totes les lletres, menys quatre, de l'altre alfabet." (L'Estrella d'En Perris, 11, 171)

Similarly, two collections have their titles derived from letters of this mysterious code; KRTU and Les Irreals Omegues:

quatre homes ... carregats cadascun d'ells amb una feixuga lletra diversa de l'alfabet, la lectura conjunta de les quals donava el nom misteriós: KURT, URKT, TRUK, UKRT, TURK, KRTU ... - del personatge central dels meus somnis. (11, 64)

llibres nous, diaris,
Codis i fulls clandestins i escriptures
Que firmo jo amb irreals omegues. (11, 209)

The final passage of L'Estrella d'En Perris highlights this theme, as Gimferrer points out: "se sent la música 'd'altres tenores', 'd'altres trompetes', 'd'altres flautes', 'd'altres clarinets', 'd'altres tamborins', d'altres violes'; en escoltar-hi així

'l'altra cobla', els protagonistes proven de ballar 'd'altres danses que només hem vist al fort del son'.³¹

The critic then goes on to explain the full significance of this trait, "Quin és l'altre Element? I l'altre alfabet? Evidentment, es tracta del món mental, del món de les idees", and at the same time comments on Foix's view of the poet's function, "ésser en tensió entre dos àmbits - el terrestre i el celeste, és a dir l'esfera del real perceptible i l'esfera de 'l'altre Element' del món interior on regnen els arquetipus de l'absolut".³²

The central thread of Foix's poetic vision may thus be unravelled but it is within the context of the artist's rôle of vates that we can understand the motive behind the playfulness and complexity of Foix's writing. Huzinga has remarked further upon this tendency:

Modern schools of lyric which move and have their being in realms not generally accessible and are fond of wrapping the sense in an enigmatic word, are thus remaining true to the essence of their art.³³

In this respect one thinks immediately of Surrealism and of the boost given to this impulse by both Freudian and Jungian currents in psycho-analysis, along with Foix's firm location in this trend.

Individuality and Anonymity

On the one hand then, Foix is happy to assume the age old mantle of poet-preacher and stand alone, separated from the rest of society by his remarkable insight. This ancient attitude, however, does not translate so smoothly into the twentieth century where a more committed approach is required of the artist in the face of the pressures of modern existence. Foix himself is appreciative of this fact as is made patent in his criticism of Apollinaire - "el cal.ligramista faceciós" - and his followers for delving into the unexplored realms

of the subconscious merely for self-gratification:

la gran aventura de lliurar-se a tot motor o hèlix
calada, a navegar pel cel vastíssim de la imaginació
sense rumb i amb la presència de sortir-ne il·lesos.³⁴

In the same article from the Revista de Poesia, our poet re-emphasises the social relevance of literature:

Si llur literatura no exerceix la benèfica funció
social que se li té assignada per què tant de paper
després, tant de llibre inútil?³⁵

It is difficult to imagine a more forceful assertion of the communal significance of art, yet given the intense individuality of Foix's work it is quite hard to find a connexion between the two in the modern day context. Gertrudis and KRTU are collections of an intensely personal nature. Sol, i de dol is, in the main, a book of solitary speculation, and the basic inaccessibility of the writings make the work seem hermetic and anti-social.

Nonetheless, critics have noticed how a social element becomes apparent as the poet has matured. Castellet and Molas feel that in Onze Nadals, a more coherent concrete and popular tone is adopted. Gimferrer has remarked how the subject of the action in Gertrudis and KRTU changes from "jo" to "nosaltres" in Del "Diarí 1918".³⁶ This coincides with Foix's remark "sempre que escric jo, vull dir nosaltres" revealed by Gabriel Ferrater in his prologue to Els lloms transparents (1969).³⁷

Foix has never subscribed to the idea of politically inspired art. One recalls the end of the title of the first poem from Les Irreals Omegues, "IL FAUT S'ENGAGER! ABÉTISSEZ-VOUS!" (I, 193) along with the satirical rendering of engager as engatjar in a later poem entitled "Dels subdesenvolupats i econòmicament afeblits, de l'engatjament, dels engatjats i dels possiblement engatjadissos, i, en general de l'actual conjuntura". (I, 409). The sentiments need no explanation.

However, on occasions there is a definite correlation between the poet's individual neurosis and the collective trauma of the nation. The critical years of disruption and upheaval between 1930 and 1942 are reflected in Foix's work by an intense questioning of his capacity to discharge his function as a poet and his ability to relate to the community in general. This may be seen from the title and first third of On he deixat les claus with pieces like "D'on vinc, ni sé", "El transeünt i la seva memòria" and "Hauríem estellat més pins si els bous no ens haguessin mirat tan de fit a fit", "No puc, de nit, i a l'aventura", contemporary poems from Desa aquests llibres al calaix de baix.

The critics have been swift in acknowledging this connexion, particularly with reference to Les Irreals Omegues. Romeu i Figueres³⁸ and Gabriel Ferrater perceived a definite sociological fact as the motivation for the very enigmatic sixth poem of the collection:

El tema n'és del reemplaçament d'una vella classe possessora, paternalista i ja calmada ... per una nova classe agressiva i disruptiva que comença per engegar els desposeis de sempre als quatre punts cardenals de l'emigració.³⁹

The previous piece "Vam arribar en aquell poble", provoked a similar response from Pere Gimferrer:

El poema ... cinquè del volum, és la segona gran composició que ... ha estat inspirada a J.V. Foix pels fets dramàtics de la història contemporànea del nostre país ... Si afegim que, ja des del títol, els temes de la fugida i de la por, de la ciutat, que els seus habitants han deixat i de la clandestinitat s'imposen com a eix del poema, no ens pot deixar de sorprendre el fet ... que hom no hagi remarcat que ... els primers mesos de la guerra espanyola són el centre del primer poema del volum, el del poema que ara tractem és la fracassada insurrecció d'octubre del 34 i, el clima anticipat de guerra civil que se'n seguí.⁴⁰

Gimferrer may be correct in his assumption though it is perhaps unnecessary to be so precise. Many of these poems are extremely cryptic and, rather than being inspired by specific events, they tend to sum up the general mood of a nation in an era of defeat, uncertainty, helplessness and exile. The titles in the opening section of On he deixat les claus are very suggestive in this respect: "Fronteres"; "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 policèfal s'em va endur amb els seus i va calar foc al bosc"; "havíem plantat banderoles fosques dalt els cims i encès teieres al campanar. Passaven els llops però jo no movia les mans de l'aigua", etc.

The empathy between the poet and community in a given context is most readily apparent in these two collections. There runs concurrently, however, a counterpointing tendency which in many ways recalls the attitude adopted by Salvat-Papasseit from La Gesta dels Estels onwards. Both poets are keen to portray themselves as special individuals, apart from the rest of the collective; Foix is the "poet-preacher", Salvat-Papasseit the "home entusiasta" acquiring the persona of the wayfaring hero and "mestre d'amor".

Nonetheless, Salvat-Papasseit is also quick to emphasise his anonymous participation in the communal life-style - we need only recall the numerous poems evoking the seasonal festivals, all of which are narrated in the first person plural. Foix's preference for "nosaltres" as being the subject of the action in his mature work reflects this tendency.

The desire for anonymity - in contrast to the statement of singularity - is taken much further in both Foix's poetry and the prose. In the article "Algunes Reflexions sobre la pròpia Literatura" from KRTU, the poet expresses his desire to shun any personal kudos. He discloses his reluctance to have his work widely published, and, although it was released on a very limited scale, he still questions "la llicitud de tipografiar ja sigui en edicions de 100 exemplars les meves perífrasis (circumlocucions?) poemàtiques. Per bé que m'he negat fins ara a lliurar cap d'aquests fràgils assaigs a publicacions d'un tiratge, superior al normal de les publicacions sectàries, dubto d'haver donat massa de flexibilitat a la meva rigor" (II, 52).

This reluctance to publish amounts to a basic negation by the poet of his own individuality:

... jo m'havia promès que la meva mà no signaria mai el meu nom, que seria inexorable en la realització de la meva personalitat, la qual aspirava a projectar desmaterialitzada, com una ombra breu que llisqués damunt la mar, perceptible tot just un moment pels peixos.

(II, 52).

Gabriel Ferrater made mention of Foix's reticence in this area in his recollection of a conversation with Carles Riba and proceeded to confirm the instinct in the artist for mere minority recognition:

Recordo la meva sorpresa quan Riba em va contar que, en una determinada època de la "Revista de Catalunya" era Foix qui la portava pràcticament tot sol: perquè no s'hi troba ni una pàgina signada de Foix ... I fins l'any 64, quan va sortir, les Obres Poètiques, no es va començar a aixecar dels tiratges de dos cents o tres cents exemplars, tiratges equivalents a la clandestinitat. 41

Gimferrer has further remarked on this phenomenon:

qué misterio el de aquel poeta inencontrable en las librerías, reducido al escueto enigma de unos pocos poemas fascinantes! Porque Sagarra, Riba, Carner, Guerau de Liost, podían hallarse; pero de Foix, ni rastro público. 42

In his desire for anonymity Foix echoes the sentiments of his illustrious contemporary Joan Miró. It seems that the loss of personal identity is essential for the enjoyment of basic human experience, as the artist revealed in an interview in the French review XX^e siècle:

But in order to become a man one must get rid of one's false self ... In other words, it is necessary to return to anonymity.⁴³

Here Miró's "false self" must surely correspond to Foix's view of his own name in KRTU, where he refers to it as "les quatres consonants i dues vocals del meu fals pseudònim" (11, 53).

Nonetheless, it is difficult to appreciate where the question of anonymity arises in the output of two creative artists whose work and style is so highly individual. Miró clarifies the apparent contradiction:

But at the same time one feels the need for a deeply personal and individual gesture that, from a social viewpoint is completely anarchic. Why? because a deeply individual gesture is anonymous. And by being anonymous it makes it possible to attain the universal. I am convinced that the more individual something is, the more it becomes universal.⁴⁴

This adds a further dimension to Foix's hermeticism. The esoteric verse is not merely the sacred writings of the vates destined only for the initiated few. It also represents the attempt at communion with mankind as a whole - a counter to the intense sense of alienation so typical of the modern spirit.

Foix is extremely lucid in his use of anonymity to sum up the universal. In sonnet XXXII of Sol, i de dol the protagonist exclaims "Ésser molts i ningú" (1, 101). The very title of a poem from On he deixat les claus expresses this topic with great conciseness: "Érem Tres. Érem Dos. Era Jo sol. Érem Ningú". There is a progression here from diversity to unity. The diversity is conveyed by

the three different elements stressed at the beginning of each stanza. The unity is evoked by the progressive diminishing of these elements into a single anonymous entity on a more universal plane:

Érem Ningú, fullats per les tenebres
 Quan plou la por en els pètals dels aigualls
 I l'altre, el Pur, llibert d'arjau i veles
 Salpa, vident cap al clarós Instant. (1, 271)

Similarly, in poem IV of Les Irreals Omegues we witness a mysterious gathering of all humanity:

I dèiem: Tu, qui ets?
 I aquell? Puix que érem molts moreus, hi érem tots

The totality of the experience is implied in the lack of individual identity underlined by the repeated questions:

I dèien: Tu, qui ets? I aquell? ...
 Bouers d'ull avetós plantats a la carena ...
 Anònims ceretans amb fòssils a les mans.

The completeness is further reiterated in the final stanza:

Érem tots, braç alçat, herois sense llegenda ...
 Reculàvem: I tu? I aquells? I qui són elles? ...
 En la gran nit comuna érem somni de tots (1, 204)

The link forged here between the individual and collective, with the universal nature of the intensely personal gesture, is dealt with more graphically in Desa aquests llibres al calaix de baix. In the poems "Miràvem el cel ..." and "Passàvem de porta en porta ..." this relationship is communicated by the idea of corporal fusion and the interchangeability of bodies:

La meva boca clou la vostra, el vostre braç atura el meu
 (1, 367)

Cadascun de nosaltres és l'altre:
 Només som un
 La vostra veu és la meva:
 Jo só l'eco de tots.
 (1, 381)

In this respect Foix strikes a very delicate balance in the multi-

faceted question of his communal relevance. On the one hand, similar to the postwar Espriu, he responds to the collective mood in a very intimate fashion, as Arthur Terry has explained:

comporta un sentit d'alienació que correspon a les circumstàncies d'un país ja desolat per la guerra ... ja és un senyal del candor amb el qual Foix sap enfrontar una crisi que l'afecta alhora com a home i com a poeta.⁴⁵

Somewhat paradoxically, the artist may aim at a further communion through the idea of anonymity or, more particularly, the anonymity of the intensely individual creation which, for Miró, constitutes the only truly universal medium.

On the other hand, the poet's difficult, recondite expression, his hallowed archaic language, allows him to fulfil the more conventional social function of visionary or vates, the man apart with a message. This is complemented by the parallel between author and reader. Just as Foix evolves a vision of unity from the enormous diversity of creation, we too deduce coherence and consistency behind the apparent disorder of the work. In this light, it makes sense to talk of the Baroque in connexion with J.V. Foix. Many commentators have found much in common in terms of inspiration and sensitivity between the Avant-garde and the Baroque.⁴⁶ In the present context of this particular poet, Casalduero's penetrating reference to the structure of the Quixote as "orden desordenada"⁴⁷ could with some justification be applied to the work of Foix.⁴⁸ Moreover, in terms of style - metamorphosis, elaborate employment of metaphor,⁴⁹ humour, etc., one is tempted to propose the possible influence of Góngora. Foix has never admitted any debt in this area but with the interest in the Cordovan revived by the Castilian generation of the twenties and Lorca's close association with the group of L'Amic de

⁵⁰
les Arts, it would be churlish to think that such a voracious reader as Foix did not have some knowledge of the work of this most influential figure. The assessment of this issue, however, lies beyond the scope of this particular study.

Thus we come full circle to confirm Arthur Terry's proposition cited early in the previous chapter, that Foix's later work offers a coherent amplification of those issues first apparent in Gertrudis and KRTU.. It is quite remarkable and a credit to the poet's conviction - that in a period of over sixty productive years he has provided us with such cogent intensity of style and purpose. Foix's thematic system and expressive network is so consistent and inter-related that from whatever peripheral point an examination is undertaken we are inevitably drawn towards the very centre of the artist's purpose.

The relevance of humour, for so long unexplained in this context, should not be underestimated. It is central to the output in the very conceit at the basis of the creative expression. It is also an essential element of the poet's function as vates. On a wider level, this playfulness presents us with a more balanced impression of Foix's reaction to the world in which he lives. Fear and trepidation, so often considered as exclusive components of this allegorical reality, are in fact accompanied by a sense of joy and exhilaration experienced by the poet when confronted with the awe and wonder of creation.

In a wider context, we may also point to how closely these elements of Foix's sensitivity relate to the general Vanguard world view. The rôle of artist as visionary and elaboration of

a complex, esoteric idiom are typical of this movement. The fundamentalistic insight itself is strikingly similar to that expressed so forcefully by the poet's friend and contemporary Joan Miró. Last but not least, Foix's impressive and constant employment of such devices as metamorphosis, fusion of opposites, etc., together with the dry sardonic wit evident throughout the work locate him firmly within the ranks of the modern innovative experience.

NOTES TO CHAPTER VI

1. J.V. Foix, p. 26.
2. Gabriel Ferrater spoke of the "exhilaració frenètica" of these sections in his prologue to JVF., Els Lloms Transparents (1969), p. 15.
3. The element of Vanguard dynamism or "risc" in JV福, has been well drawn out by Molas: "Del Futurisme, Foix, que posà Luciano Folgore en versos catalans, tragué alguns aspectes del seu radicalisme nacionalista. I, sobretot, la passió pels mites de joventut, de la màquina, de l'esport, del risc..."

Cal risc en terra i mar, i en l'art novella,
Per a besar un cos xop sota canella
I caure als trenta tres, com Alexandre!

4. La Literatura Catalana d'Avantguarda, p. 60.
5. See, for example, the section entitled "Pompeu Fabra" in JV福, Obres Completes, II, pp. 237-260.
6. A more detailed account of this topic is offered by Gimferrer in La Poesia de J.V. Foix, pp. 113-117.
7. Literatura Catalana Contemporània, p. 235.
8. "Sobre les obres poètiques de J.V. Foix", Serra d'Or, març 1968, pp. 47-53.
9. Poesia Catalana del segle XX, p. 88.
10. Poesia de J.V. Foix, p. 31.
11. The Theory of the Avant-garde, p. 133.
12. Molas, prologue to JV福., Obres Completes, II, p. 14.
13. Ibid., p. 118.
14. Ibid., pp. 122-3.
15. Ibid., pp. 129-30.
16. Ibid., p. 125.

20. Prologue to JVF., Els Lloms Transparents, p. 15.
21. Prologue to JVF., Obres Completas, I, p. 10.
22. Poesia de J.V. Foix, p. 20.
23. Terry, "Sobre les obres poètiques de J.V. Foix", p. 48.
24. Prologue to JVF., Els Lloms Transparents, p. 20.
25. J. Huizinga, Homo Ludens (London 1949), p. 120.
26. JVF., "De la poesia encara", Poesia no. 3, 1944 (pages not numbered).
27. Homo Ludens, pp. 120-32.
28. JVF., "El joc etern", Poesia no. 2, 1944 (pages not numbered).
29. Homo Ludens, p. 107.
30. Ibid., pp. 105-33.
31. Poesia de J.V. Foix, p. 55.
32. Ibid., p. 56.
33. Homo Ludens, p. 135.
34. JVF., "Algunes consideracions sobre la literatura d'avant-guarda", Revista de Poesia, I: 2 (1925), 65-70.
35. Ibid., p. 68.
36. Poesia de J.V. Foix, p. 39.
37. Prologue to JVF., Els Lloms Transparents, p. 11.
38. Romeu i Figures, "Comentaris a un poema de Les Irreals Omegues", Serra d'Or, gener 1973, 49-50.
39. Prologue to JVF., Els Lloms Transparents, pp. 19-20.
40. Poesia de J.V. Foix, p. 153.
41. Prologue to JVF., Els Lloms Transparents, p. 8.
42. "J.V. Foix: tres imágenes", Destino, no. 2, 106, Febrero 1978, p. 26.
43. Cited by Jacques Dopagne, introduction to Joan Miró (London 1974), pp. 10-28.

44. Ibid., p. 14; ²²
45. "Sobre les obres poètiques de J.V. Foix", p. 52.
46. For a synopsis of this topic see Poggiali, Theory of the Avant-garde, pp. 209-213.
47. As proposed in Sentido y Forma del Quijote (Madrid 1949), passim.
48. In the opening article of KRTU Foix declares that in: "aquesta vasta cambra dels mals endreços, on molts de nosaltres hem de viure, no és estrany que el "desordre" sigui encara, l'únic ordre possible". (11, 52)
49. For a pertinent insight into the differing use of the metaphor conceived by the Renaissance and modern author, see Terry, "A Note on Metaphor and Conceit in the Siglo de Oro", Bulletin of Hispanic Studies, XXXI (1954), 91-97, and "Quevedo and the Metaphysical Conceit", Bulletin of Hispanic Studies, XXXV (1958), 211-222.
50. See, for example, Antonina Rodrigo, García Lorca en Catalunya (1975), especially pp. 226-255.

THE CREATIVE COHERENCE

Chapter VII

Two Catalan Vanguard Poets

On various occasions throughout this study, we have been able to illustrate the idiosyncracies and similarities of the poetic stance of J.V. Foix and Joan Salvat-Papasseit. It is now time to reconsider their status within the historico-aesthetic context and the legitimacy of proposing them as authentic literary exponents of the Catalan Vanguard experience.

To speak of a coherent indigenous reaction to this movement is in itself open to immediate complications. There are no real "classic symptoms" of the Avant-garde in the principality; no tightly-knit group of creative artists uniting beneath a banner of Futurism, Expressionism, Surrealism etc., governed by the guiding hand of a Breton or a Marinetti and in open defiance of the Establishment.

Furthermore, in the case of our two poets, it would be impossible to suggest that they were bound by any committed theoretical convergence. Salvat-Papasseit was isolated from the ascendant ethic of Noucentisme in terms of class, illness, and by his subscription to the innovative current. His espousal of the regeneracionista tradition of the disgraced Modernistes, Maragall, Alomar and Ruiz, accentuated this alienation.

For personal and ideological motives, J.V. Foix was never to attempt to associate himself creatively with Salvat-Papasseit. Foix was tied to the Noucentistes through friendship, class and

the Pratian inspiration of his politics. In addition, he was to refer disparagingly to the intellectual capacity of Salvat and dismiss the validity of his Vanguard affiliation.

More important, the "objective" criteria of linguistic re-establishment and the institution of cultural identity tended to circumscribe eccentricity and unite the entire artistic circle - as did the many friendships among the various elements of this small, select, creative clan. As a consequence, it is quite common to see the impact of the Avant-garde in Catalonia summarised as sporadic, incoherent or, as Joan Fuster has it,¹ a truly "petita història."

Yet as both of Guillermo de Torre's surveys on this subject would seem to indicate², this innovative movement was imbued with such intrinsic power that its initiative yielded near global response. The experiences in Italy, France and Germany might have proved paradigmatic in this respect, but it would be churlish to suggest that any genuine, significant assimilation could only be registered if and when one of these "model" situations was accurately reproduced.

In Catalonia, the national-cultural revival, as exemplified by the restoration of the Jocs Florals, was barely sixty years old. The orthographic standard of the Normes had only recently been instituted, yet the indigenous reaction to the Avant-garde was quite exceptional. Barcelona fulfilled the role of a cosmopolitan artistic metropolis.³ The Vanguard influence was so extensive and the receptive climate so favourable that, as

a result, the nation can now boast of three of the most prominent figures in this area of the twentieth century creative world: Miró, Dalí and Sert. Clearly if Salvat-Papasseit and, more especially, Foix had worked in such internationally accessible media then they would surely have taken their place on the same platform. The artistic ethos may have been too astringent, involved and insular to reflect the classical patterns produced elsewhere on the continent, but does this minimize in any way the depth and quality of the Catalan offerings to this movement?

We have already indicated the divergence and general lack of theoretical cohesion between Foix and Salvat-Papasseit yet there is also a definite consistency in the sensibility of these two poets which sets them apart from the native literary establishment. What is more, we may locate this convergence within the context of the Avant-garde.

Both writers share the same fundamentalistic insight into the unity and permanence of creation. Foix's vision of the universal monad - "l'U clarós" - and Salvat-Papasseit's appreciation of the "cançó" which "canta en cada bri de cosa", correspond to what Szabolski sees as the basic Vanguard quest for "l'Essentiel".⁴

The innate energy of the cosmic life-force is registered by an immanent vitality in the projection of the artistic weltanschauung. In Salvat-Papasseit, this is expressed in

conventional Romantic (Modernista) terms, though recharged in the early collections by various Vanguard topics: antagonism, fixation with movement, eulogy of the machine age, etc.

In the later work, this excitation becomes more generalized and thereby conveys the idea of the essential vibrancy of creation much more accurately. The figure of the poet with his characteristic "entusiasme" and propensity to "blasmar els déus" is mythologised and projected onto the verse through the persona of the archetypal hero who is emblematic of the basic vision. The promethean defiance and perpetual revolt of the adventurer come to represent the eternal repetition of the life-round. The significance of the individual wayfarer is in turn extended, through ritualization of the collective, to encompass the everyday which is likewise described with intense vigour. As was seen, this type of spiritual rebellion was typical of the Vanguard creative psyche and, in terms of the modern Hispanic poetic tradition, we might compare the interest in popular folk mythology with that of the contemporary Lorca.

In the case of J.V. Foix, however, the whole question becomes much more subtle and intricate. We are presented with a similar insight into the perpetuity and basic unity of the cosmos though this is transmitted stylistically rather than symbolically. The excitation on an individual level is conveyed by the poet through the idea of "risc" and the universal force is evoked through the awesome but exhilarating oneiric sequences - metamorphoses are especially impressive in this respect - enhanced by the charged rhythm, pace and sound quality of the language.

The difference in approach may be demonstrated by the ways the poets present the city. Salvat-Papasseit centres on the various rituals or seasonal festivals and their excitation in the later work, before extending their significance onto everyday urban scenes - thereby imbuing them with a more "mythic" quality. On the other hand, Foix, especially in Gertrudis and KRTU, describes a compelling dreamscape of amazing events and mutations - a definite "metaphoric" reality which becomes a poetic reconstruction of the banal familiarity of Sarrià.

The artistic direction followed by this pair may initially appear divergent until one recalls that tightly-knit inter-relation in the creative psyche between myth, ritual and dream, metaphor and mythologization as was elucidated by Jung, Cassirer, Campbell and Frye. This connexion may be illustrated by stylistic comparison. Salvat-Papasseit employs many of the techniques favoured by his counterpart: allegory, humanization of the inanimate, participation of elements from different kingdoms on the same plane, etc. It is merely that Foix is prepared to stretch the expressive possibilities to the limit in order to produce as stunning an impact as possible. It is not, then, so much a question of distinction but degree as to the manner in which the individual poet will treat his subject matter.

The fixation of penetrating beneath the surface of the urban environment in all Salvat-Papasseit and much of Foix - especially the "Diacri 1918" passages - is characteristically Vanguard and

anticipates the somnambulistic peregrinations of the Surrealists in their aimless wanderings about the city, as described by Maurice Nadeau:

The important thing was to rediscover life under the thick carapace of centuries of culture - life pure, naked, raw, lacerated. The important thing was to bring the unconscious of a city into unison with the unconsciousness of men. 5

This statement applies equally as well to both our poets, from Salvat's primeval ritualism to the subliminal meanderings of J.V. Foix. In this respect, the similarity in sensitivity and direction is again apparent and the contrast may be drawn out between the approach of this pair and the distanced, distilled, urbane noucentista presentation of the metropolis as typified by Carner's Auques i Ventalls (1914).

There is also concurrence in the manner that both writers react to the function of the artist in society. The poet is in essence a moral leader. For Salvat-Papasseit it is not so much his writings which confer on him this status as his actions: "potser i tot, fins ni escriuria versos ... Cada gest d'aquest home ... seria com un vers."⁶ These sentiments are reiterated by Foix: "M'és difícil de definir el poeta - el món n'és ple, però no escriuen."⁷

Throughout his work, Foix projects himself into the pristine role of vates and this persona is especially evident in the verse collections from Les Irreals Omegues onwards. The archaic quality of this figure is well conveyed by the mystery surrounding his behaviour and the obsolete oracular idiom employed for expression, which unites the modern artist with the ancient primeval tradition.

Salvat-Papasseit clearly subscribed to this idea as was recorded in his "Concepte del Poeta": "el Poeta és vate, és a dir: adiví."⁸ However, it is only really in "Nocturn per a acordió" that the writer assumes this mantle in his enigmatic revelation of some "sacred" insight. In the rest of his output the topic is presented in more conventional Romantic terms along the moral lines suggested by Carlyle and Fichte. The poet imbues the archetypal persona with those qualities of sincerity, enthusiasm and perpetual revolt which were typical of this current and also came to be emblematic of Salvat's basic insight.

Though we may thus locate both these poets in the creative tradition, there can be no question that they are not also children of their own particular Vanguard age. The rupture, in terms of style and sensitivity, between Noucentisme and our artists could not be more pronounced and we may indicate its correspondence with the general European trend with reference to Maurice Nadeau:

The modern spirit opposes its "love of ghosts, witchcraft, occultism, magic, vice, dreams, madness, passions, true or invented, folklore, mythology" (Tzara) to logical and learned structure. ⁹

It is quite surprising how the poets fall so neatly into the categories listed here. Salvat-Papasseit relies heavily upon passion, dreams, myth and folklore to convey his elementary vision. He even goes some way to instituting a pagan hagiarchy in "Deu-me una santa" and "Llegenda" from La Gesta dels Estels.

The questions of magic, occultism and witchcraft are immediately applicable to Foix's view of his own creative art. In the much quoted phrase, he refers to the poet as "mag, especulador del mot..."¹⁰ and it is with a type of linguistic spell-binding process that the author achieves the mood of intense mystery which characterizes his finest offerings. This idea is in turn linked to the question of madness and profanity in Foix's elaboration of his view of the function of the poet. We recall the writer's comical imitations of the heretical shepherd in "Quan he sabut que el meu oncle..." from Del "Diari 1918", and the maniacal "I prego a Déu, i ric." (II, 110) from the preceding passage of the same collection. Likewise, the

Likewise, there is in Foix an extreme vigour, not only in the persona of the autobiographic protagonist but also in the intensity of the style: the daring use of metaphor, the rhythm and pace of the language, etc., which provides us with a very worthy counterpart to the ~~ecstatic~~ passion displayed by Salvat-Papasseit's wayfaring hero. Once again in this respect it may be fruitful to dwell on how radically both poets differ from what we might term the "logical and learned structure" of the noucentista and subsequent poesia pura ethic.

When the issue is approached from this expressive angle it is difficult to see why these two poets have been so frequently and insistently cast to fit the Establishment mould. The creative significance of their work has been all too readily glossed over by a rather obsessive critical concentration on positivist criteria at the expense of the artefact itself.

Various general misconceptions about the nature of the Avant-garde, i.e. its wholesale antipassatismo and implicit political subversion, have also tended to distort the question.

One feels that if Eliot's more balanced perspective on the individual talent and "tradition" had been more universally accepted then much of the confusion which surrounds this entire area could have been avoided. In this light both J. V. Foix and Salvat-Papasseit could be considered as "traditional", not for reasons of political sympathies, bourgeois aspirations or circumscription through "objective" concern, but because they both display a definite "historical sense" which:

compels a man to write not merely with his own generation in his bones, but with a feeling that the whole of the literature of Europe from Homer and within it the whole of the literature of his own country has a simultaneous existence and composes a simultaneous order.¹¹

The statement clearly applies most readily to Foix, whose knowledge of Mediterranean literature and more general creative eclecticism make him almost paradigmatic of this view, as exemplified by Salvat-Papasseit's revealing quip: "per a comprendre En Foix de Sarrià hom deu llegir a Sófocles primer."¹²

Though Salvat was not as well versed in the poetic tradition, Eliot dismisses any "ridiculous amount of erudition" as unnecessary, as the required knowledge may be "absorbed" by the individual. This would seem to be the case with Salvat-Papasseit whose acquaintance with Alomar, Gener and Ruiz led

him back to the Romantic outlook of Fichte and Carlyle which drew him inevitably to the Hellenic current, as evinced by the view he shared with Foix on the status and function of the poet in society.

Nevertheless, a further prerequisite in this affair is that the author writes with "his own generation in his bones" without displaying any "blind or timid adherence" to preceding generations. In this respect we might point to this pair's employment of innovative Vanguard techniques which so dissociated them from the clarity of modernista/noucentista expression.

Correspondingly, both poets would seem to comply with Eliot's view of "traditional", though such a perspective has been generally deemed too artistically orientated for the more positivistic social bias of the literary historian. As a result, we are left with that series of more specific, dogmatic and frequently misleading referents mentioned throughout this study to assess the status of these creative artists and locate their position in the context of twentieth century European expression.

Unlike Italy, France, Russia and other independent nations of historico-linguistic "normality", there is no way that Catalonia can be said to boast of a poetic Vanguard school in the more conventional sense of the word. This would prove impossible, given the minority participation in the cultural recuperation and indeed in its limited extent. The "objective" concern of

the various literati, the personal difference between Foix and Salvat-Papasseit, together with the latter's premature death, likewise preclude any real suggestion of a concerted homogeneous response to the innovative movement.

Nonetheless, once these attitudes are counterbalanced by more personal, creative considerations on the aesthetic level of artistic expression, we feel it justified to propose Salvat-Papasseit and Foix as forming a cogent, high-quality poetic unit - in a similar fashion to Dalí and Miró in the plastic arts - of that apparently contradictory yet synthetic experience of global significance generally referred to as the Avant-garde. They are not merely the "Vanguardistes a estones"¹³ as the critical world has generally wished to portray them, but offer a valuable Catalan voice to the international chorus of the modern tradition.

NOTES TO CHAPTER VII

1. Literatura Catalana Contemporànea, p. 226.
2. Literaturas Europeas de Vanguardia (1925) and Historia de las Literaturas de Vanguardia (Madrid 1965).
3. For a synopsis of the activity in Barcelona, see Fuster, Literatura Catalana Contemporànea, pp. 224-227.
4. "L'avant-garde littéraire comme phénomène international", p. 324
5. The History of Surrealism, p. 107.
6. "Contra els poetes amb minúscula", in Mots Propis..., pp. 81-83.
7. "Lletra a Clara Sobirós", in Obres Completes, I, pp. 27-29.
8. "Concepte del Poeta", in Mots Propis..., pp. 79-80.
9. Surrealism, p. 74.
10. Obres Completes, I, p. 28.
11. T.S. Eliot, "Tradition and the Individual Talent", in Selected Essays (London 1932), pp. 13-22.
12. Poesies, p. 6
13. Fuster refers to Salvat in this way and to Foix as a "fals avanguardista" in Literatura Catalana..., p. 223.

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