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Posted on 02 October 2017 By António Lobo Antunes

`Book ? Fado Alexandrino ? PDF eBook or Kindle ePUB free

This was a challenging and very difficult book to understand and read Written in a stream of consciousness with little punctuation and with voices switching mid sentence I needed

infinite time and patience to try and understand what the author was telling the reader the translation was excellent but because of the dense writing, few paragraphs and the narrative voices continually changing I felt I never got to know the characters sufficiently well to begin to understand the story I know little about Lisbon where the story was set. Em 1982 um grupo de camaradas rene-se para jantar e retomam contacto ap s os dez anos separados, desde a chegada da guerra colonial em 1972 Do grupo, e n o vou dizer os nomes porque faz parte da experi ncia da leitura descobrir o nome de cada um, faz parte um alferes, um capit o, um oficial de transmiss es, um tenente coronel e um soldado O livro est estruturado em tr s partes, antes da revolu o, durante o 25 de Abril de 1974, e ap s a revolu o Cada parte, qual verso alexandrino que possui 12 s labas, ter 12 cap tulos No in cio do jantar retomaram a 1972, cada um falar dos primeiros tempos ap s o regresso, quando j nos digestivos a narrativa move-se para a revolu o e os acontecimentos mais recentes, p s 25 de Abril j s o narrados em casa do alferes onde a noite acaba com um grupinho sui generis de meninas Destes cinco ex combatentes s um era claramente contra o regime e este facto torna-se interessante no seu pr prio destino ao longo desta noite de reencontro. Lembro-me do Ant nio Lobo Antunes referir numa entrevista que o seu pai s o considerou escritor ap s Fado Alexandrino e percebe-se Este quinto livro quebra com os quatro anteriores e surge j com o que ser mais tarde o seu estilo definitivo, o fluxo de consci ncia j praticamente permanente, ainda h aus ncia de musicalidade narrativa e ainda presente narrativa na terceira pessoa Al m do pr prio livro nos levar por caminhos inesperados, sendo bastante espirituoso e divertido, nunca perde f lego em mais de 700 p ginas, continuo a maravilhar-me com a capacidade do Ant nio em colidir informa es entre hist rias distintas levando a mem ria a abrir os seus outros livros j lidos para alterar, ir buscar, acrescentar informa o O seu pen ltimo cap tulo sublime Em Fado Alexandrino h uma pertinente den ncia da revolu o, o que implicou e n o mudou, o que implicou e piorou E a perda do caminho, n o s dos que estiveram na guerra, tamb m a dos que os viram partir Podendo at saber que possuem um lar, n o vislumbram onde fica O que me faz mais impress o,, tudo ter mudado na minha vida sem eu dar por isso, nada ser igual como era dantes, as pessoas, os s tios, a minha pr pria idade, exactamente o que eu necessitava que n o alterasse nunca Como se o norte fosse agora sul e eu rasca, sem b ssola, procura de qualquer coisa que me guie Esta certeza, entende, de que tarde de mais e perdi o caminho de casa, ou, se der com ele, malho com os cornos numa parede, numa esquina, num beco sem sa da. H uns dias atr s, ouvi uma entrevista antiga do Gon alo M Tavares em que ele dizia querer evitar as palavras casadas nascen a Ficou-me na cabe a a express o e quando voltei ao gigantesco tomo que o Fado Alexandrino, percebi o qu o bem encaixava este querer na obra do Lobo Antunes. Li livros do Lobo Antunes contemp raneo e agora estou a fazer uma leitura cronol gica, tendo come ado no primeiro e assim em diante Fado Alexandrino parece-me uma obra de transi o entre as duas fases Menos autobiogr fico que os anteriores, mais denso, mais intrincado, mais pr ximo da maneira circular de

escrever de agora neste limbo, que se ergue esta história assente em quatro personagens principais Cinco militares, companheiros de armas em Moambique, juntam-se para um jantar Todos eles vão contando vez ao vez ao capitão, que no narrador, a história da sua vida at aquele momento O autor divide o livro em 3 atos, por revolução, revolução e pós-revolução assim, apoiado nas vicissitudes destes homens e das suas mulheres, que o autor dissecou a história socioeconómica do Portugal da época A fuga para o Brasil das famílias ricas com medo dos comunistas, os militares revolucionários, o falhanço do 25 de Novembro, o saneamento dos oficiais, a miséria dos bairros de Lisboa. A escrita irrepreensível, mais domada que em livros anteriores, menos pomposa Como disse no início, o autor encontra metáforas belíssimas onde ninguém as veria, junta palavras que nunca seriam próprias O estilo inigualável e aparece neste livro mais depurado, com menos plumas, mais eficaz O autor admitiu já que os primeiros livros são vaidosos, tinha muita vontade de mostrar a cultura que tinha, os livros que lia, os quadros que conhecia, a música que ouvia Neste o autor desapega-se desses adereços e afunda-se pela primeira vez na sua obra em vidas alheias, nas quais enxerta um pouco da sua Não conheço na língua portuguesa autor tão bom a criar personagens, que surgem no livro tão verdadeiras nas suas forças e fraquezas que podiam ser o nosso vizinho do lado. Two years ago Lobo Antunes pissed people off by making the unarguable statement that by the time he was 40, about the age the 2001 crowd is now, he had already published *Fado Alexandrino*, one of the greatest novels of the 20th century, and they had nothing of identical power to show for It's easier to prove 2 and 2 equals 5 than refuting that statement They're not even trying instant success and hyperbolic adulation has curbed their development Miguel, As other readers have said, this is NOT an easy book to read due to the stream of consciousness, the characters not being given names described by military rank very slow reading But worth it I thought Five men are having a reunion on the 10th anniversary of their return from Mozambique having served in the Portuguese army at the very end of the occupation of Mozambique, returning home just before the overthrow of the Portuguese dictatorship It helps to know at least a little of mid 20th Century Portuguese history For 500 hundred pages we follow these soldiers and their wives, girlfriends, bosses, comrades lives for better or worse mostly for worse A fascinating rather beautiful book. Over the course of one long, long night five military men who fought in the Portuguese Colonial Wars get blasted and tell their life stories from before the revolution, during the revolution, and after the revolution Each chapter centers on one of the particular characters the lowly foot soldier, the lieutenant colonel who returns from the colonies to find out his wife has died, the communist supporting communications officer, the second lieutenant whose rich wife leaves him for another woman but voices mingle across chapters, and the past and present become nearly indistinguishable, a literary muddle of moments, some humorous, but most pretty emotional and dire And filled with detritus In Antunes's world, everything is a bit broken, dirty, faded, fat, and gross It's as if all of his characters are living in the entropic end times and trying to figure out how to keep themselves together In many

ways, this is the prototypical Antunes novel. Not an easy read I found myself struggling to distinguish the characters, locations and times because much of the narrative is stream of consciousness and not everyone is given a name. However the language is so evocative, and quite extraordinarily well translated, that I was moved and thrilled with sensations created by a large number of passages throughout the book. This is a book I will mark down to read again as I am sure that with re-reading the plot and characters will become clearer and the smells and sounds will remain just as strong.

literature as tapestry

Words that crash, rumble, streak past, drip down through the cracks in the ceiling, swell up from the pages and invade my brain, stumble, drop, fall, plunge from every page, topple my usual sense of books, I made it through *FADO ALEXANDRINO* to the very end, sometimes wondering why I was subjecting myself to such a difficult novel, sometimes rejoicing that I'd heard of it by chance many years ago. Lobo Antunes, whose other works I didn't know, has written a nearly 500 page masterpiece which definitely is not for everyone. It demands close attention, it demands patience, and you have to like the flow of language. That this is the case even in English is a tribute to the famous translator Gregory Rabassa, who almost single-handedly, brilliantly, has brought Portuguese language literature to English readers.

Five men gather in the 1980s in a bar. They served together in Mozambique around 1970, fighting in one of Salazarist Portugal's colonial wars. The novel covers their return to Lisbon, the resumption or crumbling of their previous lives, and then the onset of the bloodless Portuguese revolution of April 25, 1974.

One man never speaks, but we feel his presence. There's a soldier, become a furniture mover for his uncle's tottering business. There's a second lieutenant from a humble background, married into a rich family who flee to Brazil when the Revolution occurs. Third is a lieutenant colonel whose wife dies just as he returns from Africa and who takes up with a cloud of perfume in silver high heels and oyster-colored eyelids. Fourth is a communications officer also referred to as Lieutenant which caused me no end of confusion at first an underground Communist agitator, jailed for his pains before being freed after April 25th. What happens to the men during that confused period in Portugal's history, and then when things settle down is the subject of the rest of the book.

There's a lot of their sex life, a murder and a denouement. Set down like that, the plot of *FADO ALEXANDRINO* doesn't amount to much. No, you'll read this because you want to read a highly unusual work of art, one that weaves stories, the gritty side of Lisbon, times, voices, dreams, thoughts, imaginations, and moments together like a collage, like a Pollock painting, like a tapestry. Lobo Antunes changes direction on pages, in paragraphs, and even in sentences some of which are extremely long. He draws a detailed picture of Portuguese society seen from the bottom up no touristy views for him. You can't just skim along you have to pay close attention. Let's face it. Either you're going to be blown away by this incredible book or you're going to toss it after the first 20 pages.

A remarkable, unique world of imagery
created by one of Portugal's great
romantic writers.
—*The New York Times*

A n t ó n i o

L o b o

A n t u n e s

r a d o

A l e x a n d r i n o

Everyone is familiar with the concept of a great American novel. This book might be easily called a great Portuguese novel. It encompasses traumatic, relatively recent past of the country including desperate bloody wars for African colonial possessions followed by the revolution against the dictatorship in 1974 and its aftermath. Four main characters, all ex-military men irrevocably damaged by the war, are having the reunion 10 years after coming back. The book is intermingled monologue of these four during the events of this very long night. To say that the characters are unlikable would be an understatement, but they are deeply human all the same. There is a lot of violence, sex and black humour on these pages. There are also very acute and bleak observations of a society under the dramatic change, the meaning of this change and how each human being is forced to be a part of it. It is a very male-dominated novel. There are a lot of female characters but we only see them through the eyes of these four men. For them, the women are either the objects of their admiration or instruments for fulfilling their needs. This attitude reminded me the essay, *Courtly Love, or, Woman as Thing* by Žižek. It is my third novel by Antunes and I love his unique style of writing. It could be called stream of consciousness, but it is the stream by at least three characters. In this novel, there are four voices talking, moving forwards and backwards in time, between the reality and the imaginary of their thoughts. It is impossible to appreciate this novel without giving it a full concentration. But it pays off in my case. He manages to combine very bleak, sometimes violent content with lyricism and beautiful imaginary. He also is very good in showing the different layers of a moment how the outside reality is juxtaposed with the one inside someone's head. For example, in the fragment below the protagonist is talking to another character, the captain Mendes, all along thinking about his departure from a woman in Goa many years ago. She didn't even speak in the morning when I left her in the tumbledown house beneath a huge thunderclap, where invisible hands were torturing the clouds as if they were bread dough. The trees were agitated with tics, the brimstone light was shedding quick copper-coloured flashes over the few unmatched pieces of furniture. Not a word, not a sound, her damp fingers extended, an absolute lack of expression on her face, the Jeep heaving hesitantly in the windstorm, battered by loose leaves, trash, gusts of water, splashed of mud brought up by the wheels, just like spit. Through the body, the words, the face, the tunic of captain Mendes, he saw the house growing smaller in the distance, the restless river, the anguish of the woods, his own heart, microscopic, vibrating. Now you are watching the rain fall in some village or other, cookstoves fashioned out of three piles of stones over a small cone of hot coals and twisted logs. It is a long novel. It is a demanding novel. I have to admit, I felt a bit tired by the last 50 pages. The knowledge of context would be probably a plus. However, it is a wise and stylistically superb book.

Book? *Fado Alexandrino*? In This New Work By The Foremost Portuguese Novelist, *The Reunion Of Five Men On The Tenth Anniversary Of Their Battalion's Return From Mozambique, Portugal's Vietnam, Ends In A Fatal Stabbing Which Ultimately Serves As An Act Of Liberation For The Corrupt City Of Lisbon* Newsday

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