

The Ex-Magician¹

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Murilo Rubião's unusual book (*O Ex-Mágico* – Editora Universal – Rio, 1947), hesitant in technical and artistic achievement and remembering too much the experiences of 1922, contains, however, some interesting stories and, at least, a delicious one: the one that gave name to the volume. Delicious and deep. Here's a magician who is tired of doing magic. He becomes a public servant and when, to justify a stability he does not have, he decides to do the great magic, the one by which he will take out of his pocket an appointment title of more than ten years, he achieves nothing. He lost the gift of magic, crushed by the bureaucracy and the unhappy love that kept him stuck so long in his job. Only then the magician understands what he could have accomplished with his sorcerer's wits: "to pluck from the body red, blue, white, black scarves; fill the night with fireworks; raise his face to the sky to let that through the lips came out the greatest of rainbows ever seen. A rainbow that went from one end of the world to another and covered all men", to perform poetry, in a sense, poetry for the old and the children, those that the other seductions of the world no longer tempt and those who still have virgins the senses.

The whole magician's past had been a manifestation of power, but from his creative strength he had only taken a minimum concrete, rabbits, pigeons, pencils, goodies. And having these vulgarities at his fingertips bore him to the desire for suicide. He did not realize that in the creation of disinterested beauty was salvation.

It is possible that Mr. Murilo Rubião's story does not have so transcendent philosophical intentions. It doesn't matter. As every true work of art allows those who seek to enter into its intimacy a great latitude of interpretation. [Not always, however, are his tales this accessible. Others, such as "The House of the Red Sunflower", develop into an atmosphere of almost impenetrable surrealism. So the richness of the author's imagination is what moves us, his literary gratuitousness is what enchants us. They are sometimes small poems in prose, daydreams without apparent connection, loose images whose fluidity is broken from time to time by violent absurdities that are like warnings of a skittish decency against threatening sentimentality.] It is this fear of cheesy banality, of personal confession, one of the characteristics of the poetry of the new generations, write their poets in prose or verse. But the attitude of permanent control and mistrust cannot always be maintained. Then a wave of anguish slowly rises, riding tide that submerges everything and causes accents of a both denser and restrained despair, both more intense as without the escape valves for the lyrical explosions.

The tale entitled "Marina, the Intangible" begins with this compelling image: "Before I had time to open the window and scream for help, silence completely enveloped me." To continue in that tone outside of surrendering, perhaps becoming ridiculous in these times of derision and demoralization. May the joke intervene, therefore, the paradox, that confusion reinse on the surface of the waters, driving away the malicious intelligences, able to describe in all its minutiae the most complex psychological and social processes, because before passing by crazy, closed in its hermeticism, or by fool... The irrepressible requests of anguish, boredom, melancholy, dissatisfied love, insolubility in the false world will come to light in the aggressive form of vague suggestion, esoteric allusion, and then the roles will be reversed, the bourgeois is the one who will be afraid of mystery, and will come out "through the newspapers" to denounce the "Moscow's eye".

¹ MILLIET, Sergio. O ex-mágico. **Estado de São Paulo**, São Paulo, 3 Dec.. 1947.

I wish Mr. Murilo Rubião had given his short stories book a little different title. Not the "Ex-magician", but "The magician", because his prose is quite that of one of these guys who grind the viewer's watch inside a glass and, when they discover the container, comes out of it a carrier pigeon with the letter of the well-loved in the beak. It turns out that the viewer does not know what to make of the letter, does not understand and prosaically demands back his watch...