

June 6, 1963

Dear Mr. Miller:

In the last few years I have followed your work with deep admiration. Since I believe chance is a matter of unawareness, I shall say my destiny has brought me to Washington to occupy the post of Director of the Department of Cultural Affairs of the Pan American Union.

I am fully aware that, like most official jobs, this makes me immediately suspect of the possibility of having disinterested intellectual curiosity. Even then, delicate as my position may be, it is my purpose to carry out this assignment in the interest of culture over and above all other considerations, however embarrassing the results.

It is not for me to tell you how polemical you and your writing are, even though for some of us you already belong to the world of the classics.

Surprisingly enough, my most bitter discussions, regardless of Lao-tsu's warning that the wise man does not discuss, are with Americans who take you for granted without having read you. I do not agree with a very common attitude that sees your writing as important in regard to a liberating battle in the sexual sphere. I do not agree either with Mr. Durrell when he laments your crudeness in your later works that in his view blurs the better and more mystical passages. Being a great admirer of Cervantes, I think all great epic writers, including Dante and Shakespeare, are bound to be disturbing as part of the richness of the life they communicate--very much like light and shadow in Rembrandt. I do not call this unevenness, but contrast and the purging of the soul.

Mr. Henry Miller  
Big Sur  
California

Perhaps these brief considerations will make you understand the very great interest I have in counting you among our contributors to the magazine AMERICAS, which is now under my supervision. This magazine, which had its emphasis on information, will now shift the accent, I hope, to cultural creative work.

I hope you will not consider it too ambitious on my part if I suggest that I would very much like to have an article written by you on the subject of mysticism and magic. When I say magic I think mostly of black magic as opposed to the real world of which the mystics bring news. To give objective correlatives, the difference between Jesus the mystic and Hitler the magician."

The length of articles you will gather from a copy of the magazine under its previous editorial policy, which I am precisely trying to change. I am an Argentine and before coming to this country I heard from my friend Miguel Brinberg that you had accepted an invitation to preside over a congress of poets and writers in Rio in the not too distant future. If so, I would be delighted to meet you then, unless destiny gives me an opportunity sooner, which I would look upon as a very special gift. Our top pay is one hundred dollars, which I am sure would not be a reason to deter you from accepting this request should you find the time and disposition of heart to do so.

Yours very sincerely,

Rafael Squirru  
Director, Department of Cultural Affairs

RS/rmv  
Enclosure