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Jaume Pont



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Josep Maria Sala-Valldaura

As Professor of Modern and Contemporary Spanish Literature at the University of Lleida, Jaume Pont (Lleida, 1947) has focused his research in two areas:

twentieth-century poetry, especially postism and Carlos Edmundo de Ory, and Antonio Ros de Olano and nineteenth-century fantastic narrative. His work as a literary critic has also been a constant, his pieces appearing in a range of reviews and newspapers, for example *Destino*, *Ínsula*, *La Vanguardia*, *Avui*, among others. With Joaquim Marco, he was joint author of *La nova poesia catalana. Estudi i antologia* [New Catalan Poetry. A Study and Anthology] (1980), a book that detects the aesthetic shifts in Catalan poetry of the 1970s while, from *El año literario español 1978* [The Spanish Literary Year 1978] through to *Letras españolas 1976-1986* [Spanish Letters 1976-1986], his annual accounts of Catalan literature accomplished a comprehensive synthesis of its evolution.

If Jaume Pont's academic and critical task has been one of connecting and establishing different references of modernity, his own poetry is one of its finest examples. (The term "modernity" would embrace the whole set of relations by means of which attempts have been made over the last two centuries to associate the world, poetic language and the poet, from the most magical and unifying to the chariest among them.) Coming behind [Joan Brossa](#) and [J. V. Foix](#), and in the shelter of French symbolism, *Límit(s)* (1976), Pont's first book, seeks power and suggestiveness in precision while his verses are enhanced by their freedom of semantic association that excludes neither antithesis nor crypticism. This break with historical realism leads Pont, like many other poets of his generation, to probe the possibilities of language on his voyage to the realms of the unknown.

The title of his second book, *Els vels de l'eclipsi* [The Veils of the Eclipse] (1980), summarises this desire to inquire into things: "man seeks in the universe key and distance". The collection, however, adds a more physical and sensual acceptance of the world, with images and a lexical tone that combine, for example, light and touch. [Francesc Parcerisas](#) highlights in his discussion of this work the role of love and of the sign before the fleetingness of time. The confrontation between Eros and Thanatos, the impossible victory of the instant against the inexorable passing of life will continue in *Jardí bàrbar* [Barbarous Garden] (1981) which, on the one hand, culminates Pont's first creative period and, on the other, offers glimpses of the innovations in what was to come: the elegiac tone of narration that would increase in *Divan* and *Llibre de la frontera* [The Frontier Book], the link by way of flesh (sex and offal) that binds love and death in *Raó d'atzar* [The Rightness of Chance], et cetera.

For Àlex Broch, the dualities that structure *Jardí bàrbar* are Diurnal/Nocturnal and Love/Destruction. "Light as a space of lucidity and existential plenitude. Shadow as a space of night-time, questing and mystery. Fire as a space of love and human plenitude. Ash as destruction and consummation of the space of love." It is not very difficult to observe the weight of the collective imaginary, the value that poetic creation has given, from the pre-Socratics onwards, to fire, earth, water and wind. However, it also seems to me that this collection lives in struggle and of struggle: the battlefield, in the words of poem XX in Part One, is "the indomitable landscape of life", where the clash between the impossibility of mastering reality, on the one hand, and the power of the poetic sign, the strength of love, on the

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other, is acted out. In other words: Still a name. / Raw flesh of silence, / rust where death colours eyelids. /For love, the long apprenticeship of centuries.

Divan (1982) perhaps highlights the will to recover cultural substrata and a new Mediterranean-ness that is a long way from the "Noucentisme" that other poets, Josep Piera or Salvador Jàfer, for example, would share. However, one should also emphasise the new expressive ground that Jaume Pont has broken in order to roam, with greater lyrical freedom, some of the more sensual, amatory and erotic aspects of his work. He seems to need to furnish himself with the voice of another, that provided by the al-Andalus tradition, in order to express without impediment an existential passion which, in his earlier books, was only hinted at from difficulty. Years later, *Llibre de la frontera* will expand this facet under the guise of an old manuscript that has been discovered.

Absence ("ash", "shadow", "silence", "wreck"...) takes on greater relevance in *Raó d'atzar* (1990), to the point of becoming a new essential element in Pont's poetic idiolect. Naples might be its metonymy and geographic symbol because of what it stands for in terms of existential yearning and architectural, and even cultural, defeat. The book also takes up again the struggle against the "unreason of days", yet it is steeped in pessimism. The last poem concludes: Of that flashing beacon / (boats rigged out) / at memory's turn / there only remains / the barren rose of the compass / and the silence of charts / and an ocean of wrecks at heart.

Vol de cendres [Flight of Ashes] (1996) works with an even more acute equivalence in being more physical and wholly autobiographical: "the black tear in the eyes of the dying man" equals the ink with which Pont writes his acceptance of his father's death and his acceptance of life beyond pain: a whole elegy of love, that, as always happens with Jaume Pont's work, is produced a long way from any kind of stagy sentimentalism. The "snow", the "ink", the "flower", the "mist"... help the poet to generalise his experience, clinging to it like a voyage (and a wreck) in the light and darkness of human existence.

Llibre de la frontera (2000) once again finds lyrical distance in the Arab-Andalusian substratum, but in a much more novel-style fashion than in *Divan*. A professor called M. Omar Sumi, hands over to Jaume Pont an anthology of fourteen poems written in Arabic, in the lands of Lleida, in the tenth, eleventh and twelfth centuries. Each poet offers a biography and, between sadness and ironic, satirical mockery, a way of dealing with the big issues: life, love, sex, pleasures, the earth, the country... The whole is a mosaic in which, piece after piece, he illustrates both the varieties of human experience and humanity's roots in time and space, in this case as a child of Lleida. The final poem "Adéu al Maskijan" (Farewell to Maskijan), by Abd al-Maliq ibn Rizq, is an excellent example of this.

Again, Pont's blending of times and spaces produces a great poem and a brilliant ending to *Enlloc* [Nowhere] (2007) with "Jemmaa el-Fna", where Fitzcarraldo's dream appears "Like a ship beached in the middle of the desert" or, it is worth saying, like an allegory of the chancy, recondite and hollow reality that runs through Jaume Pont's poetic journey. Moreover, the Other acquires remarkable importance as the mirror of an identity that the subject never really manages to possess ("L'altre" ` The Other).

In the course and passing of *Enlloc*, water is the substance in which the weight of the unconscious is materialised, "the blood of the Earth, the life of the Earth" moving towards its own destruction, if we might turn to Heraclites and Gaston Bachelard. Water, here, becomes fire, dragging the earth with it, springing from a fount, "the wind that passes and does not last", the road to nowhere. For all their resistance, the body and language suffer the same movement, an identical annihilation.

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The fact is that it is not possible to establish with any clarity clearly-defined periods in the poetic trajectory of Jaume Pont because his books build on each other, organised around at least three axes: that of meta-poetic reflection always at the brink of silence and what man is ignorant of; that of exploring the relations that the human being establishes in time and space (and struggling against their inescapable victory); and that of taking a distance from the poetic subject, which fosters an objectified lyricism of love for another (from the body of a woman to the land of his birth). It must be stated, then, that Jaume Pont's poetry fulfils one of the requisites of all artistic work: it is singular, and its excellence is founded on knowledge of both al-Andalus poetry and of the baroque, symbolist, expressionist and surrealist tradition, with which and to which he is able to contribute his own discoveries. He often seems to be a fellow traveller of Georges Bataille, yet at once expanding on the sensuality of Ibn Hazm or the derision of Ibn Quzman.

Jaume Pont's poetry, which has been translated into a good number of languages, has received the prestigious Vicent Andrés Estellés and Carles Riba prizes, the "Serra d'Or" Critics' Prize more than once, and the Critics' Prize for Catalan Poetry.

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A selection of texts



WEB: Lectura de poemes

El web *Viu la poesia* edita tres poemes amb l'autor.

http://www.viulapoesia.com/membrespocio/arxiu/lletra/jpont_index_diu.html



WEB: Explicació de poemes

L'autor parla de tres poemes al web *Viu la poesia*.

http://www.viulapoesia.com/membrespocio/arxiu/lletra/jpont_index_parla.html



WEB: Comentari sobre Llibre de la frontera

L'autor parla del seu llibre al web *Viu la poesia*.

http://www.viulapoesia.com/pagina_8.php?tipus=1&subtipus=2&itinerari=16&idpoema=656&idvid=303&tipf=2

Text



WEB: Selecció de Poesia Catalana

Tres poemes del seu llibre *Vol de cendres*.

<http://www.uoc.edu/lletra/especials/folech/jpont.htm>



WEB: Pont a Magisteri Teatre-Mag Poesia

Recull de poemes extrets dels llibres *Límits*, *Els vels de l'eclipsi* i *Divan*.

<http://www.mallorcaweb.com/mag-teatre/poemessolts3/pont,jaume.html>



WEB: Tatuatges

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< <http://lletra.uoc.edu/en/author/jaume-pont> >

Set poemes més del seu llibre *Vol de cendres* a The Barcelona Review, núm. 31 (juliol-agost 2002).
http://www.barcelonareview.com/31/c_jp.htm



WEB: "Capvespre amb Pessoa"

Poema de Jaume Pont inclòs dins el poemari *Enlloc*, al bloc Segade de mots.
<http://segademots.blogspot.com/2007/04/capvespre-amb-pessoa.html>



WEB: "L'incendi" i "Fragments"

Dos poemes del *Llibre de la frontera* al bloc En brut.
<http://enbrut.blogspot.com/2005/05/retrobar.html>



WEB: "Ebrietat" i "Posseït"

Dos poemes de Pont al bloc Violant de Bru.
<http://violantdebru.bloc.cat/category/3775/29346>



WEB: Sis poemes

Sis poemes de Jaume Pont publicats a la revista *Reduccions*, núm. 12 (1980).
<http://www.raco.cat/index.php/Reduccions/article/view/46503/57742>



WEB: "Notes a l'obra poètica d'Albert Ràfols Casamada"

Article publicat a la revista *Cairell*, núm. 2 (gener 1980). Al web La Il·lustració Poètica Metropolitana & Continental.
<http://perso.wanadoo.es/lipmic/cairell/Num2/pont.htm>



WEB: "La poesia de Pere Gimferrer (1970-78)"

Estudi de l'obra poètica de Gimferrer publicat a la revista *Els Marges*, núm. 20 (1980).
<http://www.raco.cat/index.php/Marges/article/view/105493/157899>



WEB: "A l'entorn d'un llibre iniciàtic"

Estudi de l'obra *Llarg camí llarg* de Marc Granell publicat a la revista de literatura *L'Aiguadolç*, núm. 26 (2000).
<http://www.raco.cat/index.php/Aiguadolc/article/view/65274/101845>



WEB: Obra traduïda

InterRomania publica diverses traduccions al cors signades per Francescu Micheli Durazzo.
http://www.interromania.com/literatura/puesia/lisboa_corsu/pont.htm



WEB: Selection of Catalan Poetry

Three poems from Pont's book *Vol de cendres* [Flight of Ashes].
<http://www.uoc.edu/lletra/especials/foch/jpont.htm>



WEB: Pont in Magisteri Teatre-Mag Poesia

Collection of poems from the books *Límits* [Limits], *Els vels de l'eclipsi* [Veils of the Eclipse] and *Divan*.
<http://www.mallorcaweb.com/mag-teatre/poemessolts3/pont,jaume.html>

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WEB: "Limits", "History Lesson", "Amatorius" and "Carpe Diem"

Four poems by Jaume Pont in English, translated by Hillary J. Gardner, on the web site La Il·lustració Poètica Metropolitana & Continental.

<http://perso.wanadoo.es/lipmic/Pluricat/eng/pont.htm>



WEB: Un vol de cendres [A Flight of Ashes]

Brief biography and commentary on this work by Jaume Pont on the InterRomania web site. It also includes some poems. In French and Corsican.

<http://www.interromania.com/scontri/scrivani/pont/prisentazione.htm>



WEB: "Letras catalanas, hoy" [Catalan Letters, Today]

Article by Jaume Pont on Catalan literature, published in the review *Ínsula*, iss. 729 (September 2007).

<http://www.insula.es/Articulos/INSULA%20729.htm>



WEB: "La heterodoxia religiosa de Federico García Lorca" [The Religious Heterodoxy of Federico García Lorca]

Analysis of religion in the juvenilia of García Lorca published in the review *Scriptura*, iss. 4 (1988).

<http://www.raco.cat/index.php/Scriptura/article/view/94210/142513>

Bio-bibliography

Biography



WEB: A la Hiperenciclopèdia

http://www.encyclopedia.cat/fitxa_v2.jsp?NDCHEC=0052021



WEB: Fitxa al "Qui és qui a les lletres catalanes"

<http://cultura.gencat.net/ilc/peq/FitxaAutors.asp?nom1=pon&cerca=Cerca&quinform=form1&NRegistre=22&idregistre=5736>



WEB: The author in the Catalan Encyclopaedia

<http://www.grec.cat/cgibin/hecangcl2.pgm?&USUARI=&SESSIO=&NDCHEC=0052021&PGMORI=E>



WEB: The author in the Who's Who of Catalan Literature

<http://cultura.gencat.net/ilc/peq/FitxaAutorsuk.asp?nom1=pont&cercauk2=Search&quinform=form1&NRegistre=2&idregistre=5736>

Bibliography



WEB: Què hi ha a la Biblioteca de Catalunya

http://cataleg.bnc.cat/search*cat/?searchtype=a&searcharg=Pont+Jaume&sortdropdown=-&searchscope=13&searchscope2=13&SORT=D

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WEB: Què hi ha a les biblioteques universitàries catalanes (CCUC)

http://ccuc.cbuc.cat/search*cat/a?SEARCH=Pont+Jaume&sortdropdown=-&searchscope=23



WEB: Què hi ha a les biblioteques públiques

<http://argus.biblioteques.gencat.cat/iii/encore/search/C|SPont+Jaume|Orighresult|U1?lang=cat&suite=pearl>



WEB: Per comprar-ne llibres

<http://www.llibres.cat/ca/detall-autor/pont-i-ibanez-jaume>



WEB: Articles de l'autor (Traces)

<http://traces.uab.cat/search?f=author&p=Pont%20Jaume&sc=1&ln=ca>



WEB: Articles sobre l'autor (Traces)

http://traces.uab.cat/search?ln=ca&p=Pont%2C+Jaume&f=keyword&action_search=Cerca&c=Trace+s+%3A+base+de+dades+de+llengua+i+literatura+catalanes&sf=&so=d&rm=&rg=10&sc=1&of=hb



WEB: Works in the Biblioteca de Catalunya

http://cataleg.bnc.cat/search*eng/?searchtype=a&searcharg=Pont+Jaume&sortdropdown=-&searchscope=13&searchscope2=13&SORT=D



WEB: The author in The European Library

<http://search.theeuropeanlibrary.org/portal/en/search/%28%22creator%22+all+%22pont+jaume%22%29.query>



WEB: The author in the Congress Library (US)

<http://catalog.loc.gov/cgi-bin/Pwebrecon.cgi?DB=local&PAGE=First>



WEB: The author in the COPAC Catalogue (UK)

<http://copac.ac.uk/search?&au=Jaume+Pont>

Comments on the author

Criticism



WEB: Jaume Pont a l'AELC

Inclou biografia, premis, publicacions, referències crítiques i poemes en català, anglès i alemany.
<http://www.escriptors.cat/autors/pontj/>



WEB: L'autor llegeix "Veus"

Lectura del poema "Veus" al web InterRomania.
<http://www.interromania.com/video/pont/veus.wmv>

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WEB: Jaume Pont on the lletrA website in Catalan

Including more resources.

<http://www.uoc.edu/lletra/noms/jaumepont/index.html>



WEB: Jaume Pont in AELC (Association of Catalan Language Writers)

Includes biography, prizes, publications, critical references and poems in Catalan, English and German.

http://www.escriptors.cat/autors/pontj/pagina.php?id_sec=397



WEB: Jaume Pont reads "Veus" [Voices]

Reading of the poem "Veus" on the InterRomania website.

<http://www.interromania.com/video/pont/veus.wmv>



WEB: Nit de Santa Llúcia

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http://nitdesantallucia.info/guardonats_fitxa.php?win_id=343



WEB: A la Viquipèdia

Breu biografia i bibliografia de l'autor al web de l'enciclopèdia lliure.

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WEB: "La vida líquida"

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<http://web.udl.es/Noticies/revista/hemeroteca/maig2001/entrevistac.html>



PDF: "El manuscrit trobat"

Àlex Broch comenta el *Llibre de La Frontera* a l'*Avui* (09/11/00), [pàg. 1](#) i [pàg. 2](#).

<http://www.traces.uab.es/tracesbd/avui/av00058a.pdf>



PDF: "Viatge poètic a Al-Àndalus"

Francesc Calafat ressenya *Llibre de la frontera*, a *Caràcters*, núm. 13 (octubre 2000).

<http://www.traces.uab.es/tracesbd/caracters/ca013.pdf>



WEB: Activitats per treballar poemes

Tres poemes amb propostes al web *Viu la poesia*.

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