

Cyro dos Anjos and the Diary of a Civil Servant (*O Amanuense Belmiro*)

RUI MOURÃO

I FIRST HEARD the name Cyro dos Anjos when, in the company of a group of young people, we experienced the thrill of discovering literature and dreamed about the possibility of becoming writers. The novelist, at that time, had already become a great legend. Having held important positions in Minas Gerais during the government of Benedito Valadares, he was president of the former Institute of Social Security and Assistance to Civil Servants (IPASE, in the Portuguese acronym) in Rio de Janeiro, and his book *Amanuensis Belmiro*, which touched an entire generation, was touted everywhere as a masterpiece. It was with the excitement of someone who approached a sacred monster that I read it and subsequently began to devour *Abdias*. Seeking to understand the experience of the novelist who was unique is his representation of lyrical characters dealing with the drama of adapting to the world of conventions and everyday triteness. I learned to see with the eyes of someone from Minas Gerais, to understand that sensitivity is not just a natural gift but rather - and especially - an achievement of the spirit.

The way Cyro represented reality was similar to that of Lúcio Cardoso and Cornélio Pena who, from another perspective, offered a different model of *mineiridade*^{TN}. The strength of radical psychological deepening and the dive into the unconscious of the latter two contrasted with the lightness of the art of a novelist focused on everyday life, concerned, first and foremost, about projecting the sensitive image of what was happening around him in the still provincial capital. In our efforts to compare, in order to better understand what we wanted to learn, we realized how different the group from Minas was from that of the Northeast, another successful trend that since 1930 had been drawing attention with a narrative of true sociological vocation. The group from Minas focused on interpreting the being, imposing a certain distance between the individual and the collective. The representatives of the landowners of the sugar region fully exposed themselves to express ways of being, a man in conflict with the land, through such huge participation that the expression of individual drama intertwined with the expression of the drama of the regional group. Even Graciliano,

^{TN} The peculiar character or quality of people from the Brazilian State of Minas Gerais.

who sought to deflect, through subjectivity, events of a social nature - and, consequently, developed a very fertile work in the constructive realm - would never go as far as representing a bridge capable, even remotely, of establishing a connection between what was being produced by men who reacted to outside influence and was produced by men detached from temporary life and focused more on meditation and spiritualism. I had the opportunity to personally interact with Cyro dos Anjos at the University of Brasilia, where he coordinated the Letters department and I taught Brazilian Literature. We established a good relationship, which was not restricted to our academic work. Since we were neighbors, we took long afternoon walks during the time the writer was recovering from a stroke. Walking on the cement runways of buildings that always seemed to be the same and led to monotonously identified areas, we scrutinized his past experience in Minas Gerais, commented on the perplexities of the work on campus, talked about literature and writers. Cyro took me to the printing shop at the university to show me the luxurious and creative edition of *12 poemas coronários*, still in its preparation phase. The sarcastic humor he was beginning to let out, his malice in contemplating less than praiseworthy shows of human conduct, the sharpness of his observations and analyses conferred richness and exuberance to the actions of my great interlocutor.

He taught a course on literary creation at the university. I have no reliable information on how he conducted his classes. As I knew he was interested in teaching his students how to 'purify' a text, I suppose that the ultimate goal of his classroom activity mingled with the intention of passing on the experience of his craft as a creator. It was probably something similar to the knowledge transfer conducted in medieval arts and crafts shops, where the relationship between master and disciple was developed through the very phenomenology of doing. At that time, Cyro had completed the preparation of *Explorações no tempo*, an obstinate occupation he had faced each day using his sharpest and most powerful weapons, and which was not, as usually happened in his writing tasks, pressured by a deadline. For him, the completion of each page, before becoming a triumph was an exhausting but necessary battle of life and death, which pained him. He confessed to me that some chapters of this memoirs had been rewritten as many as thirty times. The various versions were stored in a box. He had an envious Olympic disposition to not ever fear starting over from scratch, to tirelessly search for the ideal purity, the ideal perfection, even knowing in advance that the fate of these absolute values would be to continue, in order to be eternally sought. What led him to interrupt his writing in the case of *Explorações no tempo* - as indeed happened with respect to any text - was the recognition of the existence of a limit to human possibilities. He stopped when he realized that the latest propositions, rather than meaning progress, were beginning to negatively affect his writing.

Cyro dos Anjos was, among us, the most prominent representative of the glorious strain of writers tortured by the composition, whose most illustrious ancestry is found in Gustave Flaubert. Common understanding assumes that the obstinacy of this type of writer is exercised only at the shallow level of concerns

with the construction of the sentence, the pursuit of the rhythm, the proper vocabulary and grammatical correctness. This because one still thinks about a significant structure independent of a significance structure as if it were possible, for example, in the concrete reality of the human being to distinguish between body and spirit. Cyro dos Anjos's relentless strive, which for many might seem incomprehensible, aimed at the discovery of his language, that is, *his* way of seeing reality. The desire to discover this dimension is what moved him and made him, with the stoicism of a true ascetic, more open to the biggest sacrifices.

Bringing to the interpretation of the facts a strong load of subjectivity, he undoubtedly defined himself as an expressionist. His primary interest was in conveying a way of viewing the world. In fact, he put himself in this perspective with such rigor that he went as far as showing some indifference for the reasons, the external provocations that led to his work desk. I had the opportunity to witness the biggest consequence of this position through certain autonomy on his part with respect to the very literary genre he had embraced. This happened when, in Brasilia, he confessed to me how he had chosen to write *A menina do sobrado*. He had two projects - one was a fiction and the other a memoir. To decide which one he should commit to, he sought the advice of the trumps of a fortune-telling game whose characteristics I can no longer accurately specify. What I will never forget is the result, which materialized in the message: "It is always gratifying to remember". His behavior bespeaks his conception of reality. Despite his rational view of things and his effort to enlighten, with the work of language, a critical, evaluating and even disillusioned awareness of human behavior, to him the world had a large share of mystery. His writing co-existed with plausible logic, with the lyrical and, as a substrate of all that lay a potential that was magical in nature. A comprehensive stylistic study which should reveal, in definitive terms, the core of the emotion that generated Cyro dos Anjos' narrative is yet to be conducted. However, it would not be inappropriate to state that the element that stands out immediately in his language is related to a mythical view of reality. It is a sensitive layer which applies to the more relaxed reader. Belo Horizonte - the provincial town of the 1940s dominated by civil service and experiencing its idyllic pre-industrial phase, short-distance streets served by trams, the cinematographic scenery of mountains - is a nearly utopian postcard that is progressively presented to our perception as readers. The century was moving slow around here. In urban areas populated by people that dressed and acted - and especially dreamed - with great demure, the middle class sought to fill the void of a meaningless existence through unattainable and impossible Platonic love.

The technical tools are perfectly suitable for the expression of this content, since the novels *Amanuensis Belmiro* and *Abdias* were conceived in the form of a journal. Subjectivity, which daily records his involvement with the plot, raises a worldview crafted by a strong creative load. When Cyro abandons fiction to embrace the memoir genre, the possibility of free advance through an extended inner time further accentuates the trend previously expressed. The writer snatches

the form of the journal off the character's hands to take over, in all its breadth, the speech of the self. This replacement of authorship was conducted in a nearly spontaneous manner, since the fiction he practiced was already of an autobiographical nature. Confirming by contrast these observations, we can consider what happened in the case of *Montanha*. The relative failure of the novel resulted in the abandonment of a perspective that seemed to intertwine with his natural way of being. The writer went on to accept the concrete and historical raw reality by attempting to portray the political environment in Minas Gerais, without a corresponding evolution in his written language. He eventually fell into the web of the narrative model of the American writer John dos Passos.

Cyro dos Anjos is the most complete expression of the lineage of writers that gradually emerged in Minas Gerais as a result of regional culture. The aloof, demure spirit of our people, the awareness of the appropriate and inappropriate that leads us to take refuge in shyness, the attachment to order and discipline as a last resource to face the mystery that lurks at our door, all led to a family of industrious cultivators of the text, of writers engaged tireless struggles with the word, of the conventual cultivators of a refined style that eventually became an unequivocal sign of civilization. Allow me to read an excerpt from an article published long ago, in which I attempted to raise the broad lines of fiction in that part of Brazil.

The literary wealth of the mountains has been produced by a group of writers whose mastery in crafting the sentence becomes sort of our trademark. I am referring to those moderate and disciplined prose writers, whose most typical specimens seem to be Godofredo Rangel, Eduardo Frieiro and Cyro dos Anjos and who were defined by Antonio Candido as practitioners of a *calligraphic literature*, since the fanciful, thorough and elegant work on behalf of the style somehow reminds us of the loving care of the ancient handwriting experts concerned with beautifying the page.

The Cartesian splendor of logic is the most esteemed virtue of these writers, who are always tirelessly searching for the appropriate term, the purification of the sentence and the elegance of the words. There is in them an undeniable tendency towards a certain mental aristocratism, and if in that respect irony is the most productive ally, the poise of those who want to "make style" ends up showing their sophistication. And by discovering that mannerist side we understand that love for rational enlightenment leads to the great whiteness of asceticism or to the accuracy of mathematical rigor. The amenity of the chronicle, the flyby of the malicious comment, the discipline that looks more like a rogue's composure is what shapes their true nature. Antonio Candido characterizes them as non-Machadian, as he understands that these are "men of defined depth, without the endless openings for the irrational and the drama", but I believe it is impossible to see them out of the shadow of the patriarch of our letters, who was a multifaceted giant, which could be reflected in all mirrors. This whole family was born fascinated by the outer poise of the author of *The Posthumous Memoirs of Brás Cubas* and stayed there without any more serious temptation to slip through the depths, perhaps because of their natural penchant for kindness.



Photo archive State Agency

The Minas Gerais-born writer Cyro dos Anjos (1906-1994).

His debut novel *Amanuensis Belmiro* was eventually more or less unani- mously enshrined as the apex of the writer's career. It seems undeniable that when the creator from Minas Gerais wrote it, he was under the influence of an emotional substrate that stemmed from his familiarity with the greatest classic of Spanish literature, *Don Quixote de la Mancha*, by Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra.

Basically, what does *Cyro dos Anjos* show us? The story of a man on the way to maturity who, as a frequent reader of novels becomes the victim of an idealized dream and consequently finds himself snatched from everyday reality, with which he is incapable to cope. Like the Knight of the Sad Figure, who raises a simple peasant woman to the status of myth - Dulcinea del Toboso, a lady of high elegance and nobility-, whom he begins to serve, dedicating to her the victories and achievements of his adventurous life, the bureaucrat Belmiro, when touched by Carmélia, an unknown teenager who approaches him during a Carnival celebration, overtaken by irresistible excitement, in an atmosphere of true delight, sees her as the very incarnation of the myth of white Arabella, who was a constant character in his childhood stories - «the damsel of the castle which has a dark tower where the swallows will rest» (Anjos, 1937, p.35) - , and from then on begins to serve her as a man in love, devoting to her all his moments of great restlessness. Even physically Belmiro resembles Don Quixote. Cervantes' character has «a stiff complexion, dry flesh, a lean face» (ibid, p.29), and is about 50 years old. *Cyro's* one is a little younger, but past maturity, spindly, extremely thin, disproportional, and wears high collar shirts and coats and a pince-nez.

The difference between the texts becomes clear when we begin to notice that: Cervantes' character lies in the realm of absolute idealism, facing the facts with the pure eyes his madness allows him to, while *Cyro's* character, endowed with reason and spirit that never leave him, walks on the ground of an uncomfortable reality, because of the feeling of being stepping, invariably, on the inconsistency of fantasy. In the case of Don Quixote the irony of the narrator in the third person appears to reveal the state of dementia of the character, lending credibility to the narrative. In the case of the civil servant, the permanent state of emotion is what produces the psychological truth, ensuring authenticity to the story of one who speaks, without intermediation, in the first person, exposing himself frankly to the reader. Dulcinea del Toboso is the unreachable lady, a «princess and grand lady», absolutely genuine, who stands behind the hero in a state of impassivity and nobility. The damsel Arabella, an imaginary being that only in times of turbulence of the senses convinces her creator, falters and fluctuates with the emotion of the anti-hero, willing to yield to the dream and move to a state of ideality, safety and peace, but permanently unquiet and ultimately incapable, under any circumstance, to break away from common sense, which is her invariable anchor.

The encounter – the discovery of his beloved – corresponds to a dive into

virtual unconsciousness. Snatched by the wave of a group of carnival revelers, a white hand grabbed his hand. When he raised his eyes to check the face of the person touching him, the unexpected happened. He experienced an uncontrollable shock. He writes down on the journal he keeps: "It was an extraordinary sight. I realized that the white Arabella had come down to me" (ibid, p.34). In an unprotected, in fact delusional surrender, he pours out his heart "an effect of the excitement of the spirit that stroke me, or of any other disorder, I felt out of time and space, and my eyes only noticed the sweet vision" (ibid., p.34). He even lost track of what had happened, he only noticed that at a given moment, the girl's hand had let go of his. In the morning, he would learn, he had fainted and, rescued by strangers, rested on a couch. His common sense back, when reporting the adventure he wrote: "The Carnival episode seems to me to have been a clever ruse, arranged by me against myself in these obscure realms of consciousness" (ibid, p.36). In the following days, however, living with the emotion intermingled with the critical spirit, he again fully surrenders to passion, walks the streets like a teenager in love. Through Gaudêncio, his coworker and colleague from the literary circle, he learns the girl's name, her address, and information about her family. The loving feeling spreads even further from then on. He passes by the house hoping to see, in a glance, the face that to him had become a vision of paradise. Seeing someone at the window he recognizes her, but unable to find the strength to face her, continues to walk more or less on the run. Having discovered in the *Minas Gerais* newspaper an invitation to the 30th day mass for Carmélia's deceased father, Aurélio Dias, he headed for the church of Boa Viagem, where he stood outside, waiting for the girl to come out. Later on he would say: "I wanted to drink her with my eyes, get an image that would stick to my optical memory, to feed me in the long days I will endure without seeing her" (ibid, p.60). He continues: "However, as when we want to focus too much attention on something and this thing escapes us, concerned that we are about the need to pay attention, a vivid image of Carmélia has escaped me, leaving behind but a vague sketch of her figure". Remembering the afternoon he had gone by the girl's house in Paraíba Street, he notes: "When, at a propitious moment, she quickly lifted her gaze to look for the family car, I inadvertently swerved my eyes. Why this shyness? Carmelia does not know me and would not notice eyes secretly looking at her" (ibid, p.62). As if he were committing a crime by wishing intensely what he did not deserve and unable to ever let go of his critical sense, he realizes that that passion was a fantasy. He says to himself: "A man should not yield, like that, to the useless life of a lyrical tramp" (ibid, p.88). Strong is his awareness of reality: "With a vague physical image of the girl [...] and with shadows and lights that were inside me, I built a mental Carmelia that devastated me". But anyway, he never considers resigning to the foolish feeling that only keeps on growing.

Throughout the book, Belmiro oscillates between dream and reality. At

a time when taken over by great ecstasy he confesses to Gaudêncio the entire adventure that is smothering him, his friend, in great surprise, says: «It is amazing that you have been able to imagine so much about a simple creature like Carmelia!» (ibid, p.110). That reasoning devoid of emotion from a person who was rooted in another reality, all but destroys him. The talk will henceforward have a sedative effect on his spirit. While his thought continues to be overtaken by Carmelia, his passion will no longer be the same. He is now able to see the damsel without the mantle of Arabella. For some time he even forgets about her. When he is informed, as always by Gaudêncio, that a cousin of the girls, a newly graduated physician had come to live in the house, he will suffer from the assumption that a rival had come into play, but his jealousy will not be unbearable. He will always be aware of his lack of conditions to compete for a teenager whose social status is far higher than his. As time goes by and his suspicions are confirmed by the news of Carmélia's wedding, who had actually fallen for her cousin, his reaction is one of resignation: «My impression was that it was an old fact, already known to me, which was being belatedly disclosed» (ibid, p.195). Love to him seems to be 'so de-virilized' - a «feeling accompanied by previous resignations» - that he ends up moving to Rio de Janeiro, passively surrendering to an inexplicable feeling of masochism or self-compassion, interested in watching the couple leaving on a cruise for their honeymoon. He confesses in his journal: «I have actually felt like saying that I still love the girl, though in a different way, almost as if missing a beloved one who died» (ibid, p.118).

Having contained himself to the point of looking at the event as something only remotely related to him, before long he would show the great effort he was making to rein in that apparent indifference. The outer layer of resignation barely restrained the volcano of idealism, uncontrollable as it could not be otherwise, that raged inside him. Still in Rio, at a later time, when approaching the sea that had stolen from him the hope of fulfillment in love, he surrenders to the sudden overflowing emotion:

It seemed to me that the sea was sending me a message, inexpressible in words and yet unsettling. A loud confused voice rose from the depths, creeping like a distant thunder. The trumpets of the Last Judgment should therefore be at the same time far and near, deaf but domineering.

We shall hear it within the soul, without the interference of the senses, just as we hear the voice of the sea.

There is in the sea an intelligence and a yearning to communicate that make up almost a soul to the seascape. (ibid, p.261)

In the language of the cosmos, 'in high apocalyptic style' the giant of the waters sent him its speech. Belmiro wonders: "Why is it that the sea leads to us reflect on love and death? Will love and death hold the fate of man? Why does it also invites us to destroy our limitations?" That's when the man with

a wounded heart rises above himself: “That is when a mighty and elementary Belmiro emerges. A domineering, Atlantic Belmiro, compared to whom the poor Belmiro, suffocated between the mountains was a crawling worm. This Belmiro increasingly loomed in space and traveled time, trespassing all ages ...” (ibid, p.262).

Belmiro and Silviano, each in their own way, are Quixotic characters in the book. The latter is the philosopher, the intellectual by definition. He is permanently providing himself with books and spreading books all around him, lending them to his mates. Because of his extensive knowledge and high abstract reasoning ability, which he never tires to showcase, he never steps down from arrogance. He glides over everybody, attacking and intimidating the intelligences that approach him. That mask falls when the text reveals that he is neither devoid of philosophical imagination nor an impostor, but rather a being who often extrapolates, losing his foot in reality. An unrestrained vanity and devastating self-sufficiency makes him unfit for the exercise of self-criticism. Not exceeding the bounds of reason, which would allow us to characterize him as the closest look-alike of the Knight of the Sad Figure in Cervantes’ conception, almost completely devoid of the virtue of common sense, he is still shown as detached from reality. The chapter “*Silviano e seu Plano Decenal*” (Silviano and His Ten-Year Plan) seems to have been written for the purpose of highlighting this aspect. Exposing the outlines of a freakish journal - as usual in the ostentatious second person - to demonstrate that he was above the ordinary mortals - in the most uncouth and pretentious way he interrupts an attempted accolade from his friend: «Do not haste, Porfirio. Curb you impulses! You haven’t seen anything yet». Belmiro is under the impression that, before him, he is «in the presence of a multiple being», with the feeling that he is dealing «with something extra-human and purely cerebral», because he sees everything in him, «from the ridiculous to the amazing» (ibid, p.74).

The Quixotic nature of Silviano helps to understand the Quixotic nature of Belmiro. Both are bogged down in the consciousness of the eternal Faustian problem defined by the first, underpinned in Salvador Albert: «Love (life) strangled by knowledge» (ibid, p.78). It is the understanding of the eternal irretrievability of the fleeting moment that goes by and turns us into presences overtaken by subsequent generations. Silviano will become more explicit in a subsequent meeting that took place in his office. When translating an excerpt from the book in which Zarathustra, when crossing the forest in the company of friends is faced with a group of maidens dancing in a clearing, he comments: “They represent life [...], the life that flees before the ascetic!” (ibid, p.79). Silviano and Belmiro get involved with women trying, each in his own way, for love, to resist the destructive vortex of time. To Silviano, who is concerned only with eternal problems, the woman represents ‘a universal and not a particular’, and therefore is but ‘food for thought’ (ibid, p.128). He accurately explains: “I

loved in her the love, the life that flees, the blooming girl, the eternal grace” (ibid, p.131). On the contrary, committed to temporality, she is ‘a particular’ - the concrete object of desire - which Belmiro sees in Carmelia. To him, the girl is in summary and in total the sole source of sentimentality and emotion. Attending a dance, to which he was taken by Glicério, when contemplating the young women that are there he plunges into melancholy for representing a generation that is gone. Indeed, it is not those girls that give him the ‘feeling of retirement’ (ibid, p.69). The state of depression into which he is thrown comes from his memory of Carmelia, made present by the sight of the girls. He writes: “Poor us who are getting old. Feeling the warmth of new beings and being touched by them is even worse than the cold of an old age that lurks around us. I understand the need to flee the blooming girls and flee Carmelia” (ibid, p.68).

We finally clearly understand that what moves Belmiro throughout the story is his inner drama. The personal feeling of worthlessness, stressed by the presence of the girl leads him to the extreme of, in a moment of self-deprecation, compare himself to a street dog. Permanently uneasy, the Knight of the Sad Figure he embodies suffers from love or self-pity. He suffers from love and self-pity. Living in a state of intense emotion is an adventure that eliminates the possibility of compartmentalized distinctions. Insofar as we understand it, Cyro dos Anjo’s debut novel is not only the story of the troubled passion of the mature man for a teenager. It requires the perspective that allows us to see the drama of the character in its entirety. Depressed, he has the most deprecating opinion of himself. He sees himself as old and physically ungraceful. He feels like a loser, a petty bureaucrat in an office where he didn’t even have anything to do. Everyone there was just watching time go by, waiting for retirement. Nothing convinces him that he will ever have any prospect of personal fulfillment. Even his literary pretensions fail to convince him. Sustained by his interaction with a group of provincial intellectuals who do not objectively state their intentions, they eventually lead him to the secret activity of writing a personal journal. In a moment of extreme frustration, he realizes that it would have been better to have followed the path of a fellow who seemed to him a simplistic example of humility - a being devoid of ambition and anxiety because he was not affected by any kind of restlessness. Florêncio, who is just shy of fifty, enjoyed “life in its most confident and quiet expression”, just watching the swelling of his own belly, which was gaining an “honest and restful expression” (ibid, p.264). With the memory of that human model of platitudes alone, Belmiro wondered:

Why look for an individual sense of existence? There are, in the endless plateaus of the interior, small trees that do not bear fruit, provide shadow or have medicinal roots. Perhaps they are there just to as part of the jungle landscape. I will not be here just as pictorial effect of the mass. (ibid, p.263).

After the episode of the great emotional outburst by the sea, full of pre-

tension, trying to overcome the frustration of Carmélia's wedding, he feels that he has been transformed into the «mighty and elementary Belmiro, a domineering, Atlantic Belmiro, compared to whom the poor Belmiro, suffocated between the mountains was a crawling worm» (*ibid*, p.262). But that was nothing more than an outburst without any consequence. He soon relaxes, steps back into reality, regains conscience of his little worth and writes: “The truth is in Erê Street”. The truth was in the poor house, where he survived in a state of absolute modesty in the company of two sisters whom he referred to as “the old ladies”: Francisquinha with her frail health, suffering from frequent attacks of dementia, and Emília, a rude woman from the interior, with her crippled vocabulary and rather wild emotions, who without watching her behavior announced when her brother arrived: “here comes the excommunicated, here comes the insane”. When he realizes that the group of writers is beginning to disperse, Belmiro sees a new friend emerge, which means lowering the level of his social relations. It will be Carolino, the janitor from the Animal Development Section, the human target of sarcastic comments and disrespectful jokes from everyone, who will begin to assiduously frequent his house and will befriend especially with Emília who, because of her little education, will feel an affinity with him.

When reality becomes more adverse, Belmiro seeks to organize the memories of Vila Caraíbas, with its «sweet procession of ghosts» (*ibid*, p.18). On one occasion, he decides to meet this world of the past, yearning to revive old impressions. He was convinced that there had been a place where he lived with dignity and confidence alongside his people. The outcome of the journey is all but disappointment: «the old Borba had already died, the farm was in different hands» (*ibid*, p.113).

Camila, the girl who had impressed him in his youth, was still alive, but as “a miserable shadow of a time gone by” (*ibid*, p.115). Shocked by what he saw, which did not correspond to the images of the memory, he concluded: “Things are not in space”, “they are in time” and this exists “within us” (*ibid*, p.115, 116). He decides not to go back to his hometown, concluding that the solution for escaping the space is to take refuge in time, where imagination can work freely and build a version of reality that will meet our needs for inner balance.

Another crutch used by Belmiro to achieve an also defensive result, is the activity of writing on his journal. Literature had the power to reintegrate him into himself, to rehabilitate him as a personality. He writes comforted: “I come from the street oppressed, I write ten lines and I become Olympic” (*ibid*, p.253). He transferred his problems to the journal, which also became a kind of inner stage. He explained with convincing arguments: “Some of us get on stage, while others sit in the audience and watch. The guy who got on stage will make us laugh, will touch us or trigger in us serious meditations. But he is an autonomous individual, and we have nothing to do with his antics, his sorrows or his concerns” (*ibid*, p.253).

Belmiro cannot get rid of the feeling of defeat, and the willingness to

write on his journal is but a symptom of that. He quotes lines from Gregorio Marañón, with whom he identifies: “In the adult man the practice of the journal corresponds to the phasing out of the active, social personality of its author [...] a journey is the equivalent of slow suicide” (ibid., p.248).

Reference

ANJOS, C. dos. *O amanuense Belmiro*. Belo Horizonte: Os amigos do Livro, 1937. 293p.

ABSTRACT – The paper discusses Cyro dos Anjos’ essentiality on Machado de Assis’ language style, and later interprets Cyro’s masterpiece *O amanuense Belmiro* [*Amanuensis Belmiro*]. Following an unprecedented path through the considerable novel’s criticism wealth, this paper takes a structural approach which subverts the signed visions on the work, revealing and broadening its size, under the blazing sun, as a Brazilian Miguel de Cervantes’ quixotic recreation.

KEYWORDS: Minas Gerais, Ideality, Quixotic, Language.

Rui Mourão is a novel and essay writer and a retired professor from the University of Brasília. He taught at the Universities of Tulane, Houston, and Stanford in the USA. He is director of the Inconfidência Museum in Ouro Preto. @ – ruimourao@veloxmail.com.br

Received on 27 Jan. 2010 and accepted on 23 Feb. 2010.