

### **Episode 03. Once more I see you – Lisbon, the Tagus and the rest**

Location: **Brasileira / Chiado**

*Café*

**Sofia:** You should be near Café A Brasileira, in Largo do Chiado. There is a bronze statue on the terrace. The man sitting there is Fernando Pessoa. The Café A Brasileira was founded in the same year that Pessoa returned to Lisbon, in 1905.

[00:00:30.04]

**Rita Patrício:** Pessoa arrived in Lisbon at the age of 17, coming from an anglophone past, an English education and he, so to speak, lands in Lisbon as a foreigner. And quickly Lisbon becomes his world.

**António Mega Ferreira:** He returned to Portugal. His mother and brothers stayed in South Africa and because of this Pessoa feels rather alone in Lisbon, a bit isolated. We mustn't forget that he was a teenager.

*Tram*

**Sofia:** Lisbon was a particular. Imagine. Fish vendors wearing aprons over their skirts, brushed with bourgeois in broad-brimmed hats and veils covering their faces. Little boys selling newspapers. Dirty chimney sweeps strolling around. And in the background, the Tagus, with the hustle and bustle of boats.

*Seagull; street sounds*

**Teresa Rita Lopes:** When he arrived in 1905 the country was in a very bad shape from all points of view.

**Manuela Parreira da Silva:** Poverty, backwardness, a certain disarray of public finances and therefore it was a period very conducive to the appearance of a certain messianic feeling, the need for someone to appear to save the country.

*Ambulance*

**Manuela Parreira da Silva:** Those were the very last years of the monarchy.

*Fado music*

**Sofia:** It is a time of great change. The intellectual class is filled with new ideas and opinions. Republican ideals begin to gain ground and there is a strong anti-clerical feeling.

*Street sounds*

[00:02:35.21]

**Richard Zenith:** When Pessoa came back I think he was not yet very politicised, but quickly, very quickly became a fervent republican.

**José Barreto:** And so he begins to consider that a revolution is necessary. He even intends to integrate himself into that movement, not associating himself, because he is extremely individualistic, he always has been, but writing a work, an analysis of Portuguese history and Portuguese society, to be published in England, but then he

changes his mind and starts thinking that this work should be published in Portugal, that there was a need for redemption, a redemption of Portugal.

*Fado music; street sounds*

**Richard Zenith:** There was later a regicide in 1908, the king was assassinated and then in 1910 there was finally a revolution and the republicans overthrew the monarchy. Pessoa was completely in favour of this movement, but he was quickly disappointed. He did not like the idea of violence.

*Library; clock ticking*

**José Barreto:** Between 1905 and 1910 there is another very important fact in Pessoa's life, he starts attending what at the time was not called faculty, it was called higher education course of arts.

**Fernando Pessoa:** *March, 28th. Absented myself from the course; will be absent also tomorrow; there is a written exercise in Geography and I know nothing at all of the matter. I hate all work that is imposed.*

*Flipping pages; clock ticking; library*

[00:04:18.14]

**José Barreto:** He had a very bad opinion of some teachers and he did not like his classmates, he did not like the course. He was especially interested in the philosophical themes, thus history and philosophy. Then in 1907 there was a student strike and he took the opportunity to drop out of school.

**Manuela Nogueira:** My grandfather was furious, because he knew he was a bright young man. And to think he was not going to graduate. Well, I have a letter still, it's not generally known, no one has ever published it nor they ever do so, because it shows huge anger between my grandmother and her husband about him giving up the course.

**Fernando Pessoa:** *Friday, April, 20th. Holidays still. Biblioteca Nacional; began reading Critique of Pure Reason in the French translation by Barni. Wrote several little poems. Thought deeply on my Metaphysics.*

*Clock ticking; library*

**Pablo Javier Pérez López:** So there is a time in Lisbon when Pessoa rather than reading literature, Shakespeare or other authors, is reading philosophy. Because he has that willingness to search for the meaning of life. And it is also the moment of his life when he himself writes in his diary: “I have to read more poetry in order to erase or go against this very strong set of philosophical readings”. So he becomes a poet thinker. He could never be an academic. The dialogue between thought and poetry, which is in fact the dramatic instinct and the instinct of the tragic that we find in the heteronomy and in his entire work. Also in the Book of Disquiet, for example.

[00:06:16.16]

*Fado music*

**Fernando Pessoa:** *May 11, 1906. Must obtain money from England by sending my compositions. It's a shame that I have no typewriter. I could buy one with the money I get.*

*Clock ticking; library*

**José Barreto:** Between 1905 and 1908 he writes mainly in English, poetry and prose. It was only around 1909 that he began to write more in Portuguese.

**Fernando Cabral Martins:** He had not read Portuguese literature so far, he had only read English literature. And it is after his return that he began to take an interest in reading Portuguese literature. He spent long hours reading at the National Library. This interest came to him also through an uncle, Henrique Rosa, also a poet, whose work he was later to publish in Athena magazine. Rosa passed on to him much of his enthusiasm and also much of his knowledge. He was an important person to Pessoa at the time.

*Café*

**Sofia:** At that time he still lived with relatives in Lisbon. But that was about to change. We are going to hear about it in the next episode. Let's walk to Rossio. To make your way there, walk down Rua Garrett and turn left on to Rua do Carmo. When you've got your bearings you can start the episode and listen as we walk.

## **Credits:**

### Voices:

Rita Patrício, António Mega Ferreira, Teresa Rita Lopes, Manuela Parreira da Silva, Richard Zenith, José Barreto, Jorge Loureiro, Manuela Nogueira, Pablo Javier Pérez López, Fernando Cabral Martins and Sofia Saldanha.

### Music:

Excerpt of Fado do Embuçado (lyrics: Gabriel de Oliveira; music: José Marques "Piscalarete").

### Bibliography:

Pessoa, Fernando, "Lisbon Revisited (1926), A Little Larger Than the Entire Universe: Selected Poems, Edited and Translated by Richard Zenith. London: Penguin Books, 2006;

Escritos Autobiográficos, Automáticos e de Reflexão Pessoal, Poesias. Edição e posfácio Richard Zenith, Lisboa, Assírio e Alvim, 2003.