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Miquel Angel Riera. *Isla Flaubert*. Basilio Losada, tr. Barcelona. Destino. 1990. 240 pages.

Miquel Angel Riera was born in Manacor, Majorca, in 1930. His extensive literary work has been written in Catalan; translations are now available in German, English, and Russian. Some of his most important narrative works include *Andreu Mila* (1973), *Morir quan cal* (1974), *L'endemà de mai* (1978), *La rara anatomia dels centaures* (1979), *Panorama amb dona* (1984), and *Els deus inaccessibles* (1987). His name has been submitted in candidacy for the Nobel Prize in Literature. He is unquestionably the best writer in Catalan literature working today.

Illa Flaubert (as the original title reads) has been exceptionally well translated into Spanish by Basilio Losada, who needs to be recognized, because seldom does one find such an original quality in translations. Riera's work involves the desperate search of the protagonist to find solitude in a senseless world wherein he is totally alienated. With the death of his mother, the nameless protagonist realizes the destructiveness of the passing of time. From that point on his only *raison d'être* lies in his fruitless attempt to find an alternative to death. He seems to realize that in order to achieve this—to control the passing of time and to make it go more slowly—he needs to accept radical changes. He therefore willingly adopts an apparent alienation from the world around him, rejecting most materialistic values while trying to find a new identity. The series of stages through which the protagonist passes culminates in his decision to go live on Isla Leona, a little island where there is only an abandoned lighthouse together with the mythical presence of Beno, a character who will exercise considerable influence on the protagonist.

The author presents a narrative in which the daily life of the protagonist is understood even though the episodes do not seem at first to follow a strict chronological order. The protagonist's suicide at the end represents his symbolic rejection of the entire world and the set of values portrayed in the novel. *Isla Flaubert* is undoubtedly one of the best examples of Catalan prose literature today.

Luis Larios Vendrell