

Episode 5: **It's in the air that everything tools! It's there that everything exists!...****

Location: **Rossio /Baixa**

Street sounds

Sofia: This is Praça D. Pedro IV, also know as Rossio. Café Irmãos Unidos was located in this square, one of the places where the *Orpheu Generation* met. The artist Almada Negreiros made a portrait of Pessoa for the cafe. We can see it later at the Casa Fernando Pessoa, in Campo de Ourique, one of the stops on our tour. It was in the cafes of Lisbon that Portuguese modernism was defined.

Cafe

[00:00:40.27]

Rita Patrício: Through Pessoa's correspondence we can see that many gatherings took place in cafes and through the accounts of conversations that went on in cafes we understand that the cafes were an important part of the literary circles. The aesthetic discussions between the protagonists of modernism took place there.

Sofia: Pessoa was a regular customer in many cafes. In this square alone, besides Café Irmãos Unidos, he used to go to the Brasileira do Rossio and Café Martinho do Rossio. Fernando Pessoa probably met Mário de Sá-Carneiro in one of those cafes in downtown Lisbon.

Fernando Cabral Martins: Sá-Carneiro and Pessoa met in 1912.

Teresa Rita Lopes: Maybe late 1911. In 1912 Mário de Sá-Carneiro went to Paris to study law, but of course, I think one can count on the fingers of one hand the number of times he actually went to college, right?

Fernando Cabral Martins: At the time Paris was experiencing a period of experimentation.

Music from the 1910s

Fernando Cabral Martins: And Sá-Carneiro told Pessoa in letters mainly, about this movement and about the avant-garde energy of those years in Paris.

[00:02:09.17]

Jerónimo Pizarro: And those letters were from two writers who were trying to construct what we now understand as the first phase of modernism, or first modernism. They were attempting to introduce modern currents into Portuguese literature, they were exchanging literary texts, and all the literary texts produced during those 3 to 4 years were being shared.

Music from the 1910s, cafe

Sofia: We've only seen part of that correspondence. Most of the letters Pessoa wrote to Sá-Carneiro were lost in a hotel in Paris.

Richard Zenith: And through their correspondence we can see the influence they had on each other and truth be told, I believe that the influence was mainly of Mário de Sá-Carneiro on Fernando Pessoa.

Rita Patrício: Both Fernando Pessoa and Mário de Sá-Carneiro looked at the period they were living in and thought there was a need for urgent agitation. And the mission of the poets was in that sense an avant-garde mission that is to bring Portugal to the same level as the rest of Europe.

Teresa Rita Lopes: One of the ways to keep up with Europe was to create a magazine, there were many magazines at the time.

Music from the 1910s

Rita Patrício: Pessoa made his debut not as a poet, but as a literary critic in the magazine *Águia*, announcing a Supra-Camões. That is announcing a figure that would radically reinvent all Portuguese poetry and would begin a golden era for Portuguese literature. This was in 1912 and from then on Pessoa made several attempts to start new magazines.

Teresa Rita Lopes: Pessoa when in his times of nationalistic fervour, had thought of creating a magazine called *Lusitânia*, but after the meeting with Sá-Carneiro they began to think of one that would be called *Europe*, which later turned out to be *Orpheu*.

Cafe

[00:04:15.17]

Rita Patrício: *Orpheu* is indeed the great Portuguese modernist moment. It is a quake that hits Lisbon, which has several smaller replicas. It immediately became news, because of the eccentric side of the magazine and was immediately labelled as a crazy magazine, made by people who had just come out of Rilhafoles, the mental health institution. And so the scandal ensured a commercial success. In fact Pessoa tried to send the magazine to a friend who was in the Azores and he wasn't even sure he could get copies, precisely because the magazine was from that point of view a big success.

Sofia: *Orpheu - Quarterly Magazine of Literature* was published in late March 1915. Two issues were printed. The third issue, for which we still have the unpublished copy, never happened. Mário de Sá-Carneiro's father, financier of the first editions refused to pay any more money on printing.

Underground cave water sound

Rita Patrício: *Orpheu* is an intriguing title for a modern magazine that caused so much scandal in Portugal. Orpheus is the name of a mythical character to which a myth is

associated often linked to poetic issues. Orpheus is given the chance of going back to hell and rescuing Eurydice, the woman he loves, because she died. He is granted that grace under a condition, to never look back once Eurydice is rescued and he can only see her in the light of day. It turns out that Orpheus is unable to resist. Half way he looks back and Eurydice gets lost forever. The drama of Orpheus is the drama of not resisting the seduction of the past. All newness in Pessoa's work means, like Orpheus, always looking back. Pessoa would find repugnant any kind of amnesic art.

Cafe

[00:06:10.24]

Ricardo Reis: *There must be in the smallest poem of a poet something which proves Homer's existence. **

Underground cave water sound

Steffen Dix: In Pessoa, modernism is a mixture of all styles and all times binding together, from antiquity to modernity.

Cafe

Rita Patrício: If the entire nineteenth century believed that the poet should express himself and the work of art is an expression of his individuality and his subjectivity, modernists draw attention to fiction and how all art has to be fiction. And in that sense the real life of a poet isn't important.

Jerónimo Pizarro: And Fernando Pessoa complicates this much more. At a certain point he says that only poor writers are completely sincere when they write. There is this famous poem "The poet is a faker", but the poem is dated 1st April, April Fool's day. So we might be missing the whole joke, because it is the idea of pretending, and yet it is on the day of pretending. Pessoa was always joking with us.

Music from the 10s

Álvaro de Campos:

How I love all of you, every last one of you!

How I love all of you, in every way possible,

With my eyes, ears, and sense of smell,

With touch (how much it means for me to touch you!)

And with my mind, like an antenna that quivers because of you!

Ah, how all my senses lust for you!

[00:08:06.24]

Richard Zenith: In 1914 Pessoa's heteronyms were born and Sá-Carneiro was very impressed with that miracle, with those other selves Pessoa invented. He wrote a letter to Pessoa to comment on the heteronyms, which he finds the most fantastic thing. Pessoa's ability to feel things he did not live. So it is not so much that Pessoa influenced Sá-Carneiro, it is simply that Sá-Carneiro was Sá-Carneiro, a great poet, but on that particular point he could not follow Fernando Pessoa.

Mário de Sá-Carneiro: *Paris, July 13, 1914: ... I... in each line of yours I read, I feel my pride growing: pride because, in any case, I'm the one whose work is nearest to yours - as near as the land and the sun - for counting you in the number of my intimate people and in short: because Fernando Pessoa likes what I write. **

Street sounds

Richard Zenith: Sá-Carneiro's suicide was premeditated and it seems that it was written, in its essence, isn't that how it seems? Because he always wanted to go to the end. In writing and finally in life too.

Sofia: On the day he committed suicide, on April 26, 1916, Sá-Carneiro writes a note to Pessoa:

Mário de Sá-Carneiro: *An immense farewell from your poor Mário de Sá-Carneiro.* *

Ambulance

[00:10:21.12]

Richard Zenith: Sá-Carneiro had two good friends at the time and he arranged for a friend to go to his house, and when his friend arrived Sá-Carneiro had already ingested the strychnine. Then they called the ambulance, took him to hospital, but it was already too late of course.

Rain

Sofia: Fernando Pessoa received the news of Sá-Carneiro's death in an office here downtown. 18 years after the death of his friend, he evokes in a poem the reunion between the two, in a time and dimension outside this life we know.

Fernando Pessoa:

Oh, my greatest friend, never again.

In the buried landscape of this life

I will find such a dear soul

To the things that in my being are the real ones.

No more, no more, and since you left

This closed prison named world,

My heart is inert and dry

And what I am is a dream that is sad.

Rain

Sofia: You can now proceed to Praça da Figueira, our next stop.

Credits:

Voices: Rita Patrício, Fernando Cabral Martins, Teresa Rita Lopes, Jerónimo Pizarro, Richard Zenith, Hugo Curado, Steffen Dix, Luís Barroso, Paulo Bragança and Sofia Saldanha.

Bibliography

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Edition ** Translated by Jethro Soutar

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