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Vicent Andrés Estellés



The Diffusion of a Poetic Voice from Valencia

Vicent Salvador (Universitat Jaume I)

Vicent Andrés Estellés was born in Burjassot in 1924. The poetic production of Estellés is prolific and original. His importance derives from -among other elements- his having been able to create an extremely high-quality poetic opus. He is a vital and impassioned poet who offers admirable depictions of everyday existence. His subjects, consequently, are those of life itself: love, death, sex, fear, the city, the country, womanhood, and so on. As Joan Fuster very lucidly expressed it, "The subjects of Vicent Andrés Estellés, when reduced to their very essence, have the elemental nakedness of everyday life: hunger, sex and death".

The Poetic Phenomenon of Estellés in Historical Context Of the same generation as [Josep Maria Llompart](#), [Blai Bonet](#) and [Gabriel Ferrater](#), Vicent Andrés Estellés (Burjassot, 1924 - Valencia, 1993) began to write his poetry after the Civil War. This he did from the literary periphery that Valencia was at the time and as part of the group of literati that included Xavier Casp, [Joan Fuster](#) and other members of the incipient Valencian Catalan nationalist movement of the years of the post-war revival. He was a young journalist with a poet's vocation, indefatigably writing verse after verse and sometimes seeing them published. For example *Ciutat a cau d'orella* (City in My Ear), published in Valencia in 1953, was the first of four collections of poems that appeared in the 1950s and 1960s.

However, it was not until the start of the 1970s that his work irrupted on to the scene, to become a symbol of the region of Valencia, which was starting to wake up shortly after the cries of protest that had resounded in the songs of Raimon. The able support of [Joan Fuster](#) and the talent of the publisher Eliseu Climent were behind the major event of the publication of his poetry.

Then came the best sellers, especially the *Llibre de meravelles* (Book of Wonders, 1971), prizes such as the Catalan Letters Prize and then, little by little, the ten volumes of the complete works. Valencian literature had a popular and exportable poet at last. The event was a success in civic terms as well, at this dawning moment of the transition to democracy. And it was also a success in the general sphere of Catalan literature where Estellés was read and appreciated, putting to rest any doubts that Fuster had expressed in his Prologue to *Recomane tenebres* (I Would Recommend the Dark, 1972), the first volume of the *Obra Completa* (Complete Works), about the difficulties of interpreting the poet's nuances of dialect beyond the local or regional framework. In fact, the local roots of Estellés' verse - from his use of dialect to the reiterated appearance of toponyms - were factors that contributed to the effectiveness of his poetry.

The Poet's Civic Commitment Estellés was a standard bearer of a collective civic sentiment, presenting himself as an interpreter of the words of the tribe and of the demands of his people. The poem "La rosa de paper" (The Paper Rose) is highly representative in this regard, telling the story of a nameless woman who leaves behind the symbol of a paper rose - and on the piece of paper is poetic writing - which is her legacy to her people as a call for resistance and transformation. The poet

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appears as "one among many", as the "voice of a people" on the move, while, as a specific individual, he is also experiencing in his own personal circumstances, the collective drama of the years that followed the Civil War, in a country that was condemned to crossing the desert.

In the varied tonal and thematic range of his poetry, one of its most irrefutable merits is his achievement of this image of personal and civic dignity. In this, he is clearly indebted to [Carles Riba](#) and, in particular, to the Riba of the [Elegies de Bierville](#) (Bierville Elegies), for Estellés, too, is writing from exile, from an internal, national and class exile. From these coordinates of its origins, his writing creates the bitter dignity of a column cast out from the temple. There are considerable differences between the two poets, to be sure. For example, Estellés is much less selective, less refined with his anecdotes. His poetic mesh lets through all kinds of descriptive details, the typical characters of a period set piece and many everyday episodes. The elegy thus becomes a social chronicle. And the journalist - witness to the micro-history - appears on the scene. Faced with the post-war spectacle, the poverty and repression of all kinds, Estellés reveals his nature as an impassioned chronicler who is not too worried about stylising, and he creates an inventory of the events and personalities that constitute his world.

From this standpoint, it is of no importance that Estellés should concern himself with episodes from national history, or with the *fidels petites coses* (faithful little things) that, as in Ribas' case, come to fill everyday life, or with recounting a very personal love story. Whatever the case, the result is profoundly coherent, generating a chronicle that is at once bitter and hopeful, the cry that raises the idea of a dignity that has never been abandoned. He frequently conveys it, moreover, by means of his very well-known gift for conversational confidentiality. With indubitable communicative efficacy.

One very particular case is that of the *Horacianes* (Horations, 1974), where the poet portrays life in Valencia by making himself pass as Horace, mixing Valencia with imperial Rome and disguising his own personal enemies as characters from the past, for example Suetonius. Apart from the objectivising effect derived by adopting a classical *persona* as the poetic voice of the "I", this also implies a "notable sensibility of the human instinct" as the specialist in contemporary Hispanic culture Dominic Keown might say, and a call for a "civilised order founded on freedom, tolerance and solidarity". At the same time, the device enables universalisation of a historically-situated experience that is born from the vicissitudes that are experienced at the local level.

Indeed, this Latinate filter permits him to work with a certain distancing that legitimates as lyrical poetry what is almost a journalistic chronicle with satirical strands. The first canto to the products of the earth and the happiness of small, everyday things, is also arrayed in the prestige of the classics and, in this sense, Estellés would sometimes invoke memory of the Chilean poet Pablo Neruda and his *Odas elementales* (Elemental Odes). Making something poetic of the experience of contemplating and eating with gusto a roasted capsicum is a true challenge to the lyrical poet and Estellés, going beyond Josep Pla's style of gastronomic tone, manages to present with poetic intensity this small sample of life's basic pleasures that permit us true communion with the world.

Again, the influence of Pablo Neruda, this time in his more epic dimension, is visible in the great work *Mural del País Valencià* (Mural of the Land of Valencia), which consists of a collection of poems that set out to extol the geography and history of the towns of the region. This work, which was left unfinished and published posthumously in 1996, is given the form of an ambitious tableau, a kind of wall painting, like those done by the Mexican painters Siqueiros and Rivera, with a powerful epic feel, which might be compared with that of Neruda's *Canto general*, the great epic work of the lands of America.

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The Theme of LoveDeath, along with its rituals and corresponding allegories constituted a theme that fascinated Estellés, frequently obsessing him to the point that he associated the sonnet - because of its graphic form on the blank page - with a coffin, and leading him to write the premonitory story of his own burial. Alongside this beauty of death there is also a compulsive attraction to love, which becomes the very core of all his poetic work, in a wide range of sensations that go from the sexual act directly expressed through to the more sophisticated manifestations of desire and even more strictly spiritualised feelings.

Perhaps one of the most evident factors with regard to the popularising of Estellés' poetry is the crude and immediate way that he sometimes writes about the experience of sex - unknown in previous Catalan poetry and unusual in what followed. Even a poem that is so lyrically agitated as "Els amants" (The Lovers), powerfully recited by Ovidi Montllor over many years and territories, was presented with a certain note of challenge to the traditional amorous rhetoric, as is clear in his allusion to noucentista poetry: "And may the chaste senyor López Picó forgive us". Hence, in stylised form, Estellés automatically associates many phenomena of nature with eroticism and the female body, for example when he sees in the movement of rippling waves "a sea in swift little breasts". In general, the female body is a source of metaphors like this and, at the same time, the focus of his attraction for intensifying his poetic devices, among which the double adjective is not the least used, for example the "benign ripened roundnesses" of the desired image of the female body that he presents as "unconquered" and "autarchic".

However, in discussing his treatment of amorous material, one must highlight above all his expressive skill, which is so full of intensity, for example both when he writes of furtive love affairs - that we frequently intuit are vividly painted by his imagination - and when he evokes a long-lived conjugal love that is as faithful as death itself, a "death-long" love. Hence, references like "the handful of sex's black saffron" or "love, between your little teeth, I am grapes", or "for you I eat lemons, I look at the whole day long", combine a startling sensuality with a stricter lyrical tension. The images surprise us at times with their elemental power of moving efficiency. "Life came to us as a surprise, / a live frog in the pocket".

Rhetorical DevicesAlongside his direct expression of sexuality and his surprising use of words that pertain to the colloquial register, Estellés' poetry is also notable for a particular stylistic and rhetorical elaboration, which is very visible in his use of adjectives, his metaphorical images and in the cultural filter that comprise, for example, his references in *Horacianes* to the classical world of Rome. To these we might add other devices, such as his expressive use of toponyms, which, for Estellés, were words of telluric roots, full of symbolism, whether they were names of streets in Valencia or entries in local rural registers, as if they had become an emblem of his linguistic origins - for example in the collection of poems entitled *Les homilies d'Organyà* (Organyà Homilies, 1981), where he renders homage to the Catalan language.

One of his most notable devices is parody, which he exercises in the classical tradition of the eclogue or using the clichés proffered by the [Renaixença](#) (Renaissance) and its patriarch in Valencia, Teodor Llorente (1836-1911). Hence the eclogues of Garcilaso de la Vega become a dialogue between present-day characters in an office setting, where a nymph of our times might scold her lover, "Nemerós, Nemorós, don't rip my knickers, for they cost me a lot". Again, the clichés in Llorente's descriptions of the landscape in poems like "El barranc dels Algadins" (Algadins Ravine) - the sweet smell of the country, the idealised ploughmen, etc. - might be replaced, in Estellés work, with "Vora el barranc del Carraixet" (At the Gully of Carraixet), written in memory of the executions that took place in the wake of the Civil War just outside the city of Valencia, where the phonic gentleness of the word

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"Algadins" becomes the multi-vibrant harshness of the real place name of "Carraixet".

A passionate, and socially committed man, a fount of literary culture, a journalist-chronicler of his own world, and a poet who rose to great heights of lyrical intensity in the protean whole of his production, Vicent Andrés Estellés bequeathed to Catalan culture a discourse that is brewed of the living word, both effective for popularising poetry - and this is quite true and constructive in the area of Valencia from whence it comes - and also a highly personal poetic point of reference that is clearly profiled and characterised within contemporary Catalan literature as a whole.

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A selection of texts

Text



PDF: 'Lovers'

A poem of Vicent Andrés Estellés translated by Jack H. Smith. In *Catalan International View*, n. 4.
http://international-view.cat/armari/internationalview:internationalview/2/civ04_21_poem.pdf



WEB: Selecció de poemes

Vuit poemes de l'autor al web *Viu la poesia*.

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



WEB: Poemes

Recull de set poemes en castellà.

<http://perso.wanadoo.es/lipmic/Pluricat/esp/estelles.htm>



WEB: Estellés a EPdLP

Nota biogràfica en castellà amb els poemes "Els amants" i "Et besaria lentament" a El Poder de la Palabra.

<http://www.epdlp.com/escritor.php?id=1392>



WEB: Selecció de Poesia Catalana

Reprodueix dotze poemes, un dels quals ("Els amants"), amb traducció a l'anglès.

<http://www.uoc.edu/lletra/especials/folch/estelles.htm>



WEB: Magisteri Teatre-Mag Poesia

Pàgina amb dades sobre l'escriptor, textos i una antologia de poemes per a l'escola.

<http://www.mallorcaweb.com/Mag-Teatre/estelles/index.html>



WEB: Selections of Catalan Poetry

Reproduces twelve poems, one of which ("Els amants" ["The Lovers"]), has been translated into English.

<http://www.uoc.edu/lletra/especials/folch/estelles.htm>

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WEB: Magisteri Teatre-Mag Poesia

This excellent page offers quite a lot of information about the writer, a large number of texts and an anthology of poems for schools.

<http://www.mallorcaweb.com/Mag-Teatre/estelles/index.html>



AUDIO: Mireia Pàmies llegeix 'Coral romput', de Vicent Andrés Estellés

<http://soundcloud.com/lletra/mireia-pa-mies-corall-romput>

Bio-bibliography

Biography



WEB: A la Hiperenciclopèdia

http://www.enciclopedia.cat/fitxa_v2.jsp?NDCHEC=0003909



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

<http://cultura.gencat.net/ilc/peq/FitxaAutors.asp?nom1=and&nom2=&cerca=Cerca&quinform=form1&NRegistre=1&idregistre=7040>



WEB: A la Viquipèdia

Biografia, obra i enllaços sobre l'autor al web de l'enciclopèdia lliure.

http://ca.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vicent_Andrés_Estellés



WEB: Vicent Andrés Estellés a Literatura valenciana actual

Fitxa dedicada a l'autor en aquest web de la Universitat d'Alacant.

<http://www.iifv.ua.es/lletraferit/consultes/veureAutor.asp?pld=141>



VIDEO: Tons (poesia x cantar)

Programa de TVC sobre l'obra de l'autor.

<http://www.tv3.cat/videos/220838617#>



AUDIO: Poetes catalans: V.A. Estellés

Programa de ràdio sobre la vida i obra de l'autora, produït per Ràdio Escairats i Ràdio Esparreguera.

http://www.edu3.cat/Edu3tv/Fitxa?p_id=45496&p_ex=vicent%20andres%20estelles



WEB: The author in the Catalan Encyclopaedia

<http://www.grec.cat/cgibin/hecangcl2.pgm?&USUARI=&SESSIO=&NDCHEC=0003909&PGMORI=E>



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

<http://cultura.gencat.net/ilc/peq/FitxaAutorsuk.asp?nom1=and&nom2=&cercauk2=Search&quinform=form1&NRegistre=1&idregistre=7040>

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Bibliography



WEB: Què hi ha a la Biblioteca de Catalunya

http://cataleg.bnc.cat/search*cat/?searchtype=a&searcharg=Andr%C3%A9s+Estell%C3%A9s+Vicent&sortdropdown=-&searchscope=13&searchscope2=13&SORT=D



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

http://ccuc.cbuc.es/search*cat/a?SEARCH=Andr%C3%A9s+Estell%C3%A9s+Vicent&sortdropdown=-&searchscope=23



WEB: Què hi ha a les biblioteques públiques

<http://argus.biblioteques.gencat.cat/iii/encore/search/C|SAndr%C3%A9s+Estell%C3%A9s+Vicent|Orightresult|U1?lang=cat&suite=pearl>



WEB: Per comprar-ne llibres

<http://www.llibres.cat/ca/detall-autor/andres-i-estelles-vicent>



WEB: Articles de l'autor (Traces)

<http://traces.uab.cat/search?f=author&p=Andr%C3%A9s%20Estell%C3%A9s%20Vicent&sc=1&ln=ca>



WEB: Articles sobre l'autor (Traces)

http://traces.uab.cat/search?ln=ca&p=Andr%C3%A9s+Estell%C3%A9s+Vicent&f=keyword&action_search=Cerca&c=Traces+%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=Andr%C3%A9s+Estell%C3%A9s+Vicent&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+%22andr%C3%A9s+estell%C3%A9s+vicent%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=Vicent+Andr%C3%A9s+Estell%C3%A9s>

Comments on the author

Criticism

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WEB: Vicent Andrés Estellés a l'AELC

Inclou biografia, obra, premis, transcripció d'articles i enllaços.
<http://www.escriptors.com/autors/andresv/>



WEB: L'autor al Corpus Literari Ciutat de Barcelona

Biografia, enllaços i transcripció d'articles sobre Vicent Andrés i Estellés.
http://www.ducros.biz/corpus/index.php?command=show_news&news_id=74



PDF: Vicent Andrés Estellés

Dossier de Vicent Sanz sobre l'autor, dins el Seminari didàctic "El gust per la lectura" (2007-2008).
http://xtec.cat/lic/centre/professorat/dossiersgust/gust%202007_08/gust_secundaria/estelles.pdf



PDF: Setanta-cinquè aniversari

"Estellés: totes les coses com la llum del dia". Article de Vicent Berenguer a *Caràcters* (9, 1999) amb motiu del 75è. aniversari del naixement del poeta.
<http://www.uv.es/caracters/pdf/CARACTERS-09.pdf>



WEB: Vicent Andrés Estellés on the Lletra website in Catalan

Including more resources and reading suggestions.
<http://www.uoc.edu/lletra/noms/vaestelles/index.html>



WEB: Vicent Andrés Estellés in AELC (Association of Catalan Language Writers)

Includes biography, works, prizes, interviews and links.
http://www.escriptors.com/autors/andresv/pagina.php?id_sec=232



WEB: Vicent Andrés i Estellés in the City of Barcelona Literary Corpus

Biography, links and transcription of articles on this author.
http://www.ducros.biz/corpus/index.php?command=show_news&news_id=74

Miscellaneous



WEB: "Auca de Vicent Andrés Estellés"

Auca escrita per Joan Vilamala al web La paret de les auques.
<http://www.auques.cat/textos.php?auca=andres>



WEB: "Deu any després"

Proposta educativa sobre el poeta Vicent Andrés Estellés. A el Diari de l'escola de VilaWeb (01/04/2003).
<http://www.vilaweb.cat/www/diariescola/noticia?id=671230>



WEB: Any Estellés

Notícia a Vilaweb de la commemoració a la Vall d'Albaida del desè aniversari de la mort de Vicent Andrés Estellés.

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< <http://lletra.uoc.edu/en/author/vicent-andres-estelles> >

<http://www.lapobladelduc.org/HTML/noti12.htm>



WEB: Premi Vicent Andrés Estellés

Informació sobre el premi Vicent Andrés Estellés de poesia (Premis Octubre).

<http://vae.imcjb.net/>



WEB: Pàgina a Facebook

Pàgina a Facebook, amb actualitzacions i notícies.

http://es-la.facebook.com/pages/Vicent-Andres-Estelles/37300396517?v=app_2373072738&viewas=0&ref=mf



WEB: Estellés Year

News on Vilaweb about the commemoration in Vall d'Albaida of the tenth anniversary of the death of Vicent Andrés Estellés.

<http://www.lapobladelduc.org/HTML/noti12.htm>



WEB: Interaccions multimèdia

El web *Viu la poesia* presenta activitats interactives de dos poemes.

http://www.viulapoesia.com/membrespocio/arxius/lletra/vaestelles_index_interac.html



WEB: Activitats per a nivells inicials de llengua

Un poema al web *Viu la poesia* amb propostes senzilles.

http://viulapoesia.com/pagina_6.php?tipus=1&subtipus=2&itinerari=9&idpoema=310



WEB: Activitats per treballar poemes

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

http://www.viulapoesia.com/membrespocio/arxius/lletra/vaestelles_index_props.html



WEB: Proposta de lectura sobre *Un entre tants*

Recursos de lectura per als estudiants d'ESO al web de l'edu365.

<http://www.edu365.cat/eso/muds/catala/lectures/entretants/index.htm>