

Fernando Pessoa

IMPERMANENCE — A Greek intellect and a modern sensibility.

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A Greek intellect and a modern sensibility. A Greek intellect: even if we suppose that a Greek intellect does not mean an eternal intellect, still the Greek discipline of thought is the scientific basis of all art. A modern sensibility: we cannot maim our emotions to please the (...)

Yet our discipline, though Greek in quality cannot be Greek in quantity. Our sensibility is of complexities which antiquity could not even dream of; so our discipline of that sensibility must involve the use of a far higher quantum of intellectual force.

The Greeks might feel deeply, or strongly or wildly, but they always felt rationally. Their emotions were born reasonable, even where born fiery and violent. Not only can we not attain to that quality, but we must not; for, if we had the Greek intellect and the Greek feeling, we would be ancient Greeks, not modern Europeans.

s. d.

“Erostratus”. in Páginas de Estética e de Teoria Literárias. Fernando Pessoa. (Textos estabelecidos e prefaciados por Georg Rudolf Lind e Jacinto do Prado Coelho.) Lisboa: Ática, 1966: 292.