

Fernando Pessoa's creative process as a "Theater of the Mind"

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ABSTRACT: Over time, the pair of concepts Emotion and Mind, seeing the latter as the seat of Reason, occupies a top place in the discussion regarding the creative artistic process, in parallel with others, such as art/ life, truth/fiction. This paper analyzes how Fernando Pessoa wrote and theorized widely on the subject, established and practiced different poetics. His poetics and theories may be synthesized in the pair "feeling/ thinking," which the poem "Autopsychography" develops, pointing to a concept of art as "pretending." However, in a kaleidoscope work, this pair of concepts is focused and analyzed from different perspectives; it assumes multiple variations, meanings, and degrees, according to the different "authors" created by the poet. As he said, he built a "drama in people, instead of acts," "a novel without a plot," or as Teresa Rita Lopes summarizes, a "novel-drama-in-people." Pessoa created the characters and became the scene where these variations confront and interact, where his authors, theorists, and critics act, all "a non-existent coterie" created by a single author. Indeed, he became "nobody," and as Bernardo Soares, he confesses, "I'm the naked stage where various actors act out various plays." That is, Fernando Pessoa's work is The Theater of the Mind.

Keywords: Fernando Pessoa, Emotion, Reason, Aesthetics of pretending, Multiplicity

1 INTRODUCTION

The pair of concepts Emotion and Mind, seeing the latter as the seat of Reason, occupies a top place in the discussion related to the creative process in the artistic field, in parallel with other pairs, such as art/life, reason/feeling, reason/instinct, truth/fiction, a debate that has lasted for many centuries.

In this field, the relationship established between the two concepts, more or less strained, varies with the authors, but also throughout the History of Art and Literature, usually alternating periods when one of these concepts becomes predominant, as is the case of Reason in Classicism and Emotion in Romanticism, in the 18th and 19th centuries, respectively.

On this subject, António Damásio tells us that in the field of science and philosophy, for centuries, the opposition Emotion/Reason is characterized by significant discrimination of the first, considered of lesser importance to the second, seen as the most excellent human capacity (Damásio, 2000, p. 59).

Interestingly, Damásio says that Romantics put emotion in the body and reason in the brain. 20th-century science left the body out, shifted emotion back to the brain, but relegated it to the lower neural layers (2000, p. 59).

It is, after all, the "creative tension between warring forces — a calm 'Apollonian' spirit and an emotionally chaotic and violent 'Dionysian' one" (Preziosi, 2009, p. 519), inherited from Greek culture and rethought

over time, as is the case of Friedrich Nietzsche in *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872).

However, Nietzsche considers these two principles reconciled in the Greek tragedy: "Apollo could not live without Dionysus!" (1923, p. 41). In short, Nietzsche analyzes these principles functioning in Greek art, both in opposition and in complementarity, or even fusion.

In fact, throughout the History of Arts and Letters, emotion and reason were almost always considered to be in opposition in the creative process. However, today science shows that this is a much broader and more complex issue.

Today, we know that emotions and feelings are linked to consciousness, intelligence, and reasoning, therefore, to Reason.

Furthermore, according to Damásio, emotions are linked to the ideas, values, principles, and complex judgments that only human beings can have (2000, p. 55), and he also notes that consciousness and emotion cannot be separated (p. 35). Damásio explains that most emotions and feelings are essential to give energy to the intellectual and creative process (2017, p. 148) and that it is not possible to talk about thinking, intelligence, and creativity without taking into account feelings (p. 195).

However, emotions in the arts are distinguished from emotions in life, both for creators and recipients. Regarding "emotion" in arts, Dutton tells us that "works of art are emotionally saturated in the

sense that they express and explore affective experience within a coherent range throughout their totality” (2009, pos. 2143).

In this way, emotion must be seen “as coextensive with art, intrinsic to it, appears to be a bedrock fact of human nature and the nature of art,” which explains the fact that it “seems to be readily understood and accepted by audiences for art everywhere” (pos. 2143).

2 FERNANDO PESSOA: FEELING, THINKING, PRETENDING

The starting point of our analysis is Pessoa’s poem, *Autopsicografia* [Autopsychography] (1995, p. 235), published in 1932. In our opinion, this poem constitutes an *Ars Poetica* and a model of literary reading by designing a model of artistic experience at the level of creation and reception. A frontier and a type of interrelationship between art and life are defined in the text, and the poet’s action and that of the reader are characterized.

The poem shows how emotion and reason work in these processes and that this experience is characterized by “pretending” and aesthetic pleasure, both for the creator and the recipient. In this perspective, the author and the reader are located in symmetrical places, affected both by an attitude of “pretending,” “playful pretense,” or “make-believe.”

Thus, life and art are distinguished, and at the same time, the rule of insincerity is instituted in the latter, however, without eliminating the former’s role and the relationship between the two.

Starting from this poem, we will highlight in our analysis the following points: 1) The aesthetics of pretending; 2) The author’s creative process; 3) The reader’s aesthetic process; 4) the case of heteronyms.

2.1 *The aesthetics of pretending*

The assertion made in the first verse of the poem, “O poeta é um fingidor” [The poet is a pretender], establishes a conception of art that summons the relations art/life, truth/lie, sincerity/insincerity, a subject addressed by Pessoa over several years, both in his name and in the name of some heteronyms. In fact, in this poem, Pessoa literarily condenses a series of reflections in other poems and texts about literary creation and reception. Published months later, the poem “Isto” [This] addresses the same theme.

By stating that “The poet is a pretender,” Pessoa institutes fictionality as an inalienable characteristic of literary art, thus assuming it

as a fundamental rhetorical mode, [...] understood as a means to communicate what is invented”, “as something imagined”, like in “The theories of “as if,” pretense and make-believe (Zetterberg, 2016).

The use of the words “pretending,” “fiction,” sincerity, insincerity, “lying,” “mask” proliferates in Pessoa’s texts and his heteronyms. Therefore, it is pertinent to remember the etymology of these words and their original uses and meanings.

According to Glare, “Etymologically, ‘fictionality’ has its roots in the Latin ‘fingere.’” ‘Fingere’ has several meanings: 1) to shape, 2) to invent, and 3) to make a pretense of.” (Apud Zetterberg, 2016).

About the word fiction, which derives from the same etymology, Schaeffer (2013) reminds us that

In Latin, *factio* had at least two different meanings: [...] it referred to the act of modeling something [...]; it designated acts of pretending, supposing, or hypothesizing.

Schaeffer emphasizes that “the second sense of the Latin meaning was used in reference to serious ways of pretending, postulating, or hypothesizing” (2013).

Given the method used by Pessoa in artistic creation and respective purposes, it is pertinent also to remember the use of the term “fiction” in the field of science and philosophy, precisely the case of the “thought experiments,” considering that “Thought experiments are generally counterfactual deductive devices giving rise to valid conclusions which are integrated into the real-world belief system” (Schaeffer, 2013).

It is precisely the case with the creation of Fernando Pessoa’s heteronyms, as we will see later.

Let us remember that for Fernando Pessoa, as he wrote in a letter, “making art” became very early the most terrible mission — a duty to fulfill hard, monastically, without diverting his eyes of the creative end of civilization from all artistic work (1986a, p. 96). In this sense, he considers his duty to work for the progress of civilization and the widening of the consciousness of humanity (p. 97), obviously, through art, because for him, the purpose of art is to increase human self-consciousness (1966a, p. 183).

Thus, for Pessoa, art is a form of knowledge and knowledge production, and this is achieved through pretense because, as the heteronym Álvaro de Campos says, “to pretend is to know ourselves” (2001, p. 234).

The pretense taken to the extreme in creating heteronyms also works in this sense, as the author himself admits.

Thus, in a game symmetrical to that of reading, the creation of heteronyms by Fernando Pessoa shows that, as Carroll argues

Fiction goes deeper than pleasure ‘to regulate our complex psychological organization, and it helps us cultivate our socially adaptive capacity for entering mentally into the experience of others’ (Dutton, 2009, pos. 2123).

In this framework, the universal “love of fiction — a fiction instinct” (pos. 1907), a relative perhaps of

the drive known as "play," a crucial instrument of the cultural mind (Damásio, 2017, p. 164, 255), contributes to self-knowledge, because "Fiction provides us [...] with templates, mental maps for emotional life" (Dutton, 2009, pos. 2154).

In a theoretical text on pretending in art, Fernando Pessoa wrote: "Sincerity is the greatest artistic crime. Insincerity is the second greatest" (1966a, p. 210).¹ With this kind of paradox, the author introduces the idea that "the great artist" must "be absolutely sincere about anything for a certain length of time — that length of time, say, which is necessary for a poem to be conceived and written" (p. 210). Then, he makes it clear that sincerity in life is different from sincerity in art.

Clarifying this idea, Pessoa asserts several times that what he wrote in the name of his heteronyms is sincere. It means that art is not subject to the criterion of truth because the artist should not be concerned with the truth of what he describes. It is lawful for him to write a poem in which all probabilities are violated (1966a, p. 201). As he says in a letter to Francisco Costa, it does not matter that we feel what we express; it is enough that, having thought it, we know how to pretend well to have felt it (1986a, p. 175).

For this reason, the poetic subject of the poem "Isto" refutes the accusation of lying in his writing and claims another way of feeling, the artistic feeling:

Dizem que finjo ou minto / Tudo que escrevo.
Não. /
Eu simplesmente sinto / Com a imaginação. /
Não uso o coração.

Pessoa goes further in this matter, considering that sincerity is the greatest obstacle the artist has to overcome and only a long discipline, learning to feel things only literarily, can lead the spirit to this culmination (1966b, p. 38). In the same sense goes the devaluation of poets who sing the emotions they feel, in favor of those who do the opposite (1980, p. 3). Therefore, he claims that "Not insincerity, but a translated sincerity, is the basis of all art" (1966b, p. 217).

At this point, Pessoa is perfectly in tune with what Eliot was writing at the same time about this subject when he says: "The emotion of art is impersonal" (Eliot, 1919).

So, what Pessoa considers insincere art are the things done to amaze and those that do not contain a fundamental metaphysical idea (1986a, p. 97).

2.2 The author's creative process

When discussing Fernando Pessoa's creative process, we necessarily think about creating heteronyms, but we will address this aspect at a specific point. However, for now, we limit ourselves to an approach about the author, his conception of art, and his *modus operandi*, as Pessoa himself.

In this regard, we have several texts in which the author analyzes himself as a person and artist. In all of them, he highlights the preponderance of his inner world over his attention to the outer world, and concerning the former, he highlights the predominance of reason, thought, and imagination over emotion and feeling. In a 1910 text, Pessoa describes himself, saying, "Mine inner sense predominates in such a way over my five senses that I see things in this life [...] in a way different from other men." (1966a, p. 13).

In a 1919 letter to two French psychiatrists, Pessoa highlights the strength of his intellectual side and laments that his ability to concentrate is limited to reasoning and fails in other aspects of life. In another text, he defines himself as an analytical reasoner (1966a, p. 74). Therefore, it is evident that Pessoa, in life, considers himself more prone to thought than to emotion and feeling.

Several poems address this theme and show the difficulty of the poetic self in maintaining the level of emotion and feeling without slipping into thought. Thus, the thematic dichotomy, or binomial, feeling/thinking arises and runs through his work in his name and the name of others.

The verse "O que em mim sente 'stá pensando" [In me what feels is always thinking] of the well-known poem of the reaper shows very well this fusion of the feeling/thinking in the mind of the poet or the immediate transmutation of the feeling in thinking.

In *The Book of Disquiet*, Bernardo Soares also confesses: "The life of my emotions moved early on to the chambers of thought" (Pessoa, 2015, pos. 1754).

The process is summarized and exemplified in another poem, in which it is said: "E eu, que sinto co a cabeça, / Fiz logo o poema preciso" [And I, who feel with my head, / I made the exact poem right away] (1990a, p. 88).

This characteristic occurs in life and art, but it is important to know how Pessoa sees these two universes. We get enlightened when reading the excerpt that says literature, like all art, is a confession that life is not enough (1966b, p. 286).

This same idea is illustrated in the poem "Isto," where life is placed on a lower level than Literature. Thus, art is at a higher level than life and has, in a way, a compensatory function, as Damásio thinks and Pessoa illustrates. However, they are not totally and necessarily separated; they interact sometimes.

1. Fernando Pessoa wrote many texts originally in English that were published in Portuguese editions. Thus, many of the quotations made in this chapter correspond to the original texts and not to translations.

So, where does art come from?

The origin of artistic creation is often a mystery, and also for Pessoa, who periodically wonders about the authorship of his writings, stating that he did not write it, like when he says: “What I write’s not mine, not mine...” (2006, p. 323).

This mystery remains, but Pessoa knows and states that the artistic work derives from origins more subtle than understanding and reasoning (1966b, p. 95). Actually, he adheres to the idea that “Poeta Nascitur, Non Fit” [A poet is born, not made], and in that sense, one cannot learn to be an artist; but one learns to know how to be (1986b, p. 111). So, poetry is a gift.

A reader of Freud, Pessoa also knows that the sphere of the unconscious, or subconscious, is vast and active, and the sphere of consciousness is small and almost static (1966b, p. 91).

Therefore, he states in a text that the faculty on which Art depends is Emotion (1966a, p. 201), and in another one, the work of art is a production of instinct (1966b, p. 7), an idea repeated several times.

Pessoa considers that the origin of art is instinct, but he also associates intelligence with the creative process. So, he joins the two and declares that the work of art derives from what can be called an intellectual instinct (p. 15), in a process in which a fusion of instinct with intelligence occurs (p. 14).

Moreover, in the creative process, it is by instinct that one reaches the object’s essence, and by intelligence, only the accessory is reached (p. 16-17). So, for Pessoa, instinct and emotion play the major role in art.

The relationship between art and life is complex, as we can see in the poem “Autopsychography,” where it is clear that the emotion of life is not the emotion of art, both for the author and for the reader. However, as the same poem shows, the emotion of life can be brought to art, but through a transformation, because even when the poet expresses the “pain he really feels,” he always does so through a process of pretense and intellectualization. This intellectualization is indispensable so that emotion can be shared with people.

Pessoa explains this process in detail in a letter to Adolfo Rocha (Miguel Torga), where he says that in order to make the sensitivity transmissible, the poet must proceed with an intellectual work, which occurs in two stages: a) the direct and instinctive intellectualization of sensitivity, by which it becomes transmissible; b) critical reflection on this intellectualization (1966b, p. 70).

Thus, we will have sensitivity (emotion), instinct, and intellect involved in artistic creation. Nevertheless, Pessoa is very clear on this, saying that it is the use of sensitivity, not sensitivity itself, that is worth in art (1986, p. 185), and in another text, he adds that the material of art is given by sensitivity, and intelligence directs the form. (1966b, p. 8).

Synthetically, Pessoa describes this process: “Art is the intellectualization of sensation (feeling) through expression. The intellectualization is given in, by, and through the expression itself” (1966b, p. 217). This process is reversible and can occur in both directions: from emotion to thought and vice versa, as seen in the concept of “complex ideation” launched by Pessoa in 1912, that supposes either an intellectualization of an emotion or an emotionalization of an idea (1986b, p. 41).

Then, the process implies that in the artistic object, emotion or feeling are intellectualized to be shared with the audience, thus implying the pair Emotion/Reason. This intellectualization of emotion or sensation is a process of abstraction that transforms common emotion into artistic emotion (1966a, p. 192), leading to the conclusion that art, having to unite the three qualities of Abstraction, Reality, and Emotion, cannot fail to become aware of itself as being the abstract embodiment of emotion (the emotional embodiment of abstraction) (1966a, p. 191). This process is explained in detail in the letter to A. Casais Monteiro, dated 1930-11-1 (2001, p. 285-6).

At the time of the launch of the sensationist movement, the literary movement created by Fernando Pessoa in 1914, and that is gathered by the *Orpheu* Group in 1915, Pessoa creates the metaphor of the cube of sensations (cf. 1966a, p. 183-188), which presents the whole process of the sensation experience analytically, and brings together the objective and subjective elements involved in a sensation. By this metaphor, he tries to show the complexity of this concept, which is interpreted and used differently by each heteronym.

This movement, about which Pessoa theorized a lot and intended to publicize internationally, promotes the idea that the basis of all art is sensation (1966a, p. 192). However, we must highlight that Pessoa extends the concept of sensation to ideas and dreams (1966a, p. 183).

Thomas Crosse, the literary character in charge of promoting this movement abroad, writes about Sensationism and how each of the heteronyms understood and practiced it. As he describes:

By sensation Caeiro means the sensation of things as they are [...]. For Campos, sensation is [...] not necessarily sensation of things as they are, but of things as they are felt, [...] or, as Campos says himself, “to feel everything in every way” [...]. Caeiro has one discipline: things must be felt as they are. Ricardo Reis has another kind of discipline: things must be felt, not only as they are, but also so as to fall in with a certain ideal of classic measure and rule (2001, p. 81; 1966a, p. 341-2)².

2. Text published in 1966a without attribution of authorship. Richard Zenith attributed it to Thomas Crosse.

According to Pessoa, sensationist art must decompose each sensation because "Sensationism pretends, taking stock of this real reality, to realize in art a decomposition of reality into its psychic geometrical elements" (1966a, p. 183).

Pessoa insists on the idea that in art, the origin of the sensation is not important, "But that which, felt or thought, we think again as *someone else* is naturally transformed into art and, cooling down, acquires form" (2001, p. 285-6).

Regarding strong emotions in real life, Pessoa considers that they prevent the artist from writing about them while he lives them. In this sense, he considers that

Three sorts of emotions produce great poetry — strong but quick emotions, seized upon for art as soon as they have passed [...]; strong and deep emotions in their remembrance a long time after; and false emotions, [...], emotions felt in the intellect (1966b, p. 217).

So, the first two types of emotions can only pass into poetry after their experience, and the third type exists only in the intellect. Consequently, the composition of a lyric poem must be made not at the moment of emotion but at the moment of remembering it (1966b, p. 72). This entire process is repeatedly and thoroughly analyzed and described by Pessoa.

In this way, we can say that "Works of literature thus form a point of intersection between the most emotional, subjective parts of the mind and the most abstract and cerebral" (Dutton, 2009, Pos. 2133).

However, Pessoa considers genuine emotions useful for his literary activity, as he confesses in the letter to two French psychiatrists (2001, p. 157) and a letter to J. G. Simões (1986a, p. 180).

As he says, some mental states are sometimes used to write in the name and person of others. The heteronyms Álvaro de Campos and Bernardo Soares also argue in the same direction.

A short poem, "Vinha elegante, depressa" (Pessoa, 1990a, p. 88), quoted above, can illustrate the process of passing through the experience of sensation and its poetic transmutation. This poem seems to confirm the author's idea that "The best sort of love poem is generally written about an abstract woman" (1966b, p. 216) and his concept of artistic imagination, which is the imagination period (already rooted) + abstraction thinking (p. 124-7).

The poem shows how the poet quickly moves from the visual sensation (of a female figure) to thinking (abstraction) and how literarily transforms that sensation into another thing: "No poema não falo dela" [In the poem I do not speak of her]; "No poema falo do mar" [In the poem I speak of the sea] (Pessoa, 1990a, p. 88).

2.3 The reader's aesthetic process

The second stanza of the poem "Autopsychography" focuses on the reader's experience in the reading process and shows that in this process, the reader experiences an imagined pain, which does not belong to his own life, but also does not correspond to the two pains lived by the poet, the true one and the artistic.

In this sense, as stated in the last stanza of the poem, the work of art constitutes an "Imaginative experience" and that "objects of art essentially provide an imaginative experience for both producers and audiences" (Dutton, 2009, Pos. 1009).

It is the case of "aesthetic illusion," the "pleasurable mental state" experienced by the reader which, according to Werner Wolf,

consists primarily of a feeling, with variable intensity, of being imaginatively and emotionally immersed in a represented world and of experiencing this world in a way similar (but not identical) to real life (2014).

To make this poem, Pessoa certainly used his experience as a reader and how he intensely lived the "aesthetic illusion" and how it functioned as a trigger for his imagination. At the end of the poem "Isto," the poetic subject launches the challenge: "To Feel? Feel the one who reads!"

In the text "Aspects," he answers: "When we read, we stop living. Let that be your attitude. Stop living, and read. What's life?" (2001, p. 30).

Pessoa explains the drive for reading, saying that "In a poem, we must understand what the poet wants, but we may feel what we like" (2001, p. 241). It is the imaginative freedom of reading and the stimulus for dreaming that the young reader Pessoa highlights in his experience, as stated in a text presumably from 1910 (1966a, p. 17).

So, it is the fact that "To read is to dream, guided by someone else's hand" (2015, pos. 3447), which seduces the young reader Pessoa and makes him an addict, but it is simultaneously the same fact that provokes in the creator Pessoa the will to replace it with his creation, with his dream: "I have found out that reading is a slavish sort of dreaming. If I must dream, why not my dreams?" (1966a, p. 21).

This view of reading fits into the conception described by J. Carroll, which shows the similarities and differences between the reading process and dreams:

Unlike dreams, most literary works have a strong component of conscious conceptual order [...]. But like dreams, [...] literature taps directly into the elemental response systems activated by emotion (Apud Dutton, 2009, pos. 2122).

So, for Pessoa, reading is simultaneous an invitation to write and an occasion to dream. As the semi-heteronym Bernardo Soares states: “The best way to start dreaming is through books” (Pessoa, 2015, Pos. 6595).

2.4 *The fiction of heteronyms: The Theater of the Mind*

Oneness is a prison. / To be myself is to not be.
(Pessoa, 2006, p. 315).

The maximum exponent of the pretense aesthetic in Pessoa’s work is surely represented in the creation of heteronyms and multiple literary personalities. Through it, Pessoa consummates his depersonalization process to the highest degree, by “surrendering himself wholly to the work to be done,” as proposed by Eliot (1919), and becoming “the naked stage where various actors act out various plays” (Pessoa, 2015, pos. 4331).

In fact, by fragmenting and multiplying himself in personalities, Pessoa annuls his personality. He becomes “nobody,” as many of his texts say. But, being “nobody,” he can be “everybody” and “feel everything in all ways.” That is, he becomes free.

He does so in order to create, as Bernardo Soares states in one of his texts and Pessoa himself in the draft of a letter:

I constantly create personalities. [...]. To create, I’ve destroyed myself (2015, pos. 4331).

Today I have no personality: I’ve divided all my humanness among the various authors whom I’ve served as literary executor. Today I’m the meeting-place of a small humanity that belongs only to me (2001, p. 296-7).

The phenomenon of multiple selves is part of the well-known fragmentation of the self and shattering of the subject of the modernist era, in the early 20th century, closely linked to modern society and life in large cities. This civilizational moment was widely analyzed by Pessoa and was treated literarily above all in the work of the heteronym Álvaro de Campos (Cf. Loureiro, 1996, pp. 77-129), namely in his sensationist phase. However, the other heteronyms also represent a reaction and a response to this historical moment, even if indirectly, either through the refuge in space, with Alberto Caeiro, the poet of Nature, or through the refuge in time, with Ricardo Reis, the classic poet.

It is a process of “Pulverization of the personality” or “The dissolution of personality,” described in detail in a long text by the semi-heteronym Bernardo Soares (2015, Pos. 6572).

In addition, this multiplication operates in the sense of producing knowledge, above all self-knowledge, providing the possibilities for new points of view. Furthermore, in the opinion of José Gil, it is necessary to proliferate in others to become oneself (1987, p. 153).

We must remember that Campos states, “Multipliquei-me para me sentir, /Para me sentir, precisei sentir tudo” [I multiplied myself to feel myself./ To feel myself, I needed to feel everything] (1993, p. 166), and Soares reiterates that, saying, “By delving within, I made myself into many” (Pessoa, 2015, Pos. 1754).

Thus, on the one hand, by creating heteronyms and multiple literary personalities, Pessoa takes on more radically what he considers to be his facet as a dramatic poet and reaches the highest degree of poetry, which he established (cf. Pessoa, 1966b, p. 69): one in which we will have a poet who is several poets, a dramatic poet writing in lyric poetry (1966a, 107). On the other hand, simultaneously, through a method that requires learning and training, one goes through several stages and reaches

The highest stage of dreaming [...], having created a picture with various figures whose lives we live all at the same time, *we are jointly and interactively all of those souls* (2015, pos. 6626).

In our opinion, through this process, Pessoa also moves from a fictional “as if” model to a “what if” model, that is, counterfactual thinking, used to produce knowledge in the “Thought experiments” through counterfactual thinking. We consider here that “counterfactuality is a principle of divergence that makes visible a vast horizon of alternative stories” (Ryan, 2013) and that this is also visible in fiction since this “is an enhancement and extension of counterfactual thinking into more possible worlds with more possibilities than life experience could ever offer up to an individual” (Dutton, 2009, pos. 1993).

In short, Pessoa takes up one of the original uses of the practice of pretending, applying it “to serious ways of pretending, postulating, or hypothesizing” (Schaeffer, 2013), placing it at the service of the production of knowledge.

By postulating “what if” I was a keeper of flocks (Caeiro), “what if” I was a classical poet in the age of decay (Reis), “what if” I was a naval engineer in an era of speed and machinery (Campos), “what if” I was a bookkeeper in the city of Lisbon (Soares), Pessoa builds several possible worlds.

Furthermore, by placing all these “personae” in interaction, he constructs and gathers a series of different points of view, for which the word “Aspects” points out, the title given to the preface of a projected publication of the works produced by these authors. Pessoa explains in that text that: with writing these «aspects» of reality, I do not intend a philosophy that insinuates that there are only aspects of a reality that are real or elusive, or non-existent (1966a, p. 100). Thus, it is implied that reality and the world are plural and polyphonic, that there are other realities and other visions of reality. Thus, all certainties vanish.

It also happens that Pessoa usually creates personalities in pairs, which represent opposite ways of seeing reality, living life, and writing, a fact that works in the same direction. Each creature is the opposite of the other.

In this way, we can say that Pessoa builds a plot that could fit the notion of "negative plotting" proposed by Susan Lanser (2011), which "outlines how competing plots, "one shadowing the other," become meaningful in their mutual contrast" (Kukkonen, 2014).

Let us see the case of the account of the genesis of heteronyms made in the letter to Casais Monteiro, on 1935-1-13:

Once Alberto Caeiro had appeared, I instinctively and subconsciously tried to find disciples for him. From Caeiro's false paganism I extracted the latent Ricardo Reis [...]. And then a new individual, quite the opposite of Ricardo Reis, suddenly and impetuously came to me (Campos) (2001, p. 291).

Similarly, Pessoa defines each character in several other texts and the interrelationships established between them, as in the text "Aspects" (2001, p. 29).

In doing so, he invites the reader to compare the fictional worlds and think about them, building knowledge, but he also builds knowledge, as revealed in the same text.

Thus, in a kind of interpersonal journey, Fernando Pessoa created a whole structure encompassing the entire literary institution, creating works, authors, theorists, philosophers, editors, commentators, critics, and translators. We highlight the case of the brothers Thomas and I. I. Crosse, who write prefaces and comments in English, among other texts. Thus, in addition to the contrast that each one establishes with the others, each of these authors is viewed from several angles, sometimes being the target of criticism and contestation.

Referring to the heteronyms Caeiro, Reis, and Campos, Pessoa stated in the text "Tábua Bibliográfica" (1928) that each individuality forms a kind of drama, and all of them together form another drama. It is a drama in people instead of acts (1986a, p. 250).

In a 1931 text referring to the heteronyms, Pessoa writes that these names represent invented people, figures in dramas, or isolated characters reciting in a novel with no plot (1990b, p. 379).

As Teresa Rita Lopes wrote, we would say that this is a "novel-drama-in-people" because the "characters" act and interact, but their stories are also invented and told by the author, the heteronyms, and other literary personalities.

In the letter to Casais Monteiro on 1935-1-13, Pessoa recounts the appearance of the heteronyms suddenly and in an epiphany, the almost automatic

writing of dozens of texts and the return to himself as Fernando Pessoa, on "the triumphal day of my life," "March 8th, 1914" (Pessoa, 2001, p. 291). However, several aspects reported are fictitious, such as the date of "the triumphal day," indicated as "March 13th, 1914" (2001, p. 297) in the draft of a letter addressed to the same recipient. The same with the attribution of the authorship of some poems referred to.

So, as Richard Zenith says, "Over the years he had been carefully plotting and refining it" (2001, p. 285). In this plot, the creator established a hierarchy among his creatures, elevating Alberto Caeiro to the place of Master of all the others and placing himself as a character and disciple. This plot of Caeiro and his disciples sets up an analogy with the story of Christ. Caeiro, "the only poet of Nature" (Pessoa, 2006, p. 61), also brings a Good News: "I bring to the Universe a new Universe, /Because I bring to the Universe its own self" (p. 43). In 1916, Pessoa presented him as one of those who act on men like fire, which burns everything accidental in them, and leaves them naked and real, proper and true, and these are the liberators. Caeiro is of this breed (1966a, p. 110).

We must remember that Caeiro was integrated into the "Portuguese Neopaganism" movement, projected by Pessoa (cf. 1966a, p. 221-325). Thus, for Pessoa, Campos, Reis, and Mora, the appearance of Caeiro functions as a Revelation and represents a milestone in their lives and their works. Each has a phase before Caeiro (b. C.) and another after Caeiro (a. C.). They all tell this story and the effect it had on them, which is summed up in each one's encounter with his truth and liberation. In addition to them, the brothers Thomas and I. I. Crosse also comment on Caeiro's life, work, and influences. Thus, this story is told polyphonically, in a kind of "recreational metaphysics," an expression by Ricardo Reis.

Caeiro affirms himself as "the Argonaut of true sensations" (2006, p. 43), refuses thought (p. 11) and subjectivity. However, as Thomas Crosse says, the Master "has contradictions," contrary to what he claims, he is "a very great thinker" (1990b, p. 439), and "his simplicity is full of intellectual complexity" (p. 442).

Another point should be referred to in this novel-drama: crossing the borders between ontologically different worlds, the actual and the fictional one.

We can see that Campos jumped from fiction to the real world, interfered in the author's personal life, such as dating Ophelia, and intervened in public life, writing letters to the newspapers, which negatively affected Pessoa and the Orpheu group itself, what Fernando Pessoa complains about (1986a, p. 250).

Conversely, Pessoa jumps from reality to fiction, becoming a character on equal terms with his creatures and even becoming Caeiro's disciple.

Moreover, Pessoa writes in the text “Aspects”: “Some of them have met each other; others have not. None of them ever met me except Álvaro de Campos” (2001, p. 30).

Indeed, it is a case of metalepsis, in which a fictional figure jumps into the real world and vice versa. In this sense, this whole case configures an “impossible world,” an incompatible world, and in contradiction with the actual world.

3 CONCLUSION

For the creative combination of intelligence, emotion, and above all imagination, Fernando Pessoa left us a multifaceted, polyphonic, and challenging work. He established very well the difference between life and art, ordinary emotion and imagination, and artistic emotion and artistic imagination. He showed us the reality as mutant and kaleidoscopic.

He created his “theater of the mind” (Dutton, 2009, Pos. 1804), his “theater of the imagination” (Pos. 1009), where we can see how the creator and his creatures conceive and practice literary creation, how they use Reason (Mind) and Emotion in their creative process, how they stand in the face of the feeling/thinking and life/art binomials.

There are no definitive answers for readers in this universe: we can react with the Heart (Emotion) or with the Reason. Or, in Pessoa’s view, considering that in this writing/reading game, the heart is “A little clock-work train/ To entertain our minds” (2006, p. 314).

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This chapter had the support of CHAM (NOVA FCSH/UAc) through the strategic project sponsored by FCT (UIDB/04666/2020).

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