



HISTÓRIAS DE UM TEMPO SÓ BY ANA ZORRINHO: SNAPSHOTS OF (WARRANTED) LIVES (2019)

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The micronarratives that constitute *Histórias de um tempo Só* by Ana Zorrinho are stories of lives and everyday gestures, perhaps in a distant time, but with something contemporary. Brief excerpts, but rich in meanings, senses, and emotions, and where dreams and fears of daily life mold each life and each story.

Born from a simultaneous need for both writing and aesthetics, these tales rely on a keen power of observation—a lucid, scrutinizing gaze, often fascinated, always moved, but attentive to situations and behaviors. The stories are capable of reaching consciousness, showing sensitivity to the external and internal movements of each character, to whom it gives body, voice, thought, will, action, and memory: “She creates them, and sometimes even talks to them. She ends their lives for the nourishment of all, with a quick and precise blow to the neck. Without suffering. She skins them. Then, she dismembers them into little pieces. Adds a touch of garlic wine (not forgetting the little sprig of rockrose).” *Maria*, page 13.

Without ever losing sight of the conflicts, manifest or only latent, affecting personal and social fabric in its diversity, the author prefers to focus her attention on the *man* (or *woman*) she chooses as the fundamental material of the universe she creates. The author does not cease to echo their doubts and certainties, anxieties and contradictions, discouragements, and losses. Characters sometimes seem to emerge in flashes that obsessively fixate us on the sequence of action and the emotions emanating from it: “She closed herself in again. Adjusts the shawl and composes herself, slowly. Listens, standing still. The silences of the house. Meets the gaze with the dead portraits. Picks one of them up. Cleans the face. Contracts the expression. Closes the eyelids. Embraces the image for a long moment.” *Mulher*, page 16.

In this collection of stories, there is a marked tendency to tell, focusing on the world of characters, examining their emotions, the evidence of their acts of fear, repression, painful loneliness, a certain marginality, and hopelessness... The narrative voice is engaged in guiding the reader to reflect on the behavior of others, either by aligning their feelings and existence with those of a particular character, usually the protagonist of the story, or through the attentive lens that magnifies details, small gestures that ultimately color these stories with humanity and stamp them with originality.

Thus, these texts largely live through the accompaniment of a vivid and galvanizing consciousness that persists—whether fragments of the past or present parade before the reader, alternating, transforming, and illuminating.

In this way, a kind of inner wandering stimulated by the pure observation of the surrounding world is witnessed. It is a world of a single time, brought to life by the contingencies of life, the inevitability of death, capable of arousing recognitions and perplexities, identifications and detachments, daydreams and disappointments, solitudes and waits: “They finished. How they wish the phone or the doorbell would ring with someone. The phone doesn’t ring, the doorbell doesn’t ring. They are alone. Waiting together.” *Man*, page 24.



On the other hand, the word in Ana Zorrinho arises from a systematic exercise of memory, allowing her to, in reconstructing, evaluate the world and each person in depth. And when memory becomes discourse, the confidence with which, as a narrator, she can adhere to the viewpoint of a character stands out, recording with a remarkable sense of balance, affective and rational modulations, in a poetic and pleasing rhythm of the sentence; strategies that lead to a psychological nuance or an emotional intensification to which the reader cannot help but be sensitive. A rich language, sometimes popular, and full of poetry: “With fingers, the threads wind around the needle in counted turns, weaving life, nestled on the couch.” *Tecendo a vida*, page 21.

Given that the spaces and human figures largely evoke Santiago do Cacém, the old town, the surrounding hills (only sporadically the city, and always in it, the oppression in the manner of Cesário), when reading *Histórias de um tempo Só*, we feel that time is only in us, the persistence of a memory of disenchanted, anonymous, and diverse people who, without truly knowing it, share with us pains and anxieties, experience equal moments of tenderness and pain, live the same dreams frustrated amid the tones of the loneliness of an everyday life that has not yet ended, “because the crowd continues to pass in a hurry.” *Cidade*, page 52.

Furthermore, the illustrations by Raquel Ventura, in strong lines and black and white tones, sensitively corroborate the lonely, sad, and sometimes anguished lives of the characters who “stroll” through these *Histórias de um tempo Só* [Stories of a Single time].

REFERENCES

Zorrinho, A. (2019). *Histórias de um Tempo Só*. ORO.

DECLARAÇÃO ÉTICA

CONFLITO DE INTERESSE: Nada a declarar. **FINANCIAMENTO:** Nada a declarar.



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