

Fernando Pessoa

**There are only two types of constant mood with which life is worth living. . .**

There are only two types of constant mood with which life is worth living — with the noble joy of a religion, or with the noble sorrow of having lost one. The rest is vegetation, and only a psychological botany can take interest in such diluted mankind (so general a fungus).

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Yet it is admissible to think that there is one sort of greatness in Erostratus — a greatness which he does not share with lesser crashers into fame. He, a Greek, may be conceived as having that delicate perception and calm delirium of beauty which distinguishes still the memory of his giant clan. He may therefore be conceived as burning Diana's temple in an ecstasy of sorrow, part of him being burnt in the fury of his wrong endeavour. We may fitly conceive him as having overcome the toils of a remorse of the future, and facing a horror within himself for the stalwartness of fame. His act may be compared, in a way, to that terrible element of the initiation of the Templars, who, being first proven absolute believers in Christ — both as Christians, and in the general tradition of the Church, and as occult Gnostics and therefore in the great particular tradition of Christianity, had to spit upon the Crucifix in their initiation. The act may seem no more than humanly revolting from a modern standpoint, for we are not believers, and, when, since the romantics, we defy God and hell, defy things which for us are dead and thus send challenges to corpses. But no human courage, in any field or sea where men are brave with mere daring, can compare with the horror of that initiation. The God they spat upon was the holy substance of Redemption. They looked into hell when their mouths watered with the necessary blasphemy. Thus we may conceive Erostratus, save that the stress of the love of beauty is a lesser thing than the conviction of a sentimental truth. Thus let us conceive him, that we may justify the remembrance.

For if Erostratus did this, he comes at once into the company of all men who have become great by the power of their individuality. He makes that sacrifice

of feeling, of passion, of (...) which distinguishes the path to immortality. He suffers, that his name may enjoy, like Christ who dies as the man, that he may prove himself the Word.

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: 180.