

From Mário de Andrade to Murilo Rubião

São Paulo, June 16, 1943.

Murilo Rubião.

I said I would write you about your short stories, I didn't, I'm sorry. Blame it on the disease. But now I have this little piece of the night, I need to go to sleep or tomorrow is headache for sure. But I still have half an hour left. There's no time to reread the short stories I have here, but there's time to copy some notes I took at first reading. I'm sorry, they go anyway.

I – A harsh humourism, revolted; a mistreating sarcasm that provokes the invention of the case – an invention that is rare and curiously imposing. Domineering. It's really strange as, after the first fatal moment when we verify that we are reading an impossible case to succeed and sometimes worry for a couple of minutes with a possible symbol, an allegory hidden in the retelling (and it is danger to carefully avoid in your case): the strangest is your strong gift of imposing the unreal case. The same gift of a Kafka: we no longer care, and caught by the story, we keep reading and accepting the unreal as if it was real, without any further reaction. Those may be the dominant and most notable qualities and characters in these only three tales: the asperably bitter humorism and the strange force of domineeringly making the reader passive, imposing the unreal as if it were real.

II – In a genre of invention, it must be taken great care of... invention. To choose well the elements so you don't lose the density. This is mainly noticed in two cases where the chosen elements seem weak to me. In "The Magician" the choice of the profession of civil servant seems to me very easy, little subtle, little "invented" and even banal. It's a very much known allusion. The sarcasm, the life's sour grapes weakens it a lot, not renewing in any way the "civil servant" case. It's humorism, it's rather a joke in which any Joel Silveira would fall. If I were to invent the rest of the "Magician", it's clear - thing I imagine more impossible to him. Care must be taken against these invention weakening traps. Also, in the other tale, the dead coming back to life seemed very little convincing. One perceives the good, the strength of the matrix invention: the humorous and pretty sarcastic situation of the dead-who-is-alive. But Murilo Rubião was not able to justify (!) enough this great first element. The non-death of the dead on the road sounds like a resource of those who could not solve inventedly, with lyrism, with creation, the problem that had to be solved.

These are the notes I took after a first reading. I apologize if I'm just going to send them, Murilo, but I'm going through exams, the whole day, I only have a few bits of night and on Sundays I leave for a farm in absolute rest, not even a letter. I sincerely liked your stories and I got wanting for more. When you make copies, take two of them and keep sending.

A hug from  
Mário