

Fernando Pessoa

No soul more loving or tender than mine has ever existed,...

No soul more loving or tender than mine has ever existed, no soul so full of kindness, of pity, of all the things of tenderness and of love. Yet no soul is so lonely as mine — not lonely, be it noted, from exterior, but from interior circumstances. I mean this: together with my great tenderness and kindness an element of an entirely opposite kind entered into my character, an element of sadness, of self — centredness, of selfishness therefore, whose effect is two — fold: to warp and hinder the development and full *internal* play of those other qualities, and to hinder, by affecting the will depressingly, their full *external* play, their manifestation. I shall analyse this, one day I shall examine better, discriminate, the elements of my character, for my curiosity of all things, linked to my curiosity for myself and for my own character, leads to one attempt to understand my personality.

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It was on account of these characteristics that I wrote, describing myself, in *The Writers Day*:

*One like Rousseau...
A misanthropic lover of mankind.*

I have, as a matter of fact, many, too many affinities with Rousseau. In certain things our characters are identical. The warm, intense, inexpressible love of mankind, and the portion of selfishness balancing it — this is a fundamental characteristic of his character and, as well, of mine.

30-10-1908?

Páginas Íntimas e de Auto-Interpretação. Fernando Pessoa. (Textos estabelecidos e prefaciados por Georg Rudolf Lind e Jacinto do Prado Coelho.) Lisboa: Ática, 1966: 3.