

VICISSITUDES AND FRAGILITIES IN THE PSYCHOLOGICAL NOVEL: THE CREATIVE PROCESS OF MENALTON BRAFF

VICISSITUDES E FRAGILIDADES NA PROSA INTIMISTA: O PROCESSO CRIATIVO DE MENALTON BRAFF

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ABSTRACT: Menalton Braff is a Brazilian writer. Since his debut in 1984, he published more than 20 books, won the Prêmio Jabuti (the “*Jabuti* prize”, a well-known literary award in Brazil) in 2000 and is almost annually finalist or semifinalist in major Brazilian literary awards. This article aims to study the author’s creative process, which ranges from an engaged literature to the increase of subjectivity through the stream of consciousness. It is possible to capture how his narrative is built up on the dialogue between form and content as well as how he engages aesthetic and ethic projects.

KEYWORDS: Creative process. Psychological novel. Stream of consciousness. Menalton Braff.

RESUMO: Menalton Braff é um escritor brasileiro. Desde sua estreia, em 1984, publicou mais de 20 livros, ganhou o Prêmio Jabuti em 2000 e figura quase anualmente como finalista ou semifinalista nos maiores prêmios literários brasileiros. Este artigo volta-se para o estudo do processo criativo do autor, que vai de uma literatura engajada ao recrudescimento da subjetividade por meio do fluxo da consciência. É possível flagrar como sua narrativa se constrói no diálogo entre forma e conteúdo assim como ele entrelaça seu projeto estético e ético.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Processo criativo. Prosa intimista. Fluxo da consciência. Menalton Braff.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

The production of the Brazilian writer Menalton Braff is surprising. At the age of 77, he has published 22 works that include novels, selections of short stories and children's & young adult literature. It is also remarkable that, since the publication of *A sombra do cipreste* (1999) - book awarded with the *Jabuti* prize which now reaches the sixth edition - Braff has, almost annually, been nominated for major literary awards in Brazil such as *São Paulo* and *Portugal Telecom* (current *Oceanos Award*).

Despite this 'recognition' by a specialized audience, the writer's critical reputation is small, with no more than a few monographs, articles, dissertations and doctoral thesis. However, beyond this academic material, there are a number of interviews given by the author, through which a number of criterias can be understood in the creation process, which pervades in several of his texts, allowing the possibility of a narrative that builds the tension between vicissitudes of the external world and the fragility of the characters. It is through these interviews that we intend to apprehend his concern to establish a strong dialogue between form and content, that is, between the author's ethical and aesthetic project.

Braff's short stories and novels follow the tracks of the psychological narratives although the use of a fragmented language highlights the urgency of talking about what is "real". The intimate and sensitive universe and the everyday life of each character are the internalization of social problems as well as the expansion of domestic dramas of characters who claim, like others in the contemporary literature, "the everyday, the intimate, the

common and private as a way to have a reconciled experience in time, more vivid and more real.”² (SCHOLLHAMMER, p.116).

In this sense Braff follows the opposite direction of the rousing and “brutalist” narratives, as the ones made by Marcelino Freire or Marçal Aquino, in which, according to Schollhammer, “it is evident, from the perspective of a reinvention of realism, the search for an impact in a particular social reality, or seeking to re-establish the relation of responsibility and solidarity with the social and cultural problems of its time.”³ (SCHOLLHAMMER, p.115).

The way Braff organizes his characters, they will have undefined characteristics because they are seen through the fragments of their own memories. All this leads to a difficult discernment between the characters external and internal world, between the past and the present, the physical and the psychic. What Braff’s novels and short stories⁴ seem to say is that it is no longer possible to think of a man who fits in only one definition. More than that, defining him would be the same as thinking of him from our own perspectives, values and beliefs, which does not guarantee an accurate definition of any individual.

FOLLOWING BRAFF’S CREATIVE PROCESS

The lonely and defective man, his inability to deal with problems around him, the disbelief in the social order, the submission to an alienating logic that undermines the ability to reflect and to pursue what can truly bring meaning to life are themes that accompany the writer since his early works. When interviewed about *À sombra do cipreste* (1999), Braff revealed:

There is in this book a certain theme uniformity [...], the man confronted with himself, but especially what might be called a frustrated act, the man who seeks something, but something he will not be able to accomplish, to fulfill. That was one of the ways of selecting the stories. Since the beginning, I had the idea that one of the things that would give a certain thematic unity would be this: the man placed at his limit, but failing. That would be explained, perhaps, as a biographical experience. I came from a situation where I had lived the limit of my dreams. The limit of my dreams was, among other things, the end of socialism, the end of the Soviet Union, the end of the Berlin Wall. All this - a polarized world that always left us a way out - collapsed [...]. This situation experienced in 1988 will have as a later result the short stories in this book. Everything fails, such as this feeling that the man is an impracticable being. (BELEBONI, p.149)⁵.

² Translation from the Portuguese edition: “o cotidiano, o íntimo, o comum e o privado como vias para uma vivência reconciliada no tempo, mais viva e mais real”.

³ Translation from the Portuguese edition: “se evidencia na perspectiva de uma reinvenção do realismo, à procura de um impacto numa determinada realidade social, ou na busca de se refazer a relação de responsabilidade e solidariedade com os problemas sociais e culturais de seu tempo”.

⁴ For this article, the children’s & young adult stories weren’t considered.

⁵ Translation from the Portuguese edition: “Há neste livro uma certa uniformidade temática entre os contos, aliás há mais de uma recorrência nos contos, mas esta da situação-limite, do homem confrontado com ele mesmo, mas principalmente naquilo que se pode chamar de o ato frustrado, o homem que busca alguma coisa, mas que não vai realizar, não vai conseguir. Isso foi uma das maneiras de selecionar os contos. Havia já desde início a ideia de que uma das coisas que daria uma certa unidade temática seria isto: o homem colocado ante o seu limite, mas falhando. Isso até daria para explicar como resultado, digamos, que biográfico. Eu vinha de uma situação em que tinha vivido o limite dos meus sonhos. O limite dos meus sonhos foi, entre outras coisas, o fim do socialismo real, o fim da União Soviética, o fim do muro de Berlim. Tudo isso aí - um mundo bipolarizado que nos deixava sempre uma válvula de escape - ruiu porque de repente o mundo de um polo só, ou você sonha com este mundo

It is worth mentioning that the social concern was not only present in his books. The dream of a more just and equal world, free of capitalist savagery and its alienating logic ends up by his affiliation to the Brazilian Communist Party, “as a child hearing on a daily basis what is fair and what is not, as a teenager I could only wish to change the world.” (BELEBONI, p.149)⁶.

Braff began his career using a pseudonym. *Janela aberta* and *Na força de mulher*, both works from 1984, are signed by Salvador dos Passos. In television interviews⁷ the writer confesses having been taken, at the time, by a nationalist sentiment that made him want a more “Brazilian name” for his publications. Braffs’ last name is of Swedish origin and for the author it would not translate his feelings for the country. Thereby he adopted his great grandfather’s name - Salvador - for whom he had great admiration. Dos Passos is a reference to the writer and political activist John dos Passos, who made several criticisms in his works regarding the American society.

By the time he published those books, the scars of the dictatorship⁸ were still burning in the author’s heart, so the pseudonym seemed a suitable alternative because it made reference to a socially active attitude. The social question is markedly present in these two works, since “politics and literature run together through my veins.” (BELEBONI, p.149)⁹.

Salvador dos Passos, who signed only two books, resounds the writer’s most combative voice. Over the years, however, Braff has changed the emphasis of his artistic production. A socially engaged literature gave way to *A sombra do cipreste* (1999), a selection of short stories in which it is possible to realize the concern with a poetic language construction. Impressionist aspects; characters presented by fragments of their own memories; impressions and feelings mingled with physical sensation; synesthesia and plasticity in the description of the scenes. From there on, Braff abandoned the pseudonym and began to sign with his real name. The transformation of the writer’s creative process seems to be a given conscious, as noted:

Poor Salvador dos Passos. He wanted to save the world. Salvador dos Passos was much more concerned about the problems of society than about the aesthetic problems. Of course I exaggerate a little, but the big difference between the two [Salvador dos Passos and Menalton Braff] is a matter of gradation. The social concern continues to exist in Menalton, but it is no longer the most important. The aesthetic dimension, which determines the literary discourse, the *literariness*, is now in first place in Menalton’s literature. Not that it did not exist in Salvador, but it was secondary. Moreover, Salvador was [...] an exercise, the search for an identity. (BELEBONI, p.145-46)¹⁰.

deste polo ou seu sonho acabou. Essa situação vivida em 1988 é que vai ter como fruto mais tarde os contos desse livro. Tudo vai falhando, essa sensação de que o homem é um ser inviável”.

⁶ Translation from the Portuguese edition: “desde criança ouvindo diariamente que isso é justo, isso não é justo, na adolescência eu só poderia querer reformar o mundo”.

⁷ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ulKjRE9xMdY>

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_XMIZ78AZWU

⁸ Between 1964 and 1985 Brazil was under a military dictatorship.

⁹ Translation from the Portuguese edition: “política e literatura me entraram juntas pelas veias”.

¹⁰ Translation from the Portuguese edition: “Pobre Salvador dos Passos. Ele queria salvar o mundo. O Salvador dos Passos estava muito mais preocupado com os problemas da sociedade do que com os problemas da estética. Claro que exagero um pouco, mas a grande diferença entre os dois é de grau. O social continua existindo no Menalton, mas já não é o mais importante. A dimensão estética, que determina o discurso literário, a literariedade, assumiu o papel principal na literatura do Menalton. Não que ela não existisse no Salvador, mas era secundária. Ademais, o Salvador foi o caderno do aprendiz, o exercício, a busca de uma identidade”.

One year after the launch of *A sombra do cipreste*, Braff published *Que enchente me carrega?* (2000). In this novel, he radicalizes the mnemonic work by adopting the stream of consciousness in the conduction of the narrative. From there, he uses this procedure in many books, consolidating a change of style towards the intimate nature of narrative.

STREAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS: THE AUTHOR'S MARK

The stream of consciousness, seen by some as a technique and by others as a kind of fiction, appears to have slippery limits and often no consensus on the procedures involved in this type of writing.

The common thread from the discussions held by many theorists - as Humphrey, Adorno, Rosenfeld, Raimond and Lasch - is that the stream of consciousness novels captures the consciousness in its dynamic state, movable, unstable, ineffable and therefore engenders a great paradox: to communicate what is, *a priori*, incommunicable: the preverbal consciousness. Thus it reduces the narrator's role or eliminates it altogether to make way exclusively to the interiority of consciousness.

According to Humphrey (1976) the mnemonic work used in this process seeks to reach the preverbal consciousness. Thereby consciousness's representation shows its discontinuous and essentially particular appearance. The result is an imperfect and apparently inconsistent texture of the psychic processes.

Humphrey states that before the rational development of the mind, memories, thoughts and feelings appear not as a chain but as a flow or stream. And that makes the mental texture almost elusive. So the great contradiction of this narrative form is just the untranslatable aspect of the psyche, once its incoherent, discontinuous, moving in time and space essence should be communicated.

The stream of consciousness novels emergence dates back to the modern novel crisis and, therefore, engages the contradiction of the contemporary narrator who, according to Adorno (2012), is incapable of narrating, although a novel requires narration.

The stream of consciousness is, for Adorno, the world pulled into the character's interior space. Rosenfeld (1996) states that the stream of consciousness is the disappearance of the perspective when there is no external world to design. It happens because if the perspective is a relation between two instances - man and world - and if the beliefs in external values are in decline, the outcome is a rupture in the instances man/world. What is left is the stream of a psychic life which completely absorbs the external reference.

Raimond (1966) defines the stream of consciousness as the concern to communicate not a fact, but the thought as it comes to the character's mind. Thus, the association of ideas replaces the order of narration. Future, past and present merge, and thoughts are mixed with feelings caused by the outside world. The lack of a person who organizes the speech - the narrator - weakens the sense of solidity in external reality and causes the impression that there is no reality or that it is just a myth forged by our senses.

Although the stream of consciousness represents the increase of an intimate perspective, placing the text in the territory of susceptibility, it is also the echo of human dramas, social tensions, and external conflicts. For this reason, it is possible to state that, in the stream of consciousness novels, the social dimension and the character crisis are related.

According to the historian and sociologist Christopher Lasch (1986), a trend that he entitles as *Inner Self* arises is in the base of the stream of consciousness novels. A movement of art and literature towards the interiority of the characters are the expression of a narcissistic personality structure.

For Silva (2009), Lasch's idea of *movement towards interiority* is symptomatic of the "impossibility to glimpse, in the external reality, a reference for the human acts and feelings [and it] makes narcissism a solution against living the destruction." (Silva 12)¹¹ By the term "destruction" Lasch refers especially to the period of post-war and mass culture imposed by the cultural industry. During this period Lasch talks about the idea of a time in which "uncertainty prevails about the identity of people and things". "The result shows a fragmented reality in the presence of which a 'minimum self' is placed [...] struggling with a mind without support in the concrete reality." (SILVA, p.12)¹².

Relying on Benjamin and Adorno, Lasch says that the survival in a post-war and cultural industry world establishes an insecure relationship in the individual, who happens to look for refuge in his inner self to the threats of the external environment. Without the support of the universal truths, solitude is in the origin of the movement towards interiority. A person can no longer advise or speak exemplarily about his own experiences nor about his dilemmas because he also cannot be advised by other people's experiences.

In terms of literature, Lasch states that this refuge to the inner self becomes a literary form and refers specifically about the stream of consciousness fiction. Rosenfeld and Adorno had previously pointed in that direction. He asserts that the decline of the narrative mode [...] reflects the fragmentation of "me". One cannot be the subject of a narrative if one does not perceive himself as an individual. The art created by a minimum self should therefore be a "minimum art" and, according to Silva's thoughts, the only adequate art to represent the damaged life in a post war and terminal time.

In *Notes to literature I* (2012), Adorno says that the rectification of human relations - due to the "standardization" of taste and habits caused by the cultural industry - establishes a crisis in the language. And, as a consequence, it incorporates the alienation as an aesthetic form of the novel.

According to him, the language crisis is announced since the positivism crisis and it can be felt in other artistic expressions. Joyce, for instance, succeeded in linking the novel's rebellion against realism to a "rebellion against discursive language". *Finnegans Wake* is a great example of that, besides *Ulisses*, whose extensive final pages calls attention for its literary form.

From this perspective, resuming to Braff's creational process, it is possible to notice that despite the shift to the intimate literature, the social perspective never abandoned his production. What happens, actually, is that external factors, such as social concerns and ideological discourses, are internalized in the work structure. This means that the expression of society within the literary work is not understood as a reflection, as a result or arising of social concern, but as part of the literature, not occupying a more or less important role than other constituent parts of the text. The social aspect, when absorbed by narrative structures, becomes organic.

From *Que enchente me carrega?* (2000) the author begins to explore the stream of consciousness more frequently. The novels are always linked to a narrator in crisis with his values or with the values to which he is obligated to submit himself. It is possible exemplify the work mentioned above as well as *Bolero de Ravel* (2010) in order to illustrate this issue.

In these novels, we observe narrators whose lives are ruined. For them, the social structure is corrosive and alienating and thus they opt for social isolation. *Firmino* and

¹¹ Translation from the Portuguese edition: "impossibilidade de vislumbrar na realidade exterior uma referência de apoio para o agir e sentir humanos [e isso] faz do narcisismo a solução contra viver a destruição".

¹² Translation from the Portuguese edition: o resultado apresenta uma realidade fragmentada ante a qual se põe um "eu mínimo" [...] às voltas com um psiquismo sem amparo na solidez da realidade concreta".

Adriano, authors of “*Que enchente me carrega?*” and of “*Bolero de Ravel*”, respectively, are disconcerted with the external reality.

Firmino, a shoemaker, besides have being unable to solve marital conflicts – Elvira, his wife, who abandoned him in the past – refutes the logic of industrial work and prefers, despite the financial loss, to handcraft shoes. He considers that his profession implies artistic creation and therefore requires sensitivity and independence of thought. A submission to the rigidity of industries and mass production means losing the sensitive capacity.

Firmino is an old man, ruined financially and seems to be losing lucidity. He tries to restore the past, but some memories are confused, others have vanished. Still, he tries to stick to the memories of his wife, his grandfather and his youth. He also sticks to his home. He built it with Elvira many years before but the house still conserved the marks of their married life - the iron burn on the table, the souvenirs and artificial flowers arrangements organized by his wife, the garden where she cried: “meu casamento, minha prisão”¹³ (BRAFF, p.33).

The house is in decadence: dust on the furniture and objects, dirt, cockroaches, broken bulbs, cracked walls, gutters, numerous repairs to be done. Since his woman left him, Firmino abandoned the house, as well as himself. Along the novel, the incessant rain that whips the house becomes a storm and the house begins to collapse. Around, landslides threaten to get to Firmino, who will soon have to abandon it.

In *Bolero de Ravel* Adriano da Silveira, 35 years old, is a character whose existence does not fit the society in which he belongs. He does not believe in the sense of lives controlled by agendas and appointments. Opposite to social conventions, he stands against a way of life that seeks to pursuit success. Also, he rejects the idea of working only as a provision of material goods.

For him, all social commitments are meaningless because, in spite of the success that can be achieved through them, one can never overcome the inevitable end for all human beings: death. However, in general, men disguise the irreparable condition of mortality by organizing their lives with agendas.

Coherent with his thinking, he refuses to play social roles. He gives up the studies, the professional and social life. But he values the senses: I feel, therefore I am. That is the principle that rules *Bolero de Ravel* narrator’s life. However, except for his mother, his father and youngest sister - Laura, a determined woman and successful lawyer - do not accept Adriano’s opinion.

The novel begins with Adriano’s arrival at the house where he lived with his parents, killed in a car accident. Just returning from their funeral, it was the first time he stepped into the house after the happening. He feels fragile and lonely. Involuntary memories of his parents, childhood, among many others, appear disorderly and blend with considerations about the society.

The parent’s death places him into a very delicate situation, because he will face a new reality not only emotionally, but also financially: Adriano will have to provide his own support. He fears to face this new life especially because he cannot count on his sister, who refuses to help.

For Adriano and Firmino, living on the margins of society, memories are their only companions and encouragement to the loneliness they feel. The similarity between the two characters is their view about the world: always critical to the emptiness of human actions and social obligations.

The representation of the character’s thinking through the stream of consciousness techniques stands out by assuming an interesting organization: there are many memories that

¹³ The book was not translated to English. A possible translation to this passage would be: “my marriage, my prison”.

are incessantly repeated throughout the narrative. If on the one hand, the memory circularity is not uncommon to the mnemonic process, on the other, in Braff the repetition seems to overcome this condition and work as a structuring element of his narrative.

In terms of form, the incessant repetition establishes a rather slow rhythm to the narrative. When each involuntary memory returns it adds up a piece of information or a new perspective on the lived moment. So, gradually, the reader becomes aware of the past happenings.

The stream of consciousness is the element that coordinates the psychic process in both novels. This procedure organizes repetitive memories with actions, with the present narration and finally with impressions and considerations about life and society. This movement causes not only a reduction in the speech rhythm, but also shows a preference for internal actions in detriment of external actions.

The narrator's memories do not come voluntarily. They are the result of a crisis that affects them during enunciation, that is, during the moment when everything must be redefined in their lives. Firmino and Adriano experience extreme situations: the first because he must leave the house in which he preserved many memories of his wife, his youth etc.; the second because, in addition to the solitude he feels due to his parents death, he subjects himself to a logic based on competition and alienating work in order to be financially established.

While building his characters, Braff implements an aesthetic project, and this, in turn, is closely associated to an ethical project. Adriano and Firmino are spokesmen of those who are not heard in society, those who cannot adjust themselves in the established order and therefore remain marginalized. In an interview, the author states:

I would only say that the link between Firmino and Adriano is a link of oppositions. Adriano has always rejected the world of work, the production, the success, the agendas, and the world he found out just after puberty. Instead, Firmino exists as an icon of a social function; he is the medieval artisan surviving in a world where the capital deletes his role as a producer. Firmino believes in a world that no longer exists and from it comes all his problems, his losses. The first loss was his social function; all others are consequences from the first. What Adriano loses is not the world that he does not believe in, but the mother's affection, his providers, his parents. Firmino should be seen as a macro phenomenon, he is a socio-historical phenomenon. Adriano should be seen as a micro phenomenon, he is an individual phenomenon. (COSTA e SILVA, p.173-74)¹⁴.

As literary form, the stream of consciousness gives unique voice to these characters who could never be heard, who could only talk to themselves, revealing that their bonds with the outside world are fragile. The writing process consciousness, revealed by the author in an interview, dialogues with the awareness that Braff has about the society that surrounds him:

Enchente is a novel in which would like to make reflections on the production processes: how the capital, the big industrial capital, destroys grocery stores, killed by supermarkets and shopping centers, and eliminates the small producers who

¹⁴ Translation from the Portuguese edition: "Diria apenas que a ligação entre o Firmino e o Adriano é uma ligação de oposição. O Adriano sempre rejeitou o mundo do trabalho, da produção, do sucesso, das agendas, o mundo que encontrou logo depois da puberdade. Ao contrário, o Firmino existe como ícone de uma função social, que é o artesão medieval sobrevivendo num mundo em que o capital vai deletando sua função como produtor. O Firmino acredita em um mundo que já não existe mais, decorrendo daí todos os seus problemas, suas perdas. A primeira perda é sua função social, todas as outras são resultantes da primeira. O que o Adriano perde, não é o mundo em que não acredita, mas o afeto da mãe, e os provedores de sua subsistência, os pais. O Firmino deve ser visto como um fenômeno macro, ele é um fenômeno histórico-social. O Adriano deve ser visto como um fenômeno micro, ele é um fenômeno individual".

cannot compete with highly sophisticated production processes. The big capital swallows the small capitalists and turns them into proletarians. (COSTA e SILVA, p.173)¹⁵.

The movement towards the characters inner self, encouraged by the stream of consciousness, reflects the survival attempt of maladjusted narrators. The fragility and lack of the worlds support engenders insecurity and causes a crisis that is reflected in the language through the punctuation modification, by a syntactic change and a disruption of the linearity of events. Allied to these characteristics, the obsessive memories and plasticity to express the characters anguish, makes Braff's novels an undeniable poetic of human ruin.

Adriano and Firmino fail in their attempts to adapt themselves to a productive logic, as well as they fail in their personal relationships. They are unable "players", unaware of the social game's rules. However, the failure they experience, on the other hand, strengthens the resistance against the productivist order. And it is the obsession of their memories that this resistance extends its meaning as it provides voice, finally, to those who "are or tend to be socially silenced because they are in the margin of the production order and therefore do not have the support of the dominant morality" (FRANCO JUNIOR, p.177)¹⁶. In this way, memory is stated as resistance.

The narrators languish as the obsessive memories assault their minds. It happens because as social beings they are fragmented. The literary structure is also part of this movement. The image of a ruined human being, dislocated from his world is, in other words, the reflection of a narrative that disintegrates itself as language.

Braff's characters try, in vain, to overpass the obstacles that separate them from objective reality. We believe that the novel is grounded in the tension between internal struggle and the need to deal with the social contingencies. Moreover, repetitive memories incorporate, in terms of literary form, their agonizing moment of existence.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

In Braff we saw that the literature concerned about social problems is no longer distant to the intimate and personal universe of the character. The dichotomy between external and internal reality as in *O cortiço*, by Aluísio Azevedo¹⁷, for instance, gives way to the blend of these two dimensions, which is possible to observe since *Vidas secas*, by Graciliano Ramos¹⁸. Braff achieves the intersection between the "subjective experience" and the "turbulence of context".

The author goes from a more combative instance, signed by a pseudonym, to a balanced narrative between its internal and external dimensions. The stream of consciousness, a characteristic in Braff's novels, incorporates the social sphere to the text structure. The apex of the individuals' particular experience finds support in the literary form of the stream of

¹⁵ Translation from the Portuguese edition: "O Enchente é um romance em que gostaria de refletir sobre processos de produção, o modo como o capital, o grande capital industrial, vai destruindo o armazém da esquina, morto pelos supermercados e shoppings e vai eliminando o pequeno produtor, que não pode competir com processos de produção altamente sofisticados. O grande capital engole os pequenos capitalistas e os transforma em proletários".

¹⁶ Translation from the Portuguese edition: "são ou tendem a ser socialmente silenciados porque se situam à margem da ordem produtiva e, por isso, não contam com o respaldo da moral dominante".

¹⁷ Published in 1890, *O cortiço* is a novel that denounces the exploitation and the terrible living conditions of the residents of Rio de Janeiro's slums in the late 19th century.

¹⁸ Published in 1938, *Vidas Secas* is a psychological novel that focuses on the Brazilian social situation in the Northeast. It reports the living conditions of a family of immigrants who suffer from constant drought and abuse of power by landowners.

consciousness as representative of the lonely and helpless being that stands before a fragmented and alienating reality.

The author's interviews show that the change in his creative process is conscious. From this perspective, Braff seeks to reconcile text and context, in other words, to establish a dialogue between his ethical and aesthetic project, considering that the literariness must prevail as a fundamental element of his production.

Through a fluid and poetic language, the balance between text and context is quite subtle. Narrative full of metaphorical and kinesthetic language, from suggested rather than described actions, from psychological time and from emphasis on the characters feelings, his novels speak of human frustration and the feeling of impotence when the individual believes to have reached the limit of his dreams.

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