

To know the beginning. Fernando Pessoa and the english heritage

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What is that tangle of modernity and modernity all the time, and even another modernity? José de Almada Negreiros²

Abstract

This article explores the relationship between the work and person (s) of Fernando Pessoa with English language and literature. It is not about untangling his work from Portugal or finding a hidden version of the writer: these pages pretend the understanding of his work is a connection between many languages, many cultures, many voices, many points of view, as part of his games of language.

Keywords; Portuguese literature, English literature, poetry, language games, national literatures, heteronyms, creative gestures.

As a writer, it seems that Fernando Pessoa is a finished author and we already have what is important and what deserves to be known. As an editorial phenomenon, he has reached limits bordering on fatigue and repetition, with the distrust that a new anthology of his poetry is another opportunity to puff up two or three scholars and swell the catalog of a few publishers. The problem, it seems to me, is that the same difficulty of editing Pessoa means that the publishing company does not take the risk or have the resources to venture into the *Pessoan* archive. This is why we suppose, and have made us suppose that what is “worthwhile”, what is “most valuable” of the thousands of pages that the Portuguese poet wrote, has already been published and has been in our libraries for years. In addition, it may be that way, but maybe not about remembering that to date, at the end of 2017, more than forty percent of the plunder remains unpublished. That is to say, that of the almost 30,000 pages that compose it, some 12,000 are still a mystery. Moreover, the statistics can become even more controversial if we believe what says, among others, Professor Jerónimo Pizarro: it is probable that 60% of the totality of Fernando Pessoa’s preserved work is written in English. Only to refer to a

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2 José de Almada Negreiros, *El niño de ojos de gigante*, p. 362.

cataloged part of his unpublished poetry, Pizarro says, “it is probable that the number of unpublished poems (more or less finished, in English) amounts to 1,500” (Pizarro, 2013, p.105). This forgetfulness cannot fit like simple negligence: we know that the files, the almost 30,000 pages, are in an inventory. However, here a difference that disguises itself as a paradox: that inventory is not ordered. What does this mean? Well, Pessoa, on a single sheet of paper and at different times, could write something for the Book of Restlessness, let us say in pencil and with an almost illegible line: a poem without author and without date, attributable to *Ricardo Reis*, written with a black ink pen; a list crossed with the possible works of Alberto Caeiro, with a pencil, also black, but of a slightly more opaque color, such as brown or ochre. Finally, the results of the Cup of England: Liverpool beat the Burnley 1 to 0, where the attendance was 99,136 people. How to organize all this if it is on the same piece of paper? How is it done to give them a date (only in a minimum proportion -10% - Pessoa’s writings indicate it) and put them within an organized chronology? In addition, with the aggravating factor of what seems obvious today: that Álvaro de Campos, *Ricardo Reis* and *Alberto Caeiro* are the main authors of a work of their own, for Pessoa it was not until the 1920s, that is, that the terms oronym and heteronym were only mildly clear for Pessoa himself until 1928. So, until then-and not even after, Pessoa solves the problem of the attribution of heteronyms texts-although, it is true that certain “control” is evident “. A fragment or a poem could, for the same author, be of one or another of his fictitious personalities, or of none, or simply not clarify any of this and be conceived as a fragment no more, one of the many that wrote daily. Do you see the difficulty for the one who decides to edit Pessoa? Do you see why what for a publisher can be a poem by Fernando Pessoa, for another is undoubtedly a poem by Álvaro de Campos? The work of the Portuguese poet starts from the same place - the espolio, the inventoried texts - but always arrives at a different result. Of all this labyrinth, I do not have for the moment more than an idea that should, and that already seems to be, the one that dictates the future of the editions of the books of Fernando Pessoa: that the edition becomes an exercise of literary criticism, that through that individual figure called editor, a new reading appears, capable of enriching and renewing our understanding. In the case of Pessoa, the posthumous condition - almost total - of his work condemns us (does he dispose us?) That his edition is always different. Pizarro explains all this exposition of the difficulty of the “physical” work, written by the author, in his book *Alias Pessoa*.

Nevertheless, the concern is another and remains there after reviewing the status of the espolio: why is that part written in English but not published? Is it illegible? Not worth it? Do the resources and the interest of the editors concentrate only on the part written in Portuguese? How is it possible that during so many years of critical and academic super-specialization there has not been a serious attempt to publish this part? The truth seems simpler, it always is, the first Portuguese editors and critics of Pessoa came from a French background, and although they had some knowledge of English, they were not qualified to do rigorous translation work (Pizarro, 2013, p. 103) and that is why they left these texts aside. In addition, and since the appearance of the first biography dedicated to the poet, that of João Gaspar Simões of 1950: *Life and work of Fernando Pessoa*, it became common the idea that Pessoa was an “Englishman” no more, apparently. The work of Gaspar Simões, with all the importance he had in the

formation of how the world met Fernando Pessoa, also helped to install a powerful topic to this day, that Pessoa was a writer of lesser value and little interest when I wrote in English. This is how Gaspar Simões defends his position: “Portuguese, not English. It was in the Portuguese language that he would be given to discover the most intimate affinities between what he felt and what he expressed” (Simões cit., In Taibo, 2011, p. 213). This distinction between what is felt and can only be expressed in the mother tongue, and the inability to do so in a different language, has been weighed for many years to judge the English work of Fernando Pessoa. In addition, and it seems necessary to include it as a possible historical justification, the first editors were not interested in publishing an English poet, but the Portuguese poet of the twentieth century, the super-*Camões* so many times announced. It seems inevitable to refer to a topical and excessive nationalist idea to understand this void. Moreover, its future will depend on future editorial work to know the English Pessoa in its entirety.

Even so, we know enough texts in this language to get an idea of its importance in the work. It is time to accept naturally that we are dealing with a bilingual writer, who throughout his life used different languages-let’s not forget that he also wrote in French-for particular uses, but above all that he had in English one more resource, one more voice to register his work. The Pessoa labyrinth is not only one of heteronyms, but another that is deciphered from the relationship between languages.

This concern of the English heritage is linked to another fundamental point: the modernity represented by the work of Fernando Pessoa. Pessoa’s ambition was to be, before Portuguese, an English poet. Moreover, I add at once, a modern English poet. That most of his works are written in a language other than Portuguese should already be a significant test for the case. How then can the greatest renovator of all literature be understood without its English part? Is this Portuguese creative revolution related to its mastery of a foreign language? Why not see Pessoa as a writer actively influenced by other languages, -as in the case of Beckett-? Let us see a little the relation of the writer with the English to try to understand this osmosis, this unique thing that is the work.

From Gaspar Simões, everyone seems to accept that English for Pessoa was his “literary and bookish” language, elevated. Who spoke it perfectly we announce it several testimonies of relatives and classmates of his years in Africa. Her middle sister, Henriqueta Madalena, the beloved and so-called Teca, tells for example that although in South Africa with their parents the brothers always spoke in Portuguese; among them, they did it in English. Pessoa “was considered a brilliant intelligence boy because, despite not having spoken English in his childhood, he learned it so quickly and so well that he had a splendid style in this language,” points out his friend at Clifford E. High School. Geerds (Pessoa, 2005, page 219). His education from 1896 to 1904 (with the interruption of the 1902 family trip to the Azores) in Durban, South Africa, by then an English colony, was the best a student of the colonies could have. Eduardo Lourenço called him “an angel education” (Spanish National Radio, 2004). Some even affirm that the formation of colonies was much better than the English one, precisely because Englishmen did not dictate it. “English, in any case, was learned by Pessoa at school. He did not learn it in the streets of Durban “(...)” I spoke with academic correctness”, says Simões (Taibo, 2011, p 210). This also coincides with other testimonies that describe him as a quiet young man

without many friends, which leads him to say to Richard Zenith, critic and editor of the Book of Restlessness, that his excellent command of the language “derived above all from the many books that he read and studied” (Pessoa, 2001, p.6), which made his forms and expressions sound archaic and erudite. His training at Durban High School and that in literature “covered even the English literature of the late nineteenth century” (Macedo, 2013, p.1), was decisive, it is known, in the young student. We cannot forget that the greatest reference for Pessoa in his adolescence and then in his first years in Lisbon after the return of Africa in 1905, was William Shakespeare and not Luís de Camões (Macedo, 2013, p.1), the Portuguese Homer and better national background. Weighed even more an author as John Milton, whom Pessoa called in a fragment written in English as “the great type, the model for poets”, “the great archetype, the model for poets, not now but always” (Pizarro, 2013, p.107).

There are many doubts when it is stated that Pessoa always wanted to write and become a writer, and since his stay in Durban, appeared some poems published in the city's newspapers under pseudonyms such as *Karl P. Effield* -when he was only sixteen years old- or *Charles Robert Anon*, which for Zenith was his “first true heteronym” (Pessoa, 2001, p.6). Although for others, like Patricio Ferrari, it is more appropriate to call him “pre-heteronymous” (Ferrari, 2011, p.33), due to that by then, and we speak of the beginning of the nineteen hundreds, Pessoa was not aware that he was handling a literary legacy, his later known as drama in people. Therefore, his adolescent writing will be mainly in English, without any other aspiration, read: Portuguese. However, we know that his plans changed drastically, and to aspire to study at an English university, and forced to return to Lisbon in 1905. Carlos Taibo in his biography summarized on Pessoa recalls that “from the autumn of 1905, and back in Portugal, in the literary expression of our man was imposed, however, and for three years, English” (Taibo, 2011, p 210). They were strange months for Pessoa, in which his British rigidity and timidity scarcely caught up among the snatched shakes of his Portuguese contemporaries. “The Pessoa that landed in Lisbon in 1905 was, or seemed to be, in any way, a foreigner” (Taibo, 2011, p 211). Even in his appearance, he looked like a gentleman. He had few friends and even the only one that appears referred to in that period by Robert Bréchon in his monumental biography about the writer: Strange foreigner, is “another Portuguese from South Africa, with whom he can discuss in English” (Bréchon, 2000, p.95) . It is as if he missed that language in which he formed his intellectual world, in which he read Byron, Keats, Shelley and Tennyson, Poe, Carlyle, Coleridge and Wordsworth, that language in which literature seemed to flow. Life had changed and Portugal was their new home, the postman, the waiter and the neighbor spoke in Portuguese, the same language of their parents and that no longer belonged to the family world, (although Jorge de Sena, “maintains that Pessoa always lived in a bilingual family in which English was used at all times ‘as a domestic language’ (Taibo, 2011, p 210). What there is no doubt is that Portugal was never a distant thing or a ghost of the past for Pessoa, as if for example for his other half-brother men, who were born in South Africa and lived in England.

The relationship with his country seems to be even closer if we believe the statement by Eduardo Freitas da Costa, that “it is certain that in the library of the stepfather of Pessoa, in Durban, there was abundant representation of the national literature -Camões, Antero de

Quental, Guerra Junqueiro, Júlio Dinis, Camilo Castelo Branco, Eça de Queirós and Fialho de Almeida- "(Taibo, 2011, p.214).

This sensation of strangeness between languages offered to Pessoa's work a rare and new intensity, which finally gave the Portuguese, until 1908 his "minor" language, an unknown opportunity. What finally decided his love for the language of Camões? What makes you re-encounter with Portugal? Bréchon explains it this way: "The use of Portuguese is a kind of liturgy through which he celebrates his union with his old and new homeland", this language "precisely because he had been about to lose it, he immediately considered it to be his" (Bréchon, 2000, p.138). Pessoa recovers Portugal not only by reading the writers of a canon hitherto ignored, but by assimilating its tragic, truculent and politically chaotic history. As Yvette K. Centeno claims: "In the mother tongue Fernando Pessoa transcends meaning and the senses, metaphorizes, symbolizes, mythifies, something that he had not achieved in English and, even less in French" (Centeno cit., In Taibo, 2011, p 212). That something that becomes myth is the Portuguese homeland, and in that myth Pessoa "reconciles the action and the dream", in the words of Bréchon (Enthoven, 2009). "Zenith concludes that, if the first texts of the writer once returned to Lisbon are in English, this is not the result of the weakness of Pessoa's Portuguese, but of the absence of literary models from whom until that moment he had read little in his mother tongue "(Cit. in Taibo, 2011, p 211). It is from his Portuguese readings that since 1907 appear fictitious personalities such as *Faustino* and *Pantaleão*, *Gaudêncio Nabos* and *Vicente Guedes*, all writers in Portuguese and the latter author of the *Book of Disquiet*. However, and we cannot forget, Pessoa never stops writing in English, and in this same period he writes what for many is the most sincere and genuinely autobiographical document of Pessoa: *the Journal of 1907-1908*, written in English, and that contradicts the idea of Gaspar Simões that this was his brain-rational language and Portuguese sentimental. This diary, of which only fragments are preserved, reveals a very special use of English. Pessoa decides to confess his family anxieties ("There is no understanding of my mental state in my family, no, no, they laugh at me, they mock and they discredit me "(Pessoa, 2009, p.32)), his amorous failures (" it is another of my ideals, also completely frustrated, with an absolute vacuum "(Pessoa, 2009, p.33)) and its uncertainties of character ("I have never made a decision born of myself, I have never shown a conscious will, none of my writings are finished" (Pessoa, 2009, p.47)) in a secret, indecipherable language. No one in his immediate environment-by then Pessoa lived with two great-aunts and his grandmother Dionisia, with whom he used to argue-knew English, so he could point freely to his intimacies, without fear of discovery.

This use of English that gave him the confession of the secret and the forbidden was replicated in a section of the work that arouses some curiosity: the sexual orientation of the writer. We do not have Fernando Pessoa as a great romantic poet. Neither Alberto Caeiro nor Ricardo Reis nor the ortho- don theater, nor the book by Bernardo Soares seems to us a work interested in the erotic. However, there are terms that not even *Alvaro de Campos* - the most violent and sexual heteronyms - dares to transgress, and are those that appear in some poems written in English by Pessoa. Taibo says that "no testimony in Fernando Pessoa's life tells of a homosexual relationship, although, it is undeniable that he wrote, basically in English, poems of a homoerotic nature" (Taibo, 2011, p 116). This is the case of *Antinous*, written in 1915 and

published in 1918, and then revised and included in the book *English Poems I-II* of 1921. In it, the Emperor Hadrian recalls, contemplating the nude body of his lover Antinous, “the love that enjoyed both” (Pessoa, 2015, p.47):

Playing with pleasure, it was all a kitten,
 with his own pleasure or with Adriano’s; sometimes
 he enjoyed alone, sometimes enjoyed the two, joined, separated
 leaving aside the pleasure or dilating it in its entire peak;
 they united, unraveled; sometimes avoiding total enjoyment
 and assuming it only half hopped on him unexpectedly;
 then he delivered himself with sweetness, whether it was squeezing with fury
 or joking and then very seriously, whether it’s resting
 next to pleasure or spying on how
 to be able to assault it without making concessions. (Pessoa, 2015, p 43)

This greater emotional expression is another of the characteristics of Pessoa’s English, as we had seen with his diaries. It is also telling that after finishing his relationship with Ophélia Queiroz, days later “Pessoa wrote, in English, a poem that is easy to relate to the rupture”:

I have wished so oft this mockery might end / Of love between us! And it’s
 ended now. / Yet I cannot even to myself pretend / That the wished thing
 achieved gives joy enow. / Every going is a parting too. / Our happiest day
 doth make us one day older. / To get stars we must have darkness also, / The
 fresher hour is likewise the colder. / I dare not hesitate not to accept / Thy
 separating letter, yet I wish / With some vague jealousy I scarce reject / That
 things were fitted for a different stretch. / Farewell! Yet do I smile at this or
 not? / My feeling now is lost in thought. (28-11-1920)

From what we know, “Zenith emphasizes how Pessoa’s love poetry is written primarily in English” (Taibo, 2011, p.217). In addition, there is an unusual fact in his work: texts in which the woman is the protagonist. Zenith again “mentions two poems in English, ‘A girl thinking of her lover’ from 1915 and ‘When I was very young’ from 1935, in which the narrator is a woman” (Taibo, 2011, p.147). To conclude with these examples of emotional limits “it is striking that just before dying Pessoa multiplied the poems of loving look, it is true that all of them in languages other than Portuguese” (Taibo, 2011, p.146). He wrote them in French and English, the last of them on November 22, 1935, a week before he died. And of course, what is supposed to be his last sentence was written in English, the famous I know not what tomorrow will bring, I do not know what tomorrow will bring. Taibo, finally, resolves this issue: “Pessoa dares to put into English what the conventions prevent him from writing in Portuguese” (Taibo, 2011, p.217), he writes. Moreover, it reminds us of the case of one of Pessoa’s greatest influences: Oscar Wilde, for whom bilingualism - he wrote in English and French - “could be the expressive representation of a sexual duality” (Steiner, 2000, p.18). Or let us stay with Bréchon, who wrote that “his erotic texts, however expressive and even violent they may be, do not seem

more than a bubbling foam on the surface of a dead sea” (Bréchon, 2000 p 126); after all, Pessoa himself clarified this in a letter to Gaspar Simoes: these creations are ways of getting rid of that element of obscenity that we all have, to concentrate, he says, on “higher mental processes” (Ramalho, 2003, p. . 2).

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There is a sentence underlined by Pessoa in one of his books that helps better understand this of the mythification of the fatherland, mentioned above; is from George Atherton Aitken: “Our ability to understand an author well is always clearly enhanced by knowledge of the circumstances in which his works were produced.” He does it because this “liturgy” that Bréchon spoke between the Portuguese language and Pessoa -Gaspar Simoes calls it “renaturalization” (Bréchon, 2000, p.132) - was decisive for his future work, but to be achieved is inevitable review some aspects of Portuguese history that deeply and vertiginously affected the boy recently arrived from South Africa.

Every nation prides itself on a past that it admires and misses, and abhors a present that strives to dishonor it. This, at least, seems to be the historical insistence of the Portuguese writers of the early twentieth century. Portugal was, let us remember, the land that engendered the “ancient rulers of the world” (Taibo, 2015, p.36), those men who decided not to look towards the land but towards the sea, and discover a remote and full world of wonders. We speak, of course, of the most memorable epoch in the history of Portugal, that of discoveries, which spanned the 15th and 16th centuries and which turned the country, or better, the Portuguese Colonial Empire, into “the head of Europe in the world” (Taibo, 2015, page 67). Not to abuse -much more- of this space, let us say briefly, and relying on Carlos Taibo’s very judicious book, understanding Portugal; that this glorious past reached a critical point, and with the collapse of the European colonial logic, already for the end In the nineteenth century, Portugal had ceased to be “an example of civilization; it was one of the first states that abolished the death penalty in the world-to enter a prolonged decline” (Taibo, 2015, p.71). West, “the 19th century historian Oliveira Martins called the country, but the phrase may be from José Saramago, by Gonçalo Tavares. It is in this atmosphere of longing and continuous failure that Miguel de Unamuno wrote his famous phrase: “Portugal is a sad town; it is even when it smiles” (VV.AA., 2013, p.11). This is more or less the state of the country when Fernando Pessoa arrived, the one of one absorbed in “having been”, exhausted by an irreparable loss. A better understanding of José de Almada Negreiros’ sentence: “It was deeply painful for our pride to recognize that, suddenly, we were losing the lead of the world” (Almada, 2016, p.222). Alternatively, this one: “More than four centuries ago we are a power that only exchanges diplomats with other nations” (Almada, 2016, p.222). Manuel de Laranjeira is more fateful in his diagnosis: “the feeling of life, in Portugal, seems to be increasingly funereal and more indicative that we are being dragged, violently dragged by a bad destiny, towards an irreparable bankruptcy and in which we definitely sink “(VV.AA., 2013, p.50), wrote shortly before shooting himself in the head in 1912.

If it occurred to them, it is better to let it pass: the above was not just a metaphysical malaise of elite of intellectuals bent on reading much to Baudelaire. It was a political disaster. At the

beginning of the century, Portugal was a country economically sunk, divided between liberals (liberals) and conservatives (monarchists), who increasingly found it more difficult to defend an outdated state organization headed by a king (Carlos I), that only governed to detonate its own end: in 1907 the first of many dictatorships that the country had during the twentieth century was established, and in 1908, as a consequence, the definitive event occurred in its modern political history: the assassination of the king that would end defining the settlement of the republic.

We delay in this to demonstrate the following lines of the book of Bréchon: "Pessoa himself dates in September 1908 the moment he stops writing exclusively in English to do it in Portuguese. There is no doubt that the main reason for this sudden change is political. After two years of permanence in that country where he still felt foreign, he was invaded by an intense patriotic feeling "(Bréchon, 2000, p.104). This emotion will come just from the words, the books he read and the authors he met. The national tragedy was the way in which Pessoa discovered the mechanism of his Portuguese sensibility. At that time the poet understood the words of Teixeira de Pascoaes: "That is why Pain, the synthesis of love and death, is the very essence of Lusitanian poetry" (VV AA, 2013, p.103). In other words, it is not only Portuguese as a language, but Portuguese poetry, which consumes Pessoa's attempt at expression. This language brought the spontaneity that would allow the creative explosion (and the conclusion of a search) of the "triumphant day" of March 1914. His affirmation as a Portuguese poet.

Nevertheless, let us go back to the circumstances. It is valid to ask who would want to stay and live in such a country. And this is where we find one of the most perplexing attitudes of Pessoa. Was this jingoistic enthusiasm of his twenties enough for him never again decide to leave Lisbon? In the face of such chaos - "between 1910 and 1926 Portugal had no less than 45 governments" (Taibo, 2015, p.82) - why did not accept what Taibo says, that "in 1910, the poet declined an offer to work in England at the service of a British subject, Mr. Killoge, who was preparing a Portuguese edition of a great anthology of prose writers and poets from all places and times "(Taibo, 2011, p.156)? There is no response and it does not satisfy the commonplace that its relationship with Lisbon is the cause. By then Pessoa's link with the city is minimal and Bernardo Soares's beautiful tirades are still far from being written.

Portugal, and Fernando Rosas is right, was "a kind of intermittent civil war" (Taibo, 2015, p.101), and Pessoa had more possibilities than the majority of the population to get a job in another country. It is, we insist, disconcerting that at a time when the Portuguese was, in the words of Laranjeira, "a town that crosses an indecisive hour, a town going through a tragic phase of imbalance" (VV.AA., 2013, p.53) Pessoa has found resignation and immobility. Between 1910 and 1930, "almost one million people-out of a total of six million inhabitants-left the country" (Taibo, 2015, p.82), life expectancy at birth was 40 years, the mortality rate was it was among the highest in Europe [...] and 75 percent of its inhabitants were illiterate "(Taibo, 2015, p.82). "A putrid ignorance," the suicide Laranjeira called her. "We are a civilized people ... in appearance, because the black reality is that four fifths of the Portuguese population cannot even read and write. We dress to the modern, we pretend to live to the modern; and we think and feel the old way "(VV.AA. 2013, p.52). It would be worthwhile to review the topic that the general ignorance of Pessoa in Portugal was due to a declared apathy to his ideas or

to the lazy and timid eagerness for the poet's dissemination. Perhaps, the vast majority of the Portuguese did not know what he was saying in those newspaper sheets, from the *Orpheu* and *Presença* magazines when they passed their eyes through them. Almada Negreiros's phrase is brutal: "The Portuguese does not feel the need for art as he does not feel the need to wash his feet" (VV AA, 2013 p.97). Pessoa is the perfect example of a cultural crisis.

And what does this have to do with this English heritage? Everything, because an inheritance is also an influence of the past and the hypothesis is simple: Pessoa decided to stay in Lisbon for knowing how to speak and read in English; that which once augured a life in Oxford, in Glasgow or in London, defined his home forever. Yes, thanks to a knowledge that almost nobody had in Lisbon, learned in the distant English colony, Pessoa never lacked what so many compatriots: the possibility of working and sustaining a life. It sounds incredible, but for 28 years Pessoa worked in a single trade, as a translator or, as he defined it, as a "foreign correspondent in commercial houses", dealing with writing and translating letters or documents in English or French, drafting contracts and making everything necessary for the negotiations of the offices of their employers to take place. Imagine, Pessoa was a lobbyist. His biographers agree that his position was never compromised; on the contrary, he was a judicious employee and satisfied with his work. After what we have just read about the situation in the country, this description of Ángel Crespo resembles that of an employee in Sweden: "being a correspondent in foreign languages was equivalent to belonging to the aristocracy of the professions related to business", and this one Taibo one from Denmark: "Pessoa had nothing of a salaried employee. Without fixed hours or obligations, with a lot of free time at his disposal, his work style was very different from that of his heteronimous *Bernardo Soares* [...] Pessoa did not have to stop being, at any moment, a genuine bourgeois" (Taibo, 2011, p.100). Was he a rich man, was he a poor man? It seems more like an individual who cared little, and on the contrary, who spent all his energy in doing a work that shocked his contemporaries. The Portuguese people, he wrote in 1915, needed an "undisciplined", a professor of indiscipline: "Let us work at least to disturb the souls, to disorient the spirits. Let us cultivate in ourselves the mental disintegration as a flower of price [...] Let us build a Portuguese anarchy" (Taibo, 2011, p.73).

And if the decision was to stay, it was best to get to work, and between the revolution, to make a revolution. Let us talk a bit then about Portuguese Modernism:

"José Régio pointed out in 1925, in his dissertation at the Faculty of Arts of the University of Coimbra, that Fernando Pessoa was" the most original, the most complete and the most powerful of our modernists" (Taibo, 2011, p. 73). What does this mean? What, by the 1920s, had Pessoa achieved the status of a poet capable of rising as a critical category? Did the Portuguese artists constituted an artistic form defined as in other countries, and they had called it modernism? Why do modernists say they are not modern? Is there any difference? To present the Portuguese case at the beginning of the century as an avant-garde, or better, as avant-garde as that of the great European cities (art, used to say Pound, is a matter of capital), involves a lot of dangers and illusions. Let us not forget, as Taibo says, "that we find ourselves facing a space that is a little away from the main foci of civilization, and also from the main invasions and cultural contacts" (Taibo, 2015, page 18); the Portuguese was a poor and backward society: "a sort of periphery of the periphery" (Taibo, 2015, p.81). However,

there was in Lisbon (and in Oporto, although this will not go beyond the mention) a group of young people who made an effort to make an impact and understand art as a solution, as a possibility to be creatively. We only have the attempt; it is as if they said.

Because if society and the state were changing, if democracy and the republic stood out in the panorama, literature also had to be reborn. For Pessoa are parallel attempts and even have a “common origin”, which rests on the “essential changes” that were happening in the “national consciousness”, and therefore none, he insists, neither political change, nor literary, was a consequence of the other (Pessoa, 1966). Pessoa, inclined to create legacies, finds in Portuguese literature a rupture that “has definitely begun with Antero de Quental”, that man who in his words suffered from infinity, “and he often found himself talking to himself, as if he were someone who spoke with him”, as Antonio Tabucchi described it in one of the most beautiful books in the world: *Dama de Porto Pim*. Teixeira de Pascoaes, of whom he manages to say that he is the greatest European lyric poet, follow the lineage. For the young Fernando, in short, who has not yet published anything and has no friends, this so-called Portuguese Renaissance is a “new stage of civilization” (Bréchon, 2000 p.156), in which after organize its most prominent precursors, warns that his participation is imminent.

It is not the case to delay in the prophecy of the Super-Camões, and we regret not having more space to explain it better. Let us say the least: Pessoa became known as a writer in 1912 with an essay called *The New Portuguese Poetry* in its psychological aspect, in which announces with a rhetorical and anticipatory tone the arrival of a genius of higher order, which will place Portugal again in the rank of the first nations of the world. Taking the surname of the first writer that Portugal “has given to glory,” Borges says, plays with this Super-Camões, and the joke is none other than revealing that this new genius is he, Fernando Pessoa, 24 years old.

We write down just this and we go forward because in reality the true modern proposal that contains the work of Pessoa moves away from this national and extravagant mysticism: if it was not, *Message* would be his masterpiece and not the *Book of Disquiet* or the *Incommittal Poems*. In addition, this “imminent participation” of a moment ago, Pessoa himself conceived it from his messianic and renovating proposal. However, it was not like that: 1912 is an important year in modern Portuguese literature, not because of the premiere of Pessoa as a literary critic and national fortune-teller, but because he and Mário de Sá-Carneiro met. Bréchon exaggerates when comparing his friendship with that of Montaigne and La Boétie (Bréchon, 2000, p.174).

It is a definitive year: in 1912, Mário de Sá-Carneiro published *Incest*, a book in which life did not simply appear, but it bustled. In 1912, the first Exhibition of Portuguese Humorists was held, and, according to José Almada de Negreiros, “was the first stone of our vanguard of modernity” (Almada, 2016, p.367). That modernity that the painter and writer defined in 1965, many years later and with evident reluctance, as the “encounter of letters and painting” (Almada, 2016), p. 366), and of which *Orpheu* magazine was his desperate test.

The influence of Sá-Carneiro distracted Pessoa from his nationalist speculations. “He will imbue it too,” Bréchon says, “of a European cosmopolitan consciousness that transcends the two cultures among which Pessoa is divided” (Bréchon, 2000, p.182), and convinced him that

what identifies “Modernity” it is, as Jorge de Sena insinuates, “integration in international movements or attitudes” (De Sena, 2013, p.230). The latter today may sound naive to us, but not only for a couple of Portuguese poets but for the European society of the time, the modern was everything that meant “industrialization, urbanization, rationalization and democratization, that is, Western Modernity” (Dix and Pizarro, 2011, p.1). The modern, understood as the plural.

And this plurality, Pessoa, Sá-Carneiro and others (that is, the group of painters and poets who founded the Orpheu magazine in 1915, the publication in which the world met Álvaro de Campos), understood it as an impulse of avant-garde experimentation. “That proposed and practiced an iconoclastic renewal of the forms and the creative point of view” (De Sena, 2013, p.227); in other words, they saw the vanguard as a privilege that allowed for differentiation. “‘Modernity’, without more, is to be of the time in which one lives [...], but ‘vanguard’ is that someone proposes an overcoming of that same time” (De Sena, 2013, p.226), clarifies of Sena.

Surely the most violent protagonist of these purposes, and especially after the departure of Sá-Carneiro to Paris, was *José de Almada Negreiros*, whom Pessoa described as the most “spontaneous and quick” of the members of Orpheu. He was also the youngest and most virulent. We mention it because *Almada* seems influenced not only the movement as such, but the early consolidation of the personality of Álvaro de Campos. In addition, we ventured more: Almada wrote in 1921 a book of little restlessness: it is called *A Invenção do Dia Claro*, The invention of the clear day. Check it, please. We say about *Alvaro de Campos* because certain attitudes of Almada and his literature convey an ambition that Pessoa also sought with his heteronym: whose of these are these phrases?:

“This being modern is like being elegant: it is not a way of dressing but a way of being”.

“Have you already observed my eyes? Observe my eyes well: they are not mine; they are the eyes of our century! “

“We are not the century to invent the words. The words were already invented. We are the century to invent again the words that were already invented.

“Create your experience and you will be the greatest.”

It seems that we left all that English etc. behind, but no. *Almada* is the joker. *Almada* raises the fundamental problem, the bridge: what follows is from his Futurist Ultimatum to the Portuguese generations of the twentieth century:

“Our literature is summarized to half a dozen well-meaning academics whose work, without satisfying ambitions more bold, requires recourse to foreign literature. Result: no Portuguese has yet conceived the true value of the Portuguese language” (Almada, 2016, p.97). Said another way: *Almada* understands that the imitation of foreign forms is the prison of the thinking of Portuguese literature, that the reproduction of other literatures is one more syndrome of the Lusitanian decadence. It is, it is known, the old concern for the original character of the national, but in this case, the answer seems not only to be given, but also to have a name and surname.

Fernando Pessoa did not resort to any foreign literature to consolidate himself because in his case, the English one was not. Pessoa's work becomes the most special of Portuguese expressions, multiplying not only the famous points of view known as heteronyms, but also the relations between languages. Being an English poet made him the greatest Portuguese poet. The creative gesture not only dispersed in people but in different linguistic contexts, in other designations of language. Pessoa imagined not only in many people but also in at least three different linguistic universes (let us not forget the French, in that language he practically read all Tólstoi and Dostoevsky). Moreover, in none of this does it imitate, because it goes further than imitation. It is time to understand the language changes in Pessoa as another literary game. The confirmation of this hypothesis is in the unpublished file.

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