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José Cardoso Pires. *Balada da Praia dos Cães*. Lisbon. O Jornal. 1982. 256 pages.

Cardoso Pires's fiction has searched for the key to the Portuguese soul; this concern pervades his previous novels and essays. In "The Ballad of Dog Beach," a fictional account of a real 1960 plot to overthrow the Salazar dictatorship, he once again deftly examines a characteristic of Portuguese existence—fear.

Cardoso Pires's characters are syntheses of aspects of Portuguese life during the late 1950s and 1960s. His protagonist is an astute, sensitive detective assigned to discover what actually happened at Dog Beach. As he takes testimony from the accused and their accomplices and as he fills in the elements of the supposed conspiracy, we discover the climate of Portuguese life and the detective's own bourgeois existence. The professional class, the youth and the peasants who supported this and other attempts against the dictatorship are poignantly drawn. Their belief in the "mission" is undaunted, regardless of the social or personal consequences faced. The events are presented in cinematographic flashes or through monologues, dialogues and dreams. The intensity of the narration is enhanced by the real people and events which make up the background: Humberto Delgado, Henrique Galvão and the beginning of the colonial wars.

What Cardoso Pires reveals to us is a society paralyzed in a siege of fear: fear of a neighbor or a friend, who may be a secret police agent; fear of thinking; fear of speaking and acting. The underground opposition forces also live in this atmosphere of fear and distrust of one another individually and collectively, which is, ultimately, the answer to the events of "The Ballad of Dog Beach." This powerful novel was awarded the prestigious Portuguese Writers Association Prize for Fiction for 1982.

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