

PORTUGUESE SEA

"O salty sea, so much of whose salt
Is Portugal tears! All the mothers
Who had to weep for us to cross you!
All the sons who prayed in vain!
All the brides-to-be who never
Married for you to be ours, O sea!

Was it worth doing? Everything's worth doing
If the soul of the doer isn't small.
Whoever would go beyond the Cape
Must go beyond sorrow.
God placed danger and the abyss in the sea,
But he also made it heaven's mirror."

I have read a poem written by Fernando Pessoa, from his book "The Message" (1934), translated by Richard Zenith, and published in 2008.

Fernando Pessoa was born in Lisbon on June 13, 1888 but received his education in Durban, Natal, South Africa, where he lived, with his mother and stepfather, between

seven and seventeen years of age. He returned to Lisbon in 1905, fluent in English, to become one of the great Portuguese poets, writers and philosophers of the 20th century. Despite that he led a rather discrete life, earning money as a translator, until he died in 1935. "The Message" was the only book he published in life. After his death and the years to follow his work, unique in Portuguese literature, was slowly recognized because, although he was a prolific writer himself he created approximately seventy-five other authors whom he did not call *pseudonyms* because he felt the word did not capture their specific intellectual life and instead he called them *heteronyms*. Some of the figures being really unique even in the world literature.

In 1915, Fernando Pessoa, together with Mário de Sá Carneiro, a poet, and José de Almada Negreiros, a genius with multiple artistic talents, produced the literary magazine "Orpheus" which introduced modern literature and futurism in Portugal.

The poem entitled "Portuguese Sea" which I read at the beginning could only have been written by a Portuguese who knew South Africa and particularly the Cape route. Fernando Pessoa was a mystic dreamer who, in the path led by Luís de Camões, our greater poet, describes the permanent fight against the sea performed by the Portuguese sailors and the price they paid.

The Portuguese don't fight the sea anymore but they fight for education, health, social rights and peace. They also fight for new knowledge and its application for the development of Portugal and of mankind.

Minister Naledi Pandor, Minister Manuel Heitor, Minister Gilberto Kassab, Commissioner Carlos Moedas, Dean Fernando Santana, distinguished guests, dear academic and non-academic staff, dear students, ladies and gentlemen:

It is a great privilege for NOVA to award the title of Honoris Causa to Minister Naledi Pandor because she is also a fighter. She is indeed a longtime fighter for justice, freedom and knowledge.

NOVA is a young university, founded in 1973, within the framework expansion of higher education. It is situated in the Lisbon Metropolitan area and our campuses are spread in both sides of the Tagus River. The one where we are now, probably one of the biggest in Europe, is the campus of Caparica, for science and engineering. Nova has a total of 19 800 students, 1600 academic staff, of which 83% have a PhD degree. Every year we open 2 700 places for 1st cycle students and we receive 24 400 applicants out of which 6 000 choose NOVA as a first choice. Nova has 40 research units 75% of which, in the evaluation performed by FCT in 2013, were classified as "exceptional", "excellent" and "very good". This is well above the national average.

NOVA is also the Portuguese university with the best funding performance by full time equivalent of academic staff in the Horizon 2020. It is also worth highlighting that since the launching of European Research Council, in 2009, researchers from NOVA were awarded 13 grants, the last one was announced yesterday, in the biomedical area.

Also yesterday we were informed that NOVA was placed in the 41st position in the QS ranking of the Universities below 50 years of age, being the only Portuguese university in this ranking.

Nova has more than 2 000 enrolled foreign students the great majority at master's level. The top five nationalities being: Brazil, Germany, Italy, Angola and Cape Verde.

This internationalization makes NOVA an open institution believing and promoting a global dialogue in an attempt to promote new bridges between different cultures.

Dear Minister Naledi Pandor, you are now part of NOVA community and we feel very privileged to have you as our peer.

May the Portuguese spirit of discovery which turned the Cape of the Storms into the Cape of Good Hope led you to continue to support scientific and technological cooperation

even in rough storms. From now on you have another safe place to come ashore in the campuses of NOVA.

Welcome to NOVA.

Thank you.