

APPROXIMATIONS TO HENRY MILLER

Some months after having appeared the first catalan translation of Tropic de Cancer (Ayma, 1977), the same publishing house offers us, now, the version of Tropic de Capricorn by Jordi Arbones too. So, the catalan reader can accede at last to two major titles of the singular millerian "corpus", which he can complete with Primavera negra (Ayma) and Un diable al paradís (Edicions 62, 1966). That is not to say those books constitute "all" Miller, because we are wanting yet the famous trilogy The Rosy Crucifixion (Plexus, Sexus, Nexus) and, to my liking, one of the most esplendid and less spectacular books by this old American author: The Colossus of Marussi.

However, the fact is that the "true" Miller has been published in our country, in excellent translations in spite of the difficulty of reproducing his style in another language without losing some of the original freshness and "spontaneity". Jordi Arbones has succeeded in his task for a simple reason: because he has had the ability of setting himself "within" the core of millerian perspective --of his stream of consciousness-- and has avoided the pitfall of approaching the translation from ~~him~~ "outside", like someone who makes a translation by assignment. That previous identification, in a work with the characteristics that have Miller's books, is an absolutely unfailing requirement.

One cannot see Miller as a novelist who has created an authentically literary cosmos, like Faulkner, for example. Faulkner tried to offer, through his novelistic cycle, the personal vision about a universe that, though essentially faulknerian in itself, is full of real significations one has to discover and interpret, as in recreating the "deep south" he takes possession of it and confers an autonomous entity to it. On the contrary, Miller appears to us as a sort of naturalistic writer. His first eagerness is to live with intensity, to accumulate experiences, as much as possible, and only later on, when he feels himself enriched by the quality and quantity of the existential lessons he has received, he begins to write.

The Narcissus Miller, given to transform the autobiographic magma in literary matter, is a complex ~~subject~~ individual. But, devoid of complexes, Miller explains himself without using euphemisms when he wants to expose his theory that sex is the brain regulating man's activities, the framework of human relations. Miller is not a moralist alike the presbyterian doctrinaires, and his scale of moral values does not match the hypocritical, timorous code or codes of bourgeois morals. Miller ~~never~~ vomits when he has to, and does not cover the meager with sawdust. Here lays the millerian sincerity --not amorality-- and it causes two kind of reactions in the narrow-minded reader: he is astonished and rejects Miller's books, or he accepts Miller as a pornographic author.

We hope catalan readers will not become tempted by an interpretation as simple and false as that. Nowadays, we see Miller as an author who believes in the regenerative generative power of intelligence and the liberating efficacy of instinct, but because of that he does not accept the deceptive alibi of spirit.

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