

MANUEL ANTÓNIO PINA

(Sabugal, 18/11/1943 — Porto, 19/10/2012)

Manuel António Mota Pina graduated in Law from the Law Faculty of Coimbra University. After practising as a lawyer he started working as a journalist, in 1971, at the *Jornal de Notícias* (beginning by signing under the name of António Mota), where he ended up as editor and editor-in-chief. He also worked for other periodicals - amongst them *A República*, *Diário de Lisboa*, *O Jornal*, *Expresso*, *JL/Jornal de Letras*, *Artes e Ideias*, *Marie Claire*, *Visão* – and other forms of media, such as RTP, the Portuguese national television broadcaster, and Rádio Porto. He was also a teacher at the journalism school of Porto and a member of the Press Council.

In 1973 he published his first book (*O país das pessoas de pernas para o ar*, short stories), marking the beginning of a diverse body of writing in its forms, themes and target audiences. His work centred mainly on poetry and Children's and Young Adult literature (poetry, prose and dramatic text), but he also produced a notable collection of chronicles, appearing in newspapers and periodicals (most importantly in this area, his regular column for the *Jornal de Notícias*, «Por outras palavras», between 2005 and 2010), partially gathered in various volumes (*O anacronista*, 1994; *Por outras palavras & mais crónicas de jornal*, 2010; *Crónica, saudade da literatura*, 2014). Some of his texts were adapted for cinema and television, for example *Se a memória existe* (1999, based on his book *O tesouro*, and directed by João Botelho), *Histórias com pés e cabeça* (1979-80) and *O inventão* (1987, which includes texts written as the scripts for a series of films for children's television). He also wrote scripts for RTP, as in the case of the series *Os Andrades* (1994-1995) and *O meu, o teu e o nosso* (1999). Several of his poems were also set to music and released as records.

From early on and throughout his life and career as a writer, he received various prizes and prestigious public acknowledgements. Most notable of these were: in 1978, the Prémio de Poesia da Casa da Imprensa (the Press Association Poetry Prize) for his book *Aquele que quer morrer*; in 1987, the Grande Prémio Gulbenkian de Literatura para Crianças e Jovens (Gulbenkian Prize for Children's and Young Adult Literature) for the play *O inventão*; in 1996, the Prémio Seiva, which distinguishes individuals for their contribution to the Arts, Letters and Sciences of the city of Porto, a city that in 2011 also awarded him the Medalha de Mérito (Medal of Merit); in 2005, he was awarded the title of Comendador da Ordem do Infante D. Henrique and, in 2011, the Prémio Camões, the highest literary award in the Portuguese language.

He was part of the official representation of Portuguese literature at the Frankfurt Book Fair (1997), the Paris Book Fair (2000) and the Geneva Book Fair (2001). In 1982 he received a scholarship from the Berlin International Theatre Centre to work with the Grips Theater, and in 1997 he was invited to become resident poet of the city of Villeneuve-sur-Lot (France). His work is available in different countries, such as France (in French and Corsican), the United States, Spain (in Spanish, Galician, and Catalan), Denmark, Germany, Poland, Russia, Croatia and Bulgaria, among others.

Looking in particular at Manuel António Pina's relationship with theatre, it is important to note that he was a founding partner of the Pé de Vento company (1978), with many of his text having been written, primarily, to be presented on stage, and only later published in book form. Among these titles are *Os dois ladrões* (1983), *História com reis, rainhas, bobos, bombeiros e galinhas* (1984), *A guerra do tabuleiro de*

xadrez (1985), *Os piratas* (1997), *Aquilo que os olhos vêem ou O Adamastor* (1998), *A noite* (2001), *Perguntem aos vossos gatos e aos vossos cães* (2003) and *História do sábio fechado na sua biblioteca* (2009).

In 1983, in a text entitled «À margem do espectáculo» *História com reis, rainhas, bobos, bombeiros e galinhas*, the director João Luiz notes that «the main lines» that drive the work as a whole, «aim to make the children's audience reflective and critical, and not simple passive consumers » (Luiz 1983: s/p). Besides this ambition, the singular way he developed the language is very noticeable in Manuel António Pina's plays, through games created with and from words, as well as the introduction of unexpected characters and situations. He wanted the stage to «show children that more worlds exist, and that these are the real ones», and this being so, they «would find there and nurture there, the essential dimension of life, of living, beyond just surviving» (Pina 1987: 74).

In 2009 Sara Raquel Duarte Reis da Silva's doctorate thesis, *Presença e significado de Manuel António Pina na literatura portuguesa para a infância e a juventude*, was defended at the University of Minho. This study, published by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, provides a highly articulate analysis contributing towards a deeper comprehension of the creative worldview of this writer, who made a decisive mark on the panorama of theatre writing for younger audiences.

BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES

ALMEIDA, Pedro Dias de (2012 [2009]). «Interview with Manuel António Pina» in *Visão*, 19 October. Retrieved from <<http://visao.sapo.pt/actualidade/cultura/entrevista-a-manuel-antonio-pina=f692243>>. (last accessed: 22 January 2018).

BASTOS, Glória (2006). *O teatro para crianças em Portugal: história e crítica*. Lisbon: Editorial Caminho.

GOMES, José António (1997). «“Há tantas coisas bonitas que não há” – Em torno da escrita de Manuel António Pina para crianças» in *Livro de pequenas viagens*. Matosinhos: Contemporânea Editora.

LUIZ, João (1983). «À margem do espectáculo» in AA.VV. *História com reis, rainhas, bobos, bombeiros e galinhas*. Porto: Pé de Vento.

PINA, Manuel António (1987). «Se calhar nem mesmo teatro...» in *O inventão*, Porto, Afrontamento.

SILVA, Sara Raquel Duarte Reis da (2013). *Presença e significado de Manuel António Pina na Literatura Portuguesa para a infância e a juventude*. Lisbon: Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian / Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia. Textos Universitários de Ciências Sociais e Humanas.

Glória Bastos

Translated by Amanda Booth