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A Note on J. V. Foix **Maria Manent**

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A NOTE ON J. V. FOIX

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In an ample part of Foix's poetry, the timeless world of myth intertwines its roots with the world of dreams — bright, disturbing, unfathomable. I believe that many of Foix's prose poems are actually a slightly stylized transcription of real dreams. They are then, in origin, what Jean-Paul Richter would call "involuntary poetry". The poet Foix ascribes pre-eminence to the dream vision's clarity.

És quan dormo que hi veig clar
Foll d'una dolça metzina

(It is when I sleep that I see clearly
Crazed by a sweet poison)

The dream fables bring repeated, anguishing images to Foix's poetry: massive, impenetrable blue ceilings, walls in an endless tunnel, amputated hands floating into the sunset. Or they bring pleasant visions: water women who extend their hands to fishermen and then disappear with a smile, the utterly beautiful places in the land of ultrasleep. The world of folktales contributes its mythology to the prose poems but above all it brings to the dreams — which can be "motionless dreams covered with tapestries" — a flow and a constant narrative tension. This force makes the dreams more believable. It gives their incongruity and fragmentation a seductive logic.

Foix has more intellectual poems which are not derived directly from dreams. In these Foix speak to us of the All, the One, Nothingness and the Idea. These poems permit a shad-

owy glimpse at a system of thought, a core of faith on nihilism. Sometimes, the poet is aware of what Lautréamont calls "universal emptiness" and he tells us that he worships "Nothingness in multiple images". But at other times, as the mystics do, he senses the warmth of a liberating Presence:

Em sé llibert si en el més negre fons
 Els Vostres ulls il·luminen els mons
 Que amb Vós delesc, i em fan el viure lleu.

(I know I have been freed if from the darkest depths
 Thine eyes illuminate the worlds
 I enjoy with Thee and they unburden my life.)

Some of Foix's poems take their place among the best Christian poetry of our times.

In Foix's strangely polychromatic verses, there are exotic elements and there is distant history. We find Persians, Hindus, Mamelukes, Muezzins, Janizaries. But we also find an intense feel for his own everyday reality: next to the exotic figures, girls from Sarrià and fishermen from El Port de la Selva. "Localism — Yeats said — is like a glove we put on to reach the Universe".

Throughout Foix's poetry, his powerful imagination matches his equally powerful talent for expression. In this aspect, Foix takes his place among the most renowned contemporary Catalan poets like Carner or Guerau de Liost. He is also among the lyricists who set words in profile and examine them with a penetrating gaze before using them. Some words stand out and return all through his verses and his tense prose (which is often mixed with verse) and one would say that he pronounces such words with delight: "pertús", "marès", "brull", "forest", "orri",... Seldom in a century do poetic works like those by

the author of the *Sol, i de dol* (Alone and in Mourning) appear in a literary tradition. They deserve, and they have achieved in part, the esteem of a wide range of people beyond the boundaries of Catalan culture.

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