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Joan Francesc Mira



The narrative of Joan F. Mira

Joan Josep Isern

Joan F. Mira (Valencia, 1939) is a writer, anthropologist and a lecturer in Greek and the Classics. He has published numerous essays and has translated the New Testament and the Divine Comedy, which received the National Translation Prize in 2001. *Purgatori* (Purgatory) won the Sant Jordi Prize in 2002, the highest honour in Catalan Literature.

The first piece of literary news involving Joan Francesc Mira dates from 1974, on the occasion of the near-simultaneous publication of two of his books - an essay entitled *Un estudi d'antropologia social al País Valencià* (A Social Anthropological Study in the Valencian Country) and the novel *El bou de foc* (The Fire Bull). One can see that the work of Mira develops from the outset along a two-lane track - reflection and fiction. Two branches - essay and narrative - to which a third one, translation, was added a few years later. All of them have continued to date, at a level of commitment and excellence that honours our culture and ennobles us all.

Some chroniclers point out that the original manuscript of *El bou de foc*, signed by a then totally unknown author, constituted a pleasant surprise for the jury of the Josep Pla literary prize of 1973, that named him finalist, though it awarded the prize to a top writer, [Llorenç Villalonga](#) for his *Andrea Victrix*. Many critics consider this novel by Joan Francesc Mira - *El bou de foc* -, and *Assaig d'aproximació a Falles Folles Fetes Foc*, the essay by Amadeu Fabregat, also published in 1974, to be the foundation titles of a renaissance of the Valencian novel.

I shall not now dwell on this issue, but, at any rate, the initial stages of this renaissance of the Valencian novel could be considered closed seven years later, in 1981, with another book by Joan Francesc Mira: *El desig dels dies* (The Desire of the Days). It must be said that this list should also be made to include the second book by Mira, *Els cucs de seda* (The Silk Worms), a compilation of short stories that won the 1974 edition of the Andròmina literary prize.

The leading characteristics of these first texts of Mira - and of part of the narrative generated in Valencia during those years - are: realism, the retrieval of collective memory (the postwar scenes, the rural world, the traditions, the customs...), and a strong autobiographical component that soon transcends the personal anecdote in order to become a generational chronicle. Thus, the essence of Mira's intellectual thought, a man committed to his land and culture, already appears with great strength in each page of those first books of his.

Two years after *El desig dels dies*, in 1983, *Viatge al final del fred* (Journey to the End of the Cold) saw the light, a magnificent confirmation of the direction in which Mira had started to consolidate himself in previous books, now including a remarkable step forward in its symbolic load, the ambitious plotting resources, the structural richness, and the narrative technique.

In September 1989 Joan Francesc Mira published *Els treballs perduts* (The Lost Works), the novel with which he opened his Valencia-based trilogy - one of the most important novels written in Catalan

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since the Spanish civil war, this being the opinion not only of he who signs these lines, but of many other critics too.

The literary project represented by this trilogy of evident Joycean reminiscences - Joyce is one of the points of reference that could already be detected in Mira's first books - rests on a number of pillars, namely the reference to a universal myth; the strong presence of a philosophical substratum; the setting in specific areas of the city of Valencia; and a leading character invested with the attributes of a classical hero. We, therefore, find ourselves in front of what we might define as a "construction with constriction". In other words, a project in which the author submits himself to a number of self-imposed norms, not in the form of a corset to restrict him, or of a mere game for the sake of a game, but of a stimulus to creativity and an expressive resource that heightens its narrative discourse. The proof of this lies in the fact that not only *Els treballs perduts*, but also *Purgatori* (Purgatory), the second part of the trilogy, become indeed much richer through the dialogue with its classical points of reference, but they work perfectly well as autonomous novels.

Els treballs perduts finds its inspiration in the myth of the twelve works of Hercules. The action is set in the twelve parish churches within the city of Valencia, and the background philosophical substratum throughout the text is Hellenic paganism. For its part *Purgatori* is inspired in Dante's *Divine Comedy*; and the area of the city of Valencia where action takes place is the first perimeter outside the old city centre - in other words, the bourgeois city - and the philosophical reference is Christianity. As for the third novel, the author has already advanced that it will dwell on the myth of Faust, and will be set in the peripheral quarters of Valencia, and that the philosophical point of reference will be the Enlightenment, science and modernity

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A selection of texts

Text



PDF: "Parlar per no dir res, o per dir alguna cosa"

Assaig de Joan Francesc Mira sobre l'art i l'ofici de la paraula pública a Occident. A *Digithum*, núm. 7 (maig 2005).

<http://www.uoc.edu/digithum/7/dt/cat/mira.pdf>



WEB: "De la identitat de l'escriptor"

Fragment del seu llibre *Sobre ídols i tribus*.

http://www.rodamots.com/calaix.asp?text=Mira_id



WEB: Narrativa de Joan F. Mira

Inclou fragments de *Viatge al final del fred*, *El desig dels dies* i *Els cucs de seda*.

http://www.joanfmira.info/general/llista_narrativa.php



WEB: "Talking and saying nothing, or saying something"

Analysis of Joan Francesc Mira on the art and craft of the public word in the West. In *Digithum*, num., 7 (May 2005).

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<http://www.uoc.edu/digithum/dt/eng/mira.html>

Bio-bibliography

Biography



WEB: A la Hiperenciclopèdia

http://www.enciclopedia.cat/fitxa_v2.jsp?NDCHEC=0042708



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

<http://cultura.gencat.net/ilc/qeq/FitxaAutors.asp?nom1=mir&nom2=&cerca=Cerca&quinform=form1&NRegistre=3&idregistre=2230>



WEB: A la Viquipèdia

Nota biobibliogràfica i enllaços sobre l'autor al web de l'enciclopèdia lliure.

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



WEB: Joan Francesc Mira a l'Institut Ramon Llull

Nota biobibliogràfica dins l'espai dedicat a la Fira Internacional del Llibre de Guadalajara 2004.

http://fil04.llull.cat/cat/02protagonistes/mira_joan_francesc.shtm



WEB: The author in the Catalan Encyclopaedia

<http://www.grec.cat/cgibin/hecangcl2.pgm?&USUARI=&SESSIO=&NDCHEC=0042708&PGMORI=E>



WEB: Joan Francesc Mira a Literatura valenciana actual

Fitxa dedicada a l'autor en aquest web de la Universitat d'Alacant.

<http://www.iifv.ua.es/lletraferit/consultes/veureAutor.asp?pld=153>



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

<http://cultura.gencat.net/ilc/qeq/FitxaAutorsuk.asp?nom1=mira&cercauk2=Search&quinform=form1&NRegistre=1&idregistre=2230>



VIDEO: Mira a Veus literàries

Documental sobre la vida i l'obra de l'escriptor, realitzat per l'AELC.

http://www.edu3.cat/Edu3tv/Fitxa?p_id=17250&p_ex=veus%20liter%E0ries



WEB: Joan Francesc Mira in the Ramon Llull Institute

Biobibliographical note on this author on a page devoted to the Guadalajara International Book Fair.

http://fil04.llull.cat/eng/02protagonistes/mira_joan_francesc.shtm



VIDEO: Mira in Veus literàries [Literary Voices]

Documentary on Mira's life and work made by AELC (Association of Catalan Language Writers).

http://www.edu3.cat/Edu3tv/Fitxa?p_id=17250&p_ex=veus%20liter%E0ries

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Bibliography



WEB: Què hi ha a la Biblioteca de Catalunya

http://cataleg.bnc.cat/search*cat/?searchtype=a&searcharg=Mira+Joan+F.&sortdropdown=-&searchscope=13&searchscope2=13&SORT=D



WEB: Què hi ha a les biblioteques universitàries catalanes (CCUC)

http://ccuc.cbuc.cat/search*cat/a?SEARCH=Mira+Joan+F.&sortdropdown=-&searchscope=23



WEB: Què hi ha a les biblioteques públiques

<http://argus.biblioteques.gencat.cat/iii/encore/search/C|SMira+Joan+Francesc|Orightresult|U1?lang=cat&suite=pearl>



WEB: Per comprar-ne llibres

<http://www.llibres.cat/ca/detall-autor/mira-i-castera-joan-f>



WEB: Articles de l'autor (Traces)

<http://traces.uab.cat/search?f=author&p=Mira%20Joan%20Francesc&sc=1&ln=ca>



WEB: Articles sobre l'autor (Traces)

http://traces.uab.cat/search?ln=ca&p=Mira%2C+Joan+Francesc&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=Mira+Joan+F.&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+%22mira+joan+francesc%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=Joan+Francesc+Mira>

Comments on the author

Criticism



WEB: Sobre *Purgatori*

Pàgina de lletra sobre aquesta novel·la de l'autor.

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<http://lletra.uoc.edu/ca/obra/purgatori-2003/>



WEB: Premi Lletra d'Or

Informació sobre el Premi Lletra d'Or que l'autor guanyà amb *Crítica de la nació pura*.

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



WEB: Premi d'Honor de les Lletres Catalanes

Pàgina de Lletra dedicada al Premi d'Honor de les Lletres Catalanes concedit a aquest escriptor l'any 2004.

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



WEB: Joan Francesc Mira. Tria de textos

Amb fragments dels seus llibres, una selecció d'articles i un exhaustiu recull d'entrevistes, crítiques i altres textos.

<http://www.joanfmira.info/index.php>



WEB: Pàgina de l'AELC

Biografia, informacions, publicacions.

<http://www.escriptors.com/autors/mirajf/index.php/>



WEB: Joan Francesc Mira, a l'IJLV

Biobibliografia de l'escriptor.

<http://www.vives.org/10anys/joanfrancescmira.php>



WEB: L'autor a la Viquipèdia

Més informació sobre l'autor a l'Enciclopèdia lliure.

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



WEB: Informació biobibliogràfica de Joan Francesc Mira

Obres, premis i crítiques al web de la Universitat d'Alacant.

<http://www.vives.org/10anys/joanfrancescmira.php>



WEB: Joan Francesc Mira on the Lletra website in Catalan

Including more resources and reading suggestions.

<http://www.uoc.edu/lletra/noms/jfmira/index.html>



WEB: Lletra d'Or Prize

Lletra page devoted to the Lletra d'Or Prize, which the author won for *Crítica de la nació pura* (Criticism of the Pure Nation).

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



WEB: Prize of Honour of Catalan Literature

Lletra page devoted to the Prize of Honour of Catalan Literature awarded to the writer in 2004.

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

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WEB: Website of the AELC

Biography, information, works.

<http://www.escritors.com/autors/mirajf/index.php/>

Miscellaneous



WEB: Els lectors parlen sobre J. F. Mira

Dins de l'espai Estiu 2003: Què llegim?

http://turquia.uoc.es/externes/cgi-bin/webforum/cat/config_estiu2003.pl?read=230



WEB: "Joan Francesc Mira, assagista" (Joan Francesc Mira, Essayist)

Enric Balaguer writes about the author in *Información* (28/04/05).

<http://www.ua.es/dossierprensa/2005/04/28/14.html>



WEB: "A València es troba poquíssima literatura catalana" (In Valencia There's Very Little Catalan Literature)

Interview with Joan Francesc Mira on the programme "Alexandria" (21/09/04).

<http://www.tvcatalunya.com/alexandria/programes/prog158666722.htm>

Comments



WEB: "Joan Francesc Mira, assagista"

Enric Balaguer escriu sobre l'autor al diari *Información* (28/04/05).

<http://www.ua.es/dossierprensa/2005/04/28/14.html>



WEB: "Amb novel·les no s'aconsegueix canviar un país"

Entrevista a TotCultura.com (29/12/04).

<http://www.grec.com/ftp/totcultura/index.jsp?URL=http%3A//www.totcultura.com/ftp/totcultura/entr1501.htm>



PDF: "Els treballs guanyats"

Vicenç Llorca escriu sobre la narrativa i l'assaig de J.F. Mira, a *l'Avui* (16/12/04)

<http://www.traces.uab.es/tracesbd/avui/av03522.pdf>



WEB: Mira, traductor

Marçal Lladó destaca la tasca del traductor J. F. Mira. A LaMalla (29/12/04)

http://www.lamalla.net/canal/actualitat_cultural/literatura/article.asp?id=161719



WEB: "Per damunt dels dictats de la moda"

Estudi de J. J. Isern, al web Joan F. Mira. Tria de textos.

http://www.joanfmira.info/general/pres_narrativa.php



WEB: "La imprescindible reflexió sobre la identitat"

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Jordi Sebastià escriu sobre els seus assaigs polítics.

http://www.joanfmira.info/general/pres_assaig.php



WEB: "Un observador civilitzat"

Una aproximació als escrits periodístics de l'escriptor, per Enric Sòria.

http://www.joanfmira.info/general/pres_art.php



WEB: Bibliografia

Exhaustiu recull bibliogràfic de l'escriptor. Al web Joan F. Mira. Tria de textos.

<http://www.joanfmira.info/general/bibliografia.php>



WEB: Entrevista a l'autor

Entrevista a l'autor i opinions dels lectors a Racó Català(21/12/2003).

<http://www.racocatala.com/articles/3238>



WEB: "Joan Francesc Mira, escriptor" (Joan Francesc Mira, Writer)

Interview in totCultura.com (29/12/04).

<http://www.grec.com/ftp/totcultura/index.jsp?URL=http%3A//www.totcultura.com/ftp/totcultura/entr1501.htm>



PDF: "Els treballs guanyats" (Works Gained)

Vicenç Llorca writes about the author in *Avui* (16/12/04).

<http://www.traces.uab.es/tracesbd/avui/av03522.pdf>