

Pessoas influence in Fernando Tavora's discourse

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34. TÁVORA, Fernando, apud *'Fernando Távora. Conversaciones en Oporto'*, op. cit.

35. *'Que trabajen con una cuerda atada al pie, para que no puedan ir demasiado lejos de la tierra en la que tienen raíces, y de los hombres que mejor conocen, siempre apoyándose en una base firme de dedicación, de buena voluntad y de honradez (honor).'* Coderch, José Antonio, 'No son genios lo que necesitamos ahora', 1960, publicado en Domus, noviembre de 1961. Apud Fochs, Carles (ed.), op. cit.

36. TÁVORA, Fernando, *'A propósito de Royaumont'*, op.cit.

37. Ídem.

38. *'La mia opera'*, entrevista con Fernando Távora, en Antonio Esposito y Giovanni Leoni, Fernando Távora, opera completa. Electa, Milán, 2005.

39. Brasil Builds, exposición realizada en el MOMA de Nueva York, y posteriormente en Lisboa, en los años 1948 y 1953.

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'In all this confusion it seems to me to be worth recording something far more relevant to an architect's activities, that is how to think about, compose and construct buildings and then to create out of all the disparate and conditioning elements some sense of harmony and formal order'.¹ Sir Leslie Martin

Contradiction and paradox

On the back cover of one of the volumes of his copy of Le Corbusier's Complete Works, there is a partial transcript of Távora's own handwriting in a somehow enraged stroke, from a poem by Álvaro de Campos:

Aye, I'm sick of demigods!
Where are there real people in the world?²

This seems to reflect both certain helplessness faced with the brilliance of Le Corbusier and Pessoa, and the merger of the Swiss architect and the Portuguese poet in his thinking. Both references remained present throughout his entire life and they represent, respectively, international modernity and the Portuguese condition, globalisation and localisation, issues which recurrently sparked Fernando Távora's internal contradictions.

In any case, during a process of education and lifelong quest, as in every life journey, these contradictions emerge quite often. In his projects, the conscious presence of opposites often reveals, without it necessarily meaning an inconsistency:

*I know, I know
yes, I know. I know now and I have known for quite a while
yes, I know, I know that.
But I know that, and I know otherwise.
And it is so hard to know that and to know otherwise.
To accept that and not despite the opposite.
[...]³*

One could suspect that Távora himself consciously nurtured this internal debate in order to reflect it in his work – *'in architecture the opposite can also be true'*⁴ – and, to a large extent, it eventually became an essential part of how he positioned. As he wrote:

*'[...] - My thinking in terms of architecture and how I have materialized it- the unit at each moment, diversity throughout a life. I can be concurrently designing a hut and a palace, with architectural expressions and economic, social and political fundamentals that are completely opposite and can still be honest in everything ... or fake throughout, which is always the same thing ...'*⁵

Truth would also seem paradoxical for Pessoa, *'hence his constant pursuing of the interstices between one thing and another ('it is all gaps, all approximation', as De Campos's verses read), such as the search for another ontological nature, another unknown purity ...'*⁶ Thus, he even states:

*'Acknowledge the truth as truth, and at the same time as an error; experience opposites, without accepting them; feel everything in every single way, and be nothing, in the end, but the understanding of it all ...'*⁷

The message

To Távora, poetry was the *'most synthetic and deepest way to consider truth and beauty'* and he claimed that reading it fed his spirit and that in it he found both Mies's less is more and the decorum is what is failed to be done by the Portuguese Renaissance Francisco de Holanda.⁸ He also stated that Mensagem, Pessoa's apogetic work about the greatness of Portugal, had been the book of his life.

'Yes, the book of my life, if I am allowed and able to choose one book, is a poetry book; a Portuguese one, called Mensagem, which could have actually been called Portugal.'⁹ He goes on to admit that he obsesses over two great figures: Luis de Camões and Fernando Pessoa, especially the second. 'Not for being especially greater than the former but for being a man closer to my time, a man who experienced or perceived the period I live in and who knew how to tell it by being it.'¹⁰

A man of great culture, not just in terms of literature, Távora received a very conservative education – mainly from his father, a member of Northern Portugal's nobility – and grew up in quite an upper-class environment for that time. This brought him closer to Arts and History and even to Raul Lino's classical architecture, who in that period was the epitome of what could be called traditional Portuguese architecture. As he would explain, at age 14 his father gave him Lino's book, Casas Portuguesas, with a personal inscription saying '... for you to always find inspiration in the work of the great master ...', which was driven by his perception of a 'feeling of certain nationalism in his work.'¹¹ Around the same time, according to his nephew and first biographer, the architect Bernardo José Ferrão¹², Fernando Távora used to recite poems from Mensagem by heart, dressed in the Mocidade Portuguesa paramilitary uniform. Therefore, young Távora had his first contact with Fernando Pessoa's literature through this book, the first one the writer managed to complete and the only one edited in Portuguese, while the poet was still alive in 1934.

Even though the originally planned title for the book was indeed Portugal, the meaning of the one chosen in the end is not trivial and goes beyond what the very word 'message' may indicate, in respect to 'intimate and profound meaning of a philosophical or literary work, which represents the writer's legacy to human culture'¹³. Pessoa himself added the anagram 'Mens agitat molem' to the title in its first edition. This sentence from the Aeneid, Virgil's epic poem which ascribed a mythical air to the Roman Empire, means 'the mind moves the matter'. In a different interpretation, researcher Miguel Real states that the word comes from the Portuguese translation of the word Gospel, Boa Mensagem, and relates its etymology to the words mass and mission.¹⁴

The latter approach would indicate Pessoa's intention to take on the mission to create a new collective spirit, via a messianic message that looks back on Portuguese history through its mythical characters, announcing the arrival of a redeeming Fifth Empire, of a cultural and spiritual character. The text, thus, integrates the epic condition with a certain sacred character, in a time when, in his opinion, Portugal had gone from being a great empire admired by the rest of the world to a decadent nation with no future:

[...]
That creeping gleam of the earth
That's Portugal breaking the heart –
A flaring without light or heat,
Like a will-o'-the-wisp's core.

[...]
All's uncertain and is the end,
All is scattered, nothing entire.
O Portugal, fog you are ...

It is time! Valete, Frates.¹⁵

The book ends with this poem, Nevoeiro, whose last verses were read by the architect as the culmination of a conference on his readings. After the dark portrait of the country's situation, there is a plea for rebellion, with the reflection that time has come – it is time! –, and a congratulatory message to the Portuguese. This is reflected in the last Latin expression, which means 'congratulations, brothers' and conveys the certainty that the goal can be met, despite the difficulties.

Certainly, a clear parallelism can be found in Fernando Távora, who makes a similar analysis of the decline of Portugal in terms of architecture starting in his youth when he begins to conceive his whole life and architectural plan. Thus, this project also represents a personal mission - 'only a comprehensive revolution will wake up the Country; and it needs to wake up'¹⁶ – to address a cause of national architectural renaissance in the heroic manner he admired in Le Corbusier; for his defense of a new architecture, and in Pessoa, for this attempt to reinvent Portugal based on its cultural revitalization.

Therefore, as a response to an article previously published in the weekly monarchical newspaper Aléo by Silva Lopes in 1945 and while still a student in a stagnant School of Fine Arts, Távora published his first essay, O problema da Casa Portuguesa¹⁷. In the essay, he criticises the glorification of a false national architecture, advocated for a contemporary Portuguese architecture and proclaimed: 'Everything must be rebuilt starting from the beginning.' This is a manifesto, his personal Message, which will be visually reflected in the project Casa sobre o Mar, and will remain present in his attitude throughout his entire career.

The architect, just like the writer with his epic poem, breaks down his essay into three parts, and calls them Architecture and Archaeology, Fake Architecture and For a contemporary Portuguese architecture. In the first one, he derides the attempt of early 20th century Portuguese architects to give character to a decadent architecture by inappropriately using forms of the past, so that 'a serious disease would be treated by a yet more serious disease and a sad reality was born from the laudable intention of the reformers'. This reality is what he calls the old-school Portuguese house, a type of architecture 'with a local and independent character, but completely incompatible with the thinking, feeling and living of the world surrounding it... an architecture of archaeologists and never an architecture of architects.'

Curiously, this way of designing had not only become usual but had also been proudly assumed by an important part of society and, along with the style called Soft Portuguese, it would be passionately defended by the Estado Novo's dictatorial regime, which wished to identify a paradigmatic image of Portuguese architecture. This was parodied in an essay by Alexandre Alves Costa, reproducing a famous fado by Amália Rodrigues, 'It is a Portuguese house, with most certainty. It is certainly a Portuguese house'¹⁸

In the second part of his article, Távora continues to claim that the Casa Portuguesa movement 'led the architectural lie that characterises bad works and bad artists.'

But it is in the third part where Távora, considering it is not merely about an aesthetic and formal problem, sets the epic goal of a new architecture – a mission that sounds utopian –, which must involve not only architects but also the entire Portuguese society. He acknowledges that 'the endeavour to be undertaken is so large that one can actually wonder if being conscious of its magnitude will not invite to immediately give up.'

Nevertheless, he points out the possibility of resurgence, provided that a different attitude is adopted other than basing the future exclusively on the remains of the past:

'We are men of a perhaps tragic, maybe very sad and even decadent era but in which not everything is decay and ruins, if it is not exclusively fed on debris left from other times.'

To carry out such resurgence, he raises the need for a comprehensive study of Portuguese architecture and construction, which later on would materialise in the Inquérito à Arquitectura Popular portuguesa¹⁹, in which he himself would participate.

This essay would demonstrate that there was no such dream of a national architectural style. As he continued to claim years later in his 1962 essay Da organização do espaço:

'It is true that past values must be defended insistently and at all costs, but we must defend them in a constructive way, either by acknowledging we need them and accepting its update or by accompanying them with contemporary works.'²⁰

Távora shows indeed his intention to rely on studies of the true common house but incorporating a contemporary architecture that reflects the current society's new conditions in which 'Portuguese Architecture must be interwoven without fear of losing its 'character.' Thereto, he also advocates for the study of the architecture he denominates foreign and opens up to the works of the great masters of the time and to the new constructive processes. That is, he expresses the need for the local and the global to meet, a stance he would take later by defending what he would call the third way.

He completes his message by offering his personal contribution to a collective effort that would pay off, as it eventually happened, in a more distant future:

'It would be simplistic to think [...] that the new Architecture will emerge in a few years and that all problems will be solved overnight. It is impossible for today's people to see the full outcome of their efforts; but great works and great realities do not belong to individuals but to a community comprising not only those present but also those to come. In this spirit then, we will be happy to know that future generations will obtain the solutions we dreamed of and to which we contributed without obtaining, however, the award of its completion.'²¹

This initial manifesto defines his cause, the conversion of the national architectural scene, which he would pursue throughout his life, consisting of a compendium of thought and theory, critic and research, teaching and professional practice.

And it is in the synthesis between the global and the local, between modernity and tradition, that Távora found his way, already pointed out in that previous manifesto and in his practical application, the Casa sobre o mar (House over the Sea) – the project for which he was awarded a CODA²² in 1951. This project clearly showed the influence of the Modern Movement, reflecting strict compliance with the five steps for a new architecture set in 1927 by Le Corbusier: support on pilotis, open floor plan, free facade, elongated windows and solarium roof. Adapting the design to a functional programme does not preclude extreme attention to be paid to the constraints of the area nor is it incompatible with the will to incorporate vernacular materials and construction techniques from the region, such as blue and white tiles on the facade or the integration of granite retaining walls between the pilotis. This seems nothing else than a reflection of his own theories:

'Contemporary homes will have to be born from us; that is, they will have to represent our needs, result from our conditions and the entire set of circumstances within which we live, both in space and in time.'²³

Even though this work was not designed to be built, it is a large risk that the architect takes with his proposal, in the sense that turning a written manifesto into a project could fail. And yet, he takes it up with courage and determination – 'clear in thinking, clear in feeling, / and clear in willing'²⁴ –, overcoming the fear he admitted in his early career that his architectural proposals would fall short.

Despite his strong convictions, Távora confessed being confused in those moments:

'The emergence of such unknown things created a terrible disorientation in us. I have the impression that the crisis I suffered following the end of the degree was born precisely from the need to combine the ideas... That crisis might have also been caused by a certain incompatibility between a rationalist education and the one from my family environment; as well as, to some extent, with a temper that would not fit into that education.'²⁵

It is true that, although he maintained the synthesis he defended with all consistency, he was always aware of his own contradictions, as he felt his initial modern militancy was largely unnatural: 'My modernism was deeply intellectual ... because it did not run in my blood.'²⁶

To Távora, 'forgetting and remembering are vital and complementary attitudes. Forgetting is a way of selecting and, therefore, a way of remembering'²⁷. He was always permeable to what was happening around him, to that context surrounding life and architecture, which were nothing but the same to him:

*The essential lies in knowing how to see,
Being able to see without thinking,
Being able to see when seeing,
and neither think when seeing,
nor see when thinking.*

*But that [...],
that requires a thorough study,
to learn how to unlearn'²⁸*

Thus, from an (self-)critical position, he tried to find the point of balance that would let him open up to the world without sacrificing the Portuguese nature which he neither could nor wanted to let go. At that point, his speech encounters again that of Pessoa, a man of anglophile education, bilingual; who, however, from a universal vision, embraced the unyielding defense of the Portuguese nature:

'Who, being Portuguese, can live in the narrowness of an only personality, an only nation, an only faith? A Portuguese who is only Portuguese is not Portuguese'²⁹

The search

True to his previous manifesto, Távora is committed to an opening process that could be called his outer journey, a frantic search of the international architecture scene, which led him to take part in the last four CIAM congresses, among others, and the first official meeting of Team 10 at Royaumont in 1962.

Through these experiences, he intended to learn and grasp a Modernity that would allow him to find that new path, although at that time many modernist assumptions were being challenged. Therefore, he lived in a time when a number of Central European and Latin architects were searching for alternatives and defending the need to adopt a more humanistic stance by nesting contemporary architecture inside the context of their own countries.

During those years, he also went from a huge crisis to a creative period full of certainties, during which he consolidated his conviction that he could be modern in a different way. Moreover, his consideration of the genius loci, the spirit of the site, would gain more and more meaning in his work. Távora understood it as the set of distinctive intrinsic characteristics of the place and it would eventually become a constant in his work. He indeed attaches great importance to the context in general and to the site in particular; and not only as a support of the project, which relates to Nature, but as an integrating element which must become a part of architecture itself. Accordingly, the place is subject to a construction simultaneous to the building, fusing together with the same architecture. As the poet, he is 'an interpreter of Nature because there are men who do not understand her language, as she is no language.'³⁰

Going back to international encounters, the parallelisms between what that group of young architects defended and what the Portuguese architect advocated for his country were not so obvious. In fact, about Royaumont he declares how he 'feels that it is a time for research and doubt, for reunion, drama and mystery' and, although he links this group's efforts with those of that 'heroic generation who has preceded us', he insists that 'continuing [...] does not mean copying solutions or sleeping in their shade.'³¹

To Távora, the bottom line of the meeting was the contrast between different realities and scales and the working methods of each of the architects, which José Antonio Coderch's attitude exhibited. Mentioning him with ill-concealed admiration, Távora points out Coderch's disagreement to the working method:

'The spirit of this meeting happily found its synthesis in Coderch's brief comment while Candilis was presenting his project of 25,000 homes in Toulouse, built in just five months. Coderch claimed that he needed six months just to study the design of a small house.'³²

Beyond their cultural and aristocratic proximity, Távora and the Catalan architect had genuinely similar concerns – 'it was regional architecture that guided me in my career and allowed me to design oeuvres that were later considered modern'.³³ Therefore, the Portuguese architect always acknowledged his interest in Coderch's architecture, which 'I found fundamentally honest, calm, with a great capacity for understanding and relating to sites, life and the city.'³⁴ In clear parallelism with Coderch's famous manifesto, No son genios lo que necesitamos ahora (It is not geniuses that we need now)³⁵, and in reference to the difference in stances pointed out at the previous CIAM, Távora states:

'This stark contrast can give us a clear idea of the nature of the problems that begin to worry us and that we need to solve; problems that, in a few years, have gone from being an issue of visionaries to being a living and strong reality.'³⁶

In any case, Távora's final conclusion of the meeting was positive because 'being aware of a problem is to have partly solved it' and he spoke of that synthesis he constantly sought in his career: 'let's, therefore, transform this awareness into a cry for hope in a future synthesis.'³⁷

Furthermore, during this time, Távora had simultaneously developed a new inner journey through his family roots, his own education, Portuguese literature and history, traditional architecture and heritage. All this would become crucial to the final orientation of his character: 'It is impossible to move towards the future without addressing the past [...]. Turning our gaze to the past is an intellectual act necessary to build the future.'³⁸ His participation, from 1955, in the aforementioned Inquérito, had meant a new rapprochement to vernacular architecture, strengthening his knowledge of building tradition, local materials and rural livelihoods. There lied many of those keys he could not quite find in his international contacts.

However, despite constantly looking into these circumstances, Fernando Távora never abandoned his outer journey which would continue to enrich him, though at some point it would only prove the differences that Portugal presented and, thus, also his desired synthesis should present. In this regard, we could highlight the arrival of the exhibition Brasil Builds³⁹ a few years before, where Távora would confirm the viability of his theories by finding that repositioning of the modern movement in a merger with the idiosyncratic condition of this tropical country with Iberian roots.

In his international experience, beyond his presence in all the aforementioned meetings and conferences, there

is a fundamental milestone in Fernando Távora's relationship with foreign architecture: the grand tour he went on in 1960 thanks to a scholarship from the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, whereby he visited the US, Mexico, Japan, Lebanon, Egypt and Greece, among other countries. This is the journey of a young but mature architect who, after a few years of teaching and practicing, had already established a positioning full of convictions, with enough work built upon the theoretical support of the third way, with which he had already achieved some recognition.

The experience of this intense itinerary, which was physically and mentally exhausting for the architect, was faithfully reflected in his Diário de "bordo"⁴⁰, the name Távora baptised it with on the first pages using navigation terms, perhaps by assimilation of his odyssey with the large epic poems and sixteenth-century Portuguese discoveries in other continents, glossed by Pessoa in his Mensagem:

*God wills, man dreams, the work is born.
God willed that all the earth be one,
That seas unite and never separate.
You he blessed, and you went forth to read the foam,*

*And the white shore went from isle to continent,
It lit up and flowed, even to the world's end,
[...]
He who blessed you made you Portuguese.
[...]
Lord, Portugal must yet fulfill itself!⁴¹*

However, while Pessoa longed for a new preponderance of Portugal in the world, opening up with a modern vision to the rest of the continents, Távora embarks towards them, overcoming his fears, in this his personal epic. His fundamental ambition was to import the American teaching method to relaunch the teaching of architecture and urbanism and Portuguese architecture itself. Furthermore, 'it may have been the conviction of the need of a persistent search for answers; an experience, combined with the dissatisfaction with the Portuguese situation, that revealed as the fundamental goal of this trip.'⁴²

In any case, the diary constitutes a real logbook in which all kinds of data, impressions and criticisms are detailed, accompanied by sketches of both architectural and urban elements and museum pieces. This allows us to understand the impact of this trip on the architect's career.

In the US, Távora visits Mies's and especially Wright's works with admiration and meets Rudolph and Kahn, among many others. In the case of the latter, Távora attends one of his lessons, discovering a certain similarity with his own theories in terms of valuing light in architecture and of the construction joint, both as an element of contact between planes and between different materials.

However, the different lifestyle he finds there does not cease to surprise him and provoke his admiration, coupled with a certain suspicion: 'We do not even know the treasure we have in some of our expressions of 'a backward country'⁴³. Later on, in other nations, he will come across the weight of history, an architectural heritage and a few museums that will impress him, especially Teotihuacan, Katsura, Giza and the Acropolis.

Nonetheless, underlying his description of the journey there is a will to only apply what he perceives as positive, trying to ignore what he finds negative – 'America is a great laboratory; it is essential to know it, exactly and above all to understand what should be avoided at all costs'⁴⁴. However, he does not leave that patriotic feeling aside that leads him to continue in his attitude towards the synthesis between architectural modernity and the international breakthroughs and towards the attachment to national traditions and his

cultural roots: '... *Oh, how much I have thought of Portugal, how much I have translated into Portuguese what I have seen and heard here, how much closer I increasingly feel to all our problems, all our difficulties and all our hopes!*'⁴⁵

The verbal transmission of this particular odyssey to his students, which Fernando Távora performed especially during his Theory and History of Architecture lessons, provoked that, the same as to him, *'the travel experience proved inseparable from knowledge, from architectural and life practice to all of them.'*⁴⁶ This, together with his teachings on the importance of drawing and history as tools for the project, influenced the transmission of a method that would become the most characteristic hallmark of the so-called School of Porto.

Ana Mesquita also argues that this great journey fundamentally contributed to the development of the essay *Da Organização do espaço* (About space Organisation) written in 1962 by Távora as part of his test to become Associate Professor. She claims that this was actually his never-delivered *'journey report, in which Távora reflected on issues that had accompanied him from his training period and further information is also included, such as the decline of planning in Portugal.'*⁴⁷

Similar to his previous manifesto, this essay indeed contains new references to the synthesis between local and global, as well as the insistence on the indissolubility of architecture and urbanism. Moreover, Távora stresses the need to consider the organisation of space as *'common work of participation'* in which *'before being an architect, the architect is a man, and a man who uses his work as an instrument for the benefit of other men and the society to which he belongs.'*⁴⁸

Therefore, as in his original Message, he is continuously considering the responsibility of the [his] mission as an architect:

'Designing, planning and drawing shall not translate for the architect into creating meaningless forms imposed by the whim of fashion or of any other nature. The forms he shall create must originally stem from a wise balance between his personal vision and the circumstance that surrounds him. He must, therefore, intensely know his circumstances, so intensely that knowing and being get confused.

And he will have to reject the negative aspects of the circumstances and value the positive ones, which eventually means educating and collaborating. And he shall

*His stance shall, thus, be that of a lifelong pupil and educator.'*⁴⁹

A heteronomy narrative

For this mission, Fernando Távora counted on the help of a number of important people, architects like him, who would appear during his life and who would, to some extent, eventually constitute a comparable structure to that of Pessoa's heteronyms, through whom the master's work geared down.

Certainly, the basis of heteronyms poetry lies perhaps in a 1933 poem by Pessoa himself, the Orthonym:

We, all who live, have
A life that is lived
And another life that is thought,
And the only life we have
It is the one which is divided
Between the true and the wrong ones⁵⁰

As previously pointed out, the difficulty of taking the leap from theory to professional practice worried Távora so much that he even went through a crisis caused by the doubt in his ability to materialise his thought with the same brilliance he had presented it with. In 1944 he wrote in his diary: *'... even without starting I finish because I find myself incapable of performing. It is a terrible situation that now afflicts me constantly.'*⁵¹

As Pessoa argued, *'living is not necessary; what is necessary is to create'*⁵² and Távora then claims he feels inferior because to him *'a superior spirit is specially he who creates'*⁵³ and great distress can indeed be perceived in him, which, however, does not prevent him from persevering:

There are worse ailments than ailments,
There are pains which do not hurt, not even in the soul
But which are more painful than others.
There is dreamt anguish which is more real
Than the one life brings us, there are feelings
Felt just by imagining them
Which belong to us more than life itself
There are so many things that, without existing,
They exist, they belatedly exist,
And belatedly they are ours and us...
[...]⁵⁴

However, when he comes back from his great journey around 1960, full of certainties, and generously gives the Boanova Teahouse project to Álvaro Siza, Távora seems to acknowledge that what Siza had developed in his absence was far superior to what he could ever achieve, having really applied the synthesis he desired. As Pessoa wrote:

*'Realising a work and admitting that it is bad after making it is one of the soul's tragedies. It is especially great when one acknowledges that this work is the best thing one could do.'*⁵⁵

In that moment, he confirms what he had probably sensed before, when he let Siza, still his mentoree, develop the design of the Quinta da Conceição pool. Perhaps he thought his so longed-for moment had come, after having been *'always waiting for a super-Camões in architecture.'*⁵⁶

In parallel, Távora tried to transform the teaching model of architecture from within and to make his theories transcend. In that mission, he could count on Alexandre Alves Costa's complicity and involvement, who made of teaching and critique a way to practice the profession, until they achieved the independence of the Faculty of Architecture from the Old School of Fine Arts in 1979. Subsequently, Costa's and Távora's influence would be repeated in the cases of Coimbra and Guimarães.

Moreover, in the 90s, his son José Bernardo carried out dedicated work with him in the studio – *'my father, my mentor, my partner'*⁵⁷ – which made it possible for an old Távora to still be Távora and build his own iconic image which would outlive him. Today, somewhat overwhelmed by this responsibility, José Bernardo continues to fight to keep his father's legacy alive.

Somehow, therefore, as the poet shaped his heteronomy – *'I myself shall be a whole literature'*⁵⁸ –, the architect – *'I am Portuguese Architecture'*⁵⁹ – was also accompanied by other characters who were essential, both to achieve the cause he pursued and to disseminate it.

Távora himself would indicate that *'there is a kind of madness that has to do with Portuguese temperament and reaches its zenith in Pessoa's experience. Pessoa's heteronyms express, in fact, the search for identity.'*⁶⁰ This was a permanent battle with which the architect also struggled while trying to keep the attempted equidistance in his creative process, in what can be considered a tensional balance between his strong modern beliefs and the equally powerful traditional roots which he struggled to reinterpret:

Lost
In the maze of myself, no longer
Do I know which path takes me
Towards human and clear reality
Full of light, where we can feel brothers
Therefore, I cannot conceive gaily
But with deep sorrow

*This joy, this happiness,
That I hate and hurts me'*⁶¹

Like many of his scholars seem to conclude, heteronyms are something structural to Pessoa's personality – *'In Caetano put all my power for dramatic depersonalization; in Ricardo Reis, I put all my mental discipline, invested with its characteristic music; I put in Álvaro Campos all the emotion that I owe neither to me nor to life'*⁶². In Távora, however, the alleged heteronomy is not sought, maybe not even comparable, since there is no direct domination of the author upon the other characters, who are not invented either but real.

It is rather a series of coincidences in his career that place us before a heteronym's narrative in an obvious gear down by a number of architects who would contribute, from different stances but with many common bonds, to Fernando Távora's dream of constructing the new Portuguese architecture, from a position that he himself finds somehow contradictory:

*'Pessoa does not only build an identity but several that can become contradictory; it is a permanent paradox that he himself cultivates. In a way, he is the true man of our time: he starts from the assumption that everything is under discussion but, at the same time, does not give up the pursuit of convictions. This is the great challenge of today's world: on the one hand there is globalisation, that condition which allows us to speak several languages, easily travel, have multiple contacts; and at the same time, there is the experience of the particular, the fact of being not just Portuguese, but also a man from Porto, with customs and roots [...].'*⁶³

It is time

This is the last verse of Pessoa's Mensagem and, certainly, the architect could see his life dream come true with the consecration of the School of Porto and the Távora, Siza and Souto de Moura Trilogy. His dream being that mission he had entrusted himself, the time for a new Portuguese architecture, conceived not as a style but as a way of doing; a synthesis integrating different narratives, internationally reputed and not exclusively by this triad's work.

As the poet claims, *'a man is the size of his dream'*⁶⁴ and this little great man lived chasing the dream he had imposed himself in the beginning of his professional career; *'because he who does not permanently and passionately immerse himself in the passion of life does not live'*⁶⁵:

*'... A true architect is not only that in his works; he must also be one in his lifestyle. Living without architecture is not living; it is pretending to live, it is escaping life permanently, it is ignoring its pleasures and also its setbacks.'*⁶⁶

Therefore, Távora always maintained his commitment, overcoming all his crises, undeterred by discouragement in his comprehensive life and architecture project; his way of being in the world, his mission, as if he was listening to the writer: *'Live your life. Do not be lived by it. In truth and error, in pain and wellness, be your own being.'*⁶⁷ And at the end of the journey, he could have stated without a doubt, as Don Duarte in Mensagem:

*Firm in my sadness, so I lived.
I fulfilled my duty against Fate.
In vain? No, because I fulfilled it.*

●○
MESSAGE
EPIC GENRE
OPPOSITE
MISSION
HETERONOMY