

Episode 13. **And he saw that he was the Princess that was sleeping \***

Location: **Route between Casa Fernando Pessoa and Cemitério dos Prazeres /  
Campo de Ourique**

*Dada music*

**Sofia:** The early twentieth century was a period of great pessimism. A generation of young soldiers died in the trenches. The progress and European enthusiasm of the nineteenth century was followed by years of disillusionment. Rationalism faced a crisis.

[00:00:29.10]

**Steffen Dix:** Esotericism in the early twentieth century was a very visible phenomenon, very important for many intellectuals and avant-garde people.

**Jerónimo Pizarro:** Fernando Pessoa was one of the writers of the twentieth century who perhaps took most interest in esoteric currents. Rosicrucianism, automatic writing, astrology, initiation, hermeticism, alchemy, the translations he made of Blavatsky,

theosophy, the interest in magic. Perhaps 10% or more of Fernando Pessoa's legacy has to be classified as esoteric.

**Steffen Dix:** This journey began in his youth, from the time he began to develop his own thoughts.

*Seagulls*

**Steffen Dix:** And especially at the end of his life, it became more and more visible.

*Birds singing*

**Steffen Dix:** And many of those poems or writings of esotericism date from 1930 to 1935.

**Jerónimo Pizarro:** And Fernando Pessoa is both interested in parts of esotericism that were more important at the time and others that are millennial traditions. And he was a very disciplined student, for a long time he was a self-taught student in astrology and he

came to have a very advanced knowledge on that subject. He was able to make complex astrological calculations.

*Street sounds*

**Patrícia Nazaré Barbosa:** And in his estate there are also studies on astrology and texts on astrology that he was working on. He went in search of other people who at the time were developing this discipline.

*Church bells*

**Patrícia Nazaré Barbosa:** He got in touch with astrologers in different parts of the world also to know more about his own astrological chart. He had some queries about his time of birth.

*Flipping pages; church bells*

**Patrícia Nazaré Barbosa:** I look at the chart and think, the greatest work this man has done is what we haven't seen yet. And his chart shows precisely the whole intensity

focusing on three areas and two of them have to do with occult work, with that inner work and with spiritual work.

*Street sounds*

[00:03:13.00]

**Pedro Teixeira da Mota:** In Fernando Pessoa's spirituality there is a great absorption of Christianity, because he believed that Christianity had also received an earlier gnostic tradition, that came from paganism, and from the mysteries of the human soul and its nature, where do we come from and where do we go. Then, what are the forces of nature and soul, and how can we work on them.

*Inside a church; footsteps; gregorian chant*

**Pedro Teixeira da Mota:** And finally, aspects of divinity and angels and archangels and all that. Fernando Pessoa studied all those subjects.

**Steffen Dix:** He had had a traditional catholic education, of course, but he also had an English education, very rational and those two worlds were always in contradiction inside him.

**Patrícia Nazaré Barbosa:** He had to go through a constant process of transformation and detachment, and what is widely known is the way he unfolded himself in terms of his identity. And this had naturally everything to do with the concentration on his astrological chart, the energy of Gemini, all its duplicity, all its multiplicity. And there is a theme of orphanhood in the chart. He feels that he is a little distant from his peers, however he is constantly seeking them out, and he creates this strategy of closeness, like a child playing with an invisible world.

**Pedro Teixeira da Mota:** I can read one of his most important texts. In it he surpasses all the intermediate levels of existence. Knowing who God is, does not depend on the Hebrew nor on anagrams, nor on symbols. It does not depend either on any given language, spoken or thought. We meet God through the encounter of our soul with itself and through the encounter of God with Himself within us.

**Steffen Dix:** That fascinating thing in his work is that he was never sure the world really exists, or if we are dreaming it. He walked through all possible realities. Of course he was interested in esotericism as a way of understanding the enigmas of the world.

*Church bells*

**Sofia:** The esoteric paths that Fernando Pessoa travelled are scattered throughout his work. Pessoa belongs not only to this planet, he belongs to all realities. And when he leaves this earthly existence, he has certainties, but also many doubts. And filled with curiosity, he leaves. As soon as you are at Prazeres Cemetery you can start the next episode. Fernando Pessoa's family grave is number 4371. Make your way there.

**Credits:**

Voices:

Steffen Dix, Jerónimo Pizarro, Patrícia Nazaré Barbosa, Pedro Teixeira da Mota and Sofia Saldanha.

Music:

Corale And Serenata by Antonio Russolo.

Album: Dada For Now -A Collection Of Futurist And Dada Sound Works.

Label: ARK-DOVE 4

Year: 1985.

Bibliography:

Eros e Psique, Poesias. Fernando Pessoa. (Nota explicativa de João Gaspar Simões e Luiz de Montalvor.) Lisboa: Ática, 1942 (15<sup>a</sup> ed. 1995). - 237. 1<sup>a</sup> publ. in Presença , nº 41-42. Coimbra: Mai. 1934. \* Free translation by Eugénia Brito