

Fernando Pessoa

The twentieth century has at last found its poet...

The twentieth century has at last found its poet — not in the sense that this poet sings the 20th century, but in the sense that a poet has at last appeared who represents an absolute novelty, something altogether unconnected with literary traditions of any kind whatever. It is natural to say that the 20th century has found its poet for no other reason than this — that the extraordinary originality of this poet happens in the 20th century. *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* in relation to its time is, if anything, less original than A.C.'s astonishing volume — *The Keeper of Sheep* — (O G[uardador] de R[ebanhos]) which has just appeared in Lisbon.

No one in P[ortuguese] literary milieux had ever heard of him. He appeared suddenly. And his contribution to Portuguese, and European literature, breaks away, as we have said, from all truths and currents that were valid in the past or are active today.

A.C. is the poet of absolute materialism. This is his first originality; there never was, properly speaking, a poet of materialism. . . The second creation is that C. puts into his absolute materialism a poetical colour and intensity which we have been accustomed to find only in the highest spiritualistic poetry.

s. d.

Pessoa por Conhecer — Textos para um Novo Mapa . Teresa Rita Lopes. Lisboa: Estampa, 1990: 358.