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IPLB, INSTITUTO PORTUGUÊS  
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(works by *Helder Macedo, José Cardoso Pires,*  
*José Luís Peixoto, Maria Velho da Costa,*  
*António Franco Alexandre*  
*and Manuel António Pina*)  
Ana Saldanha  
(works by *Ana Saldanha, Luísa Ducla Soares*  
*and Boaventura Sousa Santos*)

**Graphic Design**  
ATELIER B2:  
José Brandão | Teresa Olazabal Cabral

**Pre-Press and Printing**  
Textype

**Print run**  
2500

October 2001

ISBN  
972-8436-26-2

Legal Deposit  
170 943/01

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# Introduction

THE PORTUGUESE INSTITUTE FOR BOOK AND LIBRARIES (IPLB) PRESENTS A SERIES OF BOOKLETS ABOUT THE AUTHORS AND THE WORKS OF CONTEMPORARY PORTUGUESE LITERATURE.

This issue of *Portuguese Literature - Sights from South* is, therefore, the first of a compilation with a dual aim : to reveal the modern dynamism of Portuguese Literature, and to rescue from oblivion those authors and works that, by virtue of their creative power are worthy of regard.

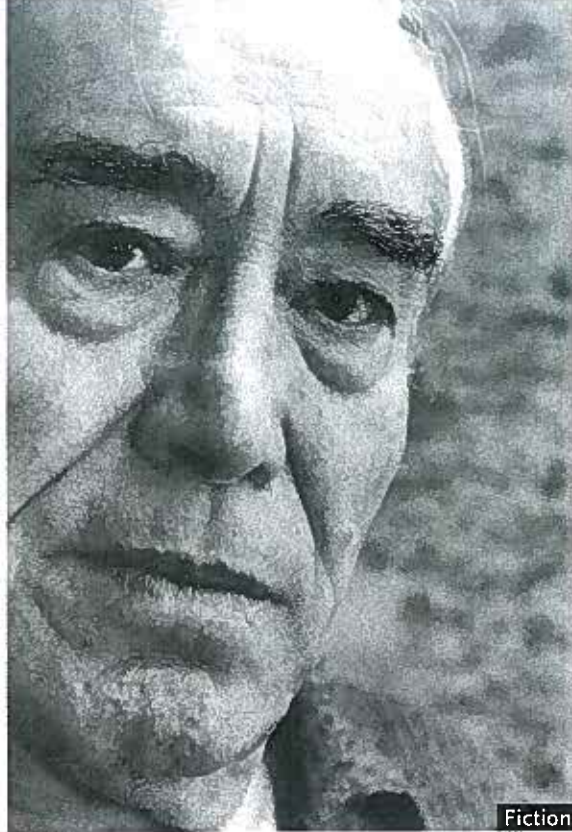
The present group of authors and works, ranging from Poetry to Children's Literature, and from Fiction to Essay, is a sample of the richness and diversity of contemporary Portuguese Literature. At the same time, this selection includes exemplary cases that justify, through their aesthetic value, originality and universality, a wider diffusion in the non Portuguese-speaking world.

This is one of the tools that makes part of a policy whose aim is to bring Portuguese works and authors closer to their potential readers, be they the general public, the lusophone specialists and researchers, or the translators and publishing professionals, one of the main activities being the funding of translation.

Through its regular publication, *Portuguese Literature - Sights from South* provides a set of essential data and information, for the understanding of both authors and works. Above all, it will help lift the veil of Portuguese language and through a careful selection of texts, the luminous intensity of a literature from the South of Europe will be able to shine through, its radiance illuminating all readers, even those who are the furthest away from our culture.

The Portuguese Institute for Book and Libraries supports the translation of works by Portuguese authors and those from African countries whose official language is Portuguese – annual assessment. All applications should be made through a foreign publisher and the entry deadline is March 31st of each year.

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Fiction

# José Cardoso Pires

Born in 1925 in the village of São João do Peso, in the region of Beira Baixa (in the North of Portugal), and died in Lisbon in 1998. He studied Superior Mathematics in the Lisbon Science School, but he abandoned his studies in order to enlist at the Merchant Marine. His professional activity was centered around literature and cultural journalism, he was a literary critic and director of several publishing houses, magazines and newspapers. He was equally a lecturer and resident writer of King's College. He participated in the first surrealist group in 1947 and was director of the newspaper *Diário de Lisboa*, between 1974 and 1975. From 1974 on he devoted himself exclusively to writing. He is considered one of the most eminent story-tellers of the Portuguese literature in the second half of the 20th century and his prose, precise and pure, was successfully adapted to cinema. This is the case of two of his most fundamental and symbolical works: *Balada da Praia dos Cães* [Ballad of Dogs' Beach: Dossier of a Crime], by José Fonseca e Costa and, more recently, *O Delfim* [The Dauphin], by Fernando Lopes. His work, which is partitioned between novels, tales, theatre plays, essays and narratives, has been the subject of studies in several countries. Amongst the great number of prizes and awards that José Cardoso Pires has received are the Portuguese Writers' Association Grand Prix for Novel and Novella in 1982 (A *Balada da Praia dos Cães*), the Brazilian Critics' Association Special Prize, São Paulo, 1988 (Alexandra Alpha), the 1991 Latin Union International Prize of Rome, the 1992 Golden Astrolabe International Nineteen-hundreds Prize of Pisa, the 1977 Pessoa Prize, the International Literary Critics' Association Critics' Prize in 1977 (*De Profundis*, *Valsa Lenta*) and the Portuguese Writers' Association Life Work Prize in 1988.

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[see page 48]

## Extracts

from LISBOA – LIVRO DE BORDO  
[LOG-BOOK OF LISBON]

Nestled next to the Tagus River, you strike me immediately as a seafaring city. Which is hardly surprising, since whenever I feel high enough to embrace the world, standing on one of your overlooks or seated on a cloud, I see you as a city-ship, a sailing vessel full of streets and gardens, and even your breeze tastes salty to me. Ocean waves, anchors and mermaids grace your pavements. Your deck, a broad square whose stones are adorned by a compass, is commanded by two columns that stand out of the water like guards of honour for your imminent departure. They seem to flank either side of your prow, and it's through them that a boy-king, mounted on a green horse a little further back, fixes his gaze on the far ends of the Earth; at his feet the names of navigators and discovery dates are etched in the basalt of the sun-washed square. In front of him flows the river, towards the meridians of paradise – the Tagus River, which the mad chroniclers of old said was filled with Tritons mounted on dolphins.

FINIS TERRAE

A curtain of furious seagulls rising up between me and the Tagus – that will be my last vision of Lisbon. I'll be sitting, as I am now, in a café at the Terreiro do Paço, next to the wharf where ferries leave for Cacilhas, with a huge window separating me from the river. The Café Atinel – what a ridiculous name. I look around at the empty tables and wonder how such a privileged place can remain virtually unknown. It has everything I want: boats arriving, boats departing, people entering and leaving (getting waited on at the counter), and I sitting above the Tagus River. Behind me lies the city. The crowds, commerce, Europe – all behind me, the people all asking each other for the time. Whereas here, in this forgotten refuge, the day's flowing can be measured by the changing colour of the Tagus. Don't anyone try to tell me it's less than bliss to be at this café table overlooking the river, with seagulls flying out from under my feet and flitting by in a shrill dance, just an arm's length away. This time of solitude is good for the soul. Even better was the time, we're reminded by researchers versed in Lisbonology, when from this shoreline Sintra – known then as the

Mons Lunae, or Promontory of the Moon – could be seen with the naked eye. It was a time, they say, when on the Far Shore there were sands that flowed with gold (reported by Marcus Terentius Varro), and celestial pastures where mares conceived by the wind. A time of luminous dust and lunar tears. And pearls. And Tritons. Singing Tritons like the one reported by Damião de Góis in his Description of the City of Lisbon. "In another age, long ago, there was in Lisbon a mermaid..." Thus begins a poem by Robert Desnos, but it's best to stop here, for the Tagus wasn't born from a fable or a poem, and it flows without nostalgia. And the same can be said of Lisbon. But with its centuries of experience and the marks of so many people making it what it is, the city can be read in numerous ways, so that each visitor (as is often said) enjoys his or her own Lisbon. This also explains why we who are from this city are so inconstant in our devotion. And when, sitting next to the river as I am now, we try to read it through other people's voices, then we feel even more inconstant, more uncertain. Depthless waters divide Tirso de Molina's Lisbon, hailed as "the eighth wonder", from the Lisbon

João Carvalho P.

that sharp-witted Fielding cursed as a leprous nightmare. William Beckford lived Lisbon in a palace; Sade invented it in a prison of resentments. "Lisbon offers a wide range of possibilities for a noble suicide," wrote one of its great narrators, Antonio Tabucchi. Voices, unceasing voices. Gazes. Remembrances.

When we finally turn the page where we've been reading the city, we discover that the café window is covered by a dance of restless seagulls and that there is no Tagus. That it vanished behind a tumult of white wings and is no longer a prelude to the ocean. And we realize, with affection and reassurance, that we're more anchored than ever to the city we set sail from.

## Selected Work

### Prose

*O Anjo Acorado* (novella) (Lisboa: Ulisseia, 1958; 8<sup>th</sup> ed., D. Quixote, 1990) [MOORED ANGEL]

*O Hóspede de Job* (novel) (Lisboa: Arcádia, 1963; 8<sup>th</sup> ed., D. Quixote, 1992) [THE LOST PILGRIMAGE]

*O Delfim* (novel) (Lisboa: Moraes, 1968; 10<sup>th</sup> ed., D. Quixote, 1988; ed. de bolso, D. Quixote, 1999) [THE DAUPHIN]

*Dinossauro Excelentíssimo* (fable) (Lisboa: Arcádia, 1972; D. Quixote, 1988) [MOST EXCELLENT DINOSAUR]

*Balada da Praia dos Cães* (novel) (Lisboa: O Jornal, 1982; 13<sup>th</sup> ed., D. Quixote, 1989) [BALLAD OF DOGS' BEACH]

*Alexandra Alpha* (novel) (Lisboa: D. Quixote, 1987) [ALEXANDRA ALPHA]

*A República dos Corvos* (short stories) (Lisboa: D. Quixote, 1988) [REPUBLIC OF CROWS]

### Theatre plays

*Corpo-Delito na Sala de Espelhos* (Lisboa: Moraes, 1980) [CORPUS DELICTO IN THE HALL OF MIRRORS]

### Essays

*Cartilha do Marialva* (Lisboa: Ulisseia, 1960; D. Quixote, 1989) [BON VIVANT PRIMER]

### Chronicles / Memoirs

*Cardoso Pires por Cardoso Pires* (Lisboa: D. Quixote, 1991) [CARDOSO PIRES BY CARDOSO PIRES]

*De Profundis, Valsa Lenta* (Lisboa: D. Quixote, 1997) [DE PROFUNDIS, SLOW WALTZ]

*Lisboa, Livro de Bordo* (Lisboa: D. Quixote, 1997) [LOG-BOOK OF LISBON]

## Selected Translations

### German

*Der Dauphin* (Verlag Kurt Desch, 1971)

*Seine Exzellenz der Dinosaurus* (Rütten & Loening, 1978)

*Ballade vom Hunderstrand* (Carl Hanser Verlag, 1990)

*Lissaboner Logbuch* (Carl Hanser Verlag, 1977)

### Catalan

*Ballada de la platja dels gossos* (Edicions de la Malagrana, 1987)

### Spanish

*El Delfim* (Seix-Barral, 1970)

*El huesped de Job* (Seix-Barral, 1972; Edit. Literatura y Arte, 1976)

*Ballada de la playa de los perros* (Seix-Barral, 1984)

*Lisboa. Diario de a Bordo* (Alianza Editorial, 1977)

### French

*Le Dauphin* (Gallimard, 1970)

*Ballade de la plage aux chiens* (Gallimard, 1986)

*Alexandra Alpha* (Gallimard, 1991)

*Lisbonne. Livre de bord* (Gallimard, 1977)

### Dutch

*Ballade van het Hondenstrand* (De Prom, 1990)

*De Krooprijs* (De Prom, 1992)

### English

*The Lost Pilgrimage* (Beaufort Books, 1981)

*Ballad of Dogs' Beach* (J. M. Dent & Sons, 1986; Beaufort Books, 1987)

### Italian

*Ballata della spiaggia dei cani* (Feltrinelli, 1985)

*Il Delfino* (Ed. Riuniti, 1979;

Feltrinelli, 1992)

*Lisbona. Libro di bordo* (Feltrinelli, 1997)

## Interview

JL *In an interview you claimed that writing was a relationship between the hand, the memory and the edges of the paper...*

J.C.P. ... That is one of the many different definitions of the activity. Another, for example, is play. I like the playful side of literature very much. To set up a conflict, a space and to discover within it both failings and the necessity for agreements, at the same time that the characters are being moulded, characters that are often stronger than that of the writer who has created them... This really interests me. Sometimes I am writing a story and I realize that there are characters who don't like me. And only an idiot is going to fight the characters. We have to go along behind them and, then, we either put them in the book or we throw them out. If not the book turns

out conceptual and dogmatic. On other occasions the character takes an immediate liking to us. [...]

JL *You're also bringing out a book about Lisbon?*

J.C.P. [...] It's called «Lisboa, Livro de Bordo» (Log-Book of Lisbon). [...] It's about Lisbon, the city I like best in the world. A maritime city like no other...

JL *What do you mean by that?*

J.C.P. You may notice that the city's mosaic pavements largely depict maps of the oceans, wave designs, caravels, anchors and the dates of maritime discoveries. Besides this, it is a city of glazed tiles. And a large proportion of these tiles, especially those dating from the end of the 19th century, [...] have designs based on flowers. And it is as if this is reflected in the mosaic pavements.

Interview by MARIA LEONOR NUNES | *Jornal de Letras, Artes e Ideias*, 21.5.1997

## About his work

The courteous forms of Lisbon. As you well know my dear José (you bring back affectionate memories in this Log-Book), I have also strolled on the bridge of the good ship "Lisbon": not only on my legs, but above all with strides of fantasy, of impressions, of sensations and of memories. [...]

I [...] don't really know how to address her. [...] But you address Lisbon with the familiar 'tu' and well you might. She is your companion. And, like a bee, you pollinate her flower.

And this is why she has continued to flourish through centuries of Portuguese

literature: because there are artists and writers like yourself who not only remember her at moments of grace but also in the darkest moments of her existence, which you went through along with her.

Dry and sonorous as a sail in the wind, that's the style of this "log-book" of yours [...].

And now we weigh anchor in "your" Lisbon like a sailing ship of which you are the pilot and also, at the same time, the ship's scrivener. Because there's no doubt that your city, "resting on the Tagus like a city about to set sail", at

Another thing, and let's hope this isn't going to be lost, the underground railway stations are among the most beautiful in Europe. Not just blind tunnels. When we stop at a station the city above is reflected there [...]

JL *And these are the three aspects of Lisbon that you base the book upon?*

J.C.P. Another thing that interests me are the voices of Lisbon. It is the fado, with that guttural drawl which originated in the old street cries that have now disappeared. Those are the real vocal and written semantics of the city...

JL *Your way of looking at the city is sentimental then?*

J.C.P. [...] My book is, deep down, a look at a lived-in city, re-remembered and questioned. It's a city which goes on asking me questions, as it always has.

other times did set sail and gave herself up to the oceans, to adventure. And circumnavigated the Africas, went to the Indies, the Malaccas, and found the Brazils. In fact, "to seas never before navigated" as Camões said, taking Europe to the world and the world to Europe.

But I'd like to join the crew of this "Lisbon" even in a humble task which however, pleases me: a good cabin-boy polishing the brasses. If you'll allow me I shall come along with you aboard this sailing ship which although at anchor, voyages, voyages.

ANTONIO TABUCCHI | *Preface to Lisbona. Libro di bordo - voci, sguardi, memoria. Milano: Feltrinelli, 1997*



Fiction

# Helder Macedo

Poet, novelist, essayist, researcher and university professor, he was born near Johannesburg in 1935. He lived in Mozambique, where he started his studies, which were pursued in Lisbon, at the Law School. He settled down in London in 1960, where he graduated and obtained a Ph.D. in Portuguese and Brazilian Studies at King's College, becoming a member of its teaching staff since 1971. He was a visiting professor at Harvard, a full professor of the chair "Camões" and a director of the department of Portuguese and Brazilian Studies at King's College. As a Camões and other Portuguese authors' specialist, he founded the magazine Portuguese Studies and is responsible for several anthologies of Portuguese poetry in English. He collaborated in several magazines and newspapers, namely the Times Literary Supplement. From 1975 on, he assumed important political and administrative posts. His second Novell Pedro e Paula [Pedro and Paula], of 1998, has enabled his consecration as a fictionist, a status which he already benefited from as a essayist and poet.

As an essayist Helder Macedo received in 1999 the Portuguese Pen Club Essay Prize and the Prize of the International Association of Literary Critics.

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[see page 48]

## Extract

from PEDRO E PAULA [PEDRO AND PAULA]

### ENTRANCES AND EXITS (1945)

What most certainly didn't happen was perhaps the following... The other passengers nervously glanced at each other when they realized who the two late arrivals were, she wearing a tearful smile, he dourly solicitous, solemn and stoical, intimating unpredictable, heroic futures. But if it was easy to applaud heroic deeds announced like a children's catechism in public bars, or even those carried out in surreptitious, nocturnal alleys stained by real blood from anonymous corpses, it was better to maintain a respectful silence in an aeroplane that could be intercepted, shot down, bursting all their dreams that only now were beginning to seem possible. It was better to tender just a vague nod, a neutral and noncommittal acknowledgement, suitable to the transit country where they would soon arrive, if they arrived at all. The pilot, an alcoholic who regularly lost his next month's wages on poker, preferred not to expose himself to heroic possibilities, and so as soon as he was airborne he switched off the gadgets that might bring orders to

turn around at once, forcing him to choose between compliance and insubordination. For now his only future was the intermediary one of three return flights per week. He preferred not to know what he would face on his return, what cards would be played against his own invariably lousy hand of deuces and renegades. Ignorance was a form of freedom, the only bluff possible, at least for now. Perhaps in Lisbon, where everyone knew everyone else, someone could explain the how and why of that impossible phenomenon he carried on board. Or perhaps the barman of the casino in Estoril, who had once sounded out his willingness to engage in clandestine activities and aerial spying (the pilot having pretended to be drunker than he was, since that was the only way he could be everyone's man without being anyone's), had some helpful contacts. Since the flight proceeded without incident and the windows so anxiously scrutinized during take-off now revealed nothing but dusky, sleep-inducing stars, the passengers also started to return to the future. Some, however, because they were now closer to what they

had so long and so ardently hoped for in their desperate exiles, suddenly had doubts, feelings of guilt, nostalgia for when their hope had not yet been contaminated by the probability of fulfilment. [...]

### THE LAND AND THOSE WHO WORK IT (1975-1980)

Here the story shifts gears, since at this point I can stop being the cautious inventor of probabilities to become the confident chronicler of uncertainties, for I at long last met the twins. Or rather, I'm going to say I met a young man and woman who later told me they were twins, although they didn't look it, and whom I decided would be useful for this book. As I said earlier, we're up against problems of so-called free will, or rather, of the appearance of what was in what might have been. And if I didn't say it earlier, I'll now say (in order to say perhaps something else) that in novels, as in life, the author eventually stops pretending to have a choice, and this is true even of those authors who pretend to the bitter end. Even they, I'm

convinced, know perfectly well that characters eventually end up inventing their author, who is as much a character as they are. And if an author tries to make the characters into something they aren't, then they're liable to balk, complaining to the reader of the author's lack of respect. Even if they collaborate with the author, whom they may or may not like, some would have preferred a different fate. But this is yet another story, involving yet other issues of free will.

For the here and now of this book, I'll say merely that it was now and here that my characters confronted me as if they'd existed prior to the names and fates I've been inventing for them. Which is to say that I'm a witness: I was also there. Picture with me the time, place and circumstances:

[...]

## Selected Works

### Prose

*Partes de África* (novel) (Lisboa: Presença, 1991; Rio de Janeiro: Record, 1999) [PARTS OF AFRICA]  
*Pedro e Paula* (novel) (Lisboa: Presença, 1998; Rio de Janeiro: Record, 1999) [PEDRO AND PAULA]  
*Vícios e Virtudes* (novel) (Lisboa: Presença, 2000) [VICE AND VIRTUE]

### Poems

*Poesia* (1957-1968 Lisboa: Moraes Editores, 1968; 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.: 1971) [POEMS]  
*Poesia* (1957-1977 Lisboa: Moraes Editores, 1979) [POEMS]  
*Viagem de Inverno* (Lisboa: Presença, 1994) [WINTER TRIP]

## About his work

To the inattentive reader the plot seems as linear as Casablanca's, which, intentionally, is there on the first pages of the book. End of the war, a relationship breaks up, frustrated marriage, children. This initial romantic paradigm starts to get close to Greek tragedy and, as in those plays, you don't understand metaphors and the symbolism of facts at a first glance. You need to immerse yourself deeper to understand the relation between the individual and society. In this novel, Helder Macedo focuses on half a century on Portuguese life, with Lisbon, London and colonial Lourenço Marques as background. The narrative is polyphonic, rhythmic but it also uses intertextual games. By the end of *Pedro e Paula*, the narrator surrenders and gives up omniscience, and becomes a character.

*Editorial Record (Brasil)*, 1990



"Pedro e Paula" is a breath of fresh in the mostly heavy and serious Portuguese literature. Helder Macedo toys with serious things. For our pleasure only: the pleasure of reading and recognizing. Conventionally realistic novels are, for a vast majority, the model of its kind, leading us to forget what all lovers of novels know only too well: there are no rules modern novels (is there any other kind?) have not defied and subverted

[...]. And authors never shirked from reminding readers that they are reading a work of fiction, that the characters are beings of paper, that the plot movements are their responsibility, creating distancing effects that have the goal of (unknowingly) test the reader's attention, to promote narrative pact [...]. The book gains truthfulness (denouncing realism), because it dives into the woods of fiction, drawing, through an in-between "symbolic history of antagonistic twins", a full bodied picture of the "content Portuguese times", where we find an added pleasure: the pleasure of reading and recognizing.

LINDA SANTOS COSTA | "Smoking/No Smoking", *Público*, 21.3.1998



The singularity of his writing and his sense of intervention in the world of narrative confirm that *Pedro e Paula* has a frame of references long detected in *Partes de África*, as if it wanted to give the reader a "fresco" that, though losing some sense in its fictional limits, hides an intentional duplicity of his own narration, because it is all part of work of close detail, as he himself admits, whenever it comes from taking a word here and adding another one there. That is why, in the narrative ambivalence that comes from the twins "Pedro e Paula", this novel confirms the author's literary

qualities, to which we should add praise to the character of Paula that was created with all its ambiguities and seductive arts, and rises as one of the most radiant female characters of modern Portuguese literature. For his Romanesque architecture, the author of *Partes de África* surprises us again and stakes his claim as an excellent prose writer, one that one must know and read.

SERAFIM FERREIRA | *A Página*, June, 1998



Helder Macedo's poetry is impregnated with a sense of rebelliousness, resolved into playful pessimism. His "love for flesh" inspired the first poems in a close way with 11-syllabled verses and metrical combinations with reminders of tradition, that took wings and became free verses, obeying the rhythm of feelings and thoughts, rather than ancient schematic; that is what is natural, because each of his poems is an attempt to illuminate, sometimes cruelly and heterodoxically so, the world of our experiences and our beliefs. In this sense we can say that poetry is one of the most purely present in Portuguese society today, in that which connects it to relentless auto-analysis by Pessoa.

ANGEL CRESPO | *Antología de la poesía portuguesa contemporánea II*, Madrid: Ediciones Jucar, 1981



Fiction

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# Maria Velho da Costa

Born in Lisbon in 1938, has graduated in Germanic Philology, by the University of Lisbon. She was a teacher, lecturer and a civil servant of the Portuguese State, for which she always worked in the area of culture. She has collaborated in cinema and television scripts and equally made an incursion into theatre. In literary terms she is located in a line of linguistic experimentalism, which has renovated Portuguese literature in the 1960's. Although internationally she is better known as one of the authors of the *Novas Cartas Portuguesas* (New Portuguese Letters), she is responsible for some of the most important romances of Portuguese contemporary literature, such as *Maina Mendes*, *Casas Pardas* [Whity-Brown Houses], *Missa in Albis* [Mass in Albis] and, more recently, *Irene ou o Contrato Social* [Irene or the Social Contract]. Tribute was paid to her in Bordeaux at the "Carrefour des Littératures", in October 2000.

Amongst other awards she has received the *Casa de Mateus Foundation D. Dinis Prize* in 1985 (Lucialima) the *Portuguese PEN Club Fiction Prize* in 1989 (*Missa in Albis*), the *International Literary Critics' Prize* in 1995 (Dores) and the *Portuguese Writers' Association Short Story Prize* in 1996 (Dores). In 1997 the *University of Évora* has distinguished her with the *Vergílio Ferreira Prize* for her work in general and, more recently, in 2000, she has received the *Portuguese Writers' Association Grand Prix for Novel and Novella* (*Irene ou o Contrato Social*).

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[see page 48]

## Extract

from "THE RARE BIRD" in the short story collection *DORES* [SORROWS]

"I don't exist," said Dores. She turned off the radio. The sounds were less and less tolerable, even at low volume. She raised the glass to her mouth and wondered what else she could do.

It was two in the afternoon and she knew the man was sleeping. In another apartment and alone, let it be noted. He slept a devastated sadness, just like hers. A devastated sadness isn't the same as depression. A devastated sadness is the sadness of no longer being able to cheer yourself up by doing things. It's when there's no activity left that can bring you any relief. She had lost that quality that makes a person tingle: curiosity. Which at least postpones. Even if the man were to call, what would prevail is the onslaught of mourning, of the inexorable, of what they could no longer construct: joint projects, pleasures, homes. The rancour of mourning.

They had been mutually useful and had enjoyed certain feelings, certain battles. How is that now she talked of shallowness, of debris? The phone didn't ring. "I haven't prepared for old age," Dores said out loud, which was a sign that she could speak alone. And that there was a

difference between the pain and the sickness, the pathology and the reality of the disaster. She would become a gaudy, crazy old lady – fine.

She looked around the room. The objects weren't ugly, but they grated on her. February's light is harsh. The acidity that anticipates the purply blushes of Spring. Dores laughed alone, in tears, at the ineptitude of grief when it resorts to words. "Purply, how disgusting." What she heard in her voice was dead-letter. An alien sound.

She called up her mother. Her mother who had always managed to be busy with something and never with anyone. Dores told her she was going to take a bath and go visit her. At that hour? Her mother took the vestige of weeping in her voice for a sore throat or a virus, complained about her kidneys and urine retention, a condition that was of course improving, and prescribed: that she take her bath, bundle up, and come on over. As if she had never been, nor would ever be, anything in life. That she dress warmly and eat something. Did she have a cough? She didn't have a cough. Yes she did, she was hiding it, and it worried her mother. Dores

thought afterwards how others would smile fondly at such a late-blooming concern for their bodily ailments. Or even at the regressive behaviour of senility: old women playing with us like dolls all over again. Or consummating their self-love in the body they expelled once. Without tenderness but with clawing tenacity. Dores had always experienced this as extortion, their relationship as a hate-ruled regime. So she was trapped. Weak, no matter what she did or had or would come to have. She wouldn't go to her mother's. They could both die alone like dogs. Old grey dogs, avowing to each other how cruel time was. For a while now the lines etching both their faces hadn't altered a bit, or very little. There was no umbilical cord between them, just the tape measure of an extendible leash. She blew her nose, laughing. She called the man again. He was asleep in his body. He slept in a long, ground-floor apartment, where the files from the job he'd left were lined up in a dead archive that invaded everything. Even the body that slept. They were both old, or almost. Dores heard the modulating whistle of a knife grinder outside. Despite the cold, she opened the window on to

Maria Velho da Costa

the dirty and ugly street. It seemed unlikely that she'd heard the grinder's trill. She didn't see him. So was that how one hallucinates? Was that how the end of a life spent with nobody begins?

She had let the phone keep ringing for the man. No one answered from out of that sleep. It gutted the furniture, left marks from burning cigarettes on the floor and on the sheets during his alcoholic pre-sleep stupor. The man's voice finally arrived, dry like he used to be. Dry and clean and firm:

"What do you want?"

Dores heard the clinking of ice, just like in her glass. It was still early to drink straight up, without the baby-rattle music of the ice cubes.

Dores hung up. Then she said, "The rancour of mourning".

She called back her mother, and this time they chattered on gaily. Her mother was always full of projects.

Her enthusiasm for doing things was unquenchable. And she would gradually let go of her hostilities, like a fishermen letting out more line to tire his prey.

"So am I a big fish, mother?"

"You'll have to speak up, I can hardly hear you. But what do you think if I rearrange the living room, moving the sofas to the side where the other window is, I can always get an extension cord for the TV, I'd like to know what you think, I always like to

know what you think."

"I don't think," said Dores. But she'd enjoyed her little game with her mother.

She went back to wanting to see the bird. And to buy it. It had been a long time since she'd treated herself. She spent money but didn't treat herself. For weeks she'd been going to see the bird and be seen by it.

It was deep blue – blue being the dominant colour, as you might say for a peacock. But it was also aquamarine, moss green, turquoise, vermilion, maroon, purple, ochre and cyclamen-pink. And it had round eyes like certain black children and all birds of prey. She would go to the shopping centre to look at it, and it gradually got used to looking at her. It measured a foot from the tip of its long tail to its cranium, and it had the mandarin nails of a psittacine in captivity. Its name was *Rosella*, and Australia no longer allowed the subspecies to be exported. The *elegans* variety, sordidated, indifferent to the proximity of caged cats and other animals' dung, neon lights and clamour. It cost a fortune.

"Let's go home," Dores said to it. The animal didn't move much, but within a few hours it had accepted the high perch, water, millet and sunflower seeds, the huge cage and the shadowy corner where it stared impassively, an adopted orphan with large black eyes. [...]

## Selected Works

*Maina Mendes* (novel) (Lisboa: Moraes, 1969; 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Lisboa: D. Quixote, 1993) [MAINA MENDES]  
*Novas Cartas Portuguesas* (with Maria Teresa Horta and Maria Isabel Barreno) (Lisboa: Estúdios Cor, 1972; 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. rev., preface by Maria de Lourdes Pintassilgo, Lisboa: Moraes, 1980; 7<sup>th</sup> ed. Lisboa: D. Quixote, 1998) (NEW PORTUGUESE LETTERS)  
*Desescrita* (Porto: Afrontamento, 1973) [UNWRITING]  
*Casas Pardas* (novel) (Lisboa: Moraes, 1977; 5<sup>th</sup> ed. Lisboa: D. Quixote, 1997) [WHITY-BROWN HOUSES]  
*Corpo Verde* (drawings by Júlio Pomar) (Lisboa: Contexto, 1979) [GREEN BODY]  
*Missa in Albis* (novel) (Lisboa: D. Quixote, 1988) [MASS IN ALBIS]  
*Dores* (short stories) (paintings by Teresa Dias Coelho) (Lisboa: D. Quixote, 1994) [SORROWS]  
*Irene ou o Contrato Social* (novel) (Lisboa: D. Quixote, 2000) [IRENE OR THE SOCIAL CONTRACT]

## Selected Translations

**German**  
*New Portugiesische Briefe* (Ullstein Verlag, 1967)  
*Körper Grün* (Tranvia, 1989) in *Portugiesische Erzählungen des Zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts* (Beck & Glöckler, 1988)

**French**  
*Nouvelles Lettres Portugaises* (Seuil, 1976)  
"Initiales" in *Des nouvelles du Portugal* (Métaillé, 2000)  
*L'Oiseau rare & autres histoires* (L'Escampette, 2000)

**English**  
*The Three Marias: New Portuguese Letters* (Doubleday, 1975; Literary Guild, 1975; Saturday Review Club, 1975; Bantam Books, 1976)

**Italian**  
*Le nuove lettere portoghesi* (Rizzoli, 1977)

## About her work

Maria Velho da Costa's name is as connected to the history of Portuguese literature and culture in the past twenty years as it is to the history of feminism. More precisely, it is connected to the passage from this culture to the modern age, after many long decades of stagnation and reclusion forced by Salazar's dictatorship in Portugal. The resounding "Três Marias" affair in which she played one of the major roles from 1973 to 1974 is one of the most spectacular episodes of this mutation [...] Maria Velho da Costa is not overly nostalgic about that old twenty-year-old story, which she, now, at a distance, finds "quaint". [...] After studying German philology, Maria Velho da Costa took interest in psychiatry and group analysis. The social dimension of this

"radical destruction of people" represented by insanity and its treatment, was for a long time one of her greatest interests: "I could have become a psychoanalyst, but I was not made to heal, rather to disturb".

PATRICK KÉCHICHIAN | *Le Monde*, 6.11.1992



If modern Portuguese literature has any "open works", then this one, by Maria Velho da Costa, is certainly it. [...] None of our contemporary books has more success in redistributing the creative experiences of Portuguese culture, from Fernão Lopes to Guimarães Rosa, landscapes that are crossed and recreated with absolute originality. Her vision is not out of orbit like Herberto Helder's, nor is it irrepressible like Bessa-Luis'. It is expressed in contention and reservedly, in tense paragraphs in order to better explode the unformed but controllable anger that inhabits her, like her family heritage, that changed into history and nature from the Iberian castle to the dead bourgeoisie living room.

EDUARDO LOURENÇO | 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. *Preface for Maina Mendes*, 1977



my vote is about the insurmountable need to do justice to one of the most innovative and radical writers (always presenting "writing" as "un-writing") in

our literature: Maria Velho da Costa. A novel like *Irene ou o Contrato Social* entirely confirms this statement, by showing us various inadequacies and unexpected surprises in human relations (defined as social, political and discursive space) made through a grammatical and syntactical puzzle that wants to make us see the ultimate intransitivity that suspends and begs for the closeness of inevitable concerts, even if it sometimes baffles the reader.

EDUARDO PRADO COELHO | *Statement as a jury to A.P.E.'s Grand Prix for Novel and Novella 2000*



Maria Velho da Costa has what is surely one of the most important Romanesque works of the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Portugal. [...] The fictional worlds she builds are crossed by eager passion that builds up in situations fraught with the oppressive suffering of an imposed destiny, or of painful learning and the search to build an individual's destiny. The immense and "tame" violence of everyday life; borderline situations; the enchanted world of exchanges between the feminine and elemental matter; the drama (passionate and ironic) in man-woman relationships; – these are some of the shapes of events in Maria Velho da Costa's fictional universe.

MANUEL GUSMÃO | *Short presentation of Maria Velho da Costa*, 1995



© Luisa Ferreira

# José Luís Peixoto

*Born in 1974, in a little village of the Alentejo. He graduated in Modern Languages and Literatures (English and German Studies variant), by the Universidade Nova de Lisboa, and was a teacher in different parts of Portugal and in Cape Verde. He presently works as a journalist and literary critic in several Portuguese newspapers and collaborates in literary magazines with fiction texts. The novel Nenhum Olhar [No Gaze], published in 2000, was immediately saluted as a great beginners' work, and gave origin to a style of writing with very singular characteristics, which immediately found his place in the present Portuguese literary panorama, by his novelty and great capacity of literary renewal. He has received in 1997, 1998 and 1999 the Portuguese Youth Institute Award that distinguishes new creators.*

Fiction

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[see page 48]

## Extract

from NENHUM OLHAR [NO GAZE]

On the road to the farmstead José's boots stepped more quickly. They made the rough sound of shovels digging into a pile of sand, moving fast and hard enough to hurl grains of sand far behind them. Seen from the sky, José was a speck advancing along a furrow cut into the plain, or a dot with arms and legs advancing along a furrow that cut between two plains or between two diversely coloured parts of the same plain. Seen from the sky, José was next to nothing, and he didn't even think it can't be true, it can't be true, nor did he hurry. Seen from the sky, all that he thought and that for him loomed larger than the sky was less than the feather of a swallow among the clouds or the memory of a raindrop on a stormy day. He had almost reached the farmstead when the wagons of the men who worked the fields passed by. They looked at him one by one without saying good day. They looked at each other and said nothing to one another's gaze, maintaining a respectful silence. José, continuing his solitary march under the sun, reached the fence that bounded the farm, and for the first time since leaving the general store he

thought of not going on. He stopped at the fence, turned towards the sun, and looked straight at it. Motionless on the road, he walked in the tunnel of light. And he remembered hearing, like a voice inside a dream, your wife isn't whom you think she is. He remembered if you don't believe me, go home and see for yourself, the shutters of the bedroom window are open, just take a look through the crack in the curtains. He wiped the light from his eyes and walked on. Through the gate that was always left open. The sight of the rich people's house struck him like a bitter memory or premonition, or the memory of a premonition. He walked past the noria. Past the unwatered garden. Towards the bedroom window. Half a dozen steps away: the bedroom window. Its old but well-preserved wood; its old but spotless panes of glass. A square hole with rounded edges in the limestone wall, in the cream-coloured wall. José's cautious steps, long with getting old over and over. And yet the steps, once taken, were short and scarcely real in his memory. He leaned forward, the shutters were open, there was a crack between

the curtains, and his wife lay under the giant. José felt like an already dead man dying over and over. His wife lay under the giant. Their son slept in his crib. And there was a very dark night, a box or a sack, in which José was enclosed, in which he gasped for air, in which he had already died and merely waited to breathe his last feeble breath of self-will. He looked at his son, at his peaceful face, his eyes, his tiny clenched fists next to his head, his slumber. He looked at his wife, and his wife looked straight at him. For the first time in a very long time, lying under the giant, his wife looked straight at him. Her gaze expressed sincere grief, suffering. And her gaze was José's. Mourning. Blackness. Death. They looked at each other and understood each other. And from inside the bedroom, underneath the giant, José's wife saw José draw away and felt in a flash his infinite absence, his eternal loss. And José, drawing away, realized that his wife wasn't to blame, and he realized, in that moment, how much he loved her. He walked under the wide sky to the stable. The sheep ignored him. He walked behind the feed-troughs, lifted his sack from his shoulder

José Luís Peixoto



and strung it on a nail in one of the pinewood logs that held up the roof, then took off his black lambskin vest and hung it on another nail. He dropped several armfuls of hay into the troughs. He changed the water. He grabbed the rope that was coiled around a wooden post, slipped his right arm through the coil, positioned it snugly on his shoulder, and took the road to the hill with the gallows.

*Your gaze will remain in my gaze when I die and stare blankly, already dead, at the plains that will be your gaze slowly turning into night. Your gaze will remain in my forgotten hands, and it won't occur to anyone to look for it there. I think: no one ever looks for things where they are, because no one ever knows what the clouds, or smoke, or a gaze, might be thinking. And you. You'll keep losing your silence through forgotten hands, you'll bury your silence inside my chest. Wife countless times over. Wife repeated in the breathing of a place that's no more. Time and life. Wife, I don't know what we were, but I know this day that you are mine. Today I know you. Your gaze and your silence are my own. Uselessly my own, for I'm going to where men cease being men. I'm taking the lonely road that wends through life's wreckage. The road where everything is scarcely anything, and each tiny thing is too much. [...]*

## Selected Works

*Morreste-me* (Lisboa: Author ed., 2000; 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.: Temas e Debates, 2001) [YOU DIED ON ME]

*Nenhum Olhar* (novel) (Lisboa: Temas e Debates, 2000) [NO GAZE]

*A criança em ruínas* (poems) (Vila Nova de Famalicão: Quasi, 2001) [THE RUINED CHILD]

## Selected Translations

### Spanish

*Nenhum Olhar* (Hiru, 2001)

### Italian

*Nenhum Olhar* (La Nuova Frontiera, 2002)

## About his work

The book first wraps us up in writing. From the first few lines we know it is not just about telling a story and telling it right; it's about making up a movement in writing, from which all narrative evidence flow. José Luís Peixoto has that remarkable quality: just read two lines and you're a different continent, a unique place in literary space. After that, it is just a matter of finding out how far this will support itself or develop. In this novel, the reader may be assured that from the second or third piece we are certain that the slope is going to be fatal: we're about to hit a wall, a conundrum, the beginning of the world, and, the final crash, in an uncontrollable overpowering of being, of words, of signs, of landscapes, of situations, in a conjunction of events that we can not escape.

In this book, there is in the village a man who writes. With his windows shut, isolated, walled in with the others, but still, he insists in writing, in imagining the blind confrontation that tears beings apart, an intimate speech that transforms them. The great strength of this amazing book by José Luís Peixoto lies therein: in the way he narrates the stories that fold inside their own insanity and the very pure beam of light that he uses to collect them and save them from oblivion. All ends, writing included. However, in the threshold of everything, death itself ends, and we enter a unique and unthinkable space: "infinity is neither infinity nor anything else". And if the

world has ended, and there is no more ink to write with, the next page brings the beginning of something that is the end of fear and death: "the memory of death had died" and "fear did not exist because there was no one to feel it". There, in that place that is not empty because it is not even a place, where anything can repeat itself as if it were the first time: from no look, a look finds a look, and the writer thinks up a book. To write, not about the stars, but about the black space that separates them.

EDUARDO PRADO COELHO | *Público – Leituras*, 7.10.2000



A sure value of Portuguese literature, with great sense of poetic and great control of the Portuguese language.

MANUEL VASQUEZ MONTALBÁN | *IX Biennial of Young Creators from Europe and Mediterranean*



The importance of José Luís Peixoto's *Nenhum Olhar* can be measured by what it adds to contemporary

Portuguese literature, or rather, by the way it tilts the sense of its reality into another semantic universe by creating its own narrative style.[...] *Nenhum Olhar* is [...] the 2nd part of *Levantado do Chão*, i.e.,[...] it is the perfect portrait of today's Alentejo that dreamt of "rising from the ground", wakes up to find total timeless immobility where characters live under blue sky and brown plains, both as images of the desert, only establish a sense for their lives inside continuous abnormality.[...]

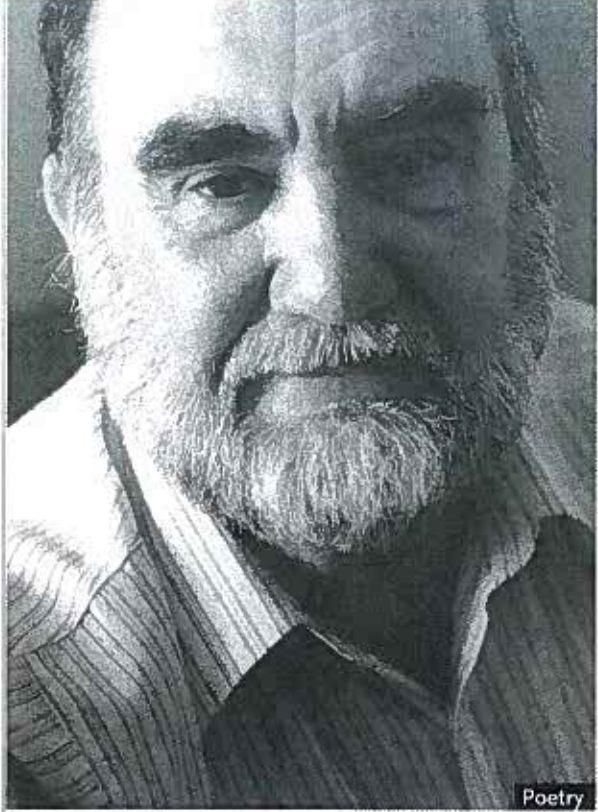
José Luís Peixoto presents the ultimate novelty in today's Portuguese literature: he has a style.

The novel draws a semantic and social space of uncertainty and doubt, of a stalled society, of life dragging on, of ideological ruin that, as a whole, represent a society lit by a sun that is, not a source of life, but a "dark summer" that destroys whatever it touches.

If 1980 book *Levantado do Chão*, announced a new style for José Saramago, who would publish "*Baltazar and Blimunda*" two years later, it is no doubt that *Nenhum Olhar* may be the announcement of a great new writer looking for his "*Baltazar and Blimunda*".

MIGUEL REAL | (about *No Gaze*), *Jornal de Letras, Artes e Ideias*, 13.12.2000





# Herberto Helder

Born in Funchal (Madeira Island) in 1930. After having abandoned both his Law and his Romanic Philology studies, he had various professions, traveled throughout Europe and lived in Angola. As a poet, he transformed the act of translating into a fundamental and complementary exercise of his poetic work, giving a new dimension to both activities. He was closely linked to the vanguards, but his momentum in Portuguese literature achieves however a greater freedom by the singular poetic world he creates, which makes him one of the most important names in the contemporary literary history. In spite of his brilliant trajectory, the author has departed from the mediatic circles, refusing interviews, awards and the participation in literary or cultural events, dedicating himself exclusively to his work. Herberto Helder has been awarded with several prizes, like the 1999 Pessoa prize, that he has refused.

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[see page 48]

## Extract

from COMPLETE POEMS

### FOUNTAIN

II  
On the mothers' mad smiles the raindrops  
patter down. On their beloved  
mad faces the lanterns tap  
their yellow fingers.  
Swaying. Pure.  
Pure raindrops and lanterns. And the mothers  
draw near, blowing on their cold fingers,  
moving their bodies  
through filial bones, tendons,  
submerged organs.  
And the intrinsic mothers calmly sit down  
inside filial heads.  
They sit there in slow and urgent silence,  
seeing everything  
and burning the images, fuelling the images,  
while love keeps getting stronger.  
Showering them in the face. Tender love.  
Fierce love.  
And the mothers are ever more beautiful.  
Think the sons whom the mothers levitate.  
Violent flowers strike their eyelids.  
Above and below they breathe  
in silence,  
their faces gleaming in the spray  
of raindrops,  
around the lanterns. In the continuous  
pouring down of sons.  
Mothers are the loftiest things  
created by sons, since they dwell  
in their sons' deflagration, since  
sons are like dandelion invaders

in their mothers' terrain.  
And mothers are oil wells in the speech of their sons,  
spurting through them  
from out of the earth.  
And the sons dive, in rubber suits, into the depths  
of myriad waters  
with the mothers wrapped like octopi around their  
hands  
and around their tenderest nerves.  
And the son sits with his mother at the head of the  
table.  
Through him the mother fiddles  
with the teacups and the forks,  
and through her he thinks  
no death is possible, and the waters  
are connected  
through his hand touching the mad face  
of his mother who can sense his touch  
and through love, in love, until it's only possible  
to love everything  
and it's possible to rediscover everything through love.

(UNTITLED)

I'd like a grammatical error to rewrite  
the poem of the world on the side of daylight  
while God hides the error of the error  
on the dark side –  
high-voltage gold,  
breath in the face.

(UNTITLED)

Mirror against mirror: image  
born of the image, oh miraculous  
depths of the self, fountain hidden  
inside its frame, light created  
so that the light will be seen.

## THE LOVER TRANSFORMS

"The lover transforms into the thing loved" with his savage smile, his teeth, his hands that flash in the dark. He brings sound and silence. He brings the noise of the cold waves and burning stones which rage within him. And he covers this primordial sound with the staggered silence of his last life. The lover transforms from moment to moment, and it's the moment of the immortal spirit of love creating flesh in extreme atmospheres, wafting over all dead things.

The lover transforms. He cuts through forms to the core. And the thing loved is an enclosed bay, the space of a candlestick, the backbone and spirit of women sitting. He transforms into extinguishing night, Because the lover is everything, and the thing loved is a curtain battered by the wind of the lover on the heights of an open window. The lover enters

through every open window and batters, batters, batters. The lover is a smashing hammer. That transforms the thing loved.

He enters through her ears, and the woman who listens holds that shout forever in her mind burning like the first day of summer. She hears and slowly transforms, while sleeping, into that shout of the lover. She awakens, and goes, and gives herself to the lover, she gives him his own shout. And the lover and the thing loved are a single shout preceding love.

And they shout and batter. He batters her with his lover spirit. And she is battered and batters him with her spirit of the beloved. Then the world transforms into this harsh noise of love. While overhead the silence of the lover and the beloved feed the surprising silence of the world and of love.

## Selected Works

*O amor em visita* (Lisboa: Contraponto, 1958) [VISITING LOVE]  
*A colher na boca* (Lisboa: Ática, 1961) [THE SPOON IN THE MOUTH]  
*Os passos em volta* (short stories), (Lisboa: Portugália, 1963; Assírio & Alvim, 1980; 4<sup>th</sup> ed. 1997) [THE STEPS AROUND]  
*Poesia Toda* (Lisboa: Plátano, 1973; Assírio & Alvim, 1981; 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. 1996) [COMPLETE POEMS]  
*Photomaton & Vox* (poems and prose), (Lisboa: Assírio & Alvim, 1979; 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. 1995) [PHOTOMATON & VOX]  
*Do Mundo* (Lisboa: Assírio & Alvim, 1994) [OF THE WORLD]

## Selected Translations

### French

*La Cuiller à la Bouche* (La Différence, 1991)  
*Les Pas en Rond* (Arléa, 1991)  
*Science Ultime* (Lettres Vives, 1993)  
*Du Monde précédé de Sceaux, Autres Sceaux et Sceaux Ultimes* (La Différence, 1997)

### Italian

*Flash* (Empiria, 1987)  
*I Passi Intorno* (Colpo di Fulmine Edizione, 1995)

### German

in *Portugiesische Lyrik des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Bremerhaven, 1999)

## Interview

### Does one write for hope?

You could call it hope... I'd rather call it... well, attention, suspicion, temptation... I wrote to provide a legible and manageable form for those moments at the doorway of a room, in the park, in the empty street, confronted by the appearance of a face. I wrote looking back as a kind of all-engulfing memorial. I didn't achieve it; the room, the garden, the sudden face continues. But I now know the existence of an inexhaustible question that takes shape, if you can put it like that, for the objectification of evasive fringes, of allusions, of remote signs.

And what's the point of writing if all accounts end here, in the same recurring question?

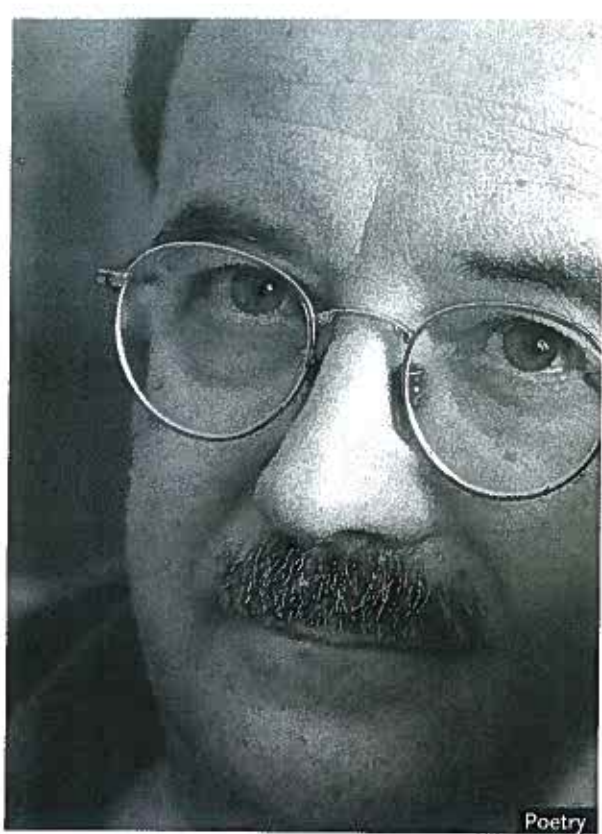
Utility isn't the point, because I ask: in what sphere does utility, whatever it may be, exist? This result interests me: what it is in me, expressing itself in grammar, in line, where there is a burning expectation, a burning question without reply and a burning perplexity which give me a centre, a point of view over the stampede of things, things moving forward with centrifugal force, in the days, in the chaos of days, moving backwards with centrifugal force, in the densest moments of memory, atoms igniting in the chaotic flux of memory. And then I know: I breathe in this question, I breathe in the writing of this question. Any reply would be a mistake. How can I myself suggest any answer: an error of the distracted muses..

### Which means?...

[...] When it is said that a poem is only an object, that confuses, it's a simplification; it does really seem like an object, yes. But because the world, through the action of this form which is full of forces, is to be found inscribed on it. It's the register and the result of forces. And we have this form: the form that we see, there it is: breathing, pulsing, moving – it is the world transformed into the power of the word, the objective invented word, into objective unreality. If we simply state: it's an object – we are placing ourselves in that array of emblems which surround us with a tricky equivocation, because an object can be useful or decorative, and poetry can never be that. It is unreal, and it lives. When I look at this book [*Poesia Toda*], I can see that I haven't manufactured or constructed or fashioned objects – these words don't imply the same way of doing – I can just see that I have written a poem, a poem in poems; throughout my whole life I've brandished the same apparatus, the same furious weapon. I was an innocent, because this can only be achieved through innocence. And if innocence is an unsubstitutable condition of scandal, a transparent and enabling familiarity with the earth, it also constitutes a reverse: because there comes a time in which it is known: things deceive us, we are deceived by things; innocence should have offered us a stupendous life, a tumult: the air around us should offer

itself as pure levitation; seeing, touching, the simplest acts and nearest facts as instantaneous and complete knowledge. It used to be like this, it was like this, but pain, the demon voices, the abyss next to the dance, the night which insinuates itself into the whole height and width of light, all of this invades innocence – and then we know nothing, for example: will our innocence be innocent? Innocence is a clandestine state in the dictatorship of the world; you have to be astute, you have to have recourse to all depravities to fight and escape; seduce the creatures, respond to memory with memory, your words to the demon interweave with the demon's words. And that is how innocence gets involved in the perturbations of war, and is the warrior who feeds the war and he feeds the other warrior, the shadow. In truth innocence doesn't exist, the demon doesn't exist, except as dynamic parts of a force, and I'm not expressing a moral, political or institutional idea here but an idea about the order of things, forces and ways of expression. Magic, that kingdom of power that is so complex, is a natural marriage, but a dramatic one, a coordinated disagreement between the levels of consciousness, formulations of desire, dominions of reality, a person's debates with reality. The object that I agitate mortally is an ambiguous weapon. As if I were involved in some kind of holy war: my innocence is a murderer.

THE PERTURBATIONS OF INNOCENCE / (questions and answers by Herberto Helder) in *Público*, 4 Dec. 1999



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# Manuel António Pina

Born in a village in Beira Alta (North of Portugal) in 1943, studied Law at the University of Coimbra and worked since 1971 as a professional journalist, having kept a scattered collaboration with several media, the press, as well as radio and television. He is one of the few authors whose work is harmoniously divided between poetry and the so-called "children's literature", while he equally develops the narrative. His eclecticism is a proof of an unusual aptitude in the domain of writing. Some of his children's books are depicted in school handbooks and published in anthologies. Many theatre productions, television and cinema programs were inspired in his work, and several records were published with musical versions of his texts. The poetry book *Nenhuma palavra e nenhuma lembrança* [No words, no memories] (1999) has brought together the critic's approval in relation to a poet with a major artistic creation.

Amongst other awards, Manuel António has received the "White Ravens" Mention in Germany (Os Dois Ladrões), the Gulbenkian Prize: Best Book Published in Portugal in 1986/1987 (O Inventão), Special Mention by the Jury of the Pier Paolo Vergerio European Prize from the University of Padua, Italy (O Inventão), the Portuguese Centre for Theatre for Children and Young People Prize, 1988 (for his work as a whole), the National Press Club/Clube de Jornalistas Chronicle Prize, 1994 (O Anacronista) and the Seiva Prize in 1966 (for contribution to the prestige of the Arts and Letters of the City of Oporto).

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[see page 48]

Poetry

## Extract

from ALGO PARECIDO COM ISTO DA MESMA SUBSTÂNCIA [SOMETHING THAT LOOKS LIKE THIS, MADE OF THE SAME]

LUDWIG W. IN 1951

"Words (the time and the books needed to reach this place – that of the first poem!) are but beings of this world, immaterial beings that likewise cannot understand, that helplessly speak before the world's immensity. The word *blue* falls short, the word *sorrow* falls short, all words fall short. How can we speak with so many words? With which words? Without which words? And yet they, in their stammer, articulate the world's riddle. They're all we have with which to love and be loved, with which to accept life and death, hopelessness and happiness, with which to feed and clothe ourselves, to know and not know. And even silence, if silence is possible, must be painstakingly built out of our words. Then, at last, we'll have a house in which to live and a bed in which to sleep, and a slumber in complete agreement with our life – a coherent and silent slumber, a single, voiceless, inexpressible word, anterior and exterior, like a boundary verging on nowhere and on no word."

*Farewell happy fields  
where joy for ever dwells: hail horrors...*  
MILTON, PARADISE LOST

(Farewell happy fields; regrets: farewell.)  
Let's talk, you and me, in the happy days,  
and I will listen to what you say  
as if I were the one speaking;  
(farewell words, dreams of beauty,  
childhood's long-lost mountains  
from where we saw everything: happiness,  
and the blindness of the unseen;)  
now do you see what I see –  
my shadow walking at your side  
in a lost time, before I died?

(Farewell perfection and imperfection.)  
Sometimes I wonder if it was worth it,  
if it could have ended differently,  
if I, for instance, could have embarked  
on one of those boats that always  
miraculously appear in the last stanza,  
and if you could have remained, standing  
on the dock or on a more imperious  
metaphor, likewise bound to depart,  
and if then it would all have been  
less improbable and less tiresome.

But there was no boat in which  
I and my memories could fit;  
all that there was, all that there *really* was,  
I had given to you and,  
in so doing, had taken from you,  
and my own death hovered  
uncertainly between us,  
like an idea, intangible.

Returning for the last time to wide  
open places, with hesitant steps I climb  
the stairs and knock on the door,  
which you open, although you are dead  
and I am dead, as if we had been  
visited by the very same dream.

Manuel António Pina

## Selected Works

### Poems

*Ainda não é o fim nem o princípio do mundo calma é apenas um pouco tarde* (Lisboa: A Regra do Jogo, 1974;

2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Porto: A Erva Daninha, 1982)

[IT IS NEITHER THE END NOR THE BEGINNING OF THE WORLD CALM DOWN IT IS JUST A LITTLE LATE]

*Aquele que quer morrer* (Lisboa:

A Regra do Jogo, 1978) [THE ONE WHO WANTS TO DIE]

*Um sítio onde pousar a cabeça* (Porto: Author ed., 1991 [A PLACE TO LAY YOUR HEAD])

*Algo parecido com isto da mesma substância* (Poesia Reunida,

1974/1992) (Porto: Afrontamento,

1992) [SOMETHING THAT LOOKS LIKE THIS, MADE OF THE SAME – COLLECTED

POEMS]

*Farewell happy fields* (Porto: Author ed., 1993)

*Nenhuma palavra e nenhuma*

*lembrança* (Lisboa: Assírio & Alvim, 1999) [NO WORDS, NO MEMORIES]

### Children's literature

*O Têpluquê* (Lisboa: A Regra do Jogo, 1976; 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Porto: Afrontamento,

1995) [TÊPLUQUÊ]

*O pássaro da cabeça* (Lisboa: A Regra do Jogo, 1983) [THE BIRD IN THE HEAD]

*O inventão* (Porto: Afrontamento,

1987; 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. 1993) [THE INVENTOR

MAN]

*O meu rio é de ouro / Mi río es de oro* (bil. ed.. transl. Marta Saracho) (Porto:

Ed. Abril, 1995) [MY RIVER IS MADE OF GOLD / MI RIO ES DE ORO]

*Histórias que me contaste tu* (Lisboa: Assírio & Alvim, 1999) [STORIES YOU

TOLD ME]

## Selected Translations

### Spanish

in *25 + 1 poetas + 1 epígono* (O Mono de Tinta, 1991)

in *Puerto del Sol* (New Mexico University, 1994)

### Danish

*Soroverne* (Skovlaenge Forlaget, 1990)

### French

in *Saveurs de Porto* (L'Escampette, 1991)

in *Vingt et un poètes pour un XXIème siècle portugais* (L'Escampette, 1994)

### Gallician

*Xiganos & Anantes* (Ed. Xerais de Galicia, 1991)

*A Revolucion das Letras* (A Nossa Terra, 1978)

### English

*Aniki Bobó* (British Film Institute, BFI Film Classics, 1997)

## Interview

*Let us leave aside the ethical lesson of this well-managed work, at a time when poets rush to produce their Complete Works at the age of 40.*

*The discreet centrality of the poetry of Manuel António Pina on our present scene, achieved despite a certain amount of neglect, may be able to do little to invert the fatuous trends of the poetry of our times; but in its fewer than 300 pages it invites us to a demanding and uncompromising meditation about this declension of being to which we give the name of poetry. As poetry of "being in the world" and the difficult grammaticality of that, the work of Pina is also, in a very conscious and cultivated manner, a crossroads of the poetic dictions of the century, between the new and the conspiring of the plagiarists, between Pessoa and Borges, finally, between impasse and the music of the word, the latter frequently atonal.*

**Ciberkiosk** [...] your latest book (*Nenhuma palavra e nenhuma lembrança*, [No words, no memories] 1999) seems to suggest that everything is delayed – life and words – in relation to a first moment, which can't be pinned down and is only recuperable (?) as memory: "as if before an initial infancy/still with the shine upon it/ of not one word/ not one memory" (p. 52). Would poetry then be committed to

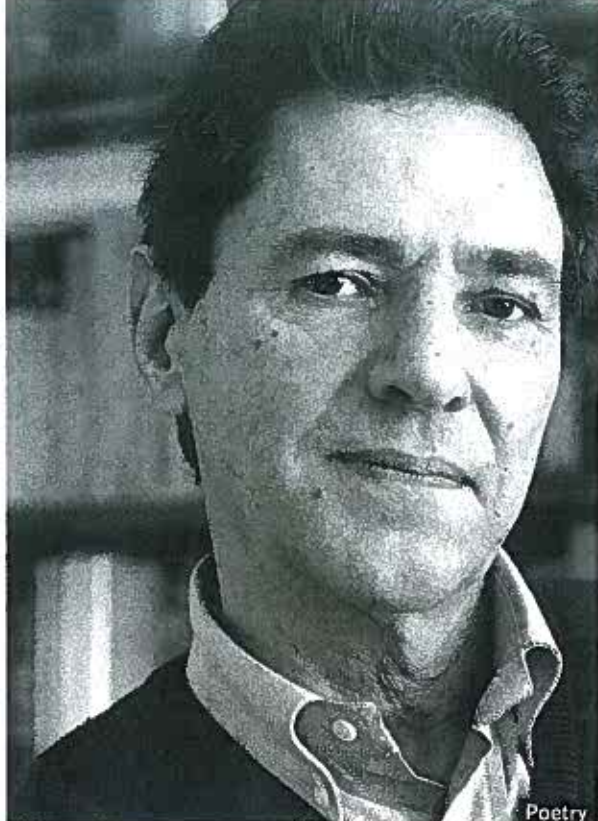
such a nigh necromantic function, in face of its incapacity to say anything but silence? And how can "an initial infancy" which no word takes the shine off be spoken of at the same time in children's literature? Is necromancy still the final result?

**Manuel António Pina** Perhaps all poetry, being memory, is necromantic. And as it's about the making and the undoing of words, our words are then time and lack of coincidence. Mine is certainly necromantic. Independently of poetry there is little more to be said than the silence of the world (silence that is, in language, open to meaning and with an open meaning), it can be a kind of epiphany without a revelation of what we perhaps know without knowing that we know "In truth whoever journeys over the head has the sky under him like an abyss" (Paul Celan). Because what from infancy does not belong to us through memory and words, is childhood, the timelessness of infancy. Perhaps poetry and its insecure silence are able, who knows?, to give form to the desire for this timelessness, for this nothing – which is, evidently, a desire for death. Childhood, as well as death, are limits on two fundamental dark abysses. Who isn't afraid of the dark? Parodying Bataille, it might even be possible to say: "I write because I'm afraid". Seen like this, the children's works I write have, then, to be, in another, perhaps more perverse way,

about the same desire. Curiously, the last story of my most recent book in this so-called 'genre' is called "Story with the eyes closed"...

**Ciberkiosk** "The times are not going well for us, the dead" is the first verse of your work. Such a literary beginning is reminiscent of certain nebulous German authors given to metaphysics (and their deconstruction) and the mortal ontology of being. To paraphrase Heidegger, could we say that in your work poetry and metaphysics are as close as the summits of distant mountains?

**Manuel António Pina** Or as distant as the summits of nearby mountains... I don't think a lot about my poetry, it itself is what I think about it. (And that's why I've been having – am having – difficulties with this interview...). Anyway my poetry is far less an illustration of a thought about poetry. [...] Poetry is a kind of religion without faith (well, mine, I think, is), and probably this vocation of religiosity (which is in the literal sense a vocation of 'comprehension'), putting it ahead of certain metaphysical and ontological intuitions. From that point to becoming metaphysical poetry there is an abyss. It doesn't 'want' to think or express anything (it is, we could say, more concerned with being), which doesn't mean, of course, that it doesn't think or express itself, other than as writing to be read.



© Luisa Ferreira

# António Franco Alexandre

Born in 1944 in the town of Viseu, studied Mathematics and Philosophy in France and in the United States of America, and teaches Philosophy at the University of Lisbon since 1975. His first book, *Distância* [Distance], was edited in 1969, and some years later, in 1975, he participated in the edition of the artist book *Cartucho* [Cartridge], with the poets João Miguel Fernandes Jorge, Joaquim Manuel Magalhães and Helder Moura Pereira. Although it is characterized by an elliptic and somehow hermetic dimension, rendering its interpretation sometimes difficult, his poetry never abandons an evident proximity with reality. He has been unanimously considered by the critics as one of the most important poets revealed in the last quarter of a century in Portugal. Amongst other awards, Franco Alexandre has received the Portuguese Pen Clube Poetry Award in 1983 (A Pequena Face) and the Portuguese Writers' Association Poetry Prize (Quatro Caprichos) in 1999.

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Assírio & Alvim  
[see page 48]

## Extract

from QUATRO CAPRICHOS [FOUR WHIMS]

I  
I'm going to put a dirty ad in the newspaper  
asking for fresh, not especially athletic meat  
and noble feelings of passion.  
I want a – how shall I put it? – human  
being who'll discover my mouth  
and who, like me, has split hooves,  
a blue bifid tongue and a rude  
manner of singing under water.  
I want someone who'll love me and leave me  
with equally tranquil concision  
and who'll record our encounter in a report  
or a poem for inclusion in the syllabi  
of the schools beyond the bridges.  
And I wait by the phone to find out  
if I'm happy, real, or just a foam  
of ashes passing through sundry hands.

II  
*Stashed under my mattress I've got  
the cleanest heart on earth,  
like a fish washed by the rain  
that floods me deep down.  
I wake up each day with a different body  
from the one I went to bed with,  
and I'm never sure if what I am  
is the project or memory of what I was.  
I hug the powerful but accurate arms  
that brought me last night to where I am,  
and as I sip coffee I read today's weather  
in the leaves of the park's trees.  
Later on I'll cross the bridges  
to buy, sell and trade life on fire,  
but cautiously, lest I scorch  
my artful, princess's hands.*

XVI  
*You can pick me up, put me on the scale  
of yes and no, and measure my virtue in inches;  
my heart is still stored in a cool,  
dry place, far away from words.  
And I like being alone, in the smallest cell  
of a sterile prison on the slopes,  
singing all night long against my window  
that looks out on to other, similarly barred windows.  
You can even recite (but you don't recite)  
those funny sentences in which you fly  
over distant hills that tremble in awe  
at such a solemn, utterly new dawn,  
and you can bring me cool water; I'll still roll  
myself into a tight ball and not budge  
even when the inexplicable monster  
rips my bedsheet with its claws.*

XVII  
Sorry, I didn't realize that you sing  
in silence, all alone. In this heat  
you should drink ice water; it's also a good idea  
not to worship idols – including, for example,  
your own self-image that torments you  
(or that torments me?).  
Other examples include babylonian gardens,  
eruptions of mt. etna, the aphrodisiac  
effect of diamonds,  
and the arts and sciences of education.  
I'm going to sit right here, breathe possible  
but inevitably unreal things until it hurts,  
and learn knot by knot how you untie yourself.  
We'll fall into a well without  
parachute or compass and be the first  
twin-hearted love in the world.

António Franco Alexandre

from MORADAS 1 & 2 [DWELLING PLACES]

9

And I could give you  
a cellophane floor where waves would slide  
on cool nights,  
four cage-coloured walls, and flawless  
marble teeth. Love would enter  
the scene on blind wings,

and honey, houseflies and the rest  
would all be ways for us to stave off death.  
Birds would grow in the place of fruits, fooled  
by the relentless exaltation of rhyme,  
and I might even know how to be sad  
without a dog or proverbs,

with my blank eyes looking up, as if sleeping  
on the dull blade of a jack-knife.

18

to burn it all is a much simpler  
process. I cover my head with ashes  
(not stars) as if in warning.  
Here we are at the end  
of the world! It's a sizeable wall, a monument  
to ancient wisdom,

and it runs inside us! Meanwhile we pour  
ourselves out in all directions, and I know I'm  
forgetting  
the essential thing, that vial of perfume  
at day's end (or was it at night?) when  
hands still made us close,

fire was an easy word,  
and in us light alone lived.

## Selected Works

*Cartucho* (with J. M. Magalhães, J. M. Fernandes Jorge and H. Moura Pereira) (Lisboa: Authors ed., 1975) [CARTRIDGE]  
*Os objectos principais* (Coimbra: Centelha, 1979) [MAIN OBJECTS]  
*A pequena face* (Lisboa: Assírio & Alvim, 1983) [THE SMALL FACE]  
*As Moradas 1 & 2* (Lisboa, Assírio & Alvim, 1987) [DWELLING PLACES 1&2]  
*Poemas* (Lisboa: Assírio & Alvim, 1996) [POEMS]  
*Quatro Caprichos* (Lisboa: Assírio & Alvim, 1999) [FOUR WHIMS]

## Selected Translations

### French

*Les objets principaux* (Les Cahiers de Royaumont/Créaphis, 1991)  
in *Vingt et un poètes pour un vingtième siècle portugais* (L'Escampette, 1994)

### German

in *Portugiesische Lyric des 20 Jahrhunderts* (Deutscher Taschenbuch, 1993)

### Italian

in *La Nuova Poesia Portoghese* (Edizioni Abete, 1975)

## About his work

I stumbled across an old book by publishers Assírio e Alvim. It is a book by a poet named António Franco Alexandre. I don't know who he is, I have never seen him, I had never read his work and from my point of view, after so many years fighting words (which gives me some insider experience), I have no doubts when I say this writer is a class act. For many reasons, by the security in his hand, his thoroughness, the strength of his sentences, the parsimony of feelings, the lulling music. Reading something by a talented author gives me the same goose-bumps I get from watching Leotard do a trapeze stunt. There is always a time when the artist (if indeed he is an artist) must let go of one trapeze and grab the other one. The endless seconds that stunt takes fill me with distress because we don't know if he is going to pull it off, if he will fail, if he will hit the net or the ground. Most people just swing back and forth on the same, safe trapeze they know. They do it without elegance or courage, with a trembling smile on his fearful lips. António Franco Alexandre is one of the few who have the talent and the strength to fly and who know how to fly and do not ever fall. I don't know what people say about him because I don't know or care what is said about anyone, but I know what I say: it is a beautiful book by a wonderful poet and do yourselves the favour of buying it.

ANTÓNIO LOBO ANTUNES / "Chronicle",  
Pública, 26.1.1997



This poetry is written from the point of view of a clear thinking phenomenology of the imprecise, that, strangely enough, plays a game with the almost palpable quality of words. The great paradox is that its worlds are built from what is known, but without any certainty ("Despede-te da mesquinha certeza" ["Say goodbye to petty certainty"]). The poem is a field crossed by an all-consuming energy, incorporating everything into such chaos that it is up to the reader to sort things out, all in "small sizes", because only detail is "poetically inhabitable". Far from being "mostly unreadable", as some critic said, this poetry is truly, like the author says, an expression of a relativistic "as if..." searching for "the way to say the true false things", of something in motion "calculating imprecise routes".

JOÃO BARRENTO / *Nelken und imortalen*.  
Berlin: Tranvía, 1999



[...] one of the best surprises I ever had I owe to António Franco Alexandre with his *Moradas 1&2* (1987) reaching the highest point of previously registered virtuosity, made him make sense, or a reference, from a negative point of view

[...] Instead of (strictly speaking) senses or perceptions, this is an experience of pre-senses or pre-perceptions, of clues; also, instead of a clearly audible voice, breath that is merely hinted at, in an as yet inarticulate mouth: "a pequena tosse do outro / lado das palavras" ["small cough on the other/side of words"]. And yet, as in Pessoa, but on a different level, there is something under such modest reference: cyclic evidences connected to the earth, to the seasons, to water, seeds of disguised and incoercible continuity, through the watery or windy flow of specific voyages [...], and, above all, an inter-personal meeting or something else that is harder to describe than that. [...]

When I started to read Pessoa, about fifty years ago, I thought it was the limit of non-poetic metaphysics. Pessoa's poetry is, clearly, but subtly, metaphysical: all-denying, saying nothing, at most it insinuates through clear antiphrasis to its own universal negativity. António Franco Alexandre's latest book, probably the best poetry book of the decade, takes me to another, a deeper, degree of negative radicality, because it is not based on the being, but on the saying, on the logic of communicating. [...] I believe this is one of the recent books from which, poetry-wise, one can learn most.

ÓSCAR LOPES / *A Phala – a century of poetry*.  
Lisboa: Assírio & Alvim, 1988



Children's Books

# Luísa Ducla Soares

Born in Lisboa in 1939. She has a degree in English and German Philology from the University of Lisbon. She has been a translator and a journalist and is now principal adviser at the Portuguese National Library in Lisbon. As well as a specialist in children's literature, she is one of the most outstanding authors for children in Portugal. Since her first book in 1972, she has published more than 50 titles — including short stories, novels and poetry — for children and young people between the ages of three and fifteen. In 1996 she was awarded the Calouste Gulbenkian Prize for Children's Literature, in recognition of one of the most original and multifaceted oeuvres in this area. In her poetry and narrative, and in the editing and adaptation of traditional literature, this author elicits an immediate, unconditional and constant response on the part of young readers, according to Portuguese specialists in the field of reading. Nonsense, irreverence, humour and fantasy are enlisted to question and combat situations of injustice, alienation, deception and emotional desertion in the context of lives marred and impoverished by indifference. In highlighting the multiple dimensions and facets of a reality whose apparent unity is illusory, Luísa Ducla Soares draws attention to Otherness, to which her oeuvre pays a significant tribute. It ranges from the search for individuality and for the uniqueness of each one of us, to the recognition and validation of Otherness. In the work of Luísa Ducla Soares, Otherness gives meaning to life, since without it 'nobody notices anything', whereas with it we realize that life is bigger than we had imagined it to be: occasionally difficult and merciless, but, for that very same reason, irreplaceable, luminous — and lived.

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[see page 48]

## Extracts

from CONTO ESTRELAS EM TI  
[I COUNT THE STARS IN YOU]

### Where's the cat?

The donkeys play guitar,  
The mice sing a tune,  
The little girls have beards,  
And I live on the moon.

The sardines are woolly,  
And all the hens have spines,  
The cows give coca-cola  
And chocolate's on the vines.

The pussy cats wear shoes,  
Look at the serpent's tresses,  
The flies can all speak French,  
And the cats brush their dresses.

The houses cross the skies,  
The clouds sleep on the land,  
The eyes pee in the pot  
And roses grow on my hand.

Child listening to me  
Because your ears are blue,  
Tell me what's wrong with this  
Or I'll tell Mummy on you.

from A GATA TARECA E OUTROS POEMAS LEVADOS DA BRECA  
[THE TALE OF PUSSY THE CAT AND OTHER POEMS LIKE THAT]

### Exchanges

Zero left the times-table,  
O left the alphabet,  
they started to play together  
in an open copy-book.

Zero got into the alphabet  
And O got into the times-table.  
Up until now  
nobody's noticed the difference.

from A MENINA VERDE  
[THE GREEN GIRL]

That girl was born green, green,  
green.  
'Might it be because I ate up all my  
greens?' the mother asked.  
'Might it be because I had lots of  
green tea?' the father asked.  
But the doctors had no idea. They'd  
never studied green girls before.  
They put her in the sun to see if  
she would redden. She became  
even greener. They put her in the  
shade to see if she would grow  
pale. She became even greener.  
Nobody was better at playing

hide-and-peek than she was. In the  
green grass, in the green bushes,  
who could find her? [...] (At the  
seaside) her green body slithered in  
the green waves, her green hair  
streamed through the green  
seaweed, her green fingers played  
on the rocks like green crabs.  
(When she climbed trees) the birds  
themselves, as she passed through  
the green foliage, mistook her for  
the wind and made way for her.  
Thus she grew, beautiful and  
green.  
'As green as spring,' said the  
dreamers.  
'As a lettuce,' said the vegetarians.  
'As green as hope,' said those who  
believed that hope had a colour.  
[...]  
'As green as my football club's  
jersey!' said the president of the  
Green Football Club  
enthusiastically.  
They fell in love greenly and truly.  
They went to live in a green house,  
and, instead of a guard-dog, they  
bought a crocodile. Green.



from O DIÁRIO DE SOFIA E COMPANHIA AOS 15 ANOS  
[THE DIARY OF SOPHIE AND COMPANY, AGED 15]

#### March the 12th

Vanessa came up to me and asked out of the blue: 'Are you happy?' I was lost for words. 'How do I know if I'm happy...?' I really don't know. I think that, in the old days, when I was a ridiculous little creature, sometimes I was completely happy. I remember when I got the bike with stabilizers and made father take me to the park straightaway. How happy I was, pedalling with the wind in my face, knowing that I was the proud owner of this marvellous machine! I was so happy at Christmas unwrapping presents, at the beach, paddling through the foam... Nowadays, happiness is more difficult to grab hold of. I dream of this and that with such intensity that when it happens, if, by chance, it does happen, it is second-hand

happiness, it's already lost half of its flavour. 'You've got everything you need to be happy,' my parents say, 'but all you do is complain, throw tantrums, sulk. Nothing ever seems to make you happy.' I shrug my shoulders. What can you say to museum pieces? I watch TV; they're showing commercials — people that are happy because they use bleach, wear tights, brush their teeth. Happy because of coca-cola, toilet paper, crisps, insect repellent ... The phone rings. 'Who else could it be for?' mother says. 'It's a bit much, it looks like your friends can't live without you.' 'Maybe they can't,' I reply, nearly, nearly happy.

## Luísa Ducla Soares Wrote About her Work

*Is there ever, in our hectic, technocratic, grey days, room for fantasy? [...]*

*Today's children no longer arrive on the beak of a stork [...] they study to dominate the world through science and technology. They have no illusions or superstitions. But they do have, and I believe they will always have, the desire, the capacity, and the tendency to dream. Playful, traditional, unconventional, or related to science fiction, fantasy can be a complement to the monotony of daily life, a form of humour, a ripple in the water, a challenge to the imagination.*

in SEIS HISTÓRIAS DE ENCANTAR  
[SIX ENCHANTING STORIES]

## Selected Works

*AEIOU, a história das cinco vogais* (Porto: Afrontamento, 1999, 3rd ed.) [AEIOU, THE STORY OF THE FIVE VOWELS]  
*Poemas da mentira e da verdade* (Lisboa: Horizonte, 1999, 2nd ed.) [POEMS OF LIE AND TRUTH]  
*A princesa da chuva* (Lisboa: Plátano, 1984) [THE RAIN PRINCESS]  
*O homem alto, a mulher baixinha* (Lisboa: Livros Horizonte, 1985) [THE TALL MAN AND THE TINY WOMAN]  
*A menina branca, o rapaz preto* (Lisboa: Livros Horizonte, 1985) [THE WHITE GIRL AND THE BLACK BOY]  
*A menina boa* (Lisboa: Livros Horizonte, 1985) [THE GOOD GIRL]  
*Mister Bad-Luck* (Lisboa: Livros Horizonte, 1985) [MISTER BAD-LUCK]  
*A vassoura mágica* (Porto: Asa, 2001, 5th ed.) [THE MAGICAL BROOMSTICK]  
*A menina verde* (Lisboa: Livros Horizonte, 1987) [THE GREEN GIRL]  
*Crime no expresso do tempo* (Porto: Civilização, 1999, 2nd ed.) [CRIME ON THE TIME EXPRESS]  
*Lenga-lengas* (collected and selected) (Lisboa: Livros Horizonte, 1997, 2nd ed.) [NEVER-ENDING RHYMES]

*Destrava-línguas* (collected and selected) (Lisboa: Livros Horizonte, 1997, 2nd ed.) [TONGUE TWISTERS]  
*A gata Tareca e outros poemas levados da breca* (Lisboa: Teorema, 2000, 2nd ed.) [THE TALE OF PUSSY THE CAT AND OTHER POEMS LIKE THAT]  
*Adivinha, adivinha* (riddles collected and selected) (Lisboa: Livros Horizonte, 1994, 3rd ed.) [GUESS WHAT?]  
*É preciso crescer* (Porto: Asa, 1992) [WE MUST GROW UP]  
*O diário de Sofia e companhia aos 15 anos* (Porto: Civilização, 1994, several reprints) [THE DIARY OF SOPHIE AND COMPANY, AGED 15]  
*Os ovos misteriosos* (Porto: Afrontamento, 1994) [THE MYSTERIOUS EGGS]  
*O rapaz e o robô* (Lisboa: Terramar, 2001, several reprints) [THE BOY AND THE ROBOT]  
*Mãe, querida mãe* (Lisboa: Terramar, 2000) [MUMMY, DEAR MUMMY]  
*1, 2, 3* (Lisboa: Terramar, 2001. [1,2,3]  
*Seis histórias de encantar*. Porto: Areal, 1985) [SIX ENCHANTING STORIES]



Children's Books

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## Ana Saldanha

Born in Oporto in 1959, is now living in the U.K. PhD on translation theory and Rudyard Kipling's work for children from Glasgow University, she is also well known for her work as a translator. Her voice is one of the most distinctive in the panorama of fiction for young people in Portugal today. Her latest works have also found an adult readership.

After an adventure series with pre-teenage characters, she wrote two books for teenagers on topics of a psychosocial nature: racism and illness. It was from then on that the qualities in this author's work attractive both to teenagers and to more mature readers developed in consistency and definition. She employs an adult narrative voice, both attentive and ironic, to render the inner world of childhood and adolescence. In fast-paced, subtly woven narratives, whose rhythm is offset both by lively dialogues and by interior monologues, we share the joys and the pains of so-called 'normal' daily life, often permeated by solitude and emotional desertion, but described without condescending pity or a moralizing agenda.

As well as providing an insight into the inner world of young people, Ana Saldanha also shows us why adults, in their stressed and hurried lives, are oblivious to this world: They have forgotten their childhood, and in consequence have lost it. In the confrontation between these two parallel universes, it falls to the reader to realize the diminutions and losses in a world made by adults to conform to their image and dimensions, when faced with the world vision, luminous but fragile, of young people.

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Caminho  
[see page 48]

## Extracts

from COMO OUTRO QUALQUER [LIKE ANY OTHER]

(Bárbara, the protagonist, is an eight year old. She is at the book club meeting at her primary school. She believes that a special door handle in her school has magical powers.)

'The wolf. What colour was the wolf?' the teacher asks, quickly, to avoid yet another interruption.

'Purple!' says one of the boys, forgetting the rules for answering questions.

'I coloured it pink,' Gustavo confesses.

'Gustavo, didn't you hear me?' the teacher scolds. 'Anyway, who's ever heard of a pink wolf? Honestly! Everybody knows there's no such thing as a pink wolf!' The teacher turns to Rui. 'Or purple,' she says.

[...]

'But in the picture in the book, it's purply pink,' Gustavo argues, in a plaintive voice. 'I know it is. I copied all the pictures and coloured them with my new felt pens.'

'The book's illustrations are neither here nor there, child! What do the book's illustrations matter? Well?'

[...]

'Miss, but the word isn't magic either,' Gustavo replies. 'And in the story it's magic. And my grandpa said...'

'Right!' The teacher is flustered.

'Right,' she says. 'Right, who knows the answer to...'

'Me, me!'

'No, me, me!'

'Me, me!'

Arms shoot up all over the classroom, fists clenched like claws.

'You, Miguel, come on. What colour...'

'It was blue!'

Miss Flávia is beginning to lose patience. 'For goodness' sake, what does it take...' she says and there are bursts of laughter in the classroom. Miss Flávia sounds like a poet. 'Children, please!'

There are rules for answering questions like this one she's trying to ask, because the right reply entitles you to special privileges.

'Right, I'll ask the question again,' the teacher says, 'and this time, only those who're very quiet and

with their hands up get to answer. Right. What colour was the wolf's coat?'

Some arms are raised, here and there, some rigid, others waving impatiently.

It has to work, Bárbara thinks. If the door handle really is magic, it should work now.

'You answer then, Dorinda.'

'The wolf's coat... the wolf's coat...'

'I know! I know!'

'Woooh...' Fernando howls.

'Silence, children! Dorinda, answer the question, go on.'

With her arm still raised, a

flagpole, Dorinda hesitates. 'The wolf's coat... the wolf's coat is light grey, because the little boy said to the wolf, he said, Mister Wolf...'

'That's enough,' the teacher interrupts. 'You've got it right,' says Miss Flávia, and the toothless smile of Dorinda fades.

The door handle really *is* magic. It didn't work with Gustavo, but it worked with Dorinda.

Ana Saldanha

That night, when the familiar sound of yet another argument reached her in her bedroom, she went down to the first landing to hear better. She had nothing else to do. [...]  
'And whose fault is that? You know perfectly well that I've hardly any time for anything else.'  
'You mean you haven't got time for your family, that's what you mean. You've got plenty of time for those young girls. They're young enough to be your daughters.'  
Mummy was talking without emphasis, as if she were reading out the weather forecast.  
'Come on! Come on! Darling!'  
'Don't darling me. As far as you're concerned, from now on, I'm plain Isa. That's it, Isa.'

Dulce climbed down the last flight of stairs. Now there was only a door between her and her parents.  
'You're the mother of my child. Isa...'  
'You should've thought of that before. What do you want me to do now? Dulce stays.'  
'What do you mean, she stays?'  
Dulce climbed up to the first landing. Sitting on the top step, she noticed that the paint of the banister was cracked. With her nail, she started to peel the coat of white paint, painstakingly, so as not to break the thin layer.  
'That was never in question. Of course it hadn't crossed my mind to take your child away from you.'  
Daddy clears his throat, gives a little cough; there's a kind of relief

in his voice. What use would she be to Daddy?  
When the argument was over, at long last, one of the banister poles was stripped to the bare wood. Maybe Daddy could paint it next weekend. The next morning, when she found him lying on the couch in the sitting room, she willed herself to believe in his explanation. 'I fell asleep watching television,' he said, stretching. But, a week later, when she saw the two big suitcases by the door and Daddy hugged her goodbye, she understood that the spot on the map, her family, was fast disappearing, swept away by a torrent that went by the name of divorce.

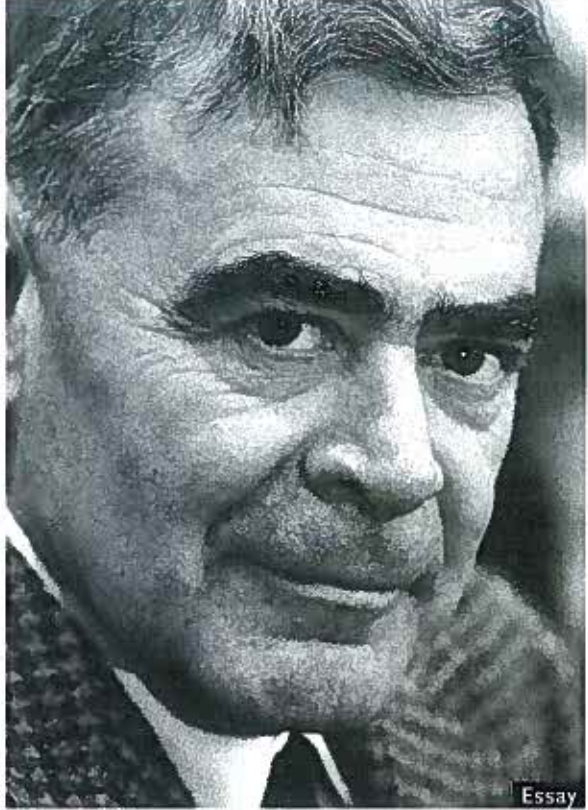
## Ana Saldanha Wrote About her Work

*[...] while I write and rewrite this novel I'm at that birthday party and at that first communion, I have pussy cats and a little toy broomstick, daring and dangerous childhood friends, a strict Sunday-school teacher without a shadow of dubious sins, and pretty dolls who misbehave. I clean the bowl of the cake mixture with my fingers and I make mud pies. And the sweets with liqueur centres I eat hastily, behind mummy's back, almost as a duty. I memorise those singing games, and, like the seven deadly sins, I remember them imperfectly.*

in PARA O MEIO DA RUA  
[OUT INTO THE STREET]

## Selected Works

- Uma questão de cor* (Porto: Ambar, 1995) [A QUESTION OF COLOUR]  
*Ninguém dá prendas ao Pai Natal* (Porto: Campo das Letras, 1996) [NOBODY GIVES PRESENTS TO FATHER CHRISTMAS]  
*Animais e Companhia* (Porto: Campo das Letras, 1996) [ANIMALS AND COMPANY]  
*Irlanda verde e laranja* (Porto: Campo das Letras, 1997) [IRELAND: GREEN AND ORANGE]  
*Doçura amarga* (Porto: Ambar, 1997) [BITTER SWEETNESS]  
*Cinco tempos, quatro intervalos* (Lisboa: Caminho, 1999) [FIVE PERIODS, FOUR BREAKS]  
*Para o meio da rua* (Lisboa: Caminho, 2000) [OUT INTO THE STREET]  
*Como outro qualquer* (Lisboa: Caminho, 2001) [LIKE ANY OTHER]



# Fernando Gil

Philosopher and essay-writer, was born in 1937. He is the Professor of Philosophy of Knowledge at the Universidade Nova in Lisboa and Director of Studies (Epistemology of Scientific Knowledge) at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales. He was the editor in chief of the journal *Análise*, and of the Centre d'Études Portugaises of the EHESS, and he is currently a member of the board of directors of the Collège International de Philosophie (Paris), and a collaborator in the project *Controverses scientifiques* of the Centre National des Recherches Scientifiques. He is also a member of the board of editors both of the *Encyclopedia Universalis* and of the *Encyclopedia Einaudi*, and is on the European University Advisory Committee of the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Chicago. He is visiting professor in various European and South American Universities, and at the Academy Sinica in Taiwan. He was an administrator of O.C.D.E. He was awarded the title of Doctor Honoris Causa by the University of Aveiro in 1998, the Portuguese decoration of Grande Oficial da Ordem do Infante D. Henrique (1992) and that of Chevalier de l'Ordre des Palmes Académiques (1995). Amongst other awards, he has twice received the Portuguese Pen Club Essay Prize (1984 and 1999) the Prize Pessoa (1993) and the Prize of the International Association of Literary Critics, in 1999.

He is the author of some 150 studies and articles in several languages published in revues, conference proceedings, symposia and brochures. Following a remarkable study on Wittgenstein and pursuing his

encyclopedic vocation, Fernando Gil embarked upon an ambitious reflection on the status of knowledge, which could be summarised in this sentence taken from *Mimesis and Negation*: Starting from a representation of experience rendered coherent by classifications and systematics, organized by categorizations and by the apparatus of conceptual oppositions, knowledge constitutes, on the other hand, the terminus of the invention of hypotheses, and the outcome of a research. Through reproduction, socialization and objectivization, research becomes rule and corpus, discipline and disciplines, which are transmitted and are an object of study. From this perspective, Gil goes on to define thought in its dual aspect of adequate ('mimesis') and inadequate ('negation'). This leads him subsequently to consider the criteria of proof of an adequate thought and the circumstances in which the proof apparently becomes unnecessary and a situation of evidence is created. More recently, broadening the scope of his reflection to include literature and photography, Fernando Gil has sought to establish an inventory of the modes of evidence, without excluding the conditions in which evidence or the analysis of specific forms of knowledge such as hallucination and belief impose themselves.

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[see page 48]

## Selected Works

### In Portuguese

- Aproximação Antropológica* (Lisboa: Guimarães, 1965) [ANTHROPOLOGICAL APPROXIMATION]
- Mimésis e Negação* (Lisboa: I.N.C.M., 1984) [MIMESIS AND NEGATION]
- Cruzamentos da Enciclopédia* (Lisboa: I.N.C.M., 1986) [INTERSECTIONS OF THE ENCYCLOPEDIA]
- Provas* (Lisboa: I.N.C.M., 1988) [PROOFS]
- Tratado da Evidência* (Lisboa: I.N.C.M., 1996) [TREATISE ON EVIDENCE]
- Modos da Evidência* (Lisboa: I.N.C.M., 1999) [MODES OF EVIDENCE]
- O efeito-Lusíadas* (Lisboa: Sá da Costa/Público, 1998) [THE LUSIADS-EFFECT]
- Viagens do Olhar: Retrospecção, Visão e Profecia no Renascimento Português* (with Helder Macedo) (Porto: Campo das Letras, 1998) (French translation forthcoming, ed. Maisonneuve et Larose) [JOURNEYS OF THE SIGHT: RETROSPECTION, VISION AND PROPHECY IN THE PORTUGUESE RENAISSANCE]
- Mediações* (Lisboa: I.N.C.M., 2000) [MEDIATIONS]

### In French

- La Logique du nom* (Paris: L'Herne, 1972) [THE LOGIC OF THE NAME]
- Preuves* (Paris: Aubier, 1989) [PROOFS]
- Traité de l'évidence* (Grenoble: J. Millon, 1993) [TREATISE ON EVIDENCE]
- Croyance et intuition* (Paris: Flammarion, 2000) [BELIEF AND INTUITION]
- Conviction* (Paris: Flammarion, 2000) [CONVICTION]

### In Italian

- Prove* (Milano: Jaca Books, 1990) [PROOFS]

### As editor of collective works

- Edição portuguesa da Enciclopédia Einaudi* (40 volumes published) [PORTUGUESE EDITION OF THE ENCYCLOPEDIA EINAUDI]
- O Balanço do Século* (Lisboa: I.N.C.M., 1990) [THE BALANCE OF THE CENTURY]
- Acta du colloque Wittgenstein* (Mauvezin, TER, Mauvezin, 1990.) [PROCEEDINGS OF THE CONFERENCE ON WITTGENSTEIN]
- Scientific and Philosophical Controversies* (Lisboa: Fragmentos, 1990)

- A Ciência como Cultura* (Lisboa: I.N.C.M., 1991) [SCIENCE AS CULTURE]
- La Science au présent* (co-editor), (2 vols, Encyclopaedia Universalis, Paris, 1991) [SCIENCE TODAY]
- A Recepção da 'Crítica da Razão Pura' (1786-1844)* (Lisboa: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, 1992) [THE RECEPTION OF THE 'CRITIQUE OF PURE REASON' (1786-1844)]
- Philosophy in Portugal, a Profile* (Lisboa: Observatório das Ciências e Tecnologias, 1999)
- A Ciência tal qual se faz* (cycle of lectures under the auspices of the Portuguese Ministry of Science and Technology. 1996/8) (Lisboa: Sá da Costa, 1999) [SCIENCE AS IT IS PRACTISED ]

## Extracts

from TRATADO DA EVIDÊNCIA  
[TREATISE ON EVIDENCE]

Together with *truth*, *evidence* is undoubtedly the term of philosophical language with greatest currency in daily use. We do not speak of being, of oneness, of the transcendent, of appearance or even of the subject in the same way as does metaphysics, while the common intuition of truth and evidence remains close to the philosophical discourse. Evident is that which does not require proof and truth is the description of what is; evidence is a double truth, an assertion that does not require justification. Evidence and truth, the truth of evidence and also the evidence of truth – one of the hypotheses of this work is that evidence works upon all thought on truth – are indispensable to enunciate and structure our experience of the world and of ourselves. What is the language of evidence?

## About his work

[...] The central thesis of this book [*Treatise on Evidence*]: evidence is structured as hallucination. In the course of the several chapters of his book, Fernando Gil clears a space and leaves a conceptual gap for the entrance on stage of a decisive character: hallucination. To do this, his starting point is a simple verification: the existence of multiple points in common between the grammar of evidence and the grammar of hallucination. To do that, he will also have to wrench hallucination from the grip of psychopathology. But, once these obstacles have been overcome, it is possible to enunciate with force and clarity this fundamental thesis: *the effect of the truth of evidence results from the application of desire to sensorial reference*.

The fundamental question is this: if this book offers a dismantling of philosophical discourse as hallucination (something which is particularly manifest in the idea of the 'vision of God' of Malebranche or in the notion of 'philosophical life' of Husserl), is it the case that all philosophers belong to this paradigm? What are the relationships between evidence and art? How does evidence intervene in the logic of scientific discourses? Are they also of an hallucinatory kind? Or, on the opposite hypothesis, what enables them to escape the regime of hallucination? Evidence is a mad operator. This critique of madness often takes on the impassioned tone of a eulogy.

EDUARDO PRADO COELHO | in *O Cálculo das Sombras*, 1997 [*The Calculus of the Shadows*]



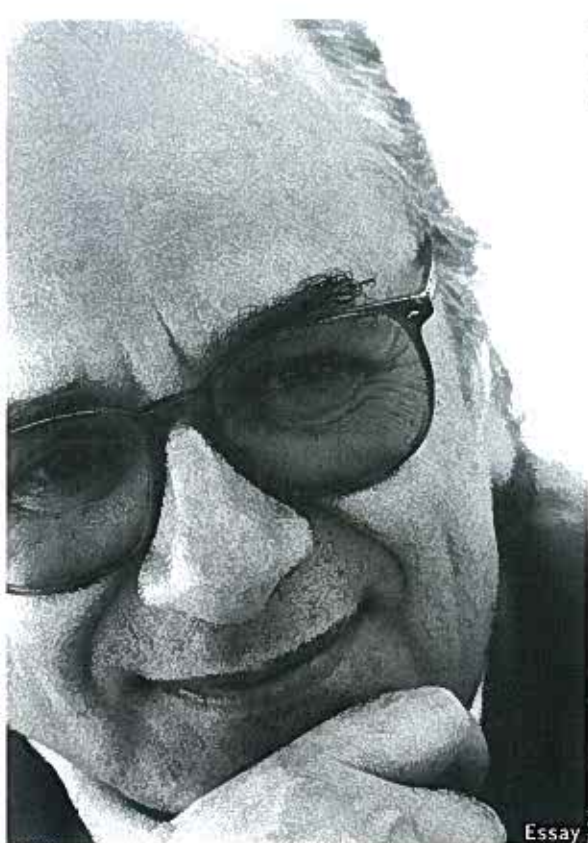
The perspective that is offered to us here [in *Journeys of the Sight*] of the historiography and literature of the period between Fernão Lopes and António Vieira, that is, from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries, revises conformist readings and academic viewpoints of the authors and periods analysed with a clarity and brilliance which make this book a feast for the spirit – to paraphrase the well known expression of Valéry, in the sense of a fundamental rethinking of our literary history.

NUNO JÚDICE | *Expresso*, 5.9.1998



In it [*Journeys of the Sight*], a dialogue is enacted between the viewpoint of the practitioner of philosophy and that of the practitioner of literature concerning the evidence of the *clearly seen* and of the new, the encounter with otherness and how to conceive it, voyage, rationality, love, belief, prophecy, that is, the themes that convey to us the way in which the Renaissance authors dealt with the classical topic of mutability, which the European Renaissance, and that of Portugal in particular, reconfigured and of which the work of Camões is an all-embracing expression.

MARGARIDA RIBEIRO AND PAULO PEREIRA | *Jornal de Letras, Artes e Ideias*, 30.12.1998



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Essay

# Boaventura de Sousa Santos

*Born in Coimbra in 1940. He completed a doctorate in Sociology of Law at Yale University in 1973, and is now professor at the Faculty of Economics in the University of Coimbra and visiting professor at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, at the London School of Economics, at the University of S. Paulo and at the University of Los Andes. He is director of the Centre for Social Studies at the Faculty of Economics and of the Centre for Documentation of the 25th of April, both at the University of Coimbra. He is the editor of the journal Crítica de Ciências Sociais. Amongst other awards, he has received the Portuguese Pen Club Essay Prize (1994) and the Gulbenkian Prize for Science (1996).*

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## Extracts

*from A CRÍTICA DA RAZÃO INDOLENTE: CONTRA O DESPERDÍCIO DA EXPERIÊNCIA*  
[THE CRITIQUE OF INDOLENT REASON: AGAINST THE WASTE OF EXPERIENCE]

The Greek philosopher Epicharmus says that 'mortals must think mortal, not immortal, thoughts.' This book deals with mortal thoughts. It starts from the concept that socio-cultural paradigms are born, develop and die. Unlike what occurs in the case of individuals, the death of a given paradigm contains within it the paradigm that will succeed it. This crossing from death to life does not have firm enough supports to be traversed in safety. What is born is incommensurable with what dies, and therefore there are neither resurrections nor reincarnations. The problem is that there can be no crossing except between commensurable thoughts. On the other hand, again unlike the case of individuals, it is only many years,

if not centuries, after the death of a socio-cultural paradigm, that it is possible to state with any certainty that it has indeed died, and to determine, always approximately, the date of its demise. The crossing between paradigms — the paradigmatic transition — is thus half-blind and half-invisible. It can only be traversed by a thought itself constructed with a minimum of supports and well used to transforming silences, murmurs and insignificant details into precious orientation signals. That thought is utopia and it is also the subject of this book. Between death and utopia, this book has as its central theme the paradigmatic transition. [...] Therefore, my main objective has not been to introduce the project

of a new order, but only to show that the collapse of the existing order, and disorder — which Fourier, significantly, termed 'subversive order' — does not in any way imply barbarism. It signifies instead a compromise that, apart from anything else, shows itself to be, not the product of an enlightened vanguard thought, but that of an emancipating common sense. To construct such a utopia — not an imaginary nowhere, even less an ironic Erewhon, but simply here, a heterotopic here — to construct, in reality, a utopia as pragmatic as common sense itself is not an easy task, nor a task that can ever be completed. It is this acknowledgement, at the outset, of its infinitude that renders the task one truly worthy of humanity.

Boaventura de Sousa Santos

from PELA MÃO DE ALICE: O SOCIAL E O POLÍTICO NA PÓS-MODERNIDADE  
[BY THE HAND OF ALICE: THE SOCIAL AND THE POLITICAL IN POST-MODERNITY]

'The future isn't what it used to be,' proclaims a *graffito* in a Buenos Aires street. The future promised by modernity has, in fact, no future. Defeated by the challenges they face, the majority of the peoples on the periphery of the world system do not believe in this future because in its name other futures have been neglected or rejected. These futures may have been less brilliant and closer to the past, but at least they assured the

subsistence of the community and a balanced relationship with Nature, both of which now appear precarious to the peoples concerned [...]. I believe therefore that, presented with this situation, there is only one way out: to reinvent the future, to open up new horizons of possibilities, mapped by radical alternatives to those options that have ceased to be radical. This is based on the assumption that we are entering

a phase of paradigmatic crisis and, consequently, one of transition between epistemological, social, political and cultural paradigms. There is also the assumption that it is not enough to go on criticizing the still dominant paradigm, something that has been done to death anyway. It is also necessary to define the emerging paradigm. This task, by far the most important, is also the most difficult.

from REINVENTAR A DEMOCRACIA [REINVENTING DEMOCRACY]

The democracy of western modernity is founded on the idea of the social contract. This contract has innovative features and has translated into very specific forms of State and Society. We live in a period of profound crisis for this social contract, manifested in the prevalence of processes of social

exclusion over those of social inclusion. As a result, we are witnessing the emergence of a new form of social apartheid, termed in this book societal fascism, and characterized by the collapse of the most basic life expectations of the vast majority of the population. Societal fascism cohabits the more

easily with political democracy as the latter loses its ability to redistribute resources and opportunities. Thus weakened, democracy becomes a low intensity democracy. Effective opposition to societal fascism presupposes the reign of a high intensity democracy. We must therefore invent it.

## Selected Works

### in Portuguese

*Um discurso sobre as ciências*  
(Porto: Afrontamento, 1988, 11th ed.)

[A DISCOURSE ON THE SCIENCES]

*Introdução a uma ciência pós-moderna* (Porto: Afrontamento, 1989, 5th ed.) [INTRODUCTION TO A POST-MODERN SCIENCE]

*Pela mão de Alice: o social e o político na pós-modernidade* (Porto:

Afrontamento, 1994, 7th ed.) [BY THE HAND OF ALICE: THE SOCIAL AND THE POLITICAL IN POST-MODERNITY]

*Reinventar a Democracia* (Lisboa: Gradiva, 1998) [REINVENTING DEMOCRACY]

*Para um novo senso comum: a ciência, o direito e a política, na transição paradigmática* (4 volumes)

*A crítica da razão indolente: contra o desperdício da experiência* (volume I)

(Porto: Afrontamento, 2000) (TOWARD A NEW COMMON SENSE: LAW, SCIENCE AND POLITICS IN THE PARADIGMATIC TRANSITION. THE CRITIQUE OF INDOLENT REASON: AGAINST THE WASTE OF EXPERIENCE)

*Introdução a uma ciência pós-moderna* (S. Paulo: Graal, 3rd. ed.)

[INTRODUCTION TO A POST-MODERN SCIENCE]

### In English

*Toward a new common sense: law, science and politics in the paradigmatic transition* (New York: Routledge, 1995) (in collaboration)

### In Spanish

*La globalización del derecho: los nuevos caminos de la regulación y la emancipación* (Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 1998) [THE GLOBALIZATION OF THE LAW: THE NEW PATHS OF REGULATION AND EMANCIPATION]

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