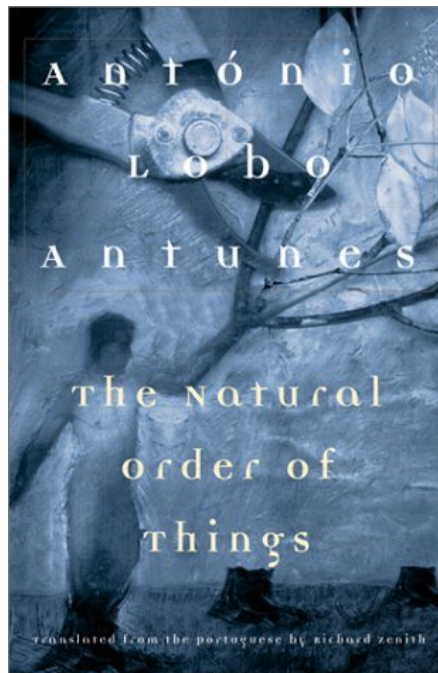




The Natural Order of Things

António Lobo Antunes , Richard Zenith (Translator)

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The Natural Order of Things is a tale of two families and the secrets that bind them. The voices of Antunes' characters -- an army officer being tortured in prison on charges of conspiracy; an elderly man, once a miner in Mozambique, now reduced to dreams of "flying underground"; a diabetic teenage girl and the middle-aged husband she despises; the officer's illegitimate sister, locked away to haunt the house like Bertha Rochester in *Jane Eyre* -- create a portrait of a disintegrating Portugal, a personal political history that attains the brilliance and surreality of Elias Canetti and Nikolai Gogol.

The Natural Order of Things Details

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Author : António Lobo Antunes , Richard Zenith (Translator)

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From Reader Review The Natural Order of Things for online ebook

Domenico Fina says

"Giacché non mi andava né un libro né il film alla televisione, ingoiai uno dei sonniferi che prendeva mio marito, mi misi a letto e dopo un attimo avevo vent'anni e giocavo a tennis a Sintra con le mie cugine, in un campo circondato da cactus e abeti, aureolato dalla mattina di settembre. Da lontano si distingueva l'oceano, una delle palline saltò al di là della rete e sparì fra gli abeti, un amico delle mie cugine andò a cercarla, e io mi sarei sposata di lì a poche settimane e non mi sentivo felice né infelice, mi sentivo strana." (Pag. 276)

Qualche pagina superflua e troppo calcata in modo grottesco, nella parte centrale, ma si riscatta con la parte finale; bella e toccante. Antunes fa quello che vuole con le parole, anche troppo, talvolta.

Luísa Freitas says

esquecer, jamais!

dannymac says

He is currently my favorite, he is the master, the one to aspire to, poetic yet linear, I could get lost in his prose forever and not miss a thing. He should be much more well known than he is, it's almost criminal this neglect.

Ana Lúcia says

Verdadeiramente labiríntico, perturbador e fascinante!

Rowena says

"A labyrinth, my friend, a veritable labyrinth, just think of all the surprises in a labyrinth, there were even tree roots in the tunnels, trees are even worse than teeth, which reach through our gums to our ears and neck, as we all know, but we look at a tree and never dream how far it goes in search of the deceased and the world's silence that sprouts as fruit on its branches." - António Lobo Antunes, *The Natural Order of Things*

"Labyrinth" is the perfect word to describe this book's structure and storyline. Antunes is an amazing writer and I've already made a vow to read more of his books. He's not an easy read; he definitely requires your full attention but it's so worth it.

I'm always excited to come across a writer who writes in a style that I'm not familiar with, and this book fit the bill. It has a dreamlike quality and it's a story that reveals itself over time. It was definitely reminiscent of

Proust due to its stream of consciousness style, and also its focus is on memory. Structurally, this book is very different; its very long sentences are further complicated by surrealism and sentences being divided up, the first half of the sentence being the thoughts of one person in one time and place, and the second half by another in another time and place, and you get an idea of how tricky this book might be to read.

The book's focus is also on history: personal history and world history, communism in Portugal, mining in South Africa, things happening in the former Portuguese colonies of Mozambique and Angola. There's a lot of travelling back and forth between time and place, and it's very clear that for many, their past and present are intertwined:

"There are those who fly in the air and those who fly under the earth, although they're not yet dead, and I, daughter, belong to the latter group, having flown at a depth of a thousand feet with a lamp on my forehead, surrounded by blacks, in the tunnels of the Johannesburg mines..."

I do wish I had some Portuguese history knowledge, at least as much as I do of Portuguese influence in Southern Africa. What I did pick up on was the discussion on colonialism, communism, war, migration, and how people in general are often pawns and are never really were appreciated for their sacrifices:

"Look around and all you see is indifference and selfishness, the way people have treated me, for instance, assaulting me on the street, insulting me, calling me a murderer and a scoundrel, spitting in my face, kicking me out wherever I go, leaving me homeless, penniless, friendless..."

Beautiful writing and imagery throughout, interesting and unique characters, very melancholy too. Ironically, in this book "The natural order of things" doesn't exist. Highly recommended!

Joana says

António Lobo Antunes = génio.

Victor Sengo says

TALVEZ A RELER.
POSSIVELMENTE ENCONTRAREI OUTRA ORDEM NATURAL

Nan says

Incredible non-linear story that wallops you with rich, sensuous writing on every page. A gorgeous book that weaves 7 or 8 narratives (you're never quite sure) loosely together, the story takes you through a couple of decades and a couple of families who are linked sometimes closely, sometimes not so much. For me, the main question was in a world gone insane (Salazar's dictatorship, South African diamond mines, and the Portuguese occupation of Mozambique are all referenced, mostly obliquely), "insanity" is a legitimate and possibly poorly titled response.

The different voices are unique and moving, always surprising. Read this one slowly to let it soak in. Lobos Altunes is truly a master. Extraordinary.

Filip says

[...]I, who watched him step on a porch, push a door, and disappear like a caramel when you get to the end of it, kept asking myself why it is that you, a writer, a man who sells novels, who appears on TV, and whose name is in magazines, are interested in a loser like that, a guy who lives on Rua #8 in a crappy building undermined by vapors from the river and by the sewer stench that peers through the holed in the wall like an animal with nowhere to go. A dump on Rua #8, for Christ's sake, a hovel for pensioners and housemaids, with crumbling plaster and leaky plumbing, the gate off the hinges, a couple of honeysuckle bushes crying out for help to the ocean's indifference, miniscule windows, a washbasin where the water comes out in spurts, **what do you want, young man, with a trash heap like that, are you sure your mind's working all right, what kind of book can you make out of a story like that when squalor's what this city already has too much of?**

Prirodni red stvari je veoma ambiciozan, kompleksan roman koji peva kako jezikom, tako i samom strukturom romana i tehnikama koje Antuneš koristi kako bi oživeo sežanj svojih likova – tok svesti, ponavljanja i preplitanje sadašnjosti i prošlosti, i čak različitih likova. Roman prati dve lisabonske porodice, ljude u njima i oko njih koji su pripovedači romana raspoređeni u parovima u pet glava ili knjiga. Svaki pripovedač ima nekoliko poglavlja u kojima pripoveda priču svog života i okruženja i gradi kolaž koji predstavlja sliku Portugala u drugoj polovini dvadesetog veka, vremena velikih pometnji i promena u Portugalu. Kao i u svom prvom romanu *Iza Božjih leđa*, Antuneš ni ovde ne dozvoljava svojim sunarodnicima da zaborave više od četiri decenije fašističke vlasti, kao što svojim likovima ne dozvoljava da pobegnu iz prošlosti, niti da se prilagode sadašnjosti, oni su zarobljeni u njoj poput lisice u kavezu, koja se provlači kroz čitav roman – bedni službenik u nacionalnoj turističkoj agenciji koji pokušava da vrati mladost spavanjem sa srednjoškolkom trideset godina mlađom, koja ga mrzi, major koji pokušava da pokrene puč protiv Salazarove vlade, njegov brat koji pokušava da pridobije ljubav svog oca, ali zauzvrat dobija jednu rečenicu koja će ga pratiti kroz čitav život, „čime sam zaslužio tako glupog sina?“,

[...]persecuted by my father's voice,
“What did I do to deserve such a stupid son?”
the same voice that bullied me at my job, on the streetcar, and in the movie theaters that colored my dreams, my father's voice that for forty years had been making fun of me, punctuated by sighs from my mother and snickers from Jorge, who came home on weekends from officer training school,
“What did I do to deserve such a stupid son?”
the voices that persecuted me everywhere, like the screams of my sister in the attic and like the eyes in the photos,
“What did I do to deserve such a stupid grandson?”
My own voice, choked by lather during my morning shave,
“What did I do to deserve being so stupid?”

Antunešova medicinska prošlost se jasno pokazuje u romanu, njegovi likovi su dijabetičari koji trunu iznutra, starci s rakom pluća, zubima koji otpadaju, koji gutaju pilule za reumatizam, srce, bešiku, jetru, leđa, kašalj, gorišicu. Likovi zatvoreni na tavanu, u rudnicima, mučeni u zatvorima gube razum, lete pomoću hipnoze, ili pod zemljom. „Znate li vi kako da letite pod zemljom, prijatelju?“, pita Dominguš, rudar iz Johannesburga koji nazad u Lisabonu pokušava da se vrati svojim rudnicima kopajući po dvorištima (usput zatrpavši žitav Lisabon izmetom kada naleti na cev kanalizacije) ne bi li ponovo leteo po rudnicima koje za njega predstavljaju ono što za druge likove predstavlja prošlost kojoj se vraćaju ma koliko ona ružna bila, prošlost koja se prepliće, ili koju, zapravo, Antuneš tako maestralno prepliće sa sadašnjosti.

Nema prirodnog reda stvari u Antunešovom romanu, ništa se ne može rasplesti, svaka glava može doneti još slojeva na priču, a ona poslednja može baciti novo svetlo na žitav roman i zahtevati novo žitanje, ne i poslednje.

Eddie Watkins says

Antunes is one of those authors whose books are so feverish and dense and, if you're spellbound by him, so stylistically compelling that you read one after another so fast that after you're done it's hard to distinguish one book from the next.

I will have to go back and read the books of his I've read and others I haven't slowly and soberly (if that's possible) so that I can at least feel capable of separating his books in my mind.

I have not come across a Latin author (is a Portuguese author considered a Latin author?) who has so completely carried on Faulkner's lushly diseased southern gothic stream of consciousness, but Antunes is more cerebral, more of a sophisticate.

Aida says

'When I was a child I liked the month of February. I liked the sweet melancholy of its flus and fevers.'

--This novel warrants a reread someday.

Nuno Martins says

E com este já são 9 os livros que li de Lobo Antunes, e mais uma vez, a sua escrita não me desiludio. Desta vez a história deste livro centra-se numa família, e Lobo Antunes faz-nos o retrato da sociedade portuguesa com o seu olhar tão crítico e melancólico em saltos de tempo que vão da altura em que o livro foi escrito (princípios dos anos 90) e com flashbacks dos anos 50, altura em que as personagens eram jovens. Lobo Antunes com este livro traz também alguns episódios cómicos e uma pitada de realismo mágico, com pessoas hipnotizadas a voarem nos céus de Lisboa. Tudo junto proporciona-nos uma leitura agradável e maravilhosa.

Sherrymoon says

Ich weiss ehrlich nicht mehr, ob ichs damals ganz fertig gelesen habe. Schwieriges Buch aber brillante! Unvergleichlicher Stil, sowas findest du nirgends anderswo. Ellenlange Sätze. Du sitzt anfangs da wie vor den Kopf gestossen, bist aber fasziniert vom Fremden.

So kann nur ein Portugiese oder Spanier oder einer aus den spanischen Kolonien schreiben, dachte ich mir. Dazu ist ein germanischer Engdenker nicht fähig!

Das phantastische Werk beginnt damit, dass ein alternder Mann für seine blutjunge Geliebte Iolanda die eigene Kindheit heraufbeschwört:

"Bis ich sechs Jahre alt war, Iolanda, kannte ich weder die Familie meiner Mutter noch den Duft der Kastanienbäume, den der Septemberwind von Buraca herüberwehte, mit dem Geruch der Schafe und Ziegen, die, von einem Alten mit Schirmmütze und den Stimmen der Toten vorwärtsgetrieben, über die Calçada zum aufgelassenen Friedhof hinauf sprangen."

Angesteckt? Lust auf mehr?

Zum Schluss ein Zitat von Antonio himself:

"Whenever anyone declares having read a book of mine I am disappointed by the error. That's because my books are not to be read in the sense usually called reading: the only way it seems to me to approach the novels that I write is to catch them in the same manner that one catches an illness."

jeremy says

born in lisbon in 1942, antónio lobo antunes is widely considered to be a strong contender for the nobel prize. a psychiatrist by trade, antunes partly gave up his practice in the early 1980's to focus on writing, following the success of his early novels. antunes's style is often compared to that of faulkner, joyce, and céline, and has already won him over a half dozen international literary awards. *the natural order of things*, set in his native portugal (as are most of his novels), is the surreal tale of two families and the enigmatic relations that adhere them to one another throughout the passing generations. at once complex and evocative, the story's fantastical narrative exhibits antunes's magnificent command of prose and his thorough discernment of the human subconscious. beautifully told, yet terribly tragic, *the natural order of things* is an urgent and illuminating book from one of modern literature's most underrated masters.

Bernardo Moura says

Confuso, desafiante e recompensador em igual medida.

Fernando says

Yo leí este libro y caí a los pies de este extraordinario escritor.

João Carlos says

António Lobo Antunes - 86º Feira do Livro - Lisboa - Portugal (2016-05-28)

Next Portuguese Nobel Prize!

"A Ordem Natural das Coisas" (1992) do escritor português **António Lobo Antunes** (n. 1942) é um romance fragmentado em cinco "livros" – **"Doces odores, doces mortos"**, **"Os Argonautas"**, **"A viagem à China"**, **"A vida contigo"** e **"A Representação Alucinatória do Desejo"** - com dez narradores.

Os narradores – dois por cada "livro" – vão construindo a narrativa num relato com saltos abruptos – no mesmo parágrafo – no espaço e no tempo, num emaranhado de histórias, que se vão desfiando, onde as várias personagens vão descrevendo as recordações do passado e as vivências do presente, através do diálogo entre os diferentes intervenientes ou através de monólogos interiores, numa explanação apresentada, quase sempre, sob o ponto de vista de uma das personagens.

As temáticas abordadas são inúmeras: desde logo, a morte (a ordem natural das coisas), a decadência física (associada à velhice) e a doença, o desprezo, directamente relacionado com o amor e o ódio, a loucura, a insurreição, a repressão e a denúncia, o rancor e a vergonha; destacando-se a incompreensão e a solidão de quase todas as personagens, em relacionamentos conflituosos e conturbados.

A prosa de **António Lobo Antunes** é labiríntica, genuinamente, sombria e perturbante, construindo uma atmosfera angustiante, quase sempre assente na subjectividade dos pensamentos e da linguagem.

"A Ordem Natural das Coisas" é um livro de leitura obrigatória para os leitores incondicionais de **António Lobo Antunes**, para quem valoriza a complexidade e a subjectividade dos enredos, para quem aprecia as informações incoerentes e caóticas ao longo da narrativa, mas que, no fim, acabam por se conjugar e relacionar; e, finalmente, para os que preferem completar as omissões e as lacunas – os espaços em branco no texto – com a leitura interventiva e a releitura...

Cordula says

I feel like I need to explain this comparatively low rating or feel like a philistine. I can see the value of this novel and why it is widely considered a modern classic. But I felt overwhelmed by the rambling prose, the difficulty in establishing the identities of the different narrators, and, ultimately, piecing together a coherent narrative. The writing is incredibly atmospheric - capturing loneliness, longing, stagnation, melancholy, the confusion of memories. But the writing style with its surrealism just isn't for me. I don't mind a challenging read, but reading this book felt like a chore that I somehow failed.

Jim says

There are some writers about whom, although I like them from the outset, I feel I need to read more before I can pass fair judgment. Antunes, who reads something like the Faulkner of **The Sound and the Fury** is one of these authors. Picture to yourself two dysfunctional families from a working class suburb of Lisbon. Each character has his or her own chapter, including one from the trees that used to grow outside one of the family homes. There is a kind of desire for justice by giving a poetic voice to everything. The result has a curious flow that is fun to read. All takes place in a Portugal that has seen better days and is beginning to sink into decay, with remnants still surviving of the former Salazar dictatorship.

Marcia Letaw says

"All this happened a long time ago, because everything happened a long time ago, including what just now happened, which was that I turned the crank on the gramophone to listen to an aria of La Boheme . . ."

Reading Antunes' impressive novel reminds me of listening to a capella performances by Roomful of Teeth, performances of such music as Caroline Shaw's *Partita for 8 Voices* in which the voices intertwine even as Antunes' memory voices intertwine to produce a truly unforgettable experience.
