

“History of a Dictatorship” An Unfinished Political Essay by the Young Fernando Pessoa

ABSTRACT: The first part of this article reviews the materials from Pessoa’s literary remains associated with the book project from 1909 to 1910 titled “History of a Dictatorship.” These materials remain little known and mostly unpublished. The second part examines some central themes and theses of this unfinished political work and places them within the evolution of Pessoa’s thought.

KEYWORDS: Fernando Pessoa, Portuguese monarchy, João Franco dictatorship, Portuguese Republic, national decay, nationalism, Sebastianism

Materials from Pessoa’s Literary Remains Related to the “History of a Dictatorship” Project

Between 1907 and 1910, the final years of the monarchy in Portugal, the young Fernando Pessoa produced a notable quantity of writings on political sociology and “psychological history,” as he called it. These writings are dispersed throughout a series of book projects and essays, some in English and others in Portuguese, that the author left unfinished or only in outline form, a practice which would later become the norm. Pessoa’s literary estate includes hundreds of pages of text and myriad notes and annotations related to these projects. These comprise a vast collection of political writings in prose that remain even today mostly unpublished.¹ Among these projects, readers should note the following: “The Portuguese Regicide and the Political Situation in Portugal,” 1908; “A Psychose [or Nevrose] adiantativa” (“The Advancing Psychosis [or Neurosis]”), 1908–1909; “History of a Dictatorship,” 1909–1910; and “Da dictadura á republica” (“From the Dictatorship to the Republic”), begun at the end of 1910 and continued into 1911.

The dictatorship of João Franco (1907–1908) was a prominent theme of these projects, with particular attention given to the actions and personality of this ruler. The young Pessoa intended to undertake a historical, political, sociological, and psychological analysis of this period, with some forays into the realm of psychiatric analysis. Also dating from this period, from 1909 or the beginning of 1910, is the project titled “O Iconoclasta” (“The Iconoclast”), a radical republican and anticlerical publication² that Pessoa planned to publish in Íbis, his unsuccessful publishing and typographic business. “The Iconoclast” followed another project, “O Phosphoro” (“The Match”), a title that was perhaps too incendiary and for this reason abandoned in 1909.³

Although many political and sociological reflections, predating the projects just mentioned, can be found among Pessoa’s papers, the writings from the years 1907 to 1910 reveal that Pessoa, who was around twenty years old at the time, followed Portuguese politics closely with the intention of publishing various works on it: first, works that were primarily aimed at an imaginary English-speaking public, and then works for a no less imaginary Portuguese-speaking public. These writings likewise express an intermediate stage of Pessoa’s political thought, somewhere between the libertarian ideas of his adolescence, which he claimed to have abandoned when he was about seventeen years old (1905), and the conservative and increasingly elitist and antidemocratic ideas that he began to develop during the decade following the Republican Revolution of October 5, 1910.

Between ages nineteen and twenty-two, Pessoa was, politically, an independent republican with radical and anticlerical tendencies and a fervent nationalist, who considered the corrupt and oppressive monarchy and the harmful influence of the Catholic Church as the two major causes of Portugal’s centuries-long decline. At the same time, he was a harsh critic of the “errors of diagnosis of social issues” (the title of another project from this period) and of the “fanatical” and “degenerative” political solutions of the anarchists and socialists. As a republican nationalist, Pessoa was in sharp opposition to another form of nationalism then existing in Portugal, represented by the Nationalist Party, a Catholic and monarchical party that had been founded in 1903 but became defunct in 1910 after the establishment of the Portuguese Republic. Republican nationalism made its first strong showing during the commemorations of the tricentennial of the death of Camões in 1880, and then from 1890 its influence increased

notably as a result of the national humiliation stemming from the Portuguese monarchy's government conceding to the British Ultimatum.⁴ The nationalist reaction triggered by the ultimatum provided a great stimulus for the propaganda of the Republican Party, and also found expression in literary works, principally in *Finis patriae* (1890) and *Pátria* (1896) by Guerra Junqueiro, which made a powerful impression on the young Pessoa.⁵ According to one scholar, *Pátria* should be considered of seminal importance to Pessoa's poetical project, originally titled "Portugal" during the decade of the 1910s, but which would come to fruition only in 1934 in the book *Mensagem*.⁶

Many important events occurred during the years 1907 to 1910, a period characterized by great political instability and republican agitation. These include the academic events of 1907, which witnessed a student strike that originated in Coimbra and spread to the rest of the country; the laws regarding the press passed by João Franco's government, which unleashed strong protests; the closing of parliament by the king and the beginning of the Franco dictatorship in May 1907; the question of illegal advances to the royal family and the highly controversial solution presented by the dictator in August 1907; the failed republican revolutionary attempt of January 28, 1908; the regicide of February 1, 1908, which involved the assassinations of King D. Carlos I and of the heir to the throne, Prince Luís Filipe, and the end of the Franco dictatorship; a series of monarchical governments that were incapable of generating confidence in the country; the Republican Party's success in the legislative and municipal elections of 1908; an outbreak in 1909 of labor and syndicalist agitation, unlike anything that had occurred before in Portugal; and, finally, the successful Republican Revolution of October 5, 1910.

During this period of great unrest, Pessoa passed through his so-called third adolescence on his way to adulthood, when he abandoned his university studies, ceased to live in the house of relatives, and tried to initiate his career as a writer and editor. The political climate in which Pessoa was living inflamed his feelings of patriotism and aroused his desire to intervene as a political writer and to contribute to the revolution, which since 1909 he had felt was both necessary and inevitable.

In 1907 and the beginning of 1908, before the regicide of February 1, Pessoa had already prepared notes on the character of João Franco, the leader of the government, and on his dictatorship,⁷ a theme that he would later develop after

the assassination of the king. In 1907 the republican doctor Artur Leitão had published a book, titled *A Case of Epileptic Madness* (*Um caso de loucura epiléptica*), on João Franco's personality—a book that the nineteen-year-old Pessoa (as Alexander Search) read and annotated in the margins. This work made a strong impression on Pessoa, inspiring him to write on João Franco and *franquismo*, even though he disagreed with Leitão on some points. Nevertheless, there is no trace in Pessoa's papers from 1907 and 1908 of the project titled "History of a Dictatorship," which, according to all available evidence, was initiated only in 1909, as will be explained in this essay.

We know from a note from September 1908 that Pessoa continued with his readings, which he had begun in 1907, of Max Nordau and of works of psychology, psychiatry, and other fields, while he was simultaneously trying to write a book on the political situation in Portugal in indignant reaction to what had been written abroad about Portugal since the regicide. This book was not named in the manuscript note written in English, but because of the date, it almost certainly refers to the project titled "The Portuguese Regicide and the Political Situation in Portugal," a book that was intended for a foreign readership and whose authorship was attributed to Alexander Search.⁸ Enlivened by an ardent patriotism, the note likewise reveals the author's inclination to Messianism and Sebastianism:

5th September 1908.

God give me the strength to draw, to understand the whole synthesis of the psychology and psychological history of the Portuguese nation!

Every day the papers bring me news of facts that are humiliating, □ to us, the Portuguese. No one can conceive how I suffer with them. No one can imagine the deep despair, the mighty pain that seizes me at this. Oh, how I dream of that Marquis of Tavira who should come and redeem the nation—a saviour, a true man, great and bold that would put us right. But no suffering can equal that when I bring myself to understand that this is no more than a dream.

I am never happy, neither in my selfish, nor in my unselfish moments. My solace is reading Anthero de Quental. We are, after all, brother-spirits. Oh, how I understand that deep suffering that was his.

I must write my book. I dread what the truth may be. Yet, be it bad, I have to write it. God get the truth be not bad!

I should like to have written this in better style, but my power of writing is gone.⁹

In addition, notes from the same year (after February 1, 1908) belong to another project, “A Psychose adeantativa,”¹⁰ which deals with the question of the illegal advances made by the government to the royal house. It was still an active project during the second half of 1909 and was even included as a title to be published in a pamphlet series issued by Íbis under the new title “A Nevrose adeantativa.”¹¹ There also exists an incomplete text in English on the same topic, titled “Psychopathology of the Advance Decree,”¹² which could be either an autonomous essay or a chapter for the book “History of a Dictatorship.”

The title “The Portuguese Regicide and the Political Situation in Portugal” appears in the group of projects Pessoa called “Book of Tasks,”¹³ dating from the first half of 1908 (again, after the regicide of February 1). On another contemporaneous list of projects titled *Books*, Pessoa planned the execution of this work from June through October of 1908.¹⁴ In the note just transcribed, from September 5, Pessoa writes, “I must write my book,” without naming the book, though he could only be referring to “The Portuguese Regicide.” Almost two months later, Pessoa drafted a text, signed by Alexander Search and dated October 30, 1908, in which he recounts the enormous difficulties he was facing in carrying out his plans, or, more precisely, his “patriotic projects” with which he intended “to provoke a revolution” in Portugal. The Portuguese regicide is mentioned in this text, which, because of its importance to a number of titles, I have transcribed here:¹⁵

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 enters¹⁶ into my character, an element of sadness, of self-centredness, of selfishness therefore, whose effect is twofold: 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. One [day] 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.

It was on account of these characteristics that I wrote, describing myself, in the "Winter 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.

My intense patriotic suffering, my intense desire of bettering the condition of Portugal provoke in me—how to express with what warmth, with what intensity, with what sincerity!—a thousand plans which, even if one man could realise them, he had to have¹⁷ one characteristic which in me is purely negative—the power of will. But I suffer—on the very limit of madness, I swear it—as if I could do all and was unable to do it, by deficiency of will. The suffering is horrible. It holds me constantly, I say, on the limit of madness.

And then misunderstood. No one suspects my patriotic love, intenser than that of everyone I meet, of everyone I know. I do not betray it; how do I then know they have it not? how can I tell their care is not such as mine?¹⁸ Because in some cases, in most, their temperament is entirely different; because, in the other cases they speak in a way which reveals the non-existence at least of a warm patriotism. The warmth, the intensity—tender, revolted and eager, of mine I shall never express, so as not to be believed, if ever express[ed] at all.

Besides my patriotic projects—writing of "P[ortuguese] Reg[icide]"—to provoke a revolution here, writing of Portuguese pamphlets, editing of older national literary works, creation of a magazine, of a scientific review, etc.—other plans, consuming me with the necessity of being soon carried out—Jean Seul projects, critique of Binet-Sanglé, etc.—combine to produce an excess of impulse that paralyses my will. The suffering that this produces I know not if it can be described as on this side of insanity.

Add to all this other reasons still for suffering, some physical, others mental, the susceptibility to every small thing that can cause pain (or even that to a normal man could not cause any pain), add this to other things still, complications, money difficulties—join this all to my fundamentally unbalanced temperament and you may be able to suspect what my suffering is.

A. Search—30-10-08—

There are no further references to “The Portuguese Regicide” project after this text, just transcribed, which means the plan for writing this work must have been abandoned in the fall or following winter in favor of the new “History of a Dictatorship” project, which was motivated by the same extreme patriotism and by the same desire to contribute to the Republican Revolution in Portugal.

The title “The Portuguese Regicide” never appears on lists of projects together with “History of a Dictatorship,” which suggests, because of the thematic similarity between the two projects, that the latter project not only succeeded the former, but likely incorporated it. It is possible that Pessoa had simply decided to change the title of the projected work and introduce some changes to its structure, eventually preferring to give less emphasis to the specific theme of regicide and to limit discussion of it to one chapter. In this way, “The Portuguese Regicide and the Political Situation in Portugal” and “History of a Dictatorship” would have to be considered successive stages of the same project and same work. Although no document from Pessoa’s literary remains expressly confirms this hypothesis, there is no evidence that disproves it.

Few texts conserved in Pessoa’s remains are explicitly connected to “The Portuguese Regicide” project.¹⁹ However, sufficient evidence does exist for us to conclude that it followed a plan that was distinct from that of “History of a Dictatorship,” even though the two projects had many topics in common. For example, the theme of an introduction that Pessoa wrote for “The Portuguese Regicide” is the same as the first chapter (“National and Institutional Decay”) of Part I of the work that would come to be identified as “History of a Dictatorship.” Although no document proves the continued attribution of authorship of this chapter to Alexander Search, it seems logical that it could have been maintained.

The new “History of a Dictatorship” project appears on a list of “work to be done” from June 1909, a list that also named the autonomous project “A Psy-

Handwritten notes:
Corrected
to be correct!

PART I.

EXTENT AND CAUSES OF PORTUGUESE
DECAY.

CHAPTER I.

NATIONAL AND INSTITUTIONAL DECAY.

Bichat defined life as the sum-total of functions which resist death. The definition - all admit - is correct, though it is not explicit nor has the clearness that is required in a definition. But it is pregnant. What is necessary is to define, or, at least, to give a shadow of a definition of death. In itself death is nothing, that is, cannot be defined so as to be understood; absolute extinction, unless it be the absolute extinction of form, which we derive from experience, cannot enter into our comprehension. From a material standpoint, death can almost be defined as decay. When an organism decays it tends to dis. Death is more: it consists in absolute decay. Decay means disintegration. Death means absolute, pure disintegration, disintegration unintegrated.

We are now in a position to understand what the French medical philosopher meant by his definition: that life is the sum-total of functions that resist total disintegration. If for "life" we put "vitality", the definition is, naturally, little changed: Vitality is the sum total of functions (or, of activities) that resist disintegration, not now total disintegration, but any disintegration at all. Disintegration, of course, can be translated by "decay".



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Pessoa, "Extent and Causes of Portuguese Decay," typescript, BNP/E3, 92N-1f.

chose adeantativa.”²⁰ Other lists from 1909 include “A Psychose adeantativa” in a group of “Portuguese Books” and the “History of a Dictatorship” project in a list of “English Books.”²¹ As has been said, none of the 1909 lists mentions “The Portuguese Regicide.” Consequently, the beginning of the “History of a Dictatorship” project, appearing hereafter as the abbreviated title *H. of a D.* (and sometimes *H. of D.*), seems to date from the first half of 1909. There is no indication that *H. of a D.* was initiated in 1908.²² Meanwhile, the pamphlet project “A Psychose adeantativa” would similarly not receive mention in 1910, and it is possible that its subject was incorporated into *H. of a D.*, which occupied the author throughout 1909 and 1910.

In 1909 Pessoa received an inheritance from his grandmother Dionísia, and in the second half of this year, he established his publishing and typographic business Íbis, which enjoyed a short life. It is possible that the launching of Íbis gave Pessoa additional impetus to write and edit his “patriotic” work. Unlike the young Pessoa’s other projects, which sometimes took the form of summary plans and fragmentary texts and other times never went beyond being mere titles in lists, *H. of a D.* reached a relatively advanced state of realization. Indeed, this was Pessoa’s first continuous and persistent attempt to write and publish a book—and significantly, it was on a political topic.

In addition to hundreds of scattered notes bearing the title *H. of a D.*, we have in Pessoa’s remains a collection of more than 200 pages of text in English. Evidence seems to indicate that despite the lack of a title for the work, this collection should be identified as almost the entirety of Part I of “History of a Dictatorship” as well as a series of texts belonging to the ending of Part I and to Parts II, III, and IV.²³ The first ninety pages of this collection, comprising the first four chapters of Part I, titled “Extent and Causes of Portuguese Decay,” exist as typescript copy (carbon copies) numbered sequentially and with some emendations and manuscript additions. There also exists in Pessoa’s remains the original typescript of these ninety pages without manuscript annotations. Almost all of the remaining pages of this collection are in manuscript form and are numbered sequentially within each chapter only. The typescript and manuscript are not characterized by separate notes and fragmentary texts, but rather are composed of running text divided into chapters. This was a book intended for an English-speaking audience not only because of the language in which it was written, but also because of certain kinds of explanations that the author provided for his readers, and because of the way he refers to Portugal.

The title of the entire work is not present on the first page of Part I, which has only the title of this section. In fact, the general title of the work is not to be found anywhere on the manuscript and typescript, which helps to explain why they have not been previously identified as the unfinished text of "History of a Dictatorship." Moreover, the materials are undated, and their date can only be determined indirectly.²⁴ Nevertheless, the central theme of the work is indisputably the dictatorship of João Franco, for on page 50 Pessoa declares that the dictator is "the hero, so to speak, of this book"—or, preferably, the anti-hero.²⁵

This collection of texts—composed of finished text in typescript and draft text in manuscript, exclusive of individual notes—constitutes the most extensive work of essay writing that Pessoa ever did, even though, as would become habitual, he never brought it to completion.

Pessoa seems to have vacillated several times over the division of "History of a Dictatorship" into parts and chapters. In what seems to be the initial plan of the work, the book was to have an introduction and five parts, although Part II was not specified, which was likely an oversight.²⁶ According to this plan with five parts (which in reality listed only four), Part I was to have nine chapters, the last dealing with the reign of D. Carlos, begun in 1891. Part III (which was Part II) was to be composed of only three chapters, which would address antecedents of the dictatorship and person of João Franco. Part IV (which was Part III) would deal exclusively with Franco's dictatorship, and the theme of Part V (or IV) was "problems of the future." In a later manuscript,²⁷ from the end of 1910 or beginning of 1911, Pessoa writes that the "Hist[oria] de uma dict[adura]," a title that he now references in Portuguese, had only three parts, a comment that does not correspond to the division of the typescript and manuscript texts, which comprised four parts. In the typescript text of Part I of "History of a Dictatorship," the reign of D. Carlos is discussed in Chapter IV, which reveals a rather different arrangement from the initial plan of four parts. As was mentioned earlier, this plan included an introduction of a theoretical nature, divided into five points, which Pessoa failed write, at least in this format. The first three chapters of Part I of this plan, which was theoretical or general in nature, did not correspond thematically with the text of Part I as it was actually written. Some correspondence between the plan and the themes of the typescript text appear in the following chapters dealing with the periodization of the history of the monarchy and with the phases of its alleged decline.

The Part I of “History of a Dictatorship” that was actually written and titled “Extent and Causes of Portuguese Decay” comprised four chapters, though the fourth chapter was unfinished. These four chapters consist of typescript pages with relatively few handwritten emendations, were given a title, and were numbered with Roman numerals. The rest of the work, including Parts II, III, and IV, is in manuscript form and is clearly a draft. These parts lack titles and consist of an indeterminate number of chapters, which themselves only rarely have titles. In addition, there are gaps in the numbering of manuscript chapters (five manuscript chapters are unnumbered), but within this group are chapters numbered XIV, XV, and XVII, which gives a sense of the extent of the book.

In addition to this main group of texts pertaining to the work itself, Pessoa wrote copious scattered notes and comments of all kinds under the title *H. of a D.* throughout 1909 and 1910. Among other means of dating these notes—such as the use of Íbis letterhead (1909–1910), references to information from the newspapers from 1910, and postmarks from this same year²⁸—there are numerous notes for *H. of a D.* that had been written on the back of small sheets taken from a 1910 day calendar from January to the end of August. In total, Pessoa’s remains hold over 700 pages of text related to this project, including the text divided into chapters and the individual notes. From that time, the project began to be named occasionally with a Portuguese designation, “*Historia de uma dictadura,*” but the abbreviated title *H. of a D.* continued to appear in English throughout 1910 and even in notes written after the establishment of the Portuguese Republic.²⁹ The contents of this multitude of individual notes, comments, and brief theoretical reflections are varied: religious themes, history of literature, sociology, psychology, psychiatry, legislation, politics, ancient and contemporary history, European and Portuguese history, and so on.

It is sometimes difficult to imagine how these notes and comments would relate to the principal subject of “History of a Dictatorship.” The title *H. of a D.* appears in many of these notes, together or alternating with other titles associated with other contemporaneous projects, such as “Errors of Diagnosis of Social Issues” (“*Erros de diagnostico [em questões sociaes]*”);³⁰ “Jeshu ben Pandira,” a legendary personality who was identified by some with the historical figure of Jesus;³¹ “Foundations of a Republican Constitution” (“*Bases [de uma Constituição Republicana]*”);³² “*Ic[onoclasta]*”³³ and “*Sursum corda!*”³⁴ The diffusion of all of these projects seems to signal Pessoa’s inability or lack of persistence in bringing the project *H. of a D.* to completion. Nevertheless, “History

of a Dictatorship” undoubtedly constitutes the principal mobilizing focus of Pessoa’s essay writing between 1909 and 1910, concentrating or touching on multiple themes, which comprised corresponding subjects of interest and of reading. Pessoa seems to have not resisted the somewhat juvenile temptation to introduce into a project with a specific theme all of the materials which then interested him and which were the subject of his varied readings.

The concern for a scientific character, the multiplicity of viewpoints, and some originality of approach do not succeed in concealing the obvious naivety of various aspects of the contents of the work. The frequent invocation of “sociological,” “psychological,” and even “psychiatric” arguments—which led him to present his work in a preface that he wrote for *H. of a D.* as the first historical study, not just in Portugal but also internationally, that was founded on the sciences of psychology and psychiatry³⁵—clashed with the manifest political bias of the book, which was close to views expressed in republican propaganda, including the anticlericalism of its radicals. In this respect, there is a glaring contrast between the texts by the young Pessoa and the book by Sampaio Bruno, *A Dictadura (The Dictatorship)*, written in 1908 and published in the beginning of 1909, which is a contemporary study of the same topic by an independent republican intellectual, a man with a great critical spirit and vast culture who wrote the book during the final phase of his life. It should be noted that Pessoa never refers to this work by Bruno, perhaps because he did not yet know it, although he included Bruno’s *O Brasil mental* (1898) in a list datable to 1910 of bibliographic references for his own book.³⁶

The fact that “History of a Dictatorship” had been imagined for an English-speaking public, which had little knowledge about the political situation in Portugal and about Portugal itself, meant that Pessoa was disinclined to develop or exhaustively detail his analysis. This problem of the intended public for the work must have been appreciated and considered by Pessoa, who was at that moment in the midst of a period of transition during which he began to write increasingly less in English and more in Portuguese.³⁷ The title of the planned work, “History of a Dictatorship,” would certainly not be the most appropriate for a book intended for an English-speaking audience for whom the personality of João Franco and the circumstance rendering his government “dictatorial”—the temporary closing of Parliament—would have been far less interesting than the fact of the regicide. The initial project from 1908—“The Portuguese Regicide and the Political Situation in Portugal”—had a title that just might have been

adequately appealing to this readership. As Pessoa himself would write in a note after the establishment of the republic, perhaps from 1911, the regicide and the Republican Revolution were the two events that most attracted international attention to Portugal: "The Regicide and, then, the Revolution were the two phenomena that attracted to us, though imperfectly, attention from abroad. That is to say: instead of being unknown, we became poorly known. Previously, nothing was known about us; then it happened that entirely false things were learned about us. The knowledge that foreigners have about us fluctuates between nothing and error."³⁸

Even less appealing to an international audience would be the fact that "History of a Dictatorship" is a work of pure republican propaganda. To write in English or in Portuguese? To write for an international audience or a Portuguese one? To write with the scientific impartiality of a sociologist and historian, or with the commitment of a republican revolutionary? These surely were some of the dilemmas confronting Pessoa at this time.

The changes of title, theme, and time range of his political essays from this period, the transition to writing in Portuguese, and, finally, the apparent disappearance of the British pseudonym Alexander Search as author indicate that Pessoa was in the process of moving toward a Portuguese reading public and a greater desire for personal involvement in the life of the nation, as though only around 1910, five years after his return from Durban, did he begin to feel fully integrated into his Portuguese milieu. We should recall his contemporaneous plan to create a publishing house with a typographic office—the unsuccessful *Íbis*—which theoretically would have enabled the publication of his works, including especially "History of a Dictatorship," without having to rely on the doubtful acceptance of the manuscript by an English publisher. After the financial ruin of *Íbis*, which occurred between November 1909 and the early months of 1910,³⁹ and during which time Pessoa squandered most of the inheritance from his grandmother Dionísia,⁴⁰ he nevertheless continued throughout the year to work on this English-language project.

After the establishment of the republic, Pessoa began to develop other political essay projects, which focused more on recent and contemporary history, but whose themes, nevertheless, partially extended or overlapped those of "History of a Dictatorship." It is true that among the set of individual texts grouped under the designation "Post-Revolutionary Considerations" ("Considerações post-revolucionárias") from 1910 to 1911, there are some with the title *H. of a D.*⁴¹

This is the case principally with the project "From the Dictatorship to the Republic" ("Da dictadura á republica"; abbreviated *Da D. á R.*), which seems to constitute a new version, now intended for a Portuguese-speaking public, of part of "History of a Dictatorship," but which considers a broader range of time, incorporating the first months of the republic, and suggests with its new title a causal connection between João Franco's dictatorship and the victorious Republican Revolution. In an unpublished text, mentioned earlier, from the end of 1910 or the beginning of 1911, which seems to be the preface to the projected book "From the Dictatorship to the Republic," Pessoa wrote, "The book which we present is actually the third part of a work on which we have been working for some time—Hist[ory] of a Dicta[torship] [. . .] Indefinitely delayed, this study could become dated, because perhaps it was preceded by the proclamation of the Republic; which would essentially not invalidate the first and second parts of the book, but which would certainly invalidate the third—the part which we are now presenting."⁴²

In the already mentioned short bibliography for *H. of a D.*, which Pessoa prepared in 1910,⁴³ there appears a Spanish work, published in February 1908, by Luis Morote about the crisis of the monarchy in Portugal and the prospect of establishing the republican regime. The title of this book, *From the Dictatorship to the Republic (De la dictadura á la república)*⁴⁴ was identical to the title Pessoa gave his project, "From the Dictatorship to the Republic" ("Da dictadura á republica"). A copy of Morote's book was found in Pessoa's private library, and in addition to Alexander Search's ownership signature, the copy contains underlining and notes in pencil.⁴⁵ Evidence would indicate that Pessoa appropriated the title of Morote's book for his own new project, which emerged during the second half of 1910 after the Republican Revolution.

The projects *H. of a D.* and *Da D. á R.*, dedicated to partially overlapping themes, coexisted independently for some time. In Pessoa's remains there are sheets with multiple passages, some with the title *H. of a D.* and others with the title *Da D. á R.*⁴⁶ On a composition from the end of 1910 or beginning of 1911 in which he makes an appraisal of the decrees of the provisional republican government, Pessoa characteristically places four alternative titles at the top of the text—"Ic[onoclast] or *H. of a D.* or [Post-Revolutionary] Cons[iderations] or From the D[ictatorship] to the R[epublic]"—though he later crossed out the second title in the list.⁴⁷ In theory, the two works by Pessoa, one in English and the other in Portuguese, were not mutually redundant, despite their largely sim-

ilar themes, apparently because they were intended for different (imagined) publics. Although the project *Da D. á R.* retained its title, the project *H. of a D.*, after some hesitations, seemed to take on the English title “The Decline and Fall of the Portuguese Monarchy,” which is how it appeared in a list of “Publications” along with “From the Dictatorship to the Republic: Sociological Study of the Final Years of the Monarchy in Portugal” (title in Portuguese).⁴⁸

An unpublished manuscript⁴⁹ confirms that the themes of the two works, Portuguese and English, were for the most part comparable, for it contains under the title “From the Dictatorship to the Republic” (1906–1910)—note the chronological range indicated—a summary plan of the Portuguese work in which Pessoa in Part I, the introductory section, intended to divide the political history of Portugal from the sixteenth century to 1906 into periods, exactly as he had planned to do in “History of a Dictatorship.” This first part of “From the Dictatorship to the Republic” is significantly titled “Extensão e causas da decadência Portuguesa,” which is a translation into Portuguese of the title that he had already given to Part I of “History of a Dictatorship”: “Extent and Causes of Portuguese Decay.” The periodization of Portugal’s centuries-long decline was also one of the themes of the new project “Post-Revolutionary Considerations” (“Considerações post-revolucionárias”).⁵⁰ Finally, during the year 1911, the surviving project *Da D. á R.* would itself disappear, yielding its place to other projects that were more focused on contemporary politics, such as “The Oligarchy of Beasts” (“A Oligarchia das bestas”), a project that was begun at the start of 1911 and that remained apparently on hold for many years.⁵¹ Meanwhile, the essay project in English, now titled “The Decline and Fall of the Portuguese Monarchy,” remained alive in 1911, for it appears on two lists of projects from that year, along with “The Oligarchy of Beasts.”⁵²

The final crisis of the Portuguese monarchy ceased being the main subject of Pessoa’s political writings around 1911–1912, when it was replaced by analysis and “sociological” criticism of the revolution and of the republican governments, radical republicanism, afonsismo, anarchism, and socialism (Pessoa had begun writing critically on the last two topics around 1906), and also by criticism of the monarchical and Catholic reactions to the Portuguese Republic. However, the political essay projects that Pessoa began to work on at this time, such as “The Oligarchy of Beasts,” were not the object of a persistent effort nor, apparently, did Pessoa show as great a desire to publish these projects as he had in previous years, in 1908 to 1910. In 1912 Pessoa finally published his first

essays in the second series of the magazine *A Águia*, but these were on literary and not specifically political themes: the “sociological” and “psychological” analysis of new Portuguese poetry, though this did not hinder him from expressing some political opinions.

On the Central Themes and Some Theses of “History of a Dictatorship”

I will not attempt here to analyze or describe the totality of the work that Pessoa composed, because of the number of manuscript pages and the herculean efforts required to decipher them as well as the number of individual notes related to the project. Nevertheless, some of Pessoa’s principal theses and the theoretical principles on which they are based are formulated in the first ninety pages of the work, which consist of typescript pages with very few corrections.

Pessoa immediately cautions that “History of a Dictatorship” is not a historical treatise, and further explains, “It is not our intention to attempt the history of Portugal. It is sufficient that we show by what degrees the Portuguese people, victim of their institutions, fell into a state of deep depression, from which however they are striving to rise.”⁵³ The work by the young Pessoa belongs to this struggle against the institutions of the declining Portuguese monarchy.

The book begins by considering, in general terms, the concept of *decadence* or *decay*, the central theme of its analysis of the Portuguese situation, and then moves on to define and delimit two types of decay: institutional and national.⁵⁴ From the outset Pessoa reveals an adherence to a markedly organicist concept of society, which was indebted to sociological concepts derived from Comte and Spencer, but which was also inspired by the biological notion of degeneration that Pessoa, following in the footsteps of Max Nordau, applied to society in order to express the process opposed to the evolution of society. In Pessoa’s text, decadence (or decay) and degeneration are used as nearly interchangeable terms. The first pages are dedicated to defining the basic concepts of life and death. These considerations and the medical-biological concepts of vitality, health, sickness, a dying state, and so on, are applied not only to living organisms, including human beings, but also to “those other species of organisms—societies and nations,” whose “cells” are individuals.⁵⁵ In a nation or society, as in a living organism, two opposing forces are active, one of integration and the other of disintegration.⁵⁶ The existence of public opinion and of collective will, normally represented by the government of a state, would manifest this integrating force. The excessive individualization of opinion or the splintering into

parties and factions would expose the contrary, disintegrating force, which would have a negative influence on government, rendering it incapable of performing its normal functions. In a free state, in which the collective will determines the government which represents it, the decline of government would be connected to the decline of the nation itself; in a state that is not free, the decay of political power or of institutions could or could not relate to the decay of the nation because in this case, power is not representative of the nation, of its opinion or the people.⁵⁷

Young Pessoa's thought was characterized by a firm belief in progress and democracy. This is seen in his conception of the political evolution of societies as a process of ascending degrees of power, which, historically, was based at the outset on force, on the will of the *strongest*, and then evolved to power based on authority, and finally to power based on opinion, that is, on the public will or *democracy*. It should be noted that Pessoa returned to this same evolutionary typology of forms of power in a work of his maturity, "O Interregno" ("The Interregnum"), from 1928.⁵⁸ With the formation of the monarchy and the aristocracy, power based on mere force became authority, and the superstition of primitive peoples became religion. However, because the original source of authority, and even its essence, continued to be force, Pessoa declared that "the authoritarian or conservative spirit has three forms: it is monarchical, it is religious and it is militarist." The following stage is *degeneration* of the system of power based on authority, which would gradually give way to the formation of the system of power based on opinion—the popular will—the stage that by historical experience, Pessoa claimed, would be reached only through a revolution.⁵⁹

The Portuguese constitutional monarchy (1820–1910), similar to other constitutional monarchies of its time, was merely, according to Pessoa, "a fraudulent mixture of the system of authority and of opinion," a kind of hybrid organism that would reveal an atavistic tendency for the reverse, for the regression to absolutism.⁶⁰ In this process of degeneration, "monarchy and aristocracy become *imbecile*, base and cruel." Institutions were corrupted and entered into an accelerated decline. The corruption of some and the oppression of all were the means by which the system of authority tried to compensate for its loss of prestige and loss of control over the people, but "the clearer-sighted of the rising middle classes," who could not be bought, would embody, despite being oppressed by power, the spirit of the public good against the decay of institutions. The revolution then showed on the horizon as the solution for the evolution of

society into a new stage, democracy.⁶¹ In these considerations the theoretical skeleton of the book emerges, as does the role the author awards to himself, which is the *clear-sighted and incorruptible element of the rising middle class*, embodying the revolutionary spirit of resistance against the decline of institutions.

In a *decaying nation*, the more selfish and criminal interests of people and politicians prevail over the public good, a value which would have to rule in a *healthy nation*.⁶² Personal ambition, a thirst for power, and a tendency to fanaticism and to oppression predominate with political conservatives. On the other hand, certain representatives of the people, who are equally indifferent to the public good and to the effects on the masses of their utopian and dangerous doctrines, possess only the ambition to lead and to gain prestige as orators. The country flounders in these extremes of selfishness, personal ambition, and indifference, revealing what Pessoa calls national decay.⁶³ The organicistic relation between collective decay and the individual degeneration of politicians is emphasized in a manuscript text that Pessoa wrote for Part II of the book: "Abnormal times call abnormal people into existence. Abnormal times bring abnormal figures to the fore. The abnormal and degenerative conditions of [the] Portuguese monarchy called forth many strange creatures to public life."⁶⁴ He was obviously referring to the "degenerate" and "born-criminal" João Franco, the dictator who emerged during the final stage of the decline of monarchical institutions.

Institutional—or political—decay might or might not reflect, according to Pessoa, a process of decay of the nation or society. The distinction between institutional decay and national decay, on which Pessoa repeatedly insisted, corresponded with the distinction between free and unfree nations, according to whether political power had its origins in opinion—the people—or whether it was granted by a king with absolute powers. If there is political decay in a *free* nation, in which the institutions and government reflect the will of the nation, then this is because the decay is also national (or social), and this is what produces political decay. If there is political decay in an *unfree* nation, then it does not necessarily follow that the people, the nation, or society are decadent, although the source of political power, which is the absolute monarch or king, certainly is. However, in an *unfree* nation with an absolute or semi-absolute government, political decay would tend to cause the decay of society. Within the concept of national or social decay, Pessoa also included economic, commercial, and moral decay.⁶⁵

These considerations on institutional and national decay tend to sustain Pessoa's thesis—as well as the larger conclusion of the work—that the causes of Portuguese decline were primarily institutional (the monarchy and Catholic Church), thereby demonstrating that the overthrow of institutions was the solution for the ills affecting the nation.⁶⁶ But for this to happen, it was still necessary to have sufficient elements of regeneration in the nation, in order to avoid a situation of complete national decadence, characterized by the absence of public opinion and popular protest or by the existence of a disjointed opposition mistaken in its purpose and dominated solely by feelings of hatred or revenge. As bad as the country's situation was, if “the majority of the people” displayed sentiments of citizenship and showed their devotion to the public good, then the power that governed against the nation would have no other option than to submit or be overthrown.

However, it was indispensable to have an organized and disciplined “body of men” who were animated by a sound spirit with coherent and attainable aspirations, and who were capable of exerting increasing pressure on the monarchy's government. This necessary spirit—as the young sociologist Pessoa could not refrain from indicating—was the revolutionary republican sentiment, and its objective had to be the establishment of the republican regime.⁶⁷ In 1909–1910, according to Pessoa, Portugal would have been at the height of a centuries-long process of institutional decay with its corrupt, oppressive, and practically moribund monarchy. However, Portugal would still not have been in a situation of complete national decay, even though the monarchy had profoundly contaminated the entire life of the nation. For this reason, it was urgent that the country accelerate the process of transforming its institutions and securing internal liberty “by the establishment of a republic.”⁶⁸ Proof of the vitality that in the midst of decline nevertheless endured in Portugal was the existence of a large Republican Party, which in those years had fostered such strong action. “There is yet hope. All is not lost,” Pessoa commented.⁶⁹

This conveys the general sense of the book “History of a Dictatorship,” a nationalistic work that tries to demonstrate the need to establish the republic in order to save the moribund nation from the threat of complete and fatal decay or, in other words, death.

The book does not historically locate the beginning of the Portuguese monarchy's decline with the loss of independence in 1580, but even earlier during the

golden age of maritime expansion under D. Manuel I, the monarch with whom Pessoa identified the stigma of degeneration and who, citing the historian Alexandre Herculano, would have ripped up, while invoking "divine right," hundreds of *cartas de privilégio, forais*, and other charters and statutes in which the ancient rights, liberties, and exemptions of the people and cities were written.⁷⁰ The delivery or sale of the country to the Spanish by the high nobility and clergy in 1580, after the African disaster of Alcácer-Quibir (1578), would prove the existence of a prior degenerative process.⁷¹ Pessoa also associates the Spanish occupation with the oppressive influence of the church, because the loss of independence to Castile had occurred during the reign of Cardinal D. Henrique and had been blessed by the pope. After the Spanish occupation (which Pessoa mistakenly claims had lasted eighty instead of sixty years), the spirit of adventure, conquest, and expansion, which had generated the glorious past of the nation, would have completely vanished.

The malign influence of the church and the church's role throughout the long process of Portuguese decline are constantly noted in this work, and this specific theme is the focus of the second chapter of Part I.⁷² The Catholic Church, by its nature, would be compatible only with an absolute monarchy,⁷³ and the church would be the only entity capable of producing the two types of decay—institutional and national—that were occurring in Portugal.⁷⁴ Following in the footsteps of the pamphletary writings of Alexandre Herculano and of *Causas da decadência dos povos peninsulares* by Antero Quental, the young Pessoa maintains that moral sense had been transformed by the church in Portugal into religious sense, a characteristic specific to the faith of southern Europe (Pessoa calls them "the Southerners"), and that this religious sense was transformed in Portugal and Spain into an institution contrary to what had occurred in northern Europe and, particularly, in England.⁷⁵

Pessoa also considers the *degeneration* of the royal family and of the aristocracy (caused by consanguinity, which he claims had been studied by Júlio Dantas, a "distinguished Portuguese author") another contributing factor to the decline of the monarchy, though it was not the primary cause. There was an even stronger and more profound degenerative effect than the one eventually caused by biological blood relation, and this was the effect caused by the "moral consanguinity" of all royal families resulting from the exercise of power. (Pessoa cites in support of this thesis a work on human selection by the Russian psychiatrist and anthropologist Paul Jacoby.⁷⁶) However, the main cause of the moral

degeneration of Portuguese monarchs and nobles was, in Pessoa's opinion, "fanaticism," that is, "religion, the Roman Catholic faith."⁷⁷ In a Catholic nation, the absolutist, authoritarian, and oppressive influence of the church would be particularly harmful among monarchs and nobles who were already "naturally predisposed to all kinds of evils and aberrations" by the exercise of power and inbreeding.⁷⁸ It would have been the church that, during the constitutional monarchy as well as before it, "rooted in the souls of the monarchs and of the nobility the ideas of absolute government." This was because the church was by nature absolutist and despotic: "The Catholic Church has an absolutist constitution, far more despotic and oppressive than any absolutism that has been, far more cruel than any political cruelty in its bad moments, and far less excusable because doing all these things for the glory of God and, of course, in the name of Jesus."⁷⁹

The Catholic Church likewise exercised a malignant influence on the masses, even though the people, thanks to their "good sense," mental sanity, and "human morality," had avoided the worst effects of this religious contamination. This demonstrated the strength of the Portuguese race at its core for having preserved its existence under such negative influences, thus preventing the decline of the country from being much greater.⁸⁰ In any case, in southern Europe (and here Pessoa cites Lombroso and an unnamed Portuguese scientist), the individuals most lacking in moral sense, the "born-criminals" and "born-prostitutes," were "characteristically religious, devoted to the Catholic Church."⁸¹ This relation between an atavistic tendency to crime and a no less atavistic type of religious devotion were not characteristic of other religions, which generated less superstition and moral laxity. "The best part of religion is that which keeps the moral sense in activity," Pessoa affirms, thereby inferring "the enormous superiority of the Protestant religion to the Catholic." He then comments, "The further from dogma, from pomp, from superstition, the better for a religion."⁸²

The radical anti-Catholicism expressed in many of these pages from 1909–1910 would be, on the whole, maintained by Pessoa throughout his life, though with nuances and variations in some of his old positions. After abandoning his negative vision of absolute monarchy in the period after World War I, Pessoa naturally no longer accused the detested Catholic Church of being the mentor of absolutism in Portugal, though he never ceased emphasizing the church's "oppressive" nature and its role as "corruptor of souls"⁸³ as well as its responsibility for "two centuries of monkish and jesuitical education."⁸⁴ In addition, his

position on religious dogma would be revised. Around 1930, Pessoa criticized the Portuguese Freemasons, accusing them of having a Catholic mentality, even though they were irreligious: "For what reason do you reject Catholic dogma, which is inoffensive and lofty, and retain the Catholic mentality, which is an intellectual and moral perversion of civilized state of mind?"⁸⁵

Even before recounting in detail the recent antecedents (1906–1907) and succession of events of João Franco's dictatorship (1907–1908), which were addressed in the following parts of the book, Part I of "History of a Dictatorship" extensively reviews the successive phases of Portuguese decline from the beginning of absolutism. During the epoch of absolutism, only the actions of the Marquis of Pombal, whom Pessoa describes as "one of the greatest statesmen in the world," were distinguished, for Pombal was motivated by ideas of public good and of national regeneration, but he had revealed himself to be even more absolutist than absolute monarchs. After the liberal revolution of 1820, Pessoa believed that constitutional monarchy was truly initiated only in 1851 with the regeneration of Fontes Pereira de Melo, an idea Pessoa had taken from the counselor Augusto Fuschini, a liberal politician with vaguely socialist ideas who during the 1890s had written two famous books on Portuguese politics, which Pessoa abundantly cites in his book.⁸⁶

The period of the constitutional monarchy is divided by Pessoa into two phases: the first from 1851 until 1890, which he paradoxically designates "Unconstitutional monarchy," and the second from 1890 onward, which he no less paradoxically designates "Constitutional anarchy."⁸⁷ From the liberal revolution until the time when he wrote the book, Pessoa, following Fuschini,⁸⁸ always refused to grant the Portuguese monarchy the attribute of being constitutional because he felt that it never attained an equilibrium between sovereignty with popular origins and the prerogatives of the crown, an equilibrium that was difficult to obtain and that had only been possible, according to Pessoa, in England and in other countries of northern Europe because they were not subject to the influence of the Catholic Church. Not only was the Carta Constitucional (1826) of an "ultraconservative spirit," because it maintained instruments of the king's absolute power (the dissolution of parliament by D. Carlos two years before Pessoa was writing seemed to confirm this) and because it maintained Catholicism as the state religion, but so were the politicians, who were elected under the carta, even when they were of popular origins, and who became increasingly immersed in the general climate of corruption and venality, which royal

power itself favored and fomented, and they rarely represented the interests of their people.

The central themes of Part I of "History of a Dictatorship" are national decay and the possibility of Portugal's regeneration. Let us first consider the social forces and dynamics that the young Pessoa, in 1909–1910, considered essential for the Portuguese nation to resist decline and start down the path of regeneration. Second, let us examine how his thinking on these questions developed as he matured.

In the organism of the nation, which he sometimes also calls the state, the young republican Pessoa indicates the sickly organs, responsible for national decay and for the "moribund" state of the Portuguese monarchy—the monarchs, the aristocracy, the Catholic Church, and the political bosses—as a whole, corrupt and corrupting enemies of the public good. Foreign influence is also singled out as a cause of decline, though years later Pessoa would rather focus on the process of *denationalization*. If these determining causes were removed, "what was physiologically social below this would improve," Pessoa wrote in his proposed conclusions to the work.⁸⁹ For Pessoa, in fact, the healthy part of the nation was the people in general and the middle classes in particular, a term that for him encompassed the various social strata between the nobility and the proletariat. Even though they were subjected to the harmful influence of the church and the corrupting system of monarchy, the people—or at least the part of the people who were saved from these contaminating influences—constituted for the young author the healthy basis of the nation, the main foundation of resistance to disintegration and decline. The people had common sense and were the guardians of *human* moral sentiment that was independent of (Catholic) religion, a surprising statement when we consider the author's thoughts on the religiosity of the Latin peoples.

In this work, Pessoa uses the concepts of democracy, popular will (or government founded on the people), and popular opinion (or government based on opinion) synonymously. As bad as institutions might be, if the *majority of the people* (according to his democratic credo at the time) possessed a sense of citizenship and demonstrated devotion to the public good, government would have to submit or be overthrown.⁹⁰ However, in other passages of the text, this sense of citizenship and of devotion to the public good, the conditions for national regeneration, seem to have been conferred not on the majority of the people, but instead on specific entities. Thus, as was mentioned earlier, Pessoa distin-

guished from the mass of the people “the discerning elements of the rising middle classes,” which were the bourgeoisie and the intellectual elite; he also noted the indispensable existence of an organized and orderly “body of men,” animated by a healthy spirit and coherent aspirations with a realistic and attainable program—in other words, the Republican Party.⁹¹

Basing his considerations on the analysis of psychiatrist Júlio de Matos (who in 1904 translated *The Socialist Superstition* by Raffaele Garofalo, founder of criminology and luminary of positivism), Pessoa believed that socialists, anarchists, and workers' leaders did not belong to the healthy part of the people and nation. The emphasis Pessoa placed on the clear-sighted and incorruptible elements of the rising middle classes evokes the decisive importance he would later attribute to the elites, to an “aristocracy” not of blood, but of merit, intelligence, and ethical sense. Thus, in a phase in which Pessoa still spoke much about the people and “the majority of the people” as a natural reserve of the nation, he nevertheless began to show embryonic signs of his future elitist thinking, which would lead him years later to formulate the doctrine of an “aristocratic republic” and, in 1919–1920, in a climate of great social and political instability following the government of Sidónio Pais (1917–1918), to reject entirely the value of democracy and to speak of the majority of the people almost always with contempt.

In addition, Pessoa's notion of public opinion changed with time: when Pessoa was twenty years old, he thought that the *government of opinion* was the government of the people, the government of the majority. When he was in his thirties, he conveyed in such works as “O Interregno” (1928) the idea that a government founded on public opinion could not be a “democracy”—at least as it was then understood—because public opinion was the opinion of minorities, and because the wills and opinions of the majority of individuals could not be merged. In his youth, as already mentioned, he criticized egoism and individual ambition, whereas in his thirties he considered these characteristics, as a whole, the most solid pillar of society and civilization.

In conclusion, let us briefly examine the persistence of the themes of national decay and regeneration in Pessoa's political, literary, and prophetic work from his youth until death—themes that he had basically recovered from previous generations of intellectuals.

As has been established, the theme of national decline is treated in “History of a Dictatorship” according to an organicist, evolutionist, and rigid historicist paradigm, a rather schematic and simplistic approach that is not surprising in a

kind of radical political manifesto by a young author. Pessoa did not intend to distinguish his work by its theme alone, nor by its conclusions, but rather by its pretense to a scientific approach, which was very much influenced by works written by psychiatrists, criminologists, and some exponents of positivist thinking.⁹² The theme of decay, whether it referred to the monarchy or to Portuguese society itself, had long been commented on by the intellectual elite of Portugal. National decay had been previously discussed in differing tones and with more or less hope of regeneration by Alexandre Herculano, Antero de Quental, Oliveira Martins, Eça de Queirós, Ramalho Ortigão, Guerra Junqueiro, Fialho de Almeida, Sampaio Bruno (who was less apocalyptic in his diagnosis of decline), and other patriotic intellectuals, such as Augusto Fuschini, the most cited author in "History of a Dictatorship." Indeed, Pessoa could have imbibed the notion of a moribund nation from Fuschini, Oliveira Martins, or Guerra Junqueiro. Fuschini was perhaps the most pessimistic of all, ultimately believing that the people and the Portuguese race itself had been "poisoned" by "centuries of physical decay and moral corruption."⁹³

As we have seen, Pessoa believed that the people constituted the healthy segment and the moral reserve of the nation, and that "the Portuguese race" had been in the past, and was still, "a strong race, the strongest in the South."⁹⁴ Pessoa also followed in the path of those who cultivated the theme of Portugal's decadence, a compulsory motto of elite thinking during the second half of the nineteenth century. But—following other patriotic thinkers, such as Oliveira Martins, Guerra Junqueiro, and Sampaio Bruno (also author of *O Encoberto* from 1904)—Pessoa augmented this theme early on with messianic mysticism and Sebastianism. We should recall the focus of Pessoa's hope in 1908 when he was twenty years old: "A savior, a true man, great and bold that would put us right." The diagnosis of national decline, originating in the belief in a mythic national golden age (essentially, the period of discoveries and overseas expansion), had as its natural complement, in the young Pessoa's Sebastianist mysticism,⁹⁵ the prophecy of a messianic redemption or savior. It seems defensible to state that Pessoa's Sebastianism first crystallized around the idea of the republic as savior, and that "History of a Dictatorship" is the work that announces its coming.

Pessoa's political thought during the years following the revolution of 1910 tended toward a self-professed conservative republicanism, though he always maintained his independence, a stance that would characterize him from youth until death. In his political writings, he was soon diverted from the study of

national decline as a process related specifically to the monarchy, and he ended by projecting the phenomenon, with no discontinuity, onto the period of the First Republic (1910–1926). This process of further “radicalizing,” “anarchizing,” and “denationalizing” the declining nation would have pushed Portuguese society into a period of supposed “degeneration,” a term used in a pejorative sense that goes beyond simple decay or denationalization, indicating a pathological or “moribund” state in a regressive process.⁹⁶ For Pessoa, the First Republic ultimately revealed the continuation and worsening, even without the monarchy, of the vices that he had diagnosed in the constitutional monarchy.

After his disappointment with the democratic republic, which since 1911 was clearly seen in the fragments that he wrote for “Oligarchy of Beasts,” in collaboration from 1912 with the magazine *A Águia*,⁹⁷ and in various other writings, Pessoa created or adhered to other self-professed messianic and Sebastianist models, and to other “Desejados”: the “supra-Camões” (announced in *A Águia*⁹⁸); the redeeming figure of “President-King Sidónio Pais” (created after his death in Pessoa’s collaboration with the Sidonist journal *Ação* in 1919–1920); the Fifth Empire (a biblical myth that Pessoa reelaborated, beginning in the mid-1920s, inspired by António Vieira’s seventeenth-century interpretation published in his *History of the Future*); and, from May 1926, the more realistic military dictatorship (to which Pessoa offered his messianic perspective with the publication of “The Interregnum”). All of these prophetic models were associated with diagnoses of decline and ideas of national regeneration, glory, and future greatness of Portugal—the “super-Portugal of tomorrow” as he called it in *A Águia* in 1912.⁹⁹

Thus, the theme of national decline accompanied Pessoa throughout this life, whether it was with the hope of redemption, as in *Mensagem*, a work written and rewritten through his maturity (“Tudo vale a pena se a alma não é pequena,” “É a Hora!”); or whether it was finally without hope, as in the pessimistic poem “Elegia na sombra,” a declaration of the despair and disbelief of a mystic and messianic nationalist, written in 1935, months before his death (“Quem nos roubou a alma?” “ . . . nada vale a pena”).

NOTES

1. Some of these were inventoried by Jerónimo Pizarro, who gave priority to contents related to the themes of genius and madness in Pessoa’s writings. See Fernando Pessoa, *Escritos sobre génio e loucura*, Vols. I, II, ed. Jerónimo Pizarro (Lisbon: INCM, 2006); and Jerónimo Pizarro, *Fernando Pessoa: Entre génio e loucura* (Lisbon: INCM, 2007).

2. Outlines of the program and presentation of "O Iconoclasta" can be found in BNP/E3, 87-53^r to 57^r and 92B-30^r.

3. "Let up O Phosporo" is the annotation in a list of things to do in 1909 (BNP/E3, 48H-49^r).

4. With the publication of the "Pink Map" (c. 1886), Portugal claimed sovereignty over the territory between Angola and Mozambique, allegedly against Cecil Rhodes's "Cape to Cairo" projects. The dispute resulted in the British Ultimatum (Jan. 11, 1890), to which the Portuguese kingdom conceded, fostering a wave of republican nationalism. The Portuguese national anthem, adopted in 1910 by the new republican government, had been composed in 1890 in the wake of the British Ultimatum.

5. In response to an enquiry by Boavida Portugal published in the newspaper *República* (n. 1161, Apr. 7, 1914) about the "most beautiful Portuguese book of the last thirty years," Fernando Pessoa suggested *Pátria* by Guerra Junqueiro, which, in his opinion, was "not only the best work of the past thirty years, but until now the foremost work in our literature." In an unpublished text, a chapter in English on Guerra Junqueiro that Pessoa wrote in 1909-1910, according to our identification, for "History of a Dictatorship," Pessoa highly praised the author of *Pátria*, *Finis patriae*, *A Morte de D. João*, and *A Velhice do padre eterno*, and considered this last title, which he translated as *God's Old Age*, as "his best work (at some points, at least)." Guerra Junqueiro is here described as "the greatest of Portuguese contemporary poets." The title of this unfinished chapter by Pessoa is "Words to Remain in History: A Poet's Trial," and it discusses the sentence passed on Guerra Junqueiro in April 1907 (BNP/E3, 14C-30^r-35^r).

6. See Maria Teresa Pinto Coelho, *Apocalipse e regeneração: O Ultimatum e a mitologia da pátria na literatura finissecular* (Lisbon: Cosmos 1996), 164, 191-92.

7. Jerónimo Pizarro, *Fernando Pessoa: Entre génio e loucura*, 91; and Fernando Pessoa, *Escritos sobre génio e loucura*, 234.

8. BNP/E3, 79A-71 (title page of the manuscript of the work to which was attached an unfinished draft of the introduction and little else).

9. BNP/E3, 138A-6, published for the first time in Teresa Rita Lopes, *Pessoa por conhecer* (1990), Vol. II, 76-77, with transcription errors corrected by Jerónimo Pizarro in *Fernando Pessoa: Entre génio e loucura*, 132. The Marquis of Tavira (and not of Távora, as T. R. Lopes read it) referred to in the text is a fictitious person created by the Spanish dramatist José Zorrilla (1817-1893) in this piece "Traidor, inconfeso y mártir," supposedly inspired by the historical figure Cristóvão de Távora, the favorite of King D. Sebastião, who accompanied the king to Alcácer Quibir and was at his side when he died.

10. BNP/E3, 48C-3^r, list of projects attributed to the pseudonym "Pantaleão (if necessary give true name)," and 92H-16^r, "A Psychose adeantativa," published in Fernando Pessoa, *Escritos sobre génio e loucura*, 238.

11. Pessoa, *Escritos sobre génio e loucura*, 241. Some texts actually written for this project are found on pp. 238–40.

12. BNP/E3, 92P–10. The “decreto dos adiantamentos” (Aug. 30, 1907), signed by João Franco after the government had closed Parliament, annulled the debts of the Royal House with an accounting maneuver, which unleashed a wave of discontent, disparaging the king and the monarchy.

13. BNP/E3, 48C–1^r to 5^r (the title in question is on 48C–2^r, list of projects of Alexander Search).

14. BNP/E3, 49C¹–48^v.

15. BNP/E3, 20–1^r to 6^r, published for the first time, with errors and lacunae in Fernando Pessoa, *Páginas íntimas e de auto-interpretação*, ed. Jacinto Prado Coelho and Georg Rudolf Lind (Lisbon: Ática, 1966), 3–6, and with corrections in Fernando Pessoa, *Escritos autobiográficos, automáticos e de reflexão Pessoal*, ed. Richard Zenith (Lisbon: Assírio & Alvim, 2003), 84–88. The transcription just mentioned ends after the line with signature and date.

16. enter<ed>/s\

17. Richard Zenith, in his transcription of the text, corrected the English to “he would have to have.” See Pessoa, *Escritos autobiográficos*, 86.

18. This question mark is lacking in the original.

19. The principal texts are the already mentioned introduction with the subtitle “National and Institutional Decay” (BNP/E3, 79A–71 to 82), which apparently remained unfinished, and the three initial pages of Part I (BNP/E3, 92W–70^r to 72^r). The introduction was translated into Portuguese and published without explicit reference to the fact that it was an introduction to “The Portuguese Regicide and the Political Situation in Portugal,” in [Ana Cristina Assunção,] “Ensaio político inédito: O Regicídio Português e a situação política em Portugal,” *Jornal de Letras, Artes e Ideias* 177 (Nov. 26, 1985), 14–15.

20. BNP/E3, 48–24^r, published in Fernando Pessoa, *Escritos sobre génio e loucura*, 240–41.

21. BNP/E3, 144D–3^r and 6^r.

22. Cf. the differing opinion of Jerónimo Pizarro expressed in his *Fernando Pessoa: Entre génio e loucura*, 44, and in Fernando Pessoa, *Escritos sobre génio e loucura*, 822. It cannot be confirmed that “History of a Dictatorship” was a bilingual work (Pizarro, *Fernando Pessoa: Entre génio e loucura*, 122), because the chapters actually written, whether typescript or manuscript, were always in English, and Pessoa himself classified the work either as an “English essay” or as an “English book.” (BNP/E3, 144D–6^r). For the project *H. of a D.*, although scattered notes were written in Portuguese, some additional notes were written in English.

23. The whole is mostly divided between numbers 92N, 92O, and 92P of the literary remains, as well as numbers 92Q, 92R, 92S, and 92Y. A typescript chapter, also unfin-

ished, which appears to be Chapter IX of Part II, is located in another section of the remains (BNP/E3, 14C-30^r to 35^r).

24. We know, for example, that the work was written during the monarchy (before Oct. 5, 1910) from the following phrase: "the Portuguese monarchy [. . .] is at present very low, very weak—dying, we may say" (BNP/E3, 92N-40^r).

25. BNP/E3, 92N-93^r.

26. BNP/E3, 92L-19 to 20, published by Pizarro in Fernando Pessoa, *Escritos sobre génio e loucura*, 260-61. In addition to this plan and part of a preface, fifty-one texts by Pessoa associated with the project "History of a Dictatorship" are transcribed in this work (259-302).

27. BNP/E3, 92S-54.

28. See Fernando Pessoa, *Escritos sobre génio e loucura*, 822, with caution regarding the assertion that Pessoa would have already begun "History of a Dictatorship" in 1908; this claim cannot be confirmed.

29. For example, BNP/E3, 108A-75 to 79^r, under the title *H. of a D.*, is a text dated after the fall of the monarchy.

30. BNP/E3, 108A-40 and 108A-65 to 66.

31. BNP/E3, 108-46 and 47. Pessoa also wrote *Ieshu* and *Jeschú*.

32. BNP/E3, 108-20 to 26, 108-50, 108-95.

33. BNP/E3, 92E-26 to 29.

34. BNP/E3, 108A-91.

35. BNP/E3, 92S-42 and 43. The author here writes, "This is, we believe, the first clearly historical work in which the principles of a psychology based upon science, in which even the principles of psychiatric science are applied." This preface was partially transcribed by Jerónimo Pizarro in Fernando Pessoa, *Escritos sobre génio e loucura*, 259.

36. BNP/E3, 93-48^r, under the title "Livros para escrever a H. of a D.," reproduced in Fernando Pessoa, *Escritos sobre génio e loucura*, 291. This bibliography included a book by João de Barros published in 1910, *La Littérature Portugaise*, which enables us to date it from this year.

37. See Jerónimo Pizarro, *Fernando Pessoa: Entre génio e loucura*, 123.

38. BNP/E3, 92Q-97r.

39. António Mega Ferreira, *Fazer pela vida* (Lisbon: Assírio & Alvim, 2005), 59-60.

40. In a still unpublished letter from Pretoria dated January 12, 1913, Fernando Pessoa's mother speaks of the "cinco contos de réis" from the inheritance of his grandmother which had disappeared, leaving her son a debt of 350,000 réis to pay. His mother attributed these events to the failed typographic business: "A tua má cabeça, metendo-te em negócios de que nada entendias, levou tudo por água abaixo." The cause of every-

thing, according to his mother, was “tuas ideias da tipografia, para publicar livros teus, os quais tu próprio confessas, ainda nem hoje estão escritos.”

41. For example, BNP/E3, 108A–22 to 23 and 108A–25^r.

42. BNP/E3, 92S–54^{r-v}.

43. Pessoa, “Livros para escrever a H. of a D.”

44. Luis Morote, *De la Dictadura á la república: La vida política en Portugal* (Valencia: F. Sempere, n.d. [1908]). The ambiguity of the title and the fact that the edition was undated have produced confusion regarding the publication date of this book, which has generally been considered to be after October 5, 1910. Morote’s book recounts the history of the dictatorship of João Franco and its antecedents, concluding with a brief note written at the last minute: “Tragedia final: derrumbamiento de un régimen” (281–82), which refers in two pages to the regicide (Feb. 1, 1908) and the accession to the throne of King D. Manuel II. Morote does not, then, actually discuss the fall of the monarchy, but only his conviction that the republic was about to be established. Patricio Ferrari correctly dates the work to 1908 in “A Biblioteca de Fernando Pessoa na génese dos heterónimos,” in Jerónimo Pizarro, coord., *Fernando Pessoa: O Guardador de papéis* (Alfragide: Texto, 2009), 195.

45. Jerónimo Pizarro, Patricio Ferrari, and Antonio Cardiello, *A Biblioteca particular de Fernando Pessoa I* (Lisbon: D. Quixote, 2010), 138–39, 142.

46. For example, BNP/E3, 108–10.

47. BNP/E3, 92B–63.

48. BNP/E3, 48H–33^r. The new title of the essay in English also appears in the list on 48H–7^r and 58^r, with its authorship being here attributed for the first time to Fernando Pessoa. This list enumerates nine titles under the heading “Estudos Contemporaneos” (a collection of books?) and the title “Da Dictadura á republica” does not figure in it.

49. BNP/E3, 92C–71^r.

50. BNP/E3, 92C–82: “Cons[ideraçõe]s post-rev[olucionarias] e (?) / ou Da D. á R.”

51. Curiously, the idea of writing *A Oligarchia das bestas* emerges during the writing of a note for *Cons[ideraçõe]s post-rev[olucionarias]* (BNP/E3, 92F–27^r). *A Oligarchia das bestas* is here described as “A Pamphlet against our radicals, against A[fonso] C[osta], etc.”

52. BNP/E3, 48H–58^r, under the title *Politica e sociologia*, and 48H–7^r, cited earlier, seems to be the project for a collection of studies titled *Estudos contemporaneos*. This project is datable to 1911, because the title *A Coroação de Jorge Quinto* (the coronation of George V took place in June 1911) figures among the projected studies.

53. Fernando Pessoa, “Extent and Causes of Portuguese Decay” (text that we here identify with Part I of “History of a Dictatorship”), 18 (BNP/E3, 92N–35^r).

54. Pessoa, “Extent and Causes of Portuguese Decay.” The first chapter of Part I is titled “National and Institutional Decay” (BNP/E3, 92N–1^r to 17^r). As has been said, “Na-

tional and Institutional Decay” was also the subtitle of the introduction that Pessoa wrote for “The Portuguese Regicide and the Political Situation in Portugal” (BNP/E3, 79A–71 to 82).

55. Pessoa, “Extent and Causes of Portuguese Decay,” 92N–4.

56. The pair of concepts of integration and disintegration, which Herbert Spencer first employed in *First Principles* to describe organic processes as well as social processes, was then used in the sociological work of Émile Durkheim. Pessoa had direct or indirect knowledge of the work of both, and was particularly influenced by Spencer, whom he had read before 1910. See José Barreto, “Fernando Pessoa racionalista, livre-pensador e individualista: A influência liberal Inglesa,” in S. Dix, J. Pizarro, eds., *A Arca de Pessoa: Novos ensaios* (Lisbon: ICS, 2007), 109–27; Jerónimo Pizarro, *Fernando Pessoa: Entre génio e loucura* (Lisbon: INCM, 2007), 50–54; and S. Dix and J. Barreto, “Um sociólogo oblíquo: A Função social da religião e da arte e as reflexões políticas em torno de Fernando Pessoa,” in P. A. Silva and F. C. Silva, eds., *Ciências sociais: Vocação e profissão—Homenagem a Manuel Villaverde Cabral* (Lisbon: ICS, 2013), 181–205.

57. Pessoa, “Extent and Causes of Portuguese Decay,” 5.

58. See José Barreto, “A publicação de *O Interregno* no contexto político de 1927–1928,” *Pessoa Plural* 2 (Fall 2012), 191, n. 19.

59. Pessoa, “Extent and Causes of Portuguese Decay,” 6–8.

60. *Ibid.*, 2.

61. *Ibid.*, 8–9.

62. *Ibid.*, 11.

63. *Ibid.*, 10–11.

64. BNP/E3, 92R–75^r.

65. Pessoa, “Extent and Causes of Portuguese Decay,” 12–13.

66. See BNP/E3, 108B–5^r, under the title H[istoria] de uma Dictadura—*Conclusões*. Other factors of national decline would be foreign influence, the oligarchy of political bosses, and the decline of Western civilization itself.

67. Pessoa, “Extent and Causes of Portuguese Decay,” 15–16.

68. *Ibid.*, 17.

69. *Ibid.*, 37–38.

70. *Ibid.*, 19.

71. *Ibid.*, 38.

72. *Ibid.*, Chapter II, “Origin of Portuguese Decadence: Influence of the Roman Catholic Church,” 18–43.

73. Pessoa, “Extent and Causes of Portuguese Decay,” 44.

74. *Ibid.*, 23.

75. *Ibid.*, 22.

76. *Ibid.*, 28. This is the book *Etudes sur la sélection dans ses rapports avec l'hérédité chez l'homme* (1881) by Paul Jacoby; Pessoa could have had been aware of this book through the work of John F. Nisbet, *Marriage and Heredity* (1908), which he had read.

77. Pessoa, "Extent and Causes of Portuguese Decay," 29.

78. *Ibid.*, 33.

79. *Ibid.*, 22.

80. *Ibid.*, 37.

81. *Ibid.*, 30.

82. *Ibid.*, 31.

83. BNP/E3, 55F-17^r, 55F-18^r to 20^r, extract from an unpublished response to an inquiry from around 1930.

84. BNP/E3, 55I-23^r, extract from an unpublished response to an inquiry from around 1930, published for the first time in *Sobre Portugal*, 84-85.

85. BNP/E3, 129A-3^r, extract from an unpublished response to an inquiry from around 1930, published for the first time in Fernando Pessoa, *Associações secretas e outros escritos*, ed. José Barreto (Lisbon: Ática, 2011), 190.

86. The works most cited by Pessoa throughout Part I of "History of a Dictatorship" are *O Presente e o futuro de Portugal* by Fuschini, originally published in 1899, and *Manual político do cidadão Português* by Trindade Coelho, published in 1906.

87. These two periods are analyzed in Chapters III and IV of Part I, titled "Unconstitutional Monarchy" and "Constitutional Anarchy." See Pessoa, "Extent and Causes of Portuguese Decay," 44-76, 77-89. The author also uses for the first expression the variant of "constitutional absolutism" (*Ibid.*, 55).

88. Pessoa, "Extent and Causes of Portuguese Decay," 41.

89. BNP/E3, 108B-5^r, *H[istória] de uma Dictadura—Conclusões*.

90. Pessoa, "Extent and Causes of Portuguese Decay," 16.

91. *Ibid.*, 15-16.

92. Among others, Pessoa cites in support of his theses works by Paul Jacoby, Cesare Lombroso, Júlio de Matos, Júlio Dantas, and the physiologist Xavier Bichat (1771-1802), one of the great inspirations of Auguste Comte.

93. Augusto Fuschini, *Liquidações políticas* (Lisbon: Companhia Tipográfica, 1896), 149.

94. Pessoa, "Extent and Causes of Portuguese Decay," 25.

95. Obviously, mystical Sebastianism did not prevent Pessoa from judging King D. Sebastião's African adventure as a catastrophe that led to the loss of Portugal's independence in 1580. In his opinion, the young king had scorned all prudent counsel, subjected as he was to the influence of the church: "the sole cause of the madly audacious condition of minds" would have been religion (Pessoa, "Extent and Causes of Portuguese Decay," 26).

96. See the text “A desorientação em que temos vivido, a decadência em que temos vegetado . . .” (BNP/E3, 92D–37^r), published for the first time in Fernando Pessoa, *Sobre Portugal: Introdução ao problema nacional*, ed. Joel Serrão (Lisbon: Ática, 1979), 130.
97. Fernando Pessoa, “Reincidindo . . .,” *A Águia* 5 (May 1912), 143.
98. Fernando Pessoa, “A Nova poesia Portuguesa sociologicamente considerada,” *A Águia* 4 (Apr. 1912), 107.
99. *Ibid.*

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