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Imma Monsó



Who I Am and Why I Write ...

Imma Monsó

Imma Monsó (LLeida, 1959) has published four novels to great critical and public acclaim: *No se sap mai* (One Never Knows), which was immediately translated into

Spanish and was winner of the Tigre Juan Prize for the best first novel to be published in Spain, *Com unes vacances* (Like a Holiday) and *Tot un caràcter* (A Total Character), while her last novel, *Millor que no m'ho expliquis* (Better Don't Tell Me), was runner-up for the prestigious Llibreter Prize awarded by the Bookseller's Association of Catalonia.

How I Began to WriteI've been writing all my life and, I suppose, for the same reason that everyone else writes -to ease a little the solitude to which we are condemned, a kind of solitude, a kind of internal exile that cannot be healed by simple conversation, however intense it may be. I used to write without ever finishing anything. In general I don't like finished things. I always prefer to have an open door there. Again, I suddenly find that I'm distracted by other enthusiasms, or other obsessions, or other inventions ? I see myself as always having some or other craze, always working like mad but never doing what I'm supposed to be doing ? That's why, for many years, I missed out on reading García Márquez, who's obligatory. I remember that during that period I was reading Henry Miller, Dorothy Parker and Virginia Woolf and I guess I was thinking that there was no way that someone who was in the middle of "schooling" could be a great writer. No doubt I was wrong, but that's how my discovery of writing came later.

Not doing what you're meant to be doing and giving yourself over to your passions has its drawbacks. I've never managed to be a disciplined person. However, this has also turned out to be very productive intellectually and emotionally. I've learnt a lot from my crazes because, in the long run, I've touched on many different matters ? And I've gone deep into my crazes, taken them to the limits ? Then, at last, the act of writing was like finding a place where I felt at home in the world, because every book is like that, a long obsessive period during which everything you see, all you learn, all the trips you do and all the books you read are filtered through the issues you want to deal with in the book you're writing.

How I Began to PublishUntil I was thirty-three I never wrote any story with the firm resolve of finishing it. I wrote my first novel, *No se sap mai* (*One Never Knows*) in this frame of mind. As for the idea of the novel, I was having lunch with my partner and a few friends who used to get together to talk about philosophy on Fridays. Someone had brought a bottle of Alsatian Gewurztraminer and, while we were drinking it, I was thinking about how much of the argument of the friend who was speaking fitted exactly with what I was thinking inside and, eventually, the story of the magic wine that enables one to transmigrate and occupy a friend's mind for a while emerged. When I finished it, I took it anonymously to Edicions 62. It ended up in the hands of Oriol Castanys, who phoned me the very next day. It's quite improbable that a manuscript by an unknown author should end up in the hands of the publisher, but that's how it was. It was an incredible stroke of luck, of a kind that rarely happens. The fact is that, if I hadn't been so lucky, I would probably never have published, but would have got caught up in yet another one of my crazes.

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Why I Write I write to live, I write because it's a vice, I write to laugh, I write to reconstruct what I have lost and to have it again, I write to put everything in its place, I write to multiply life, I write to communicate better, I write to seduce, I write to love, to provoke debate, really I don't know ? In brief, I write for the same reasons that I read.

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They Have Said ...One of the most outstanding features of *Un home de paraula* is the high degree of self-knowledge Monsó displays as she constructs a character who is both original and consistent and with her own ideas about love and death, which the reader, while not necessarily sharing them, will find decent and frequently enviable. In order not to fall into the trap of emotional excess, Imma Monsó is careful to look at herself from a distance, to observe herself with an entomologist's objectivity, that of an empathetic entomologist. Some passages have their dose of black humour, which partly defuses the pathos. As the story unfolds, the couple, Lot and Cometa, achieve levels of complicity and communion -silent and linguistic- such as we only find with La Maga and Horacio Oliveira, Jane Eyre and Edward Rochester and Glenda Berna and Poltern Mac.

Un home de paraula has elements of Imma Monsó's three earlier novels: the sentimental initiation, the importance of holidays as epiphanic periods, humour as prophylactic distancing and, above all, the coming together of two strange, sensitive characters who, in the end, are understandable and even feel close: love as a total experience, meaning the almost utopian union of two clearly differing characters who love one another without renouncing their individuality. The narrator of *Un home de paraula* recalls in more ways than one the main character of *Tot un character* [A Total Character].

Vicenç Pagès Jordà, "Entomologia empàtica" (Empathetic Entomology), *L'Avenç*, Nº. 320 (January 2007).

In a story titled "Millor que no m'ho expliquis" (Better Not to Tell Me), Imma Monsó uses the autobiographical anecdote of having cancer to write a story in which she shows that personal dramas can always be relativised and, by means of her sense of humour, she achieves the triumph of pleasure over unhappiness and pain.

In *Un home de paraula*, Monsó uses the same device to describe in novel form her vicissitudes after the death of her companion (in first person because the grief is immediate) in juxtaposition with her account of the ups and downs of her love story over the years (in third person because this draws on memory). Not missing are the features that characterise the rhythm and sounds of the Imma Monsó's literature: her descriptions of events and things take on a glacial obsessiveness and her methodical analysis of the way people behave brings to the narrative ambience a kind of claustrophobic dazedness even while everything also seems to be extremely enriched because there is not a single nook or cranny that lacks the throb of the affectionate irony in which the couple's relationship was steeped, not a single episode that is not tinged with tones of complicity, and not a single page that does not give off the fragrance of the intensities of placidity.

Ponç Puigdevall, "Un triomf absolut" (A Total Triumph), *El País* (December 2006).

A selection of texts

Text

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PDF: Work in progress

Fragment from the 5th chapter of the novel *Una tempesta*. Includes a short introduction about the writer. In *A Catalan Writing* (november 2008).

http://www.traces.uab.es/tracesbd/catalanwriting/2008/catalanwriting_a2008m11n5p2.pdf



PDF: Work in progress

Fragment, en anglès, del capítol cinquè de la novel·la *Una tempesta*. Inclou una petita introducció sobre l'autora sense signar. *A Catalan Writing* (novembre 2008).

http://www.traces.uab.es/tracesbd/catalanwriting/2008/catalanwriting_a2008m11n5p2.pdf



WEB: Els estudiants i professors de català de la universitat de Birgmingham llegeixen *Tot un caràcter*, d'Imma Monsó

<http://soundcloud.com/lletra/tot-un-car-cter-imma-mons>

Bio-bibliography

Biography



WEB: A la Hiperenciclopèdia

http://www.enciclopedia.cat/fitxa_v2.jsp?NDCHEC=0253358



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

<http://cultura.gencat.net/ilc/qeq/fitxaAutors.asp?nom1=mon&nom2=&cerca=Cerca&quinform=form1&NRegistre=5&idregistre=9208>



WEB: Imma Monsó a l'Institut Ramon Llull

Nota biobibliogràfica dins l'espai dedicat a la Fira Internacional del Llibre de Guadalajara 2004.

http://fil04.llull.cat/cat/02protagonistes/monso_imma.shtm



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

<http://cultura.gencat.net/ilc/qeq/fitxaAutorsuk.asp?nom1=Mons%F3&cercauk2=Search&quinform=form1&NRegistre=&idregistre=9208>



WEB: In Wikipedia

Bio-bibliographical note and links on the author in the free encyclopaedia.

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



WEB: Imma Monsó in the Ramon Llull Institute

Biobibliographical note on this author on a page devoted to the Guadalajara International Book Fair.

http://fil04.llull.cat/eng/02protagonistes/monso_imma.shtm

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Bibliography



WEB: Què hi ha a la Biblioteca de Catalunya

http://catalag.bnc.cat/search*cat/?searchtype=a&searcharg=Mons%C3%B3+Imma&sortdropdown=-&searchscope=13&searchscope2=13&SORT=D



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

<http://cbueg-mt.iii.com/iii/encore/search/C|SMons%C3%B3%2C+Imma|Orightresult|U1?lang=cat&suite=def>



WEB: Què hi ha a les biblioteques públiques

<http://argus.biblioteques.gencat.cat/iii/encore/search/C|SMons%C3%B3+Imma|Orightresult|U1?lang=cat&suite=pearl>



WEB: Per comprar-ne llibres

<http://www.llibres.cat/Catalogo/Autor/monso-imma>



WEB: Articles de l'autora (Traces)

<http://traces.uab.cat/search?f=author&p=Mons%C3%B3%20Imma&sc=1&ln=ca>



WEB: Articles sobre l'autora (Traces)

http://traces.uab.cat/search?ln=ca&p=Mons%C3%B3%2C+Imma&f=keyword&action_search=Cerca&c=Traces+%3A+base+de+dades+de+lengua+i+literatura+catalanes&sf=&so=d&rm=&rg=10&sc=1&of=hb



WEB: Works in the Biblioteca de Catalunya

http://catalag.bnc.cat/search*eng/?searchtype=a&searcharg=Mons%C3%B3+Imma&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+%22mons%C3%B3+imma%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=Imma+Mons%C3%B3>

Comments on the author

Criticism



WEB: Pàgina de l'AELC

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Biografia, publicacions i comentaris.
<http://www.escriptors.cat/autors/monsoi/>



WEB: L'autora al Corpus Literari Ciutat de Barcelona

Biografia, enllaços i transcripció d'articles sobre Monsó.
http://www.ducros.biz/corpus/index.php?command=show_news&news_id=1533



PDF: Montserrat Lunati entrevista Imma Monsó

Inclou una introducció molt completa sobre l'obra de l'autora. A *Journal of Catalan Studies* (2005).
[http://www.anglo-catalan.org/jocs/8/Articles%20&%20Reviews/Versio%20pdf/\(110906\)%201%20Imma%20Monso%20Entrevista.pdf](http://www.anglo-catalan.org/jocs/8/Articles%20&%20Reviews/Versio%20pdf/(110906)%201%20Imma%20Monso%20Entrevista.pdf)



PDF: 'Tempo' de 'pausa da longa'

Andreu Sotorra ressenya *La nit porpra*. A *l'Avui* (26/05/11).
http://www.traces.uab.es/tracesbd/avui/2011/avui_a2011m5d26p15scultura



PDF: Imma Monsó, nou rumb

Ressenya de Vicenç Pagès sobre *Una tempesta*. A *El Periódico de Catalunya* (25/11/09).
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WEB: Historia de un duelo

J. Ernesto Ayala-Dip comenta la traducció al castellà d'*Un home de paraula*. A *El País* (09/12/2006).
http://www.elpais.com/articulo/narrativa/Historia/duelo/elpepuculbab/20061209elpbabnar_6/Tes



WEB: La mirada inquietante

Ressenya sobre la trajectòria literària d'Imma Monsó. A *El País* (16/04/2004).
http://www.elpais.com/articulo/cataluna/Imma/Monso/recupera/primeros/cuentos/publicados/inedito/elpepuespcat/20040416elpcat_27/Tes



PDF: El viaje a los confines

Ressenya d'Anna M. Gil sobre la novel·la juvenil *La nit porpra*. A *La Vanguardia* (29/06/11).
<http://hemeroteca.lavanguardia.com/preview/2011/06/29/pagina-9/87110612/pdf.html>



WEB: AELC Website

Biography, publications and comments.
<http://www.escriptors.cat/autors/monsoi/>



WEB: Imma Monsó in the City of Barcelona Literary Corpus

Biography, links and a transcription of articles on this author.
http://www.ducros.biz/corpus/index.php?command=show_news&news_id=1533



WEB: Imma Monsó

UCLA website with articles and useful links.
<http://ucla-catalanwriters-immamonso.org/index.html>

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Miscellaneous



WEB: Premi Ramon Llull 2012

La novel·la *La dona veloç* guanya el Premi Ramon Llull 2012. Notícia a Vilaweb (27/01/2012).
<http://www.vilaweb.cat/noticia/3976623/20120127/imma-monso-guanya-premi-ramon-llull-dona-veloc.html>



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A la seva novel·la *Un home de paraula*. Notícia al web d'Alfaguara.
<http://lletra.uoc.eduhttp://www.alfaguara.com/es/noticia/un-hombre-de-palabra-de-imma-monso-premio-terenci-moix-a-la-mejor-novela-del-2006/>



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Eva Piquer entrevista l'autora, que parla de la seva literatura i en especial dels personatges i temes de *La tempesta*. A l'*Avui* (19/11/09).

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June Fernández entrevista Imma Monsó. A *El País* (30/12/2006).
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