

Pets¹

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Murilo Rubião's dragons belong to a domestic and conformed zoology. If not for that reason it is less atrocious, the animals of the writer from Minas Gerais seclusively suffer their own monstrosity. Aware that, after all, their kingdom is not of this world, it seems to them that it is better to silence their own sorrow, than to bother their neighbor for nothing with useless lamentations.

Similar to such urban Dragons, the other animals of the novelist that also participate in any anomalous nature – the rabbit Teleco, Alfredo, the dromedary – end up adopting the same mortified customs of those lords, avoiding to exorbit a certain civil area of conventions, even when restless by nature.

Is he a fabulist, then? The question has already been asked about that hero without profile, invisible protagonist of "Not Don José", this dialectical fiction that is one of his best pages. But the Sibylline answer is there in the text itself: no, he was not a fabulist. "The monsters haunted his house, right under his nose". This and the excess of quotations from the Bible, which Murilo distributed throughout the book, according to a strict system of epigraphs, close the question.

That is why we are – as some strict critics claim –, at best, facing a wayward naturalist, who has for boredom abdicated his classificatory systems. A resigning naturalist who preferred to manipulate the scientific planks, which he once only recorded, in a ghostly kaleidoscope, which ranges from the slowest to the most frenetic rhythms.

Classic of postmodernist fiction, Murilo Rubião's *Os dragões e outros contos* gathers, in new clothes, in a blue suit very well cut by Mario Silésio, the two previous books of the writer, *O Ex-mágico* (1947) and *A Estrela Vermelha* (1953). Although it is an Official Press of Belo Horizonte edition, it might be able to cross the clandestineness that, with almost no exception, murders the province editions for their evident virtues. In fact, being able to reconcile dragons and state typography, it may be that the author achieves more miracles besides this unusual reconciliation of everyday and fantastic, matter of the same memory in different dosages.

It is through a fundamental sense of unreality, proposed in every way, that Murilo Rubião expresses the disparity between man and his inner mirror: Proteus, who has so much been transformed, has already lost all the memory of his personal perspective. Thus, the subject of metamorphosis, in all its alliances and variations, and focused from the point of view of the grotesque, is the main constant of his work, summarizing the representation of exile and abandonment. *Omnia fluunt*: ironically nothing is created or lost, but turns into a revolving tide, where, as in a puppet play, the entrances, exits and returns to the scene repeat in a painful gallop. The image of the time and existence flow suffered by people and things, this metamorphosis and transformation ends, finally, in an ultimate mask of dreadful wax, with death. There is where the macabre takes place, the epilogue to so many stories in the book.

To express this daily oddity the author gradually moves away from the down to earth, installed in a non-historical time in which unreal and real have the same value. Swaying between Revelation and Genesis, this Bible reader who is the most committed of the dilettantes, establishes himself in a lyrical underworld of monsters, infamous,

¹ EULÁLIO, Alexandre. Animais de estimação. Supplement of **O Globo**, Rio de Janeiro, 26 Aug., p. 3, 1965.

crazy, retarded and incestuous, dense of poetic significance, and in which he carves his way.

In language, this monstrous element is insinuated on its toes, through the careful deformation of the prevailing sentence, whose ostensible sobriety is gradually worn down by the rare synonym, by the technical term, by the too exact word, which open in the clause, apparently without resources, the trail to the unusual element. The wise dosage of these almost imperceptible mutations might accelerate even to the same explosion of the sentence. To point at issue its own verbal and conceptual univocity, it ends up dismembering the logical reasoning with the same thorough cold furor of a boy who wrecks an insect – first a wing, then a leg, then an antenna – until the “torn, dull, vile” reasoning succumbs for good. Admirable examples of this linguistic research are stories such as “Zacarias, the Pyrotechnist”, “Marina, the Intangible”, “The Man in the Gray Cap”, “Mariazinha”.

This suspension of realistic judgment starts from a careful exposition of the obvious in order to achieve a vertiginous liberation, which is poetry and freedom, a new gestation of the world. It is in this chaos that the author seeks the identity and the unity, and the meaning that Time has. It is resuming within it the archetypes of stories that are always the same (there are no original themes) that he created his work. And stories such as "The Dragons", "The Edifice", "Barbara", "House of the Red Sunflower", "The Glass Flower", "The Ex-Magician" with no favor have enriched, with their allegorical meditation on the problems of the man of our time, our literature.