



The Stars Are as Variable as the Lines: Fernando Pessoa's Works Considered from the Perspective of Editorial Agency

As estrelas são tão variáveis quanto as linhas: As Obras de Fernando Pessoa consideradas da perspectiva da mediação editorial

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Abstract: Here we discuss editorial agency and its impact in the work of Fernando Pessoa, focusing on perception, mobility and interpretation. A posthumous publication is a privileged object to investigate the complexity of the process of editorial agency and its effects because, in the posthumous extension of a *corpus*, what is at stake is precisely its construction. We also examine the role of the editor and his intervention, rather than the one of publishers, bearing into account the impact the decisions and reorganizations can have when speaking of posthumous works. We conclude that a “work” is the product, or the result, of the joint work left by an author and that of its editors, and that a work or a set of works is not something determined and established forever, but a reassembled product, or the result of a construction or reconstruction.

Keywords: Fernando Pessoa; editorial agency; mobility; interpretation; work; posthumous work.

Resumo: Discutimos aqui a mediação editorial e o seu impacto na obra de Fernando Pessoa, com enfoque na percepção, na mobilidade e na interpretação. Uma publicação póstuma é um objeto privilegiado para investigar a complexidade do processo de mediação editorial e os seus efeitos porque, na extensão póstuma de um *corpus*, o que está em jogo é precisamente a sua construção. Analisamos também o papel do editor (*editor*) e da sua intervenção, em vez do papel da editora (*publisher*), tendo

em consideração o impacto que as decisões e as reorganizações podem ter quando falamos de obras póstumas. Concluímos que uma “obra” é o produto, ou o resultado, do trabalho, em conjunto, do autor e da obra que deixou, e dos editores; e que uma obra ou um conjunto de obras não é algo determinado ou estabelecido para sempre, mas um produto reorganizado, ou o resultado de uma construção ou reconstrução.

Palavras-chave: Fernando Pessoa; mediação editorial; mobilidade; interpretação; obra; obra póstuma.

This article’s purpose is to devote minimum of critical attention to the process of editorial agency, that is, the intervention of an editor, rather than that of a publisher, in the production of a given text or work. From the private act of writing to the public text, as an object of circulation and cultural consumption, there is a process of mediation that makes the book possible, constituting the “writer” in “author” and inserting the work into the space of literature. Given that an editor is characteristically a posthumous agent, as suggested below, I considered pertinent to view the editorial agency since the perspective of posterity, a future time in which that intervention tends to be more crucial and apprehensible because it is about a series of acts situated in the border between the moment of writing and the moment of the publication itself. This election can be surprising since the memory of the author’s name corresponds to the oblivion of the editor’s name, but it should be noted that, in the framework of posterity, it is the editor who “stamps” the author’s name. In fact, the option we chose may be less surprising if we notice the great number of posthumous works and that, by the way, have multiplied with modernity and the expansion of the literate universe. Editors of texts preserved in original form are increasingly more responsible for the existence of circulation of many more books.

As a starting point, a distinction between mostly posthumous authors and others who are only partially posthumous must be drawn. Among the former we should mention some notable examples: Emily Dickinson (1830-1886), whose poems –except for ten– were edited after her death, as were the letters which survived (many were burned by her obedient younger sister); Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844-1889), whose poems were published in a book for the first time in 1918, edited by Robert Bridges, shortly before the correspondence, notebooks and sermons; Franz Kafka (1883-1924), whose novels *Der Prozess* (1925)

[*The Trial*], *Das Schloss* (1926) [*The Castle*] and *Amerika* (1927) [*America*] are all posthumous, as are certain intimate writings (diaries, letters and other notes); Georg Trakl (1887-1914), who only published one book of poems before his suicide and whose posterity begun with none other than *Sebastian im Traum* [*The Dream of Sebastian*]; Walter Benjamin (1892-1940), many of whose writings were published late, including his unfinished and more ambitious work, *Das Passagen-Werk* [*Arcades Project*] in Paris in the Second Empire; Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1951), whose books, with the exception of *Tractatus*, are all posthumous; Simone Weil (1909-1943), whose first book was compiled posthumously by her friend Gustave Thibon (*La Pesanteur et la Grace*, 1974 [*Gravity and Grace*]) and whose letters, notebooks and even courses (see *Leçons de Philosophie*, 1969 [*Lectures on Philosophy*]) begun to appear after fall of Nazism. The list could be much longer, and each reader will surely remember different names.

Although the frontier between mostly posthumous and not as posthumous is variable and difficult to establish, given that posterity tends to modify the extension of any work and redefine many aspects, and even the very concept of “work” itself, one should also name other less posthumous authors. These include: Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900), whose unpublished works were defended, among others, by Martin Heidegger and whose aphorisms and fragments have been variously compiled; Eça de Queirós (1845-1900), edited by friends and family since the early 20th century and who, if not by the volume of his contributions in periodical publications, would have to be considered as mostly posthumous; Paul Valéry (1871-1945), who we should place before Kafka, perhaps without reservations, if we ever perused his colossal *Cahiers*; Robert Musil (1880-1942) who, during his lifetime, published *Nachlaß zu Lebzeiten* (1936) [*Posthumous Papers of a Living Author*],¹ but left *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften* [*The Man Without Qualities*]

¹ There are similar cases, as *The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club* (1838), by Charles Dickens, and *Memórias Póstumas de Brás Cubas* (1881) [*The Posthumous Memories by Brás Cubas*], by J. M. Machado de Assis. Not forgetting romantic gestures, as the *Mémoires d'outre-tombe* (1848-1850) [*Memories from Beyond the Grave*], by René de Chateaubriand, and *Les Contemplations* (1856) [*The Contemplations*], by Victor Hugo, seen as a funeral monument. On Chateaubriand, see Neefs (1986; included in DEPPMAN *et al.*, 2004).

unfinished; Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937), who should be placed before Weil, if we consider the volume of *Quaderni del carcere* [*Prison Notebooks*] and the letters... not mentioning any details on Hölderlin, Heine, Büchner, Lautréamont, Rimbaud, Walser, Bakhtin, Lampedusa or Paul de Man and excluding famous diaries and correspondence, which were sometimes conceived as “works”, since the time of the first epistles. To not mention all the canonical books we have forgotten are posthumous, such as Hegel’s shortened *Aesthetics* (*Vorlesungen über die Aesthetik*, 1832 [*Lectures on Aesthetics*]), or Saussure’s *Cours de Linguistique Générale* [*Course in General Linguistics*], which depended on the editorial work of students and friends.² A posthumous publication is a privileged object to investigate the complexity of the process of editorial agency and its effects because, in the posthumous extension of a *corpus*, what is at stake is precisely its construction.

The author that I will discuss here, Fernando Pessoa (1888-1935), clearly belongs to the mostly posthumous group. In general, I will say “author” and not “writer” because the former is a broader term that covers all kind of artists and *scientists*,³ but I am aware that these are not synonymous voices and that there is an aporia, a contradiction when the notions of author and posterity (posthumous author, posthumous authorship, etc.) are brought together. Generally, “author” is the one that creates or gives existence to something. Thinking about a posthumous author or about the posthumous authorship (when speaking of being an author posthumously), is to reason about paradoxical objects since many of the notions associated to the concept of author become problematic. Is it possible to create or give existence to something from posterity? Posthumous is the superlative of *posterus*, coming, and it is difficult to conceive the *comingest* [*veniderisimo*] or the *futurest* [*futurisimo*] author. Especially after the meaning the word “author” received in the 18th century, when literary posterity was founded by the theory of natural right and the aesthetics of originality (see CHARTIER, 2000). From that moment on, the writer becomes an author-owner who negotiates the publication of his works with the booksellers-editors and may be

² A similar case is *La ciudad letrada* [*The Lettered City*] by Ángel Rama, a book canonized by the academia, posthumous, as is his *Diario* [*Diary*].

³ In Portuguese, as in English and other languages, “scientific” is not used as an adjective and noun at the same time.

subject to criminal appropriation, as Foucault (1969) emphasizes. This double nature, of writer and author, becomes more complex when the empirical subject disappears because the ownership of the works passes to the heirs –who lose the exclusive rights of publication after a given number of years– and the books published post-mortem appear with an author’s name, which does not correspond to the new owner of the works nor to that of the person most immediately responsible for their publication, who usually is, for some decades, the same literary executor. The author who comes to light after his death⁴ is merely a name fulfilling a “function” and to which unstable or mutable notions are associated. As a lawyer explains it, “the author after the author is, more than ever, a signature”⁵, a referential lexeme and an act of faith.

When Pessoa died, in 1935, there was not a single way of organizing his works because of the lack of coherent plans and testamentary dispositions, but also because of the absence of information and knowledge that would allow to value the reach of certain writings, which apparently were unique and isolated. From the beginning, the name “Pessoa” fulfilled the function of ensuring a paradoxical unity, since he did not manage to organize his production during his lifetime, despite desiring to do so from an early age. From his reason, the hypothetical *Obras* [*Works*] must be seen as an attempt of regrouping, correlating and organization, as a useful reference point which will serve, above all, to retrospectively examine and contrast other schemes, which do have a historical reality. When “parts” are organized and the production of others is structured, logical and meaningful relationships are proposed to determine the reading of the “whole”. Reading the Pessoaan prose published during his lifetime is different from reading the same prose interwoven with what was published posthumously. In the latter case, the public profile Pessoa left as a writer before he died is blurred, and a writer with even broader and more diverse interests appears, who, if he had published everything, he wrote on the First World War or Portuguese presidents and political parties, for example, would have left an image of a committed intellectual, and not of a modest and silent city-centre clerk.

⁴ Let us recall in late Latin the alteration of *postumos* by *posthumus*, given the wrong link with *humus* (earth) or *humare* (bury).

⁵ “L’auteur après l’auteur, c’est plus que jamais une signature” (FAULTRIER-TRAVERS, 1996, p. 183).

I said works and not complete works, but one notion or another would refer to the discussion already raised by Foucault:

When undertaking the publication of Nietzsche's works, for example, where should one stop? Surely everything must be published, but what is "everything"? Everything that Nietzsche himself published, certainly. And what about the rough drafts of his works? Obviously. The plans for his aphorisms? Yes. The deleted passages and the notes at the bottom of the page? Yes. What if, within a workbook filled with aphorisms, the notation of a meeting or of an address, or a laundry list: is it a work, or not? Why not? And so on, *ad infinitum*. How can one define a work amid the millions of traces left by someone after his death? A theory of the work does not exist, and the empirical task of those who naively undertake the editing of works often suffers in the absence of such a theory. [...] The word "work" and the unity it designates are probably as problematic as the status of the author's individuality. (FOUCAULT, 1979, p. 143-144)⁶

However, if there is no exact nor predefined extension of a set of works, can there be several Paul Celan or Several Paul Valéry, for example, who could be called "complete"? Possibly; it would depend on when we stood, on what we circumscribe –that is, on the radius covered by the term "complete" and on what we understand as "work", in general, and in each specific case. In this regard, I would like to examine one of the configurations of *Obras* by Fernando Pessoa and the criteria by which certain editors were governed in order to establish certain texts.

⁶ "Quand on entreprend de publier, par exemple, les œuvres de Nietzsche, où faut-il s'arrêter? Il faut tout publier, bien sûr, mais que veut dire ce 'tout'? Tout ce que Nietzsche a publié lui-même, c'est entendu. Les brouillons de ses œuvres? Évidemment. Les projets d'aphorismes? oui. Les ratures également, les notes au bas des carnets? oui. Mis quand, à l'intérieur d'un carnet rempli d'aphorismes on trouve une référence, l'indication d'un rendez-vous ou d'une adresse, une note de blanchisserie: œuvre ou pas œuvre? Mais pourquoi pas? Et ceci indéfiniment. Parmi les millions de traces laissées par quelqu'un après sa mort, comment peut-on définir une œuvre? La théorie de l'œuvre n'existe pas, et ceux qui ingénument entreprennent d'éditer des œuvres manquent d'une telle théorie et leur travail empirique s'en trouve bien vite paralysé. [...] Le mot 'œuvre', et l'unité qu'il désigne, sont probablement aussi problématiques que l'individualité de l'auteur" (FOUCAULT, 1969, p. 79-80).

Shortly after 1935, the publishing house Ática, despite its anthological vocation, began to publish the first *Obras completas* [Complete Works] of Pessoa. How did Ática organize them? Dividing them, generically, into prose and poetry, starting from the still incipient knowledge of the Pessoaan trunks, which came, so to speak, without instructions. Although Pessoa kept his papers in envelopes which he often labelled, the envelope “Campos”, for example, did not have to include all of Campos’ production and could keep papers that were not in its place or that, as many others, had no “place”. Between 1942 and 1982 Ática published the following volumes:

Poesia [Poetry]

- I. *Poesias de Fernando Pessoa* [1942] [*Poems of Fernando Pessoa*]
- II. *Poesias de Álvaro de Campos* [1944] [*Poems of Álvaro de Campos*]
- III. *Poemas de Alberto Caeiro* [1946] [*Poems of Alberto Caeiro*]
- IV. *Odes de Ricardo Reis* [1946] [*Odes of Ricardo Reis*]
- V. *Mensagem* [1945] [Message]
- VI. *Poemas dramáticos* [1952] [*Dramatic Poems*]
- VII. *Poesias inéditas* (1930-1935) [1955] [*Unpublished Poems* (1930-1935)]
- VIII. *Poesias inéditas* (1919-1930) [1956] [*Unpublished Poems* (1919-1930)]
- IX. *Quadras ao gosto popular* [1965] [*Quartains to Popular Taste*]
- X. *Novas poesia inéditas* [1973] [New Unpublished Poems]
- XI. *Poemas ingleses: Antinous, Inscriptions, Epithalamium, 35 Sonnets e dispersos* [1974] [*English Poems: Antinous, Inscriptions, Epithalamium, 35 Sonnets and Uncollected Texts*]

Prosa [Prose]

Páginas íntimas e de auto-interpretação [1966] [*Intimate and Self-Interpreting Pages*]

Páginas de estética, teoria e crítica literária [1967] [*Aesthetical, Theory and Literary Criticism Pages*]

Textos filosóficos [1968, 2 v.] [*Philosophical Texts*]

Cartas de amor [1978] [*Love Letters*]

Da República (1910-1935) [1978] [*From the Republic* (1910-1935)]

Sobre Portugal, introdução ao problema nacional [1979] [*On Portugal, Introduction to the National Problem*]

Textos de crítica e de intervenção [1980] [*Criticism and Intervention Texts*]

Ultimatum e páginas de sociologia política [1980] [*Ultimatum and Political Sociology Pages*]

Livro do desassossego [1982, 2 v.] [*The Book of Disquiet*]

Many observations could be made in regard to this first editorial enterprise: it prioritizes poetry over prose –which appeared late and without roman numerals–; it includes theatre in the poetry section (*Poemas dramáticos*) and it excludes translations; it introduces new poems two or three decades later (*Poesias inéditas* and *Novas poesias inéditas*); it proposes some titles that publishing tradition will shorten (*Quadras* instead of *Quadras ao gosto popular*), and will vary them (*Páginas íntimas e de auto-interpretação*, 1966; *Escritos íntimos, cartas e páginas autobiográficas*, 1986 [*Intimate Writings, Letters and Autobiographical Pages*]; *Escritos autobiográficos, automáticos e de reflexão pessoal*, 2003 [*Autobiographical, Automatic and Self-Reflection Writings*]). The addition “to popular taste” meant to accentuate the editors’ surprise: “who would have guessed that such a cerebral and speculative spirit would condescend to cultivate such a simple and popular genre [as the verses]”.⁷ *Ática*’s project was left unfinished, like so many other projects of *Obras completas*. But for the time being, it is worth highlighting just a couple of aspects: the editors of *Ática*, like others did after, forged titles that are not found in Pessoa’s literary projects (for example, that long and academic *Páginas de estética e de teoria e crítica literárias*)⁸ and published “pages”

⁷ “Quem podia supor que um espírito tão cerebral e especulativo condescendesse em cultivar um género tão simples e popular” (LIND, in PESSOA 1965, p. 11).

⁸ Another similar case can be evoked: Kafka’s aphorisms who did not bear a title. *Betrachtungen über Sünde, Leid, Hoffnung und den wahren Weg* [*Considerations on sin, suffering, hope and the true way*] was the title suggested by Max Brod, “bello y extraviadoensu solemnidad” [beautiful and forgotten in its solemnity], as Roberto Calasso wrote in his last chapter of *K* (2002).

that he would not have published (such as *Cartas de amor*)⁹ and, much less, turned into a “book” or, at least, into the books that we know today. Why did they proceed in this way? Are they Pessoa’s “works” that he did not conceive as such but that today appear under his name and, especially, those singular “works” whose existence and internal structure depend more on the critical editor? To some extent they are, but these “works” lead us to two fundamental questions: what to publish? And, how to publish it? In other words, two questions on which there is usually no consensus and whose differential resolution causes interpretative repercussions. For now, let us recall that João Gaspar Simões and Luís de Montalvor, the editors of volumes I to V of the Ática publishing house, limited themselves to publishing the compositions that were, at the time, “definitive” (almost always because they were typewritten) and worthy of representing the “disciplined genius” of Fernando Pessoa; while Jorge Nemésio, editor of volumes VII and VIII, adopted a new position. Nemésio understood that there were no “definitive” compositions, that manuscripts did not necessarily contain texts inferior to those typewritten and that there was no absolute way of measuring the expression of this “disciplined genius”.¹⁰

⁹ We do not believe that Pessoa would have published *Cartas de Amor*: first, because as Ofélia Queiroz, the recipient of the letters, acknowledges, “O Fernando era extremamente reservado. Falava muito pouco da sua vida íntima” [“Fernando was extremely reserved. He spoke very little of his intimate life”], so much so that he kept the relationship between the two secret; secondly, because shortly before Pessoa’s death the letters had already become a literary subject (cf. the poem by Álvaro de Campos that begins “Todas as cartas de amor são | Ridículas. | Não seriam cartas de amor se não fossem | Ridículas,” [“Aleloverletes | Are ridiculous. | They would not be love letters if they | Were not ridiculous”]) (JACKSON, 2010, p. 104); thirdly, because the letters involved two people, as their childish-loving idiolect reminds us: to “Nininho” [“Little boy”] Fernando, more inhibited, though playful, and to “Bébézinho” [“Little baby”] Ofélia, less inhibited, though repetitive. The Love Letters served—and so David Mourão-Ferreira justified their publication—to show Fernando Pessoa—the artist of poetic feigning—not naked, but “pelo menos tão quase ‘despido’ ou tão sumariamente ‘vestido’” [“at least almost as ‘naked’ or summarily ‘dressed’”] as it could possibly be. To reveal the “man” beyond his poetry, which was considered sincere only on an intellectual level. See Queiroz and Mourão-Ferreira, in Pessoa (1978, p. 40 and 182). Campos’ poem, written in 1935, was first published in *Acção*, v. 41, 6 March 1937.

¹⁰ On the polemic that generated the publication of *Poesias inéditas*, see Nemésio (1957). The initial “warning” from volume VII (*Poesias inéditas*) can be considered programmatic.

The *Poesias inéditas* of 1955 and 1956 “completed” the *Poesias* of 1942, although a volume with the poems before 1919 never appeared. As we move forward—as is the case when time passes—the collective character of some “works” and, in particular, of the Pessoaan ones, will be revealed more intensely.

As can be seen in the diagram of the Ática publishing house, in 1966 the leap from poetry to prose was made. At that time there were other editions and some prose texts by Pessoa were known (in this aspect the Ática house was behind), but these editions only republished what the Portuguese writer had published during his lifetime. It is perhaps not an exaggeration to say that the literary and social image of Pessoa that prevailed in Portugal for over twenty years—and indirectly abroad—was that of the poet, which coincided with the traditional and official idea of the primacy of poetry over prose. In this sense, one fact is significant: *Cartas de amor* and the first volume of political texts published by the Ática publishing house appeared only in 1978, that is, after the “Carnation Revolution”. However, the 1966 milestone is also interesting for another very specific reason: in that year, a German professor who had begun working with the Ática publishing house, Georg Rudolf Lind, found himself having to defend the continuity of the editorial work and, likewise, the publication of Pessoaan prose. At that time, some people declared that the essential was already known, and against this flimsy, mistaken and paralyzing opinion, Lind (1966) proposed the “systematic exhumation of the trunks”, to avoid partial or subjective appreciations. He also understood, and said so, that the “systematic exhumation” would be “somewhat misunderstood”, precisely by the specialists who already considered Pessoa “sovereignly known” and exclusively a poet.¹¹ This happened sixteen years before *Livro do Desassossego*, a work in prose which would become a worldwide best-seller, was known.

¹¹ “A exumação sistemática da arca deve contar, de antemão, com uma certa incompreensão da parte daqueles que não reconhecem a necessidade destas edições intermináveis”; algunos se preguntarán, “porquê perder tempo com a publicação de obras de interesse menor, quando o essencial da produção de Fernando Pessoa já está sobejamente conhecido?” (LIND, 1966, p. 57) [“The systematic exhumation of the trunk must be preceded by a misunderstanding on the part of those who do not recognize the necessity of these endless Editions”; some may ask, “why loose time publishing works of a lesser interest when the essential production of Fernando Pessoa is already vastly known?”].

Lind's criterion resulted to be pertinent over five decades and is in force today, because there are still those who say, demagogically, that the main Pessoa trunk is already well understood. The truth is that it will continue to hold surprises and that fame and omnipresence of the name of the writer must not be confused with the detailed knowledge of the archive, as well as the study and rigorous transcription of the autograph testimonies. Fortunately, Lind's position, and the position of others linked to *Ática*, allowed for nine other volumes to be launched, though they were anthological. With the exception, without any particular reservations, of *Cartas de amor* and *Livro do desassossego*, all volumes published by *Ática* are made by a reduced selection of the matter announced in the title, even though they appear in the framework or the sequence of *Obras completas*. What lessons can we learn? At least one: we should not cling to the static idea of an already closed literary universe, and understand that it was built and keeps being forged by successive generations of readers –who mobilize, or “divert and refine”, to quote Borges,¹² our perception– because the Pessoa universe (the radius of the work, the author's facets, the number of themes and books) was completely revolutionized from 1966 onwards, and again after 1988 when other workgroups, with diverse criteria and points of view, began to edit his works again. Editing or fixating a book and its successive reeditions, the consecration of an author and his canonization, the recollection of some works under the adjective “complete”, ended up persuading us, commonly and erroneously, of the conclusion of a process, against its endless mobility and transformation.

There is something peculiar in the publications of 1966 and 1967: they scarcely have a title, and no major pretension of unity or totality – *Páginas*. They barely suggested a book is, in the end, nothing more than a given set of pages; which maybe is the same as saying that a character is nothing more than a collection of words, desacralizing the text and removing from it the “life of its own” it takes on our conscience. But then, some *Obras* –let us not say “complete”– would be made up only of “pages” seen as their more material aspect, according to which some of them would be one or more volumes? However, the choice of the term “pages” does not seem significant to us because it points to this aspect, but because it usually is an alternate name for an anthology. Think

¹² “Desvían o afinan”, in “Kafka y sus precursores” (*Discusión*), (BORGES, 2005).

about *Estas páginas mías* [*These Pages of Mine*], by Juan José Arreola, or in any compilation of *Páginas escogidas* [*Selected Pages*] or of *Mis mejores páginas* [*My Best Pages*], and notice it was precisely the two sets of *Páginas* –in 1966 and 1967– that cut off the existence of the *Obras completas*. Perhaps it should be noted that the project *Obras completas* by the Ática publishing house anticipated its difficulty from the beginning because: or 1) *Novas páginas* [*New Pages*] (as *Novas poesias* [*New Poems*]) were being edited when new were being found or established; or 2) only sections were published and there was no aspiration for totality back then; or 3) the fragmentary nature of the Pessoaan production was recognized –whose fundamental features are heterogeneity, discontinuity and brevity– and it was admitted that everything, or almost everything, was made of only loose “pages” which the editors would thread together. Pure “fragments, fragments, fragments”, as Pessoa calls the *Livro do Desassossego* in 1914.¹³ In the case of Pessoa, we would be faced with the so-called, by some editors, *Obras completas*, which would be made up of fragments, many of which with no necessary connection between them and, some of them, with no relation to existing “works”; in other words, we would be faced with collections of fragments that have become more and more the component elements of certain changing “works”.¹⁴ Except for *Mensagem*, the only book published during the author’s lifetime, and except for the English *plaquettes* and some leaflets, all the remaining Pessoaan “works” have been reconstructed with projects, sketches and texts of migratory character. (Why publish, for example, Álvaro de Campos’ “Ultimatum” in *Páginas de sociologia política* and not in *Páginas de estética*?) It is not about blaming Ática for its omissions. On the contrary, the term “pages” was a way of recognizing the difficulty of *Obras completas*; and this happened, precisely, in the year when the edited volumes lost their numbering. Even today, there is not an academic, editorial or cultural consensus on how to publish Fernando Pessoa, and it will be a long time before there is a consensus on which are his works, which are the main ones, or which is the “exact” *corpus* of some of his

¹³ “Fragmentos, fragmentos, fragmentos”. See the letter to Armando Cortes-Rodrigues from 19 November 1914 (in PESSOA, 1945).

¹⁴ Some “works” can be composed only of fragments; but in these cases, perhaps a “theory of the work” (Foucault) becomes more necessary and the organization of each volume and of the complete set more controversial.

books. Finally, what exists in many cases are publications conceived by one, two or even three editors that did not agree on how to publish a heteronym, for example, or the set of literary appreciations of Pessoa-*ipse*. If we look at the plurality and diversity of the published and unpublished texts, we can say that there are several Pessoa, as there are several Paul Valéry and several Paul Celan, or other similar intellectual characters, because there are several configurations and constellations of their works. The texts change context, association, hierarchy, properties, and more and more different selections and organizations keep being discovered. We could almost speak of permutations and rotations, as Octavio Paz would say. When this happens, and it is not the author who makes the context alterations, to dream with “definite” editions that resolve all uncertainty is, more than ever, like longing for a lost paradise.

Note that of all the texts attributed or attributable to a heteronym, no set was published in its entirety during Pessoa’s lifetime. This if we quantitatively interpret ‘entire’. Note, furthermore, that today the extension of the work of each heteronym corresponds to the extension discovered posthumously because the partial publications that appeared during the author’s lifetime were only meant to present a figure to a community of readers, but never exhaustively. At the time, each publication opened a small window, leaving others necessarily closed. In any case, accepting that the posthumously discovered production prolongs a particular work brings us back to a fundamental problem: what would Pessoa have published? It is a question that haunts us, that comes from the beginning of the work of reading and researching Pessoa’s unpublished writings –or those of any other author– and to which there is no way of answering in a univocal and accurate manner. It would be pretentious and speculative to say, and ensure, which would have been his last decisions, and in which form he would have accepted the printing of some texts. In any case, the truth is that it is essential to bear into account the set of texts he published during his lifetime in order to be able to study the posthumous construction of his works and to better understand how those works, after 1935, are his own or are alien. Thanks to the investigations of several editors, today, the “poetic works” of Caetano, Reis and Campos have new dimensions. The *Livro do desassossego* continues to be reconfigured and we might never definitely know which is the actual *Livro* because Pessoa himself did not put a definite article before it. Besides, his uncountable readers do not need

to be afraid of its changing character (even though they might benefit from the comparison of several editions). In the beginning, we wondered whether a work involves one author or if it can involve several. After an author's death, it is evident that the responsibility for what is left is not exclusively his and that this material is, more and more, the raw matter of a work of collective construction. In the 100th anniversary of the fictitious birth of Álvaro de Campos (1990), for instance, Teresa Rita Lopes made known sixty-three unpublished writings of this heteronym, in Álvaro de Campos, *Vida e obras do Engenheiro* [Álvaro de Campos, Life and Works of the Engineer] and dedicated them to Campos on his 100 years. Perhaps some attributions can be discussed,¹⁵ but the work of the "Engineer" is being redimensioned and, with it, that of Pessoa. There is nothing better than these kinds of findings to show the open character of a work and, especially, of some supposed *Obras completas*. Even if we already knew "everything", or we believed that we did, we would have to understand that the closed character of a composition is only nominal and accidental.

From an interesting process of revision, a notable example would be the one of Herberto Hélder, who has not ceased renewing his poems and whose *Poesia Toda* [All Poetry] continues to be a motive for astonishment and an attempt to deny death, associated with the intention of fixation. The successive editions of *Poesia Toda* (1973), *Poesia Toda* (1981), *Poesia Toda* (1990), *Poesia Toda* (1996), *Ou o Poema Contínuo* (2004) [Or the Continuous Poem], speak for themselves –in 2004, Hélder also reedited *Poesia Toda*, but then under the title *Ou o Poema Contínuo*. We quote every book because each one is the same and it is another. Against the booksellers who return the books to the editors after a certain time, against the promotion of the last editions, Hélder, in his aversion to institutionalism, continued to rewrite the same poem, which was once called *Poesia Toda* and then it was called *Ou o Poema Contínuo*. We think of Whitman, who conceptualized in his entire life one single book: *Leaves of Grass*. Valéry should also be remembered: criticized for publishing several texts or variations of the same poem, the poet stressed he was even tempted "to encourage the poets to produce, like musicians or painters (Leonardo's virgins, for example), a diversity of variations or solutions

¹⁵ Less than half of the poems Lopes thought to be unequivocally from Campos were later confirmed as such in the critical edition (*Poemas de Álvaro de Campos*, 1992).

of the same theme”.¹⁶ And, lastly, we can also evoke Cortázar’s *Último round* [*Last Round*], which ends with a suggestive quote: “What John Coltrane does is to play five notes of a chord and then keep changing it around, trying to see how many different ways it can sound”. With this, we suggest that the *Complete Works* of an author, and more of a posthumous one, are only “complete”, or can be “complete”, quantitatively, by the inexistence of more autograph documents. Or, also, that even extending the concept “complete” to its maximum degree of elasticity, it does not imprison everything that was made, but what remained, more or less as the author left it, with or without revision. The complete *corpus* of Álvaro de Campos’ poetry, returning to our first example, varies from edition to edition, and it may never really be defined since it depends on posthumous attributions that are not exempt of mobility and subjectivity.

I have been speaking of *editorial agency* and this was my intention, due to theoretical and philosophical reasons. Mediation is such a crucial fact that it has provoked all kinds of debates, some of them particularly important in the literary field. The dispute between Stanley Fish and Wolfgang Iser, which the journal *Diacritics* hosted in 1981, for example, can be read as a discussion on the problem of mediation. Iser proposes an image –the stars in a literary text are fixed, the lines uniting them are variable– to which Fish responds that the stars are as variable as the lines because a “[M]ediated access to the world is the only access we ever have” (FISH, 1981, p. 10). Iser differentiates between what is there (“what is given”) and the perception of it, established by fixed data (a work’s title, for example), and Fish insists nothing is given –that can be directly perceived– because, in the end, he does not accept the identification between what it is (or exists), and what it is given. Surely perception is established not only by what exists, under the form in which it exists, but also by categories of social understanding, of conventional nature; and beyond whether or not the world exists regardless of those categories, the interesting thing, in this context, is to ask ourselves if the text, as the world, despite seeming stable, can change, and can be transformed. Are the words in a literary text fixed? Not entirely. Borges’s text, “Pierre Menard, autor del Quijote” [“Pierre Menard, author of Quixote”], shows it perfectly: an identical *Quijote* in another context (the

¹⁶ “[D]’engager les poètes à produire, à la mode des musiciens, une diversité de variantes ou de solutions du même sujet” (VALERY, 1936, p. 65-66).

20th century), written by another author (a late-symbolist writer), results in a different *Quijote*. Similarly, *one* text, edited in *two* different moments, by *two* editors, results in another text, equal and different from the first one. Just as there is no ideal *Quijote*, there are many *Quijotes*, just as they are given to us, that is to say, as they exist (Borges' *Quijote* where two red volumes with golden letters from Garnier editions). What Iser might have minimized is what we could name as mobility, not of what it is (or exist?) but of the mobility of what is given because if something is given to us, then it is possible to admit some sort of mediation, as well as some determining elements. The agency I am highlighting here is the editorial one, a type of mediation that questions the fact that words in a literary text are fixed. That is why, in my opinion, it is necessary to place the editor between the poles represented by the text and the reader, to problematize “what is given” and not to assume it as immediate data, acquired and always identical to itself. This movement does not imply a condemnation of interpretation, but a call for a more inclusive criticism, that integrates the analysis of the edited texts –that is, of the texts as they were given to us– in the interpretation. That is how we can evaluate better what is produced and its consequent effects.

In addition to the extension, another aspect that often stands out posthumously is mobility. In the case of Pessoa, some writings have migrated from book to book, have rotated, as Octavio Paz would subtly say, within the same editorial project and, of course, have also migrated from project to project. This is not only due to the reedition or revision of certain documents, but also, so to speak, due to their migratory quality. On the one hand, there is the format of the editions, which is important because form affects the production of meaning, as material bibliography teaches us.¹⁷ We could say, for example, that there is a Pessoa in a large format –INCM's–, another in a medium format –the one from Ática, Assírio & Alvim– and another one in a small format –Europa-América. On the other hand, there is this “migratory quality”, which makes some of the papers in the archive practically unclassifiable and which explains, to a certain extent, some books with wandering and apparently provisional titles, as *Mensagem e outros poemas afins* [*Message and Other Kindred Poems*] or *Aforismos e afins* [*Aphorisms and Kindred Texts*], for example.

¹⁷ See for example the classical Works by Ronald Mckerrow (1927) and Philip Gaskell (1979).

In this sense, we can understand an appreciation by Roger Chartier, when –wanting to contradict the idea of a text as an abstraction, alien to the historical contingencies– says: “A novel by Balzac can be different without modifying a single line of text if it is offered as a leaflet, a book for the reading halls, or when, together with more of his novels, it is included in a volume of complete works”.¹⁸ From Pessoa’s texts, the handwriting has changed, but also their location or frame. Editors have not ceased to reconfigure the archive, which is poorly organized, nor they have ceased to change the location of some texts, as if they were, each time, trying to find a more perfect organization.¹⁹ Naturally, all these continuous movements and adjustments have had diverse effects on the production of meaning and some editions have become, in some cases, more fragile than others. Pessoa’s *Obra completa* has turned, as Helder’s, into a *continuous* production, despite its variations are not the result of new campaigns of artistic revision. The texts’ mobility inside the Pessoaan works is, therefore, due to the decisions, the criteria and the points of view of the editors, as well as the migratory character of some writings (consider a list of projects, in a dialogue between Caeiro, Campos and Reis, or a text of uncertain attribution, for example). In this sense, the concept of “work” becomes, once again, relative and circumscribed to a historical context –to the conditions of a time and to the formation of a canon– because the elements that make up a work or a series of works can change and these will never be “identical to themselves”. The “disciplined” poet of the first volumes from the Ática publishing house has become more and more an “undisciplined”, a much more prolific and varied poet, representing new selections of interests and reflecting a better knowledge of the totality of the archive.

¹⁸ “Un roman de Balzac peut être différent sans qu’une ligne du texte ait changé, selon qu’il est donné en feuilleton, dans un livre pour les cabinets de lecture, ou avec d’autres de ses romans quand il est compris dans un volume d’œuvres complètes” (CHARTIER, 1997, p. 138).

¹⁹ The inventory of the archive has been completed and no alteration in the order of the signatures is to be expected; however, each new edition reconfigures the archive, since it brings together uncollected papers and proposes new organizations of a given number or autograph documents. If these reconfigurations were to be exhausted, which is unlikely, the rereading of the original documents would have the same renovating effects as it would continue to create new links between passages of pieces that are thematically, stylistically or temporally close, although materially distant.

To conclude, I would like to suggest an answer to the main question: what is a work? A “work” is the product, or the result, of the joint work left by some men and which others progressively try to complete, revise, comment or organize. All “works” are re-examined and reassembled over time, even though some, more unfinished, fragmented or “incomplete” –in other words, less imagined as a whole–, delegate more effort for posterity. As a production, the work of Fernando Alberto Reis de Campos Pessoa – that permanent surprise to which we could also name, in a more extensive way, the work of Jean, Fernando, Alberto, Antonio, Search, Reis, de Campos, Soares, de Teive, Pessoa, and still we do not name it completely – is, precisely, the one that is consigned in his papers, that is to say, in the original papers he left in his trunks, which have been gradually revealed, for many years, thanks to the effort or the parallel “work” of successive editors, critics and investigators. This means that knowledge of the Pessoaan production has been and will continue to be mediated, as is inevitable, by different institutions, companies, and individuals. A “work” or a set of works is not something determined and established forever, but a reassembled product, or better yet, the result of a construction or reconstruction. As we saw, this process takes place at different levels, from the change of the material support (it is not the same to read Pessoa in a white book of *Ática*, with the Pegasus drawn by Almada, as in a virtual page of poetry, with other windows open), to the selection and presentation of a new *corpus*, with its corresponding insertion in a publishing project, guided by certain ideological, cultural or aesthetic criteria. From the moment a writer delivers a manuscript, it begins not to belong to him: he shares it with editors, reviewers, and composers, and, when it is printed, with the readers. This extension of a work or *Obras* becomes more evident and clearer when their socialization is posthumous, because, then, the writer is no longer even the one in charge of delivering his manuscript, the one responsible can be a third party, who will have given the final “form” to the text. In this sense, each work by Pessoa can be seen as the work of many people, since it represents the result of a long collective process of selection, organization, presentation and handling of the texts. Although Pessoa wished it at different times, he did not manage to examine, organise and publish all his production. He did not do so, despite stipulating as a rule of life “Organise your life like a literary work, putting as much unity into it as possible” (PESSOA, 2001, p. 17 and 321); conceiving the organisation

in an organicist sense, influenced by Spencer; theorising about the organisation and studying the way the archive is structured. So much so that even in 1935 Pessoa expressed doubts –in letters–about how to publish his unpublished texts and with what priorities. Therefore, it was others who posthumously resolved the doubts and established priorities, in a process of continuous and collective construction that will not stop, because there still is an abundance of unpublished material, and because new editorial proposals and critiques of reading and interpretation can always arise. It is possible that no unpublished text will detract from Pessoa and all the writings that will emerge will continue to contribute to the redefinition and complementing of his “works”.

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