

## **“EDUCATION OF THE STOIC”**

**Fernando Pessoa (Baron of Teive)**

Einaudi editore, Turin, 2005.

112 pages. 15,00 Euros

In her preface, Luciana Stegagno Picchio talks of an “exemplary autobiography of a suicide”. The Baron of Teive is a heteronym of the great Portuguese writer who, in this work which takes the form of a diary, develops a relentless, logical *de dicto* attitude that can only lead to suicide.

The call to stoicism repropose the conviction developed by many thinkers, from classical antiquity to the present day, that reason preserves mental health and permits achievement of “peace of mind” and a “carefree life”, while equilibrium requires detachment and voluntary control of emotions.

Through his heteronymy, Pessoa stretches this conviction - which the author considers an illusion - to the very limit, leading to extreme consequences, which can only end in self-destruction.

“I feel I have achieved fullness in the application of reason. Thus I can now kill myself”. The heteronymy disappears on the departure of the Baron of Teive, as though his existence and end had perhaps saved its creator from suicide.

As observed by Richard Zenith in the post-mortem accompanying the book, “Teive takes on the most dangerous aspect of his creator: unbridled reason”.

Pessoa needed the death of this heteronym to save himself, providing us with a difficult, somewhat dangerous text, which prompts the need for self-inquiry and reasoning without being struck down by its inescapable lucidity.

*Luigi Pavan*