

Episode 15. **To live is not necessary: what is necessary is to create ***

No location

Paper shuffling; drawer opening

Sofia: Pessoa dies. He leaves a trunk full of papers, about 30 thousand and they are organised in a confusing way.

Pencil writing

[00:00:22.10]

Fernando Cabral Martins: There was no organization in the sense that nothing was complete, nothing was closed, I think, because no one knows really what was in that trunk and in that cabinet and in that suitcase, where things were stored.

Footsteps on wooden floor

Manuela Nogueira: My mother constantly had people asking about her brother. And then there were a lot of people that would go to our house to see the things he left. And my mum used to offer snacks to everyone, because she had the English craze of five o'clock tea, everyone had to have five o'clock tea. Always. I'm also very keen on five o'clock tea. And my mother would go to the kitchen, to prepare the five o'clock tea and all those people would stay by themselves in the room where the papers and the books were stored. Some people cut the books, took his signature off, and those books are now in Casa Fernando Pessoa. Books were stolen, pages torn off. We only saw it much later. Some things got out of place, others got disorganised, but anyway, he kept a lot of things. We have a little piece of paper from the day before he died or the night before, before going into hospital, 3 days before. It is a shopping list he wrote asking for a bottle of wine, a soap bar and something else, I don't remember. He kept that little piece of paper. He had that habit. So when the academics started studying his legacy got very confused with so much information.

Old printing machine

Sofia: The leading figures of *Presença* were the first to publish what remained in the trunk.

[00:02:13.13]

Teresa Rita Lopes: At that time there were no photocopies, you know that changes things a lot. So the publishers took the easiest way. They took what was typed and sent it to the typography. Often the originals got lost. So Pessoa was very badly published, poorly published, until the 1960's.

Rita Patrício: Those editions are now recognised as very dated, very censored with some gaps, but they were the first and were the ones that made Pessoa known. Nowadays, those editions have a strong historical interest, and they have the great merit of showing that Pessoa is much more than what had been shown until then.

Teresa Rita Lopes: The archive was about to disappear. The family wanted to sell it to the Gulbenkian Foundation, but at the time the foundation was not considering buying archives. I knew about this while I was in Paris and in Paris the director of the Gulbenkian Foundation told me, because he knew I was studying Pessoa, I was doing my thesis on him. So I was in a mental turmoil. And I immediately told my friend António José Saraiva, who was exiled like myself for political reasons. And he immediately called his brother. His brother was José Hermano Saraiva. He was a minister, the last minister of culture of Salazar. And José Hermano Saraiva was very close to his brother, although they were politically and ideologically in opposed camps, and he was also very sensitive to cultural issues. But it was him. He used to tell this story on television and say "Ask Teresa Rita". It is the truth indeed. It is thanks to him, the last minister of Salazar that

Pessoa's archives are still here in Portugal. Because the family, and they confirmed this to me, since Gulbenkian did not want to buy it, they were already dealing with the English that were about to acquire the estate.

Library; clock ticking

Sofia: José Hermano Saraiva ordered an inventory of Pessoa's estate to be made. It was acquired by the Portuguese Government in 1979, after the fall of the dictatorship. Two years later it was incorporated into the National Library Archives.

[00:04:49.23]

António Mega Ferreira: Suddenly in 1981 the National Library received that shapeless monster that was Fernando Pessoa's estate. The issue with Pessoa's estate is the same as the issue with Pessoa himself.

Sheep bells

Richard Zenith: On the same page there could be prose about, I don't know, his ideas on a political subject, in another corner of the page an ode by Ricardo Reis, in another corner a poem by Alberto Caeiro, all written on the same day.

Library; flipping pages

António Mega Ferreira: If anyone wants to do a serious, profound and scientifically unassailable work on the Pessoa's estate, he or she has to read the entire archive, an inhuman and impossible task. There are tens of thousands, not only texts, fragments, small notes, I don't know if anyone could read everything, I doubt that anyone can ever read everything.

Sofia: In addition to the difficulty in dealing with the quantity of work, there is difficulty in deciphering Fernando Pessoa's handwriting.

Library; clock ticking

[00:06:21.13]

António Mega Ferreira: Because his handwriting, in his best moments, that is during the day, is still legible, but sometimes as the night progressed everything became much more complicated. And so there are problems like that. Now it's the vastness of Pessoa's estate that makes it such a bottomless pit.

Sheep bells

Steffen Dix: This really shows how vivid Fernando Pessoa still is. New editions of his work keep being published. We can create our own Pessoa and create his own story, as Tabucchi did, as Saramago did, as Luis Borges did, as well, with his little letter. We can continue his life and his work the way we want. Nowadays we can say that it is a blessing that he left things the way he did. If we had left a complete work, we would interpret it and it would be a classic. But as he didn't, it is still alive and maybe even more alive than before his death.

Antonio Cardiello: But what if this is all on purpose? If this fragmentation so complex, where we cannot find the way out, was all well thought out, premeditated, constructed? Then we are before a genius that humanity has never seen before.

Sheep bells

Sofia: Using astrology, Fernando Pessoa came to the conclusion that in the year 2198 a major figure was going to be very important for the Portuguese language and for the future of Portugal. He concluded that that figure would be him, wholly recognised, fully understood.

[00:08:10.25]

Patrícia Nazaré Barbosa: Pessoa also came from the future and only in the future can he be understood. When Pessoa says that he will only be understood in 2198, we have a perception of the time we still need to fully process this evolutionary tendency, so mankind still has a lot of work to do. And Pessoa in a sense brought a vision of the future, a knowledge. And he had no one to talk to about it. As a social individual, it was as if he was talking to a deaf society. So maybe we can still learn from the things he left. And together we can develop this evolutionary journey. So the contribution he gave isn't closed. It's still operational, because it has not yet completed its purpose.

Sheep; street sound; fado music playing on the street

[00:09:50.04]

Sofia: Fernando Pessoa an intrepid traveller. A man who is no longer of flesh and blood, but it's still to be found walking around Lisbon and beyond. And it is interesting to wonder what is still to come from Fernando Pessoa.

Street sound; fado music playing on the street; people talking and walking about

Credits:

Voices:

Fernando Cabral Martins, Manuela Nogueira, Teresa Rita Lopes, Rita Patrício, António Mega Ferreira, Richard Zenith, Steffen Dix, Antonio Cardiello, Patrícia Nazaré Barbosa and Sofia Saldanha.

Bibliography:

Escritos Autobiográficos, Automáticos e de Reflexão Pessoal, Poesias. Edição e posfácio Richard Zenith, Lisboa, Assírio e Alvim, 2003. * Free translation by Eugénia Brito