

An ibis that flew too close to the sun

[Um íbis que voou muito perto do Sol]

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Keywords

Fernando Pessoa, Empreza Ibis, Failed enterprise, Estate, Inheritance.

Abstract

The following is a chapter from *Pessoa: A Biography*, forthcoming in July 2021 from Liveright/Norton. It covers the rise and fall of the Empreza Ibis, discussing a little-known poem by Pessoa that suggests the enterprise was doomed to fail as well as his literary reaction to that failure: he began writing the English sonnets that attempted to compete with and perhaps surpass Shakespeare. For the readers of *Pessoa Plural*, the chapter has been enhanced with facsimile documents from the Pessoa Archive, thanks to the collaboration of the journal's editors.

Palavras-chave

Fernando Pessoa, Empreza Ibis, Empresa falhada, Espólio, Herança.

Resumo

O capítulo que se segue é do livro *Pessoa: A Biography*, a sair em Julho de 2021, pela Liveright/Norton. Cobre a ascensão e queda da Empreza Ibis, discutindo um poema pouco conhecido de Pessoa que sugere que a empresa estava condenada ao fracasso, bem como a sua reacção literária a esse fracasso: começou a escrever os sonetos ingleses que tentavam competir com e talvez ultrapassar Shakespeare. Para os leitores da *Pessoa Plural*, o capítulo foi melhorado com documentos fac-símile do Arquivo Pessoa, graças à colaboração dos editores da revista.

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Pessoa was supposedly in a barbershop, getting a shave and a trim, when he spotted an ad in the newspaper for a used printing press. With his face still partly covered with lather, he jumped out of the chair and, brandishing the paper, ran out of the shop in a mad rush to contact the seller before anyone else did. It was Pessoa's younger half-brother who would report this story, which apparently circulated among the poet's survivors. However much they may have enhanced it (the shaving foam seems an added flourish), the essential facts of the story were true: on August 5, 1909, Pessoa saw a newspaper ad for a printing press, and he proceeded to close a deal as soon as possible (cf. ROSA, 1969: 232 and FERREIRA, 2005: 51).

António Maria Silvano, the great-uncle who administered Pessoa's inherited estate, must have heaved a worried sigh when he heard how the young man was going to invest his money, but at this point he could not stop him. Two and a half months earlier, on May 26, Silvano had drawn up a balance sheet of credits and debits for recent activity in the heir's estate. The credits included large dividend payments on twenty-four shares of stock in the Bank of Portugal and slightly exceeded Pessoa's debits, which were for his room and board and other living expenses. The amount of ready cash in his account, though considerable, was not exactly a fortune, but the bank shares were worth well over four million reis (cf. FERREIRA, 2005: 55-56, 215-216; cf. Fig. 1. BNP/E3, 137E-58^a) the equivalent of sixteen years of room and board. Pessoa did not need his prudent uncle to point out that the dividend income from the bank shares, as demonstrated by the balance sheet, was just enough to cover his basic expenses. In other words, he could live off the estate, as long as he lived frugally, without ever touching the principal. The young poet could only have smiled. His imagination was far too large and lively to give such a reasonable, uninspired idea any serious consideration.

Meanwhile, Pessoa's stepfather had prevailed on his two brothers in Lisbon to find a job for Fernando that could develop into a career. Henrique Rosa was too withdrawn from the practical world to be of much help, but Júlio Leopoldo Rosa succeeded in the search: Pessoa was offered a position at Vacuum Oil Company with a starting salary of twenty-five thousand reis per month.¹ If he stuck with it, he would soon be promoted and earn significantly more, but he rejected out of hand the idea of working for someone else at a job with set hours. Being his own boss, he could potentially earn much more, while at the same time doing something for literature and for Portugal.

He turned twenty-one in June and, with inheritance in hand, acted quickly. The printing press he saw advertised in August was located in Portalegre, a district capital near the Spanish border—one hundred miles east of Lisbon, but it took him

¹ His rejection of the job offer, and the salary he would have earned, are mentioned in Maria Nogueira Rosa's 12 Jan. 1913 letter to Pessoa (author heirs's collection). Eduardo Freitas da COSTA (1951: 61) claimed that the starting salary was higher: 40,000 reis per month.

six hours to get there by train. The local economy revolved around cork, olive oil, lumber, and livestock, but Pessoa was only interested in his printing press, which was being carefully dismantled and packed for shipping. On August 24, after having drunk a lot of “decidedly alcoholic” wine at the Hotel Brito, he wrote an “epistolary composition,” in English, to Armando Teixeira Rebelo, the classmate from the School of Arts and Letters who had also spent time in South Africa as a child. He remarked that the weather was exceedingly hot, that there was nothing to do in the town except “get tired of doing nothing,” and that it was “taking a damned long time” to get everything ready to ship. Although his tone is jocular throughout, the mild desperation expressed at the end of the letter seems to have been authentic. He complained of “hyper-boredom” and of “ultra-get-tired-of-everythingness,” yet he was “unable to summon energy” to read a book he’d found (cf. ZENITH, 2012: 144-146).

It was probably not energy but concentration that Pessoa could not muster for reading the book, even though reading was his favorite pastime. His mind was too busy whirling with plans. But the next day, still in Portalegre, he did manage to sketch an Alexander Search poem:

What is life that we should care for it?
 What is love that we should bear for it
 Hope and despair and misery?

Nothing is worth anything.
 Let us shut out hope, [*line left incomplete*]
 And cross our arms and close our eyes
 And let apathy be king.

(BNP/E3, 49A²-37^r; cf. Figs. 2 & 3)²

Eager as he was to set up shop as a publisher, Pessoa shielded himself with a protective layer of apathy. The first stanza above justifies his ambitious enterprise: win or fail, he would at least not simply have lived and loved the way most people do. The second stanza establishes an attitude of sublime detachment from the project, which he suddenly realized was risky. The path to success was laden with pitfalls, and he was placing his entire inherited fortune on the line, but in a certain part of his being he decided to cross his arms and close his eyes, leaving the whole business in the hands of fate. While this attitude may have buffered him against whatever disappointment might follow, it also guaranteed that success was unlikely. Pessoa dedicated only part of his heart and soul to the business, and in that heart dwelled an aristocrat, unwilling to get his hands dirty. His enterprise would rely almost entirely on hired help.

The used printing press cost Pessoa around one million reis, almost a quarter of his inheritance, and he had to pay to have it dismantled, shipped, and

² The manuscript contains several alternate endings, all of which preserve the notion of apathy being king.

reassembled in Lisbon. He also needed additional equipment and replacement parts, which he purchased through Aniceto Mascaró, the cousin by marriage who had arranged for his brief internship at R. G. Dun two years earlier. The entrepreneurial Mascaró, who got involved in various businesses over the years, had recently opened a Lisbon firm that sold printing machinery and supplies imported from Germany and elsewhere. He was taking advantage of the local boom in printing—there were close to a hundred printing offices in Lisbon—but presumably did not take advantage of Pessoa. Nor did Fernando expect any special favors. He was proud, evasive as to his ultimate intention, which was to become a literary publisher, and closemouthed about his finances. In September, at the latest, he sold his stock in the Bank of Portugal without telling anyone except, in all likelihood, his cousin Mário, swearing him to secrecy (cf. FERREIRA, 2005: 57-58; notebook 144M-31^v; cf. <https://purl.pt/1000/1/cadernos/index.html>). At least half the money went to pay for the used press, additional equipment, and set-up costs, and the rest would be needed for operating and living expenses until the business began turning a profit. In a small notebook, Pessoa jotted down figures and reckoned these expenses would amount to around two hundred thousand reis per month. It was a disastrously conservative estimate (cf. notebook 144M-1^v; on-line).³

In the same notebook, he drew up a list of eleven books in translation that he wanted to publish. Doing his best to be realistic, he selected works of fiction he thought had sales potential, including novels by the best-selling authors C. Ranger Gull (aka Guy Thorne) and W. W. Jacobs, as well as literary classics such as the short stories of Edgar Allan Poe and Pessoa's all-time favorite novel, *The Pickwick Papers*. He also planned a *Revista Lusitana* [*Lusitanian Review*], sixteen pages of which would be reserved for his own work (cf. notebook 144M)⁴. He named his publishing house *Empreza Ibis*—*Typographica e Editora* [*Ibis Printing and Publishing*]. The ibis Pessoa had in mind was from the shores of the Nile, in ancient Egypt, where the god Thoth, scribe of the other gods and the inventor of writing, was usually portrayed with a human body and an ibis head, making this bird a symbol for the divine art of writing. Now the same bird served as a talisman for Pessoa's venture in publishing. It would fly, unfortunately, too close to the sun.

³ FERREIRA (2005: 41-65), provides the most complete account of Pessoa's purchase of the printing press and accessory equipment.

⁴ *Revista Lusitania* and *Revista Ibis* were alternate titles for the magazine.

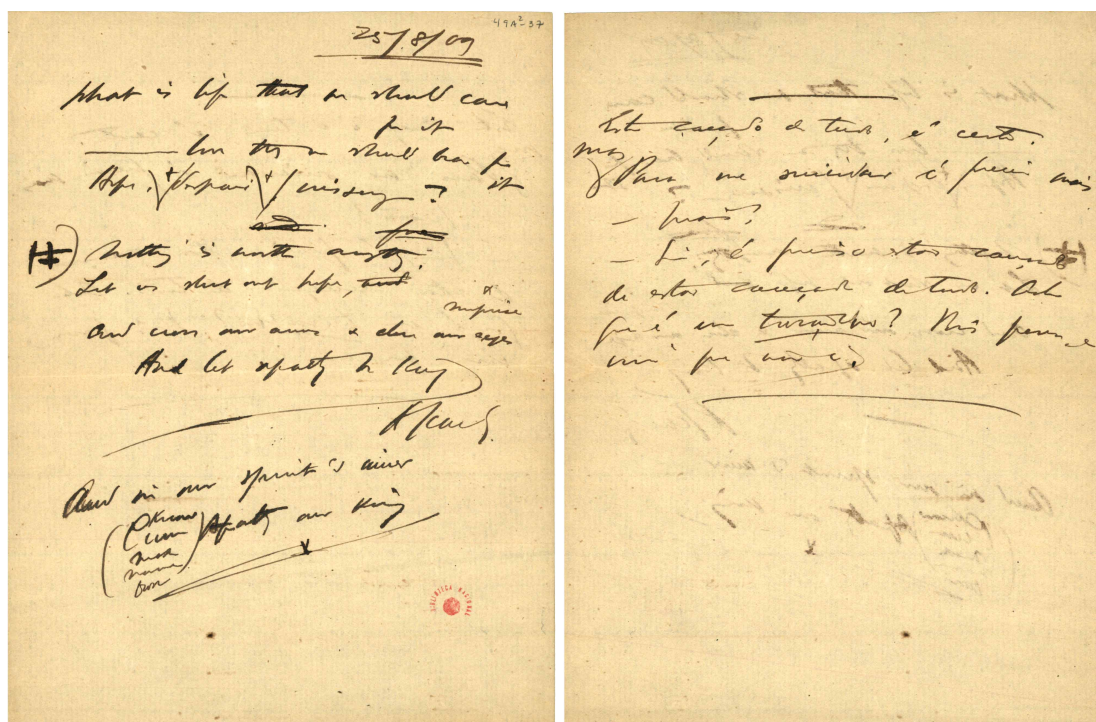
137E-58

Saldo de contas apuradas depois de 25 de
março 1908 até março 1909 -

		<u>Despesa</u>	
Saldo do antec ^{do}	558.190	14 meses Salimentação a 15.000 por mes	2100.000
Saldo deixado por D. Dionísio	1500/05	Doisima da Casa por herdeiros de D. Dionísio	54.500
Venda do cobre de ferro	320.000	Extraordinarios, fumos, lavagem de roupa & &	84.000
Juros de 24 ações do Banco de P ^{ta}	522.000	Carta precatória para se receberem os juros das ações do Banco de P ^{ta} na Rioclara -	11.590 500
Juros de 1908		Preparos no tribunal para se receberem as quantias depositadas	34.000
Ditos em fev ^o 1909	238.000	na cca ^{ta} g ^{ra} dos depositos	
Recebido da cca ^{ta} geral dos depositos	580.910	Inventario de D. Dionísio na 1 ^a Vara	134.500
em Junho 1908		Dito de D. Dionísio na 1 ^a Vara e preparos	24.4010
Despesa	416.640	Venda de casa em maio 1908	324.500
Legado	182.500	Galacdo	240.50
		Noviças brancas	94.900
		1 anno de credit	34.000
		5 pares de meias	5.000
		Venda de casa out 1908	334.250
		Dito em maio 1909	334.250
		Fato ^o completo p ^o Verão	15.000
		Rembancas p ^o sua mãe	
		e limpo ^o nossos dos seus amos	34.400
		Contas finais de D. Dionísio	160.280
		1 ^a Vara	
		Medicamentos	14.500
		Muo Chapao	14.500
		Setto dos juros das ações do Banco de P ^{ta}	50
		Somme	416.640

Os 8000.00 de extraordinarios foram pedidos
por uma vez 3.000 e por outra 5000.00

Fig. 1. Balance sheet of credits and debits (BNP/E3, 137E-58^o).



Figs. 2 & 3. Poem by Alexander Search and note in Portuguese (BNP/E3, 137E-58).



Although it was swiftly consuming all his resources, Pessoa, with nervous excitement, managed to open the Ibis press in November 1909 (cf. BNP/E3, S2-23). It was located on Rua da Conceição da Glória—a little removed from the downtown bustle and just one block away from the Praça da Alegria, where in the shade of tall, exotic trees a small fountain pushed up a single stream of softly trickling water. Lisbon's most tranquil square, it may have afforded some comfort to the young businessman when, as soon happened, he found himself overwhelmed by practical difficulties. Two blocks in the other direction, on Rua da Glória, Pessoa moved into his own apartment. For the first time ever he would be living alone.

The first print job executed by the Ibis press was its own letterhead stationery. Next to the company's name and address appeared a handsomely designed logo of an ibis standing on one leg. The press also printed stationery for Mário's Anglo-Portuguese Mining Agency, and Pessoa no doubt counted on other relatives and friends to order calling cards and to entrust him with assorted print jobs. Attracting business was no easy matter. The competition among printers was fierce, so that clients had to be courted aggressively; they rarely walked in off the street. Pessoa, however, could not get excited about printing calling cards, flyers, announcements, brochures, and the like. In the apartment he had rented on the street called Glory, he spent feverish evenings laying plans for his publishing empire. The giddy range of his publication program included everything from classical Portuguese literary works to his own poetry and prose, from plays by Aeschylus and Shakespeare to

Robert Louis Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, from a novel by Brazil's Joaquim Machado de Assis, *Posthumous Memoirs of Bras Cubas*, to a selection of poems by Finland's Johan Ludvig Runeberg, who wrote in Swedish (Pessoa read him in English). Besides national and international poetry and fiction, Pessoa planned collections of scientific, historical, political, and philosophical works. A book on gymnastics by Luís Furtado Coelho, whose method had proven so beneficial to Pessoa in 1907, was also on his list of books to publish.

Books were just one facet of Pessoa's program for dominating the world of Portuguese publishing. He also planned to issue a series of "Ibis Pamphlets," several of which would contain political essays signed by his heteronym Pantaleão. In addition to the *Lusitanian Review*, the Ibis press would publish two newspapers, *O Iconoclasta* [*The Iconoclast*] and *O Fósforo*⁵ [*Inflammable*], which offered a mix of political commentary, literature, and humor.⁶

As by now the reader may suspect, Pessoa invented a new set of heteronyms to handle the writing and translating for so many publication projects. The most multifaceted of his new collaborators was Vicente Guedes—poet, short story writer, and translator. He was scheduled to contribute poems to *The Iconoclast* and to publish, under the Ibis imprint, translations of Byron and Shelley as well as a collection of his own stories.

The similarly versatile Carlos Otto, besides writing poetry, was tasked with translating Arthur Morrison's *Martin Hewitt, Investigator* (1894), whose protagonist competed with Sherlock Holmes for the attention of readers partial to detective fiction. But instead of translating, Otto devoted his energies to the most improbable of all the books in the would-be Ibis catalogue: a *Treatise on Wrestling*, according to the "Yvetot method." Although the French wrestler or trainer named Yvetot was Pessoa's own invention, his photo was nonetheless slated to grace the book's frontispiece, along with a photo of the equally unreal Carlos Otto. The treatise proper—the few pages of it that were written—provides a detailed description of various kinds of moves and the Yvetot technique for executing them.⁷

How did Pessoa become so well informed about the art of wrestling? With a little effort we can picture him in his neatly tailored suit at Lisbon's Coliseum, in a middle- or back-row seat, taking notes to pass on to Carlos Otto or else simply looking on in rapt attention as two he-men sweated it out in the ring. He would have no reason to clap or cheer, since he did not care who won or lost, but he would watch

⁵ Literally *The Match* (for lighting fires).

⁶ Pessoa's publication plans for Ibis can be found in notebook 144V as well as in docs. BNP/E3, 48A-11; 48B-130 to 133, 148; 55D-101v; and 93-51.

⁷ There was a well-known song and more than one comic opera from the nineteenth century titled "Le Roi d'Yvetot" (Yvetot, a town in Normandy, was once a small kingdom). There was also a French typographer and anarchist named Georges Yvetot (1868-1942). It's uncertain what inspired Pessoa's use of the name.

the battling physiques as closely as anyone. Of course, it is also possible that he merely read about the wrestlers' art.⁸

Political outreach was the most urgent item on the Ibis agenda, and special-purpose heteronyms were conjured up to wield their imaginary pens against the monarchy and the conservative hierarchy of the Catholic Church. Manuel Maria, a journalist for the Ibis newspapers *The Iconoclast* and *Inflammable*, took over as the author of some satirical, antimonarchist "Visões" ["Visions"] that had previously been signed by Pantaleão. Another scheduled contributor to the two newspapers, Joaquim Moura-Costa, wrote caustic poems against the Catholic Church as well as the monarchy. Markedly different was Father Gonçalves Gomes, an *Inflammable* columnist who was a fervent republican yet faithful to the Church he served. Pessoa wanted to make the point that religion and republicanism were not incompatible. It was not Catholicism per se that he bitterly opposed, but the alliance between the Church leadership in Portugal and the corrupt monarchy.



The Ibis press could almost be the subject of a Borges short story titled "The Publishing House of Babel." Though anchored in a specific time and place, it was as endlessly fantastical as the Babelian library conceived by the Argentine writer. The Ibis publication plans, germinated over the course of a few months (and merely summarized here), would have kept a team of real writers and translators busy for many years to come, and even for time eternal, since the plans would have kept proliferating. Pessoa, the bedazzled planner, proceeded as if his team of unreal writers and translators would be able to accomplish their literary assignments on their own, without needing their creator's writing hand, his brain, and his time, without interrupting his beautiful dream. The dream was at least slightly, nominally fulfilled, since the firm called Ibis Printing and Publishing actually existed, and Pessoa wanted to savor it, to keep dreaming of what his publishing house could be and do. He did write a few poems and prose texts in the names of Carlos Otto and Vicente Guedes; he produced a lampoon against the Church and another against the queen in the voice of Joaquim Moura-Costa; he jotted down a number of ideas for stories and sketched some plots, wrote some scenes—enough to make the dream feel vaguely sustainable. But his creditors were pounding on the door, almost from the day the Ibis press opened for business.

On January 13, 1910, Jaime de Andrade Neves, his mother's cousin as well as his personal physician, wrote him a letter requesting immediate repayment of an

⁸ The title *Tratado de Luta, Sistema Yvetot* [*Treatise on Wrestling: The Yvetot Method*], attributed to Miguel Otto rather than to Carlos Otto, appears on an incipient list of Ibis books that was crossed out (cf. BNP/E3, 144V-5). The pages actually written for the treatise (cf. BNP/E3, 124-56 to 59), under a slightly different title, were signed by Carlos.

overdue loan of ninety thousand reis. It was a substantial sum, and all the debtor could reply was that he would pay up as soon as possible (cf. ZENITH, 2012: 150-151). Pessoa, who already owed money to other relatives and friends, now found himself having to borrow from B to pay off A, from C to then pay off B, and so forth. It was worse than that, since the total amount of debt increased with each passing day. The set-up costs for his business had been more than he'd anticipated, and the overhead was high. He had employed perhaps half a dozen workers to receive and manage print orders, set type, handle paper, run the machinery, and do deliveries. To turn a profit, the press would have had to operate at near full capacity, but Pessoa was a neophyte in a competitive field, and anything but a good salesman. His workers were often idle. Unable to break even as a commercial printer, the firm could by no stretch of the imagination evolve into a publishing house.

Scholars used to wonder whether the Ibis press might have gone bankrupt even before it could open for business, since there was no evidence of its having printed anything other than its own stationery. In 2010 a researcher finally discovered that for three months in 1910 the *Empreza Ibis* was listed on the masthead as the printer of a weekly newspaper published in Loulé, a town in the Algarve.⁹ (The printed copies were shipped by train.) The March 12 issue of *O Povo Algarvio* [*People of the Algarve*] was the first one printed by the Ibis press, and the large number of typographical errors—for which an apology was issued the following week—suggests it may have been the press's first large-scale job. *O Povo Algarvio* was a stridently republican and anticlerical paper, which must have pleased Pessoa, though at that point he was grateful for whatever print jobs came along, helping him to stanch his operating loss. In April or May he put his press up for sale, and it was with tremendous relief that he found a buyer for it in the second half of June (cf. ZENITH, 2012: 155). His editorial dream had ended in a financial nightmare.

The shuttering of the Ibis press caused some of Pessoa's lately created heteronyms to be laid off, as it were. Carlos Otto, Joaquim Moura-Costa, Manuel Maria, and Father Gonçalves Gomes, all of whom were closely connected to Ibis publishing projects, had no more role to play and were never heard from again, but Vicente Guedes, a larger and more complex heteronym, would reemerge several years later as a fictional author of *The Book of Disquiet* (a role subsequently passed on to Bernardo Soares). The material legacy of the failed enterprise was a tall stack of Ibis stationery, which Pessoa used for notes and for his creative writing between 1910 and 1914, as well as a pile of debt, only partially reduced by the sale of the press. In less than a year's time he had spent his entire inheritance of five million reis—and then some. On top of various amounts owed to family members, friends,

⁹ The name of the researcher is Rui Sena, of Loulé. Two years later another researcher, Ana Rita Palmeirim, discovered that the Ibis press printed the first issue of *A Mosca* (16 Mar. 1910) and several issues of *A Comédia* in April and May 1910; both were obscure, ephemeral magazines published in Lisbon.

and several investors, Pessoa had taken out a bank loan that he would be paying off for the next four years (cf. BNP/E3, 28A-10; 66D-6^v; and 92A-87^v). Since he had no job, the only way he could service his debts was through freshly borrowed funds from newly recruited creditors.

And what if he turned his back on everything and sailed for England? Since returning to Portugal in 1905, not a year had gone by without his pondering the possibility of making Shakespeare and Milton's country his own, and 1910 was no different. The harrowing experience of trying to be a publisher had not dampened his resolve to write and publish, but he wondered more than ever whether his talents might be better appreciated elsewhere. On August 5, however, he outlined a poem titled "Por que não vou para o estrangeiro" ["Why I Am Not Going Abroad"]. Although the outline is sketchy, the thread of the poem is easy to trace. The narrator comments on the oppressive atmosphere of Portugal and particularly of Lisbon, where life feels precarious and where so much is lacking for a "subtle spirit" like his own, but this is his land, and he realizes that genius and virtue are born out of troubled circumstances. "And that is why I am not going abroad," concludes Pessoa in the last line of the poem (cf. BNP/E3, 11¹⁴X-8^v, 8a^v; cf. Figs. 4 & 5).

But he did go abroad poetically. On the same piece of paper where he sketched his flagrantly autobiographical poem, he began writing Shakespearean sonnets in English.



While by day the Ibis press had been proving itself to be unprofitable, forcing Pessoa to borrow cash left and right to pay for paper, employee wages, and the monthly rent, at night the beleaguered entrepreneur read his favorite authors against the intermittent background noise of the Ascensor da Glória, a funicular that—just a few yards away from his ground-floor apartment—ferried pedestrians up to and down from the hilltop neighborhood of Bairro Alto. Rereading Shakespeare's sonnets over the course of several evenings, he was more fascinated than ever by their conceptual and linguistic complexity, and in August he drafted, in English, a number of his own Shakespearean sonnets—a form consisting of three rhyming quatrains followed by a couplet and not actually invented by Shakespeare. The first such sonnet attempted by Pessoa, and not completed until two years later, is his most famous. Here is the first quatrain in its final version:

How many masks wear we, and undermasks,
Upon our countenance of soul, and when,
If for self-sport the soul itself unmasks,
Knows it the last mask off and the face plain?

The answer to the last question is no, according to the next two quatrains, since our souls “foist otherness” on whatever images of ourselves we might see (as in a mirror) with our “co-masked eyes.” We can never reach the state of spiritual nakedness, “the last mask off.” The sonnet’s closing couplet sums up the conundrum:

And, when a thought would unmask our soul’s masking,
Itself goes not unmasked to the unmasking.

Although this sonnet lacks—like virtually all of Pessoa’s English poems—the naturalness of expression that would make it great poetry, it is a perfect formulation of his conviction that we can never know ourselves, since we are actors who cannot do other than act. It’s not just that all the world’s a stage; each individual is a stage, where he or she is forever pretending, especially to his or her own self.

Pessoa was forever bemoaning his weak will and yet demonstrated remarkable fortitude. In the wake of the Ibis debacle, he retreated to a field of endeavor he understood—poetry—and decided to compete head-on with none other than Shakespeare. He was not altogether unsuccessful. Between August 5 and August 15 he wrote ten of the sonnets included in his *35 Sonnets*, a chapbook he would self-publish eight years later to modest acclaim.¹⁰ A review published by *The Times Literary Supplement* on September 19, 1918, noted that the sonnets by the unknown poet from Portugal, “probing into the mysteries of life and death, of reality and appearance, will interest many by reason of their ultra-Shakespearian Shakespearianisms, and their Tudor tricks of repetition, involution and antithesis, no less than by the worth of what they have to say.”

Shakespeare was not the only great author whom Pessoa aimed to equal or improve on. Amid the English sonnets he drafted in the first half of August 1910, the twenty-two-year-old writer jotted down an idea for “a drama, in Portuguese, dealing—better than Ibsen did—with general paralysis” (BNP/E3, 11¹⁴X-9r; cf. Fig. 9).¹¹ The Norwegian playwright, who had a conflicted relationship with his homeland and spent many years in exile, was appreciated by the failed businessman for his stark realism. Pessoa’s play was to end with an old, once stalwart soldier confined to a chair and unable to do more than mumble. The enfeebled soldier clearly represented Portugal, whose decay and decadence were the dual refrain of the many pages Pessoa continued to write on the nation’s history and politics.

¹⁰ BNP/E3, 11¹⁴X-8a^v (cf. Fig. 7) contains the initial draft of the first quartet of the sonnet “How many masks wear we,” dating from August 5 and quoted above. Nine additional sonnets that would go into the collection *35 Sonnets* (sonnets 1, 4, 11, 13, 14, 18, 23, 25, and 27) were written between 6 August and 15 August (see, on this point, the introduction to PESSOA, 1993: 8-9). In that same month, Pessoa wrote still other English sonnets not included in *35 Sonnets*.

¹¹ Written, in English, at the same sitting as the document mentioned in the previous two notes.

Although he never did anything with his Ibsenesque idea, Pessoa had already been working for some months on a rather different portrayal of the national drama: an epic poem divided into cantos, like *The Lusiads* of Camões, and patriotically titled *Portugal*. Expressing disillusion with Portugal's present state of decadence but also pride in its past and high hopes for its future, it was a work he had planned to publish at the Ibis press, whose demise did not diminish his passion for writing it (BNP/E3, 93-51; cf. Fig. 12).¹² Portugal would be the never-ending object of Pessoa's desperation and adoration. Despite feeling that his "subtle spirit" was misunderstood, intellectually malnourished, and condemned to solitude in the country where he was born, he loved it too much not to stay put—especially at this critical juncture, when the political winds heralded big changes.

¹² Most of the material for this fragmentary poem can be found in envs. 117EN and 117ENP (transcribed by BARBOSA; PIZARRO; PITTELLA; SOUSA, 2020: 76-229). 117EN-71 contains a (fragmentary) epilogue, followed by the date August–September 1910, but Pessoa would write additional verses for the poem until at least 1918 (cf. BNP/E3, 44-36).

[illegible]

Nos estranhas, semis nos py des a
 As mais apinto amulos como a apor
 As cotarantos e as
 Quando o vis oça on hamos
 Mos d'agui e' pa asu o ~~talento~~
 S' as amblate ~~entre~~ o vis e
 Se abto e si herma; e apend o
 No emulata e
 Gues o
 entre

E' pa isto que eu não em pare
 o estrangeiro -
 5/8/10

11 X-8

Pige: brant, tube from...

M: (chance): One piece in a to it.
That tube was from the dr.

P: (later & pp): Take for, me, piece +
come also even

P: (ch): That tube was from the one over me, but, not, just
that a tube from... I am
for later for the dr.

P: (interjected -) - Take... Page?

M: but, was the one dr....

P: I am the one another, name...

M: Oh, it could be just the one in
the file; is the one: (the one in the file?) Take a few more, now
when:

P: Was from, brant; not from. Others
to be only, a few more pieces.
Others over name...

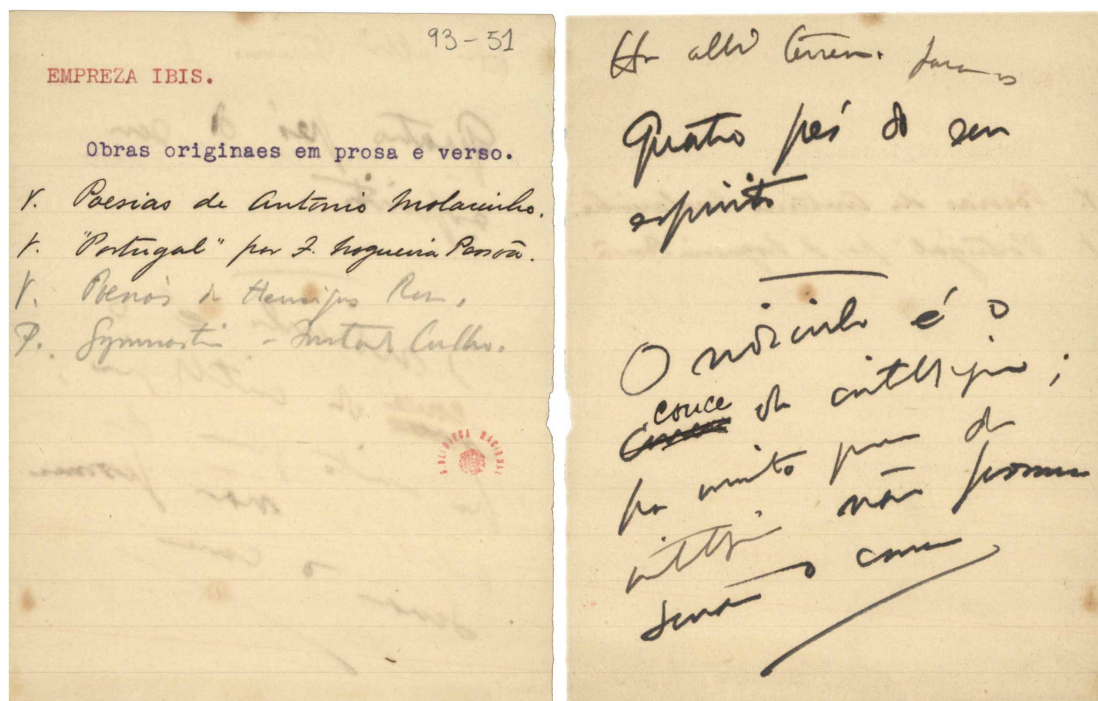
M: Spence, Spence... The to be just
just one before a few more... So is
a not, finally... Yes
(from a box: the in fact)

P: Take some pieces from the one over me
a few... A few is not... Take
for, brant.

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[illegible]

Figs. 4, 5, 6 & 7. Poem titled “Por que não vou para o estrangeiro”, dramatic dialogue between a “Pequeno” and his “Mãe”, and draft, in English, of a Shakespearean sonnet (BNP/E3, 11¹⁴X-8, 8a).



Figs. 12 & 13. Publication plan for the Empreza Ibis, including Pessoa's epic poem in progress titled "Portugal," and (verso) two witty sayings (BNP/E3, 93-51).

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