

Episode 11. **The hour has come!**

Location: **Terreiro do Paço / Baixa**

Street sounds

Sofia: We are in in Terreiro do Paço. Here, on the 1st February 1908, the King of Portugal D. Carlos and his eldest son, Luis Filipe, were shot dead.

Fado music; carbine shooting

Sofia: The monarchy fell. The people were divided between republicans and monarchists. Portugal was a country in flux and Pessoa was energised.

Crowd protesting

[00:00:40.24]

José Barreto: We cannot find a period in Fernando Pessoa's life in which he supported the established power structures. He was always reacting against them. He was always critical and against them.

Crowd applause

Sofia: In 1926 there was a coup in Portugal, which resulted in a military dictatorship. This was then followed by the Estado Novo [New State], an authoritarian, conservative regime, founded by António de Oliveira Salazar.

António de Oliveira Salazar addressing the masses

António de Oliveira Salazar: *We won't question God and virtue. We won't question our homeland and its history. We won't question the authority and its prestige. We won't question the family and its morals. We won't question the honour of work and our duty to work.*

Crowd applause

José Barreto: He is critical towards the Estado Novo and Salazar, but he accepted it. He said "I do not know what the Estado Novo is, but well, Salazar manages finances well, currency has credibility abroad", so he thought the Estado Novo was not so bad. But then he turned completely against the regime in 1934, 1935.

Portuguese legion's hymn; Portuguese legion marching

Sofia: One of the regime's figures, António Ferro, knew Fernando Pessoa from the times of *Orpheu*. Ferro was incidentally the editor of the *Orpheu* magazine's first edition.

[00:02:13.20]

Teresa Rita Lopes: When the Estado Novo was formed, in 1934, António Ferro was in charge of creating the National Propaganda Secretariat.

Sofia: The National Propaganda Secretariat created a literary prize, the Antero de Quental Prize, which aimed to award a book that was nationalistic in nature.

José Barreto: *Mensagem* which was first called *Portugal* was just one of the several works that Fernando Pessoa had in mind to publish. He just had to write another 10 or 12 poems, in 1934, to finish the book, so it was relatively easy to finish the book and publish it and win a prize that was more or less already promised.

Teresa Rita Lopes: Mário Beirão, one of the judges, knew Pessoa from the times of *Águia* magazine. They used to be friends, but Mário Beirão didn't like him anymore. So they didn't give Pessoa the first prize, they gave it to a monk who wrote a book called *Romaria*. But António Ferro found a way of awarding Fernando Pessoa. He created another prize for a poetry book, so *Mensagem* was also awarded and Pessoa got five thousand escudos, which at the time was a lot of money.

Portuguese legion's hymn; birds singing

Pedro Teixeira da Mota: *Mensagem* is a work that has a lasting quality. It's a book which Fernando Pessoa worked on from an early stage. It has a perfect combination of word, rhythm, sound, image and spiritual forces that are evoked from those people. Those forces are within us and we should express them. So it is a magical work.

[00:04:25.05]

Steffen Dix: There is an esoteric strand in it, but that was Pessoa's hope, and he always had this hope, that Portugal would someday return to the glory it had in the past. It is as if esotericism was the only way of explaining how a rural country like Portugal, with a high percentage of illiterates, could have discovered the world. Rationally that's quite hard to explain.

Ocean

José Barreto: António Ferro was aware of the literary value of Fernando Pessoa. What was Ferro's intention? He explained it. He wanted to turn him into the poet of the Estado Novo, the poet and prophet of the Estado Novo. And he wanted to turn *Mensagem* into a prophetic book. Let's not forget that *Mensagem* ends with "The hour has come!" And this happened right at the beginning of the Estado Novo.

Sofia: But Pessoa was never interested in being a writer for the regime.

José Barreto: A month after he received the prize he decides to write that bombastic article, which he called "bomba", "I prepared a bomb for the first time in my life and threw it out into the middle of the street". Which was an article praising the number-one

enemy of the regime, Freemasonry. That was seen as a huge ingratitude, a childish reaction from a man “to whom we have just given a prize”. From that point on Fernando Pessoa was out.

Waves

Sofia: There was a prize-giving ceremony. Pessoa did not attend it. Salazar made a speech.

Voice introducing Salazar's speech: *The Prime Minister Professor Oliveira Salazar will now speak to the nation.*

Crowd applause

[00:06:22.19]

José Barreto: The speech caused in him a reaction of enormous rejection. Because Salazar said that censorship was necessary. And also that writers and artists should follow the government's guidelines. One thing is to prohibit, to say "You cannot write this". But

it's another thing to say "You have to write this", that's a completely different story. When he turned against the regime, he said a very funny thing "I was not aware that in order to have a good administration we had to sell our souls. I already miss the time when the country was poorly run."

António de Oliveira Salazar addressing the masses

Sofia: That was the turning point.

Fernando Pessoa:

António de Oliveira Salazar.

Three names in regular sequence ...

António is António.

Oliveira is a tree.

Salazar is just a name.

It makes sense so far

*Yet the meaning of it all is a bit bizarre. **

António de Oliveira Salazar addressing the masses: *All is well as it is and it couldn't be different.*

Street sounds

Pedro Teixeira da Mota: Then in March he wrote that famous biographical note of the 30th March in which he defines himself, and it is where he says he is a liberal, a nationalist liberal and he also says he is a Gnostic Christian, loyal to the secret traditions of Christianity and then in the position of the initiated, he mentions having been initiated “in the 3 lower grades of the apparently extinct templar order of Portugal”. Therefore, when he says Gnostic Christian, he is also saying that he is completely in opposition to the Roman Catholic Church. Since he thought it was one of the forces behind the ban on secret associations.

[00:08:19.00]

Sofia: In 1928 Pessoa published an essay in *Presença* Magazine, entitled Bibliographic Board. *Presença* was based in Coimbra. Its editors were José Régio, Adolfo Casais Monteiro and João Gaspar Simões.

Rita Patrício: One of the main goals of the *Presença* magazine was to publish and resurrect, so to speak, the work of Mário de Sá-Carneiro. And from the outset Fernando Pessoa maintained a fairly regular correspondence with these names. And it is a very interesting correspondence, because Pessoa realises that they are his first serious readers and critics. Also, this correspondence gives us absolutely precious information, on the one hand about the way Pessoa began to be read and then how Pessoa reacted.

Pedro Sepúlveda: The first study on Pessoa was published by João Gaspar Simões when Pessoa was still alive. It is a chapter of a book called *The Mystery of Poetry*, which Pessoa was very excited about, he found it absolutely extraordinary.

Pedro Teixeira da Mota: He writes in a letter that he almost cried, when he received great praise from Gaspar Simões.

António Mega Ferreira: He was flattered, and above all, somehow he realised that what he had always believed in had begun to gain substance, that is the recognition not only from his generation, but what really interested him, was the recognition of the next generations.

[00:10:02.19]

Rita Patrício: So when Pessoa was writing for the young presencistas he knew that he was writing for the entire twentieth century and the twenty-first century. And in that sense it is very interesting to note how Pessoa tried to shape the idea that the presencistas were forming of him and of the first modernism. The second modernism was a very conservative movement when compared to the first. And Pessoa's lesson on pretence, on fictionalization and the playful game he created with the heteronyms, is something that really disturbed the second Portuguese modernism.

Sofia: *Presença* magazine published 54 issues between 1927 and 1940. We have finished the first part of our tour. We suggest you take tram number 28, which you can find in Rua da Conceição, which is the street where Sá-Carneiro was born. The tram will take you to Campo de Ourique. You can also walk or take a taxi. Our next stop is Casa Fernando Pessoa.

Credits:

Voices:

José Barreto, António de Oliveira Salazar, Teresa Rita Lopes, Pedro Teixeira da Mota, Steffen Dix, Jorge Loureiro, Rita Patrício, Pedro Sepúlveda, António Mega Ferreira and Sofia Saldanha.

Music:

Excerpt of Fado do Embuçado (letra de Gabriel de Oliveira Música de José Marques "Piscalarete". Criado para o repertório de Natália dos Anjos.)

Bibliography:

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

António de Oliveira Salazar. Da República (1910 - 1935) . Fernando Pessoa. (Recolha de textos de Maria Isabel Rocheta e Maria Paula Mourão. Introdução e organização de Joel Serrão). Lisboa: Ática, 1979. - p. 349. 1ª publ. in Diário Popular , Lisboa, 30 Maio e 6 Junho 1974 . inc?
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* Free translation by Eugénia Brito