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< <http://lletra.uoc.edu/en/author/josep-maria-espinas> >

Josep Maria Espinàs



They Have Said...

Josep M. Espinàs (Barcelona, 1927) is one of the most popular writers of Catalan literature. Author of essays, books on walking trips and autobiographical works, he

writes regularly for newspapers and magazines and is a frequent guest on radio and television programmes.

Josep Maria Espinàs is the author of an extensive narrative *oeuvre* in which the realist, testimonial element prevails. As early as the 1950s, he was one of the first to incorporate neorealist literary forms into his writing, combining models from Spanish literature (for example Delibes and Camilo J. Cela) while rendering homage to Italian cinema, which had become prominent as one option for criticising the reality of the post-war world. Espinàs was awarded the 1953 Joanot Martorell Prize for his novel *Com ganivets o flames* (Like Knives or Flames) and would become a leading figure among the writers of realist narrative. With novels like *El gandul* (The Layabout - 1955) and *Tots som iguals* (We Are All Equal) he sharpened his focus on fiction with a markedly social character. Notable in these works are the sharp contrasts between the economic and housing situations of people from different social classes. In *Combat de nit* (Combat by Night - 1959) he presents a group of workers from a perspective that borders on that of the epic in telling the story of truck drivers who are pitted against machines. The characters are depersonalised, are nameless and only described by their physical features, while their journey and the places they visit are given an objectified treatment through inner monologues and description. Espinàs also published collections of short stories: *Varietés* (Variety - 1959), winner of the 1958 Víctor Català Prize, and *Els joves i els altres* (The Young and Others - 1960). Espinàs' realism starts out from a sceptical view of society. He focuses on the human tragicomedy and the anonymous figures that give shape to the urban universe of a society without hope. His condition as a journalist is manifest in his extraordinary gifts as an observer and social critic and his adoption of a disenchanting perspective densely tinged with humour. Sceptical and individualistic, his approach in the 1960s did not fit well with the revolutionary one. He was a faithful contributor to the newspaper *Avui* from the date of its founding until January 1999, writing one of its most popular columns. He was thus able to amplify his journalistic contribution, which had previously been limited to the Spanish-language publications *Noticiero Universal*, *Destino* and *El Correo Catalán*. Espinàs has always combined journalism and literature. The best fruit of this vocation has been the series of television interviews collected in book form and his works about travelling on foot around Catalonia, from the legendary *Viatge al Pirineu de Lleida* (Journey to the Lleida Pyrenees - 1957), which he wrote with Camilo José Cela, to the more recent books in which he visits regions that are far removed from the centralism of Barcelona, always drawing attention to social groups and problems that are a long way from the mainstream centres of interest. In recent years he has started to write fiction again: the novel *Vermell i passa* (Red and Go - 1992) and the magnificent collection of short stories *Un racó de paraigua* (A Corner of Umbrella - 1997).

Enric Bou, «El context cultural a partir del 1959» (The Cultural Context after 1959), *Literatura catalana contemporània* (Contemporary Catalan Literature), (Barcelona, UOC-Proa, 1999).

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Regular reading of a newspaper column not only brings to light the writer's views about the world but also the inner weft that sustains his writing: what he talks about, when he talks about it, how he alternates his focuses of interest? And then it might happen when you are such a faithful follower that, if there are any tricks, you discover them and you feel let down and, if not, you stay fascinated and you learn quite a lot about this trade called column writing. After Joan de Sagarra, who published in *Tele/eXprés* I had never read any newspaper columnist with any fidelity until 1976 when Josep Maria Espinàs began to write his daily articles, which he continued to do for more than twenty years in *Avui* and more recently in *El Periódico*.

I am quite sure that, thanks to Espinàs, I have understood that there is no such thing as big news or small news: everything depends on the use to which it is put and how it is discussed. That if what is called "hot news" has been talked about by everyone, maybe it's better not to say anything about it if everything you might say about it has already been said by somebody else. However, if you contribute a different point of view, however slight the difference may be, it is worth speaking about even though everyone has already had their bit to say about the "hot news". I have also understood that one can be both tough and polite, sensible and irreverent, and that an opinion offered coherently with a smile is more effective than one that comes with supposedly provocative taunts. And that, in the end, it is important to be oneself, independently of whether what you think coincides with the majority or conventionally correct opinion.

Quim Monzó, «25 anys d'article diari de Josep Maria Espinàs» (Twenty-five Years of Josep Maria Espinàs' Daily Column), Homenatge a J. M. Espinàs (In Homage to J. M. Espinàs - 23 April, 2006).

The Author Has Said ...We writers are often quite wrong about ourselves. I wrote novels and now it seems that there weren't many of them although then they represented a hundred per cent of my production. I spent five years writing two novels every six months. I was a full-time novelist and was lucky because my books sold. I left it, not because I was frustrated or was failing or not selling ? Maybe my temperament had some influence in the change and the fact that running the Nova Cançó (New Catalan Song) movement was, for me, incompatible with having the mental serenity that I needed for writing novels ? I also thought there would have to come a new generation that would write novels that were different from what we were doing. I started to publish when I was twenty-six. I didn't have enough of a novelist's vocation to think I'd be doing that all my life. I've never thought like that, whether it's being a novelist, lawyer or singer ? I don't know why I stopped writing novels. Neither did the *Nouveau Roman* interest me very much, or experimentalism, or the new techniques that were making their appearance then ...

Every writer creates a clientele. But where is mine? With the travel books? The novels? Or Catalan song? It seems easy but there is also a touch of risk. The truth is that it's a fact, this communication with one's readers. This has been the case with me since I was twenty-five years old. I've never had a book sitting in a drawer waiting to be published. I have certain aptitudes and also conditions that make what I do communicable. Not because I planned it like that. I have always done what I have needed to do. I've always written without previous schema, without chapters and without anything else. My work is like those drawings of numbers and dots where the figure appears when you join them. There are other people who draw knowing where they want to go.

«Entrevista de Carles Geli a Josep M. Espinàs» (Carles Geli Interviews Josep M. Espinàs), *Cultura Barcelona*, N° 18 (Barcelona, 1990).

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A selection of texts

Text



WEB: 85 anys, 85 frases

Un recull de frases de l'autor amb motiu del seu 85è aniversari. A l'*Ara* (07/03/2012).
http://www.ara.cat/llegim/Josep-Maria-Espinas-anys-frases_0_658734307.html



PDF: L'ofici d'escriptor

Josep Maria Espinàs parla de la seva experiència com a escriptor, i aborda temes diversos relacionats amb la seva manera de concebre la literatura. A l'*Avui* (04/10/2007).
<http://lletra.uoc.edu> <http://www.traces.uab.es/tracesbd/avui/av07449.pdf>



WEB: Cançons

Recull de cançons amb lletra de Josep M. Espinàs.
<http://www.cancioneros.com/aa.php?NM=338>



WEB: Espinàs i el Bages

Alguns articles de l'autor sobre aquesta comarca i la ciutat de Manresa. Inclou també una breu nota biogràfica i una selecció d'enllaços. A Memòria.cat.
<http://www.memoria.cat/espinas/content/portada>



PDF: L'ofici d'escriure

Dos capítols d'*El meu ofici* en què l'autor evoca el seu parer sobre el paper de l'escriptor en la societat actual. A l'*Avui* (28/02/2008).

http://www.traces.uab.es/tracesbd/avui/av080228_06.pdf



WEB: Espinàs a EPdLP

Nota biogràfica i un fragment de la seva obra a El Poder de la Palabra.
<http://www.epdlp.com/escritor.php?id=1688>



WEB: Espinàs a Google Books

<http://lletra.uoc.eduhttps://www.google.es/search?q=inauthor%3A%22josep+m.+espin%C3%A0s%22&btnG=Cerca+l-libres&tbm=bks&tbo=1&hl=ca>



WEB: Espinàs a WorldCat

http://www.worldcat.org/search?q=au%3Aespin%C3%A0s&dblist=638&fq=ap%3A%22espin%C3%A0s%2C+josep+m+maria%22&qt=facet_ap%3A



WEB: Songs

The Barça hymn and two other songs composed by Josep Maria Espinàs.
<http://www.cancioneros.com/aa.php?NM=338>

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Bio-bibliography

Biography



WEB: A la Hiperenciclopèdia

http://www.enciclopedia.cat/fitxa_v2.jsp?NDCHEC=0024951



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

<http://cultura.gencat.net/ilc/req/FitxaAutors.asp?nom1=esp&nom2=&cerca=Cerca&quinform=form1&NRegistre=6&idregistre=1188>



WEB: The author in the Catalan Encyclopaedia

<http://www.grec.cat/cgibin/hecangcl2.pgm?&USUARI=&SESSIO=&NDCHEC=0024951&PGMORI=E>



WEB: A la Viquipèdia

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

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



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

<http://cultura.gencat.net/ilc/req/FitxaAutorsuk.asp?nom2=Espin%E0s&cercauk2=Search&quinform=form1&NRegistre=2&idregistre=1188>



WEB: In Wikipedia

Biography and works in the free encyclopaedia.

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

Bibliography



WEB: Què hi ha a la Biblioteca de Catalunya

http://cataleg.bnc.cat/search*cat/?searchtype=a&searcharg=Espin%C3%A0s+Josep+M.+1927&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|Sjosep+m.+espin%C3%A0s|Ff%3Afacetfields%3Aauthor%3Aauthor%3AAutor%3A%3A|Orightresult?lang=cat&suite=def>



WEB: Què hi ha a les biblioteques públiques

<http://argus.biblioteques.gencat.cat/iii/encore/search/C|SEspin%C3%A0s+Josep+M.|Orightresult|U1?lang=cat&suite=pearl>



WEB: Per comprar-ne llibres

<http://www.llibres.cat/Catalogo/Autor/espinas-josep-m>



WEB: Articles de l'autor (Traces)

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<http://traces.uab.cat/search?f=author&p=Espin%C3%A0s%20Josep%20M%20&sc=1&ln=ca>



WEB: Articles sobre l'autor (Traces)

http://traces.uab.cat/search?ln=ca&p=Espin%C3%A0s%2C+Josep+M.&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=Espin%C3%A0s+Josep+M.+1927&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+%22espin%C3%A0s+josep+maria%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=Josep+Maria+Espin%C3%A0s>

Comments on the author

Criticism



WEB: Pàgina de l'AELC

Biografia, informacions, publicacions.
<http://www.escriptors.cat/autors/espinasjm/>



WEB: L'autor al Corpus Literari Ciutat de Barcelona

Biografia, enllaços i transcripció d'articles sobre Espinàs.
http://www.ducros.biz/corpus/index.php?command=show_news&news_id=861



PDF: La literatura coma a antídoto

Ressenya de Xavier Pla sobre *El meu ofici*. A *l'Avui* (28/02/2008).
http://www.traces.uab.es/tracesbd/avui/av080228_07.pdf



PDF: Josep Maria Espinàs i Camilo José Cela. Des d'un viatge a peu pel Pirineu (1956) fins a dues opcions literàries interdependents

Estudi de Núria Garcia, a UOCtreballs.
<http://lletra.uoc.edu/offlletra/files/4e8c47f0-7b94-46e9-a885-31312ea5c0a4.pdf>



WEB: Catalan Letters Prize of Honour

Lletra page devoted to the Catalan Letters Prize of Honour that was awarded to Josep Maria Espinàs in 2002.

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< <http://lletra.uoc.edu/en/author/josep-maria-espinas> >

<http://www.uoc.edu/lletra/premis/premidhonor/>



WEB: AELC Website

Biography, information, publications.

<http://www.escriptors.cat/autors/espinasjm/index.html>



WEB: Josep M. Espinàs 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=861

Miscellaneous



WEB: "Relacions particulars"

Espinàs presents his book in this video.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PTSVLX7mGFI>



WEB: Espinàs' 80th birthday

Greeting Espinàs on his 80th birthday.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mxF72oIJPNc>



PDF: "Escriure e?s un ofici. E?s la manipulacio? d'un material per obtenir un resultat determinat"

Entrevista de Josep M. Muñoz a Espinàs. A *l'Avenç*, 340 (novembre 2008).

<http://www.lavenc.com/index.php/cat/content/download/43845/700495/file/entrevistaespinas.pdf>



PDF: Jordi Llavina entrevista Josep M. Espinàs

L'autor parla de la seva etapa com a novel·lista i de l'abandó de la novel·la a favor dels llibres de viatges, de la "sobreevaluació" de la ficció com a gènere literari i de les autodefinicions de "poeta", "novel·lista", etc. A *Caràcters* (juliol 2007).

<http://lletra.uoc.edu> http://www.traces.uab.es/tracesbd/caracters/2007/caracters_a2007m7n40p3.pdf



WEB: Anna Carreras conversa amb Josep M. Espinàs

Conversa entre la traductora i l'escriptor, a *Quaderns Divulgatius*, 39. XVII Seminari sobre la Traducció a Catalunya (2009).

http://www.escriptors.cat/?q=publicacions_quadernsdivulgatius39_conversa



WEB: "L'important no és què dius, sinó com ho dius"

Entrevista a l'autor a 356d365e (febrer 2011).

<http://www.356d365e.com/entrevistes/?p=807>



WEB: Personal i intransferible (TVC)

Programa d'entrevistes dirigit i presentat per Josep M. Espinàs als anys 90.

http://www.tv3.cat/searcher/tvc/searchingVideos.jsp?acat=BB_PERSONAL&catname=Personal-i-intransferible

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< <http://lletra.uoc.edu/en/author/josep-maria-espinas> >



WEB: Identitats (TVC)

Espinàs entrevistà en aquest programa diversos personatges del món de la cultura.

http://www.tv3.cat/searcher/tvc/searchingVideos.jsp?acat=BB_IDENTIT&catname=Identitats
