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Literary news about Àngel Guimerà on Lletra, the UOC's virtual space devoted to Catalan literature

< <http://lletra.uoc.edu/en/author/angel-guimera> >

Àngel Guimerà



Àngel Guimerà Ramon Bacardit

The details of Àngel Guimerà's biography have been a source of controversy, from his real birth date (1845, but deliberately falsified by the playwright) to matters that more directly concerned his private life. In fact, some writers have seen the two areas as related. At least, this was the view of Xavier Fàbregas, who sees in the circumstances of Guimerà's birth (his parents were not married) one of the biographical factors that surely marked his writing, along with the idea of his mixed ancestry (born in Tenerife of a Canary Islands mother and Catalan father, he came to live in Vendrell at the age of eight) and his frustrated love for a girl named Maria Rubió in which it seems that both sets of parents opposed the match.

This tendency to interpret his work starting out from his biography has been a constant and is partly explained by the contradiction between the high-voltage passion of his writing and the extreme discretion of his personal life, from whence comes the inevitable temptation to project psychoanalytical readings on to the author and his work. To all this must be added the rumours that were already circulating in Guimerà's own time, arising from his resolute bachelorhood and his habit keeping company with a group of younger disciples.

With time, some biographers like Caravaca, first, and then Ferran de Pol, have dealt with the latter issue fairly transparently. Ferran de Pol was the more provocative, declaring in no uncertain terms, "Guimerà was not homosexual", addressing head-on the rumour that, as he recognised, was rife in Barcelona intellectual circles. Whatever the case, the obsession of some writers (Miracle in particular) with constructing in all its detail an alleged love story that appears to have been little more than an adolescent flirtation, seems rather odd. Without being led astray away by the slightly prurient gossip, or trying to "save" Guimerà from moth-eaten prejudices, one can usefully point out that his peculiar personality invites one to enter into the nucleus of a conception of love that is a constant in his writing. It is evident that, apart from the differences in many aspects of their work, Guimerà shares with Strindberg a great capacity for presenting psychologically complex passions in all their power.

As for his "mixed parentage", the theme of the misfit, the outsider, is a recurrent motif in his work, as Fàbregas has remarked. One can easily find a clear relationship here with the playwright's own life story.

The Playwright The early period of Guimerà's playwriting is particularly notable for his resolve to follow a programmatic scheme suggested by his friends, especially [Josep Yxart](#), who was then the most lucid and best-informed critic. In Catalan theatre of the time, the prevailing figure was [Frederic Soler](#), who had consolidated a melodramatically-grounded model of Catalan theatre in which the predominant forms were comedies of manners and rural or historical dramas. The dissatisfaction of many Catalan intellectuals with these plays and the monopoly enjoyed by the author of *La dida* [The Wet Nurse] pushed them into looking for an alternative that would, as part of the packet, bestow a measure of literary prestige on the local scene, a factor that had been excluded by Soler's overindulged popularism.

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Hence, and coinciding with a European-wide reaction against the excesses of the early days of [romanticism](#), an attempt was made to recover, under the heading of tragedy, some forms of refined drama that would breathe new life into the already-established romantic tradition, both through deeper realism in the treatment of the historical reality in which passion-fired conflicts were set (Pietro Cossa, Victorien Sardou, etc.), and by way of recovering something of the last dramas of Schiller, which were notable for the manner in which he synthesised the Shakespearian model of theatre and that of seventeenth-century French classicism. This was seen as a formula for avoiding the melodramatic gruesomeness of a certain brand of romanticism, while also moving away from the rhetorical stiffness of a playwright like Racine and decidedly opting for incorporating history as stage material. The function of the old-style tragedy was thus recovered but this was achieved by introducing the renovation in theatre that had been brought about by the European reception of Shakespeare's plays. This option was the one that intensely interested [Yxart](#), once the difficulties of establishing contemporary realist drama in the setting of mid-nineteenth-century Catalan society were duly understood. Guimerà was the author elected by his contemporaries as the most appropriate playwright to move ahead with the creation of a genre of contemporary Catalan tragedy that would bring prestige to a literature that, with [Verdaguer](#), had already embraced the epic.

The most outstanding tendencies in Guimerà's works from *Gal·la Placídia* [Galla Placidia] (1879) to *La boja* [The Madwoman] (1890) are, on the one hand, an approximation to a more sincere kind of realism expressed both in his approach to plots and in the sobriety of his linguistic register and, on the other, the creation of a number of thematic constants that Guimerà would never abandon but would, indeed, continue to probe more deeply in his successive works. He wrote about conflicts of passion that, at bottom, implied power relations, frequently highlighting issues of non-adaptation because of orphanhood and/or mixed parentage. This is the backdrop onto which he projected relationships containing more or less evident elements of masochism and tormented sensuality.

This is best expressed in his prose dramas of the 1890s, especially in works such as *Maria Rosa* (1894), *Terra baixa* (1896, staged in English as *Martha of the Lowlands*) and *La filla del mar* [Daughter of the Sea] (1900). This approximation to contemporary reality and the processes of change Catalan society was undergoing as it headed towards a clearly urban and industrial model gave a stamp of singularity to his production of this period, in which one might say that Guimerà managed to define his own style of extraordinarily powerful theatre. Curiously enough, it is in these texts, which Guimerà dubbed as dramas, that he achieved a modern tragic form in bringing out the essence of the passion-based conflict against a choral background that has the dual function of counterpoint and impotent witness to the struggle. If we then add the figure of the "*coreuta*", which tends to be someone of advanced age who takes the side of the protagonists of the drama and who frequently announces its denouement (for example Gepa in *Maria Rosa* or Tomàs in *Terra baixa*), we find an approach that is a long way from the typical bourgeois drama or any facile schematisation of a certain species of [romanticism](#). This is due to the fact that his characters, like those of a tragedy, are pure forces of passion that are subject to a terrible and implacable fate. They are not psychological portraits in the strict sense of the term, which is to say in the sense it might be given by nineteenth-century bourgeois theatre. It is in this essentiality that the powerful sense of drama in Guimerà's plays lies, and this is what makes them recoverable today.

The final period of his production for the stage, from 1900 to 1924, is perhaps the most difficult to systematise because the diverse nature of his work and the constant changes of register and style, make it hard to recognise a common thread. Guimerà was suddenly at the height of popularity and international recognition thanks to the popularising of his work by the actress Maria Guerrero. However, he also began to feel the need not to lose the favour of his audiences and attempted to

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adapt his work to the new aesthetic trends set in circulation by [modernism](#), especially after it consolidated as the predominant cultural movement. In these years, he variously tried the bourgeois drama (*Aigua que corre* [Water that Flows], 1902) and dramatic musical poems with fantastic elements (*La santa espina* [The Sacred Thorn], 1907), historically-based Catalan-nationalist theatre (*Indíbil i Mandoni* [Indibilis and Mandonius], 1917), or a class of tragedy that aimed to harvest the contributions of the poetic theatre that was once again in vogue (from the more traditional strain of Rostand to the symbolist-type drama of D'Annunzio). However, it is with plays like *L'Eloi* [Eloi] (1906) and *Sol solet* [Sun, Little Sun] (1905) in which Guimerà partially recovered the tone of his finest works.

The Poet and the NarratorGuimerà's facet as a poet was the first for which he became known. It is sufficient to recall that he was established in this genre before his theatre was recognised (to the extent that, in 1877, he was invested with the title of "Mestre en Gai Saber" (Master of the Art of Poetry) in the literary competition known as the [Jocs Florals](#)). In fact, at no point did he stop writing poetry, despite his work in the theatre. Nevertheless, his strictly poetic output was scarce, consisting of only two collections, one in 1887 (*Poesies* [Poems], with a Prologue by [Josep Yxart](#)) and the other in 1920 (*Segon llibre de poesies* [Second Book of Poems]). The most notable feature of his work in this genre is, without a doubt, the wide range of registers he employs, from the intimist and almost colloquial tone of his love poems through to the more vivid and declamatory style of the historical and patriotic poems by way of a vein of popular verse, and the original gesture, *vis-à-vis* Catalan poetry of the period, of his dedicating a poem to Satan. Unfortunately the poet was overly eclipsed by the playwright, for his poetry signals a way to renewal in Catalan poetry that might have, in part, presented itself as an alternative to the course embodied by [Verdaguer](#). Guimerà's further contributions of the freshness of his poetic language and intuitions that moved towards overcoming the corseted poetic themes of Jocs-Florals rules have not been properly appreciated.

Guimerà's production of narrative prose was more circumstantial than anything else, to the point that his contribution to the genre amounts to only two stories ("El gos de casa" [The Household Dog] and "El nen jueu" [The Jewish Boy], 1890) and a short novel, *Rosa de Lima* [Rose of Lima] (1917). Outstanding in these two cases are his concision and thematic condensation, which also characterise his theatre and his poetry. The fact that he turns again to the subject material of uprootedness or ethnic mixing, which is so habitual in his work, once again demonstrates the secondary role he conceded to prose fiction. However, one must stress that, as was the case with his stage works and poetry, his vivid, colourful language set him apart from most other writers of his times and brought him more into the realm of artists of the stature of an Emili Vilanova.

The Pro-Catalonia PoliticianGuimerà's commitment to Catalan nationalism coincides with the outset of his career as a writer. For him, literary creation and Catalan nationalism were closely bound. In fact, he believed that cultural and linguistic normalisation was a higher priority than any platform determined along strictly party lines. From the Catalan Congresses of 1880-1881 through to his famous speech on accepting the presidency of the Barcelona Athenaeum in 1895, not to mention his participation in the "Memorial de Greuges" (Brief in Defence of the Moral and Material Interests of Catalonia, sent to King Alfonso XII of Spain) Campaign of 1885, and in support of the "Bases de Manresa" (Bases for a Catalan Regional Constitution) in 1892, Guimerà was always connected with pro-Catalonia propaganda and militancy.

In 1906 he brought together some of his speeches and talks in a volume titled *Cants a la pàtria* [Songs to My Native Land], which he dedicated to his friend Pere Aldavert.

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A selection of texts

Text



TXT: La festa del blat : drama en tres actes

Reproducció digital basada en l'edició de Barcelona: Il·lustració Catalana.
<http://www.lluisvives.com/FichaObra.html?Ref=14124&portal=1>



TXT: La filla del mar : drama original en tres actes y en prosa

Reproducció digital de l'edició de Barcelona, Impr. La Renaixensa, 1900.
<http://www.lluisvives.com/FichaObra.html?Ref=13168&portal=1>



TXT: Indíbil y Mandoni [Manuscrit]

Reproducció digital del manuscrit amb data del 3 de desembre de 1915.
<http://www.lluisvives.com/FichaObra.html?Ref=13164&portal=1>



TXT: Rosa de Lima [Manuscrit]

Reproducció digital del manuscrit anterior a 1923.
<http://www.lluisvives.com/FichaObra.html?Ref=13163&portal=1>



TXT: Indíbil y Mandoni : tragedia en tres actes, en vers

Reproducció digital de l'edició de Barcelona, Imp.
<http://www.lluisvives.com/FichaObra.html?Ref=13166&portal=1>



TXT: Rosa de Lima : novel·la

Reproducció digital de l'edició de Barcelona, Imp.
<http://www.lluisvives.com/FichaObra.html?Ref=13165&portal=1>



WEB: Selecció de Poesia Catalana

Reproducció del poema "Catalunya, pobra mare".
<http://www.uoc.edu/lletra/especials/folch/guimera.htm>



WEB: Guimerà a Magisteri Teatre-Mag Poesia

Mitja dotzena de poemes, entre ells, "Postals", "Cant a la vinya", "Va!" i "Déu perdona".
<http://www.mallorcaweb.com/Mag-Teatre/poemes-solts/guimera.html>



WEB: "El gos de casa"

Edició de 1918 al web del Departament d'Ensenyament (Generalitat de Catalunya).
<http://www.xtec.es/~malons22/personal/guimeragoscasa.htm>



WEB: Mar i cel

Text íntegre de l'adaptació de Dagoll Dagom a la Biblioteca Virtual Miguel de Cervantes.
<http://www.cervantesvirtual.com/servlet/SirveObras/08141652100836162979079/p0000001.htm#1>

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WEB: Quatre poemes

El web La Il·lustració Poètica Metropolitana & Continental conté quatre poemes de Guimerà: "Judith de Welp", "L'any mil", "Mort del joglar" i "Poblet".

<http://perso.wanadoo.es/lipmic/Poecat/guimera.htm>



WEB: Un viatge literari per les comarques de Catalunya

Elena Vicioso recull el poema "El Vendrell, voltat de vinyes..." sobre el Baix Penedès.

<http://www.xtec.es/~evicioso/baixpen/guimera.htm>



WEB: "Al Tibidabo"

Elena Vicioso recull aquest poema al web Un viatge literari per les comarques de Catalunya.

<http://www.xtec.es/~evicioso/bcnes/guitibid.htm>



WEB: La Llengua Catalana

Discurs del president llegit en la sessió pública celebrada en l'Ateneu Barcelonès el 30 de novembre de 1895

[http://ca.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fitxer:La_Llengua_catalana_\(1896\).djvu](http://ca.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fitxer:La_Llengua_catalana_(1896).djvu)



WEB: Guimerà a EPdLP

Nota biogràfica amb dos fragments de la seva obra a El Poder de la Palabra.

<http://www.epdlp.com/escritor.php?id=1792>



WEB: Selection of Catalan Poetry

Biographical note, photograph and the poem "Catalunya, pobra mare" [Catalonia, Poor Mother].

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



WEB: Guimerà in Magisteri Teatre-Mag Poesia

Half a dozen poems including, "Postals" [Postcards], "Cant a la vinya" [Song to the Vine], "Va!" [Go!] and "Déu perdona" [God Forgives].

<http://www.mallorcaweb.com/Mag-Teatre/poemes-solts/guimera.html>

Bio-bibliography

Biography



WEB: A la Hiperenciclopèdia

http://www.enciclopedia.cat/fitxa_v2.jsp?NDCHEC=0031692



WEB: A la Viquipèdia

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

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



WEB: Membre de l'IEC

Àngel Guimerà, membre numerari de l'Institut d'Estudis Catalans.

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<http://apmembres2.iec.cat/detall.aspx?pkMembrePLE=200>



PDF: "L'ocellot sinistre"

Semblança biogràfica d'Àngel Guimerà. Conferència a càrrec de Jaume Cabré.

<http://publicacions.iec.cat/repository/pdf/00000040%5C00000070.pdf>



VIDEO: Àngel Guimerà a Edu3.cat

Documental biogràfic de 18 minuts destinat a estudiants d'ESO i Batxillerat i produït per la Generalitat de Catalunya.

http://www.edu3.cat/Edu3tv/Fitxa?p_id=18164&p_ex=angel%20guimera



VIDEO: Guimerà vist per estudiants

Biografia en vídeo amb les veus de tres estudiants de batxillerat.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GMpmlgk7PwU>



WEB: The author in the Catalan Encyclopaedia

<http://www.grec.cat/cgibin/hecangcl2.pgm?&USUARI=&SESSIO=&NDCHEC=0031692&PGMORI=E>



WEB: In Wikipedia

Biographical note and links on the author in the free encyclopaedia.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Àngel_Guimerà



WEB: Member of the IEC

Àngel Guimerà, a permanent member of the Institut d'Estudis Catalans (Institute of Catalan Studies).

<http://apmembres2.iec.cat/detall.aspx?pkMembrePLE=200>

Bibliography



WEB: Què hi ha a la Biblioteca de Catalunya

http://cataleg.bnc.cat/search*cat/?searchtype=a&searcharg=Guimer%C3%A0+%C3%80ngel&sortdr opdown=-&searchscope=13&searchscope2=13&SORT=D



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

http://ccuc.cbuc.es/search*cat/a?SEARCH=Guimer%C3%A0+%C3%80ngel&sortdropdown=-&searc hscope=23



WEB: Què hi ha a les biblioteques públiques

<http://argus.biblioteques.gencat.cat/iii/encore/search/C|SGuimer%C3%A0+%C3%80ngel|Orightresult |U1?lang=cat&suite=pearl>



WEB: Per comprar-ne llibres

<http://www.llibres.cat/ca/detall-autor/guimera-angel>



WEB: Per llegir a internet (BVJLV)

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< <http://lletra.uoc.edu/en/author/angel-guimera> >

<http://www.luisvives.com/FichaAutor.html?Ref=2314&portal=1>



WEB: Articles de l'autor (Traces)

<http://traces.uab.cat/search?f=author&p=Guimer%C3%A0%20%C3%80ngel&sc=1&ln=ca>



WEB: Articles sobre l'autor (Traces)

http://traces.uab.cat/search?ln=ca&p=Guimer%C3%A0%2C+%C3%80ngel&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=Guimer%C3%A0+%C3%80ngel&sortdr opdown=-&searchscope=13&searchscope2=13&SORT=D



WEB: The author in The European Library

<http://search.theeuropeanlibrary.org/portal/en/search/%28%22creator%22+all+%22guimer%C3%A0+%C3%A0ngel%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=%C3%80ngel+Guimer%C3%A0>

Comments on the author

Criticism



WEB: Guimerà a Madrid

Estudi sobre l'obra d'Àngel Guimerà i la seva projecció a Madrid, de Joan Martori.

http://books.google.com/books?id=Hr5GH7Rr158C&pg=PA154&lpg=PA154&dq=crítica+Terra+baixa&source=web&ots=ZM12nFP-Pw&sig=jQHBPiH3UOAHrYr7VxULjGmxh40&hl=ca&sa=X&oi=book_result&resnum=1&ct=result#v=onepage&q=cr%C3%ADtica%20Terra%20baixa&f=false



WEB: Àngel Guimerà a l'AELC

Inclou biografia, cronologia d'estrenes, adaptacions cinematogràfiques...

<http://www.escriptors.cat/autors/guimeraa/>



WEB: L'autor al Corpus Literari Ciutat de Barcelona

Biografia, informació bibliogràfica i enllaços.

http://www.ducros.biz/corpus/index.php?command=show_news&news_id=1116



PDF: La preocupació social en el teatre d'Àngel Guimerà

Estudi de Salvador Calvet i Figuerola, a UOCtreballs.

<http://lletra.uoc.edu/offlletra/files/4e8c4be1-80c8-446a-8c1d-31982ea5c0a4.pdf>

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WEB: Àngel Guimerà on the lletrA website in Catalan

Including more resources.

<http://www.lletra.cat/noms/aguimera/>



WEB: Àngel Guimerà in AELC (Association of Catalan Language Writers)

Includes a biography, chronology of premieres of his plays, critical references and a list of film and operatic adaptations.

http://www.escriptors.cat/autors/guimeraa/pagina.php?id_sec=2051



WEB: Àngel Guimerà in the City of Barcelona Literary Corpus

Biography, bibliographic information and links.

http://www.ducros.biz/corpus/index.php?command=show_news&news_id=1116

Miscellaneous



WEB: Adaptacions a The Internet Movie Database

Nòmina de les obres de Guimerà que han estat representades i/o enregistrades.

<http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0347320/>



WEB: Casa Museu Àngel Guimerà a El Vendrell

Informació sobre la Casa Museu Àngel Guimerà al web Espais escrits de la Xarxa del Patrimoni Literari Català.

<http://www.espaisescrits.cat/home.php?op=6&module=escriptors&ides=23&idioma=cat>



WEB: Àngel Guimerà i Margarida Xirgu

Xavier Rius Xirgu sobre la relació de l'actriu Margarida Xirgu amb l'autor i la seva obra.

<http://margaritaxirgu.es/vivencia2/52guimer/52guimer.htm>



WEB: "Auca d'en Guimerà"

Auca escrita per Joan Vilamala i il·lustrada per Josep Casadevall al web La paret de les auques. Amb suggeriments de treball.

<http://www.auques.cat/tot.php?auca=guimera>



VIDEO: Terra baixa a Teatralnet

Reportatge sobre una versió teatral de l'obra protagonitzada per Roser Camí i Joel Joan al Teatre Romea.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r_CCwSjD63E



WEB: Tiefiland al Liceu

Article de V. Gaillard publicat a *El Punt* (02/10/08) amb motiu de l'estrena al Liceu de l'òpera *Tiefiland*, basada en *Terra Baixa*.

<http://www.classics.cat/noticies/detall?id=7117>

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WEB: In Wikipedia

Biography, writings and analysis of Guimerà's work in the free on-line encyclopaedia.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C3%80ngel_Guimer%C3%A0



WEB: Terra baixa

Guia interactiva de lectura del departament d'Educació.

<http://www.edu365.cat/batxillerat/lectures/catalana/terrabaixa/index.htm>
