

Fernando Pessoa

There is in a genius an obscure element...

There is in genius an obscure element — that obscure element, real but difficult to define, which is called mediocrity when it assumes certain aspects. A case like that of Napoleon makes this clear. Napoleon was the medium of a vast number of tendencies of his age and time; if he had not been such a medium he would not have got hold of that age. He was sent out by it to come in to it, and commanded because it told him to command it.

s. d.

“Erostratus”. in *Páginas de Estética e de Teoria Literárias*. Fernando Pessoa. (Textos estabelecidos e prefaciados por Georg Rudolf Lind e Jacinto do Prado Coelho.) Lisboa: Ática, 1966: 198.