



❖ 'A scene in life of India' by Mario Miranda

❖ *Nissim Ezekiel on Mario Miranda*

An article on Mario Miranda's art by the late iconic Indian Jewish poet, playwright, editor and art critic in the 2008 Gerard da Cunha book

I know that Mario would be contemptuous of any attempt to verbalise his cartoons, to describe them in terms of high-sounding abstractions. He is essentially a simple, integrated person, with the extraordinary strength that comes from simplicity and integration. He has no pretensions to ideology or intellectual attitudes. If his humour is broad and his satire biting, it is only because he sees through appearances. There is no rage or revulsion against the India scene which is his subject, no hatred of the social game.

Mario's distortions and exaggeration, which are obviously very great, do not express a personal pathology. He is among the soberest, the most balanced of men. His cartoons do not denounce or analyse. To his intensely individual vision, life is funny and that is all. It is enough for him. Men and women (children too) are funny, dressed or undressed, eating, drinking, sitting or walking. Whether they are worthy or unworthy of their human garb makes no difference. That being so, they are even funnier in their aspirations and activities; the situations in which they find themselves, the roles they have to play, their relations with others and with their man-made or natural surroundings. The comedy is ordained. It must be enacted. When the acting goes wrong, the comedy is hilarious.

In Mario's world, even houses, trees, dogs, cats and crows are funny. One may presume he has no malice against them. Everything is transformed into caricature, but nothing becomes unreal. Mario makes fun of reality for being what it is, not because he wants it different. He is no idealist or dreamer. He is a pure humourist. His choice of title for *A Little World of Humour*, confirms my view of him. An earlier collection he entitled *Goa With Love*; and love is the source of his cruelest jokes, his most extravagant irony. Adult love need not be sentimental or inhibiting.

Mario's drawing is opulent, dense with proliferating details, wildly inventive. The modern, economic style, which aims at the merest visual hint and suggestion, is not to his taste. He loves filling up every inch of space. In him, I find it a kind of large-heartedness, as if he chooses to give you plenty for your money. Besides, there is movement, exuberance, dance, in his line. This is a vital and dramatic, not a tableau world. The buffoonery of his human figures is redeemed from grossness by their verve, their inner urge towards going places, getting somewhere. It is not always their fault that there is no place to go to, nowhere to get except through the corridors of illusion. They are not lethargic and heavy-spirited, at any rate, but alive. The price of being alive is being funny, and one can enjoy paying the price only by realising this.

The grotesquerie which we create as we live is inherent, inevitable. You cannot pose for a marriage photograph without being absurd. It is impossible to relax in an armchair without seeming ridiculous. There is no escape, if Mario is looking at you. You can only laugh, at yourself and at others, for being what you and they are. The total effect on me of an hour with Mario's cartoons is hallucinatory. I feel exalted. The ego collapses. I no longer trust the commonplace images of the world as it appears to my eyes but accept the images in the mirror of Mario's art.

❖ *JS Bach : Cello Suite Number 1 – A different take by ‘The Piano Guys’*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ry4BzonlVlw>



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