Fernando Pessoa Crosses the Atlantic

ABSTRACT: The prehistory of Fernando Pessoa's reception in Brazil shows that Pessoa was warmly received. Three primary channels made this possible: literary magazines, writers on both sides of the Atlantic and, especially, the poetry troupe Os Jograis. Periodical writers were crucial to the reception of Pessoa's poetry, but Os Jograis did the most to popularize the work of the great Portuguese poet by presenting Pessoa's poems to a large audience through the immediacy of spoken words, without the mediation of writing. The dynamics of Pessoa's reception must be understood in the context of São Paulo, then in the process of becoming a major metropolis.

KEYWORDS: poetry, reception, literary magazines, Fernando Pessoa, Portuguese literature, *Crítica*.

A statement by Robert Bréchon, in the first great biography of Fernando Pessoa ever written by a foreigner (Bréchon 1996, 561), set me on the path that led to this article. Bréchon says that since the late 1950s there had been a pressing need for a systematic edition of Pessoa's poetry. Bréchon reached this conclusion after examining the several volumes of the Ática edition, with Almada Negreiros's Pegasus vignette on the cover, supervised by João Gaspar Simões and Luis de Montalvor, which came out between 1942 and 1946. Over the next thirty years other editions of Pessoa's poetry appeared, including the dramatic poems, the quadras (quatrains), the English poems, and many others—and that is just the poetry. Pessoa's prose and correspondence also began to be compiled and published in the second half of the twentieth century.

Bréchon finds it curious that the comprehensive edition of Pessoa's poetry so sorely needed, rather than being released in Portugal, came out in Brazil. Collected in a single volume by the publishing company Aguilar in 1960, it was prepared by Maria Aliete Galhoz, an expert on Pessoa, in an edition that was to become canonical. But only those who know nothing about the Pessoa fever that had spread across Brazil find it strange that the poet first became widely popular in the tropics rather than in Portugal.

While Pessoa's greatness as a poet had been appreciated in Brazil for some time, three main channels are responsible for the explosive growth of his popularity in the 1960s. The first channel, in an era before the hegemony of the visual media, consisted of journals and literary supplements in Brazil and overseas. Book production proceeded so slowly at the time that when Pessoa died in 1935, only Message had been published, and the edition of his complete works by Ática began only in 1942. The anthology Fernando Pessoa—Poesia, compiled by Adolfo Casais Monteiro, also appeared in 1942.

The second channel was the flow of writers, poets, and critics who saw the value of Pessoa's work and began to spread the word. A third channel, examined below, was a Rio de Janeiro theater company called Os Jograis (the Jesters), which helped build the foundations of modern theater in Brazil in the 1950s and '60s, and which based a large part of its early repertoire on Pessoa's poetry.

Journals in Brazil and Overseas

Among the most important Brazilian journals and literary supplements that took an interest in Pessoa's work was the Boletim de Ariel, the seventh issue of which (April 1938) included a study by Adolfo Casais Monteiro titled "O exemplo de Fernando Pessoa" that had first appeared in the newspaper Diário de Lisboa. The Boletim de Ariel also published several of Pessoa's poems in 1938, in its August and September issues (Saraiva 1986, 212). Another Brazilian journal, the Revista do Brasil, featured an article called "A apresentação de Fernando Pessoa," by João Gaspar Simões, in its November 1938 issue (Jackson 2011, 196). These were the first essays to appear on Pessoa by writers outside Portugal.

Other Brazilians also wrote about the poet in the early 1940s, among them Domingos Carvalho da Silva, with two articles in the newspaper Correio Paulistano (19 September 1943 and 6 February 1944) and a review of Casais Monteiro's anthology; Antonio Candido, who reviewed Ática's first volume of Pessoa's poetry, which contained the poetry of the orthonym, in the journal Clima (September 1944); and Murilo Mendes, who wrote about Pessoa in the Recife newspaper Folha da Manhã (10 December 1944). In addition, Geraldo Ferraz wrote an extensive feature for the newspaper Diário de S. Paulo's literary and arts supplement titled "Quarta Seção" (1 December 1946), with a mini-anthology of the heteronyms and the orthonym. Lúcio Cardoso wrote two pieces, one in Letras Brasileiras (July 1946) and one in the Letras & Artes supplement of the news-

paper A Manhã (December 1950). This supplement also published an article by J. S. Silva Dias (3 June 1948) and nine of Pessoa's poems (17 October 1948; Jackson 2011, 196–97). And the torrent only grew, its waters steadily increasing in volume throughout the 1940s.

Pagu

In the realm of journals, Patrícia Galvão, a modernist Pagu—Oswald de Andrade's partner in the journal Revista de Antropofagia and the newspaper O homem do povo (Galvão 2007, 56–58)—occupies a special place when it comes to promoting our poet, as she was an enthusiastic fan of Pessoa. Once she had left behind the modernist-activist phase, after many arrests and experiences in both proletarian and clandestine life, the Communist and feminist author of the novel Parque industrial severed her partisan ties and dedicated herself to professional journalism. Ever a libertarian spirit, however, she continued to wave the banner of modernism in her stories, always ready to fight a setback, whether aesthetic, political, or behavioral.

Galvão systematically defended the avant-garde and artistic experimentation, promoting Beckett, Nabokov's Lolita, Arrabal, Ionesco, Alfred Jarry's Ubu Roi, Brecht, André Breton, Saint-John Perse, Artaud, Stravinsky, and many others—but above all Fernando Pessoa, whom she championed indefatigably beginning with an article for the journal Fanfulla in 1950.

The recent revival of Galvão's journalistic work underscores the leading role she played in our poet's critical fate.¹ She penned news reports, chronicles, critiques, reviews, and articles on Pessoa, and even a review of the Fernando Pessoa recital by Os Jograis in 1955. She reviewed the Estudos sobre Fernando Pessoa by Casais Monteiro (1958), the Aguilar edition of Obra poética, and the anthology by João Gaspar Simões, published in Brazil in 1961. Closely attuned to the international art scene, she took note in 1960 of Pessoa's inclusion in the poetry series Poètes d'aujourd'hui by Seghers Editions, in a translation by Armand Guibert that included the Ode marítima (Jackson 2011, 194).

Galvão also founded the "Centro de Estudos Fernando Pessoa" in Santos, the city in which she lived for the rest of her life and where she was a leading cultural agitator. Her friendship with the great critic of Pessoa's work, Casais Monteiro, in his Brazilian phase (Monteiro wrote the preface to the second edition of Doramundo, a novel by Pagu in partnership with Geraldo Ferraz, in 1959 [Jackson 2011, 196]), ensured her communion in the worship of the poet.

The Mediators: Cecília Meireles

A precocious enthusiast of Pessoa's poetry, Cecília Meireles figures among those who first promoted it in Brazil, as well as in Portugal, so much so that Eduardo Lourenço stated that he first became acquainted with our poet by way of her anthology (Gouvêa 2001, 71). Meireles was the first Brazilian writer to recognize Pessoa's outstanding talent (Saraiva 1986, 213), and she gave him pride of place in the preface to her Poetas novos de Portugal (1944). As early as her 1929 thesis, O espírito vitorioso, Meireles transcribed excerpts of Pessoa's Ode triunfal (ibid., 67). She was one of the first to disseminate Pessoa's work in Brazil, and, after Casais Monteiro's Fernando Pessoa—Poesia, of 1942,² also one of the first to promote him in Portugal.

Cementing Meireles's prestige in Lusitanian lands, her book Viagem, published in Lisbon in 1938 by Ocidente, won first prize in a contest sponsored by the Portuguese Academy of Letters, much to the consternation of the native candidates and their patrons, prompting an argument in the newspapers. She also won a prize from the Brazilian Academy of Letters and, as this institution was still quite impervious to modernism, the accolade awarded to Viagem prompted protests there as well.

At that time Meireles was by far the most popular Brazilian poet in Portugal; indeed, she was more highly regarded there than in her motherland (Gouvêa 1986, 85). Married to a Portuguese painter and illustrator, Fernando Correia Dias, she had been visiting Portugal since 1934, and she often returned there, making friends with intellectuals and artists. Earlier, her husband and Pessoa had been contributors to the journal Águia. On one visit she had arranged to meet Pessoa, and waited several hours for him at A Brasileira do Chiado, where Pessoa was a regular, but the meeting did not take place, to her great frustration and disappointment. Pessoa left a copy of Mensagem, hot off the presses, at her hotel, inscribed: "To Cecília Meireles, high poet, and to Correia Dias, artist, old friend, and even accomplice (see Águia etc.), in invoking Apollo and Athena, / Fernando Pessoa / 10–XII–1934." This copy was one of the first that Pessoa gave, since the date is the same as that in the copies he gave to his girlfriend, Ofélia Queirós, and her nephew, his friend Carlos Queirós. Meireles replied with a thank-you card, signed jointly with her husband, now in the Fernando Pessoa Estate at the National Library in Lisbon (Saraiva 1986, 214). Later, her friendship with Os Jograis leader Ruy Affonso would influence the group's decision to base their debut repertoire on Pessoa's work.

In addition to Luis de Montalvor in 1913 and Correia Dias in 1914, the latter remaining in Brazil until his death, other Portuguese friends of Pessoa's who spent time in Brazil included Veiga Simões, Álvaro Pinto, Jaime Cortesão, Carlos Lobo de Oliveira, Antonio Ferro, and José Osório de Oliveira (Saraiva 1986, 211–12). They did less to promote Pessoa, however.

The Diplomats

Among Pessoa's fellow writers, Mário de Andrade did not give him much attention. Apart from the oft-cited "Uma suave rudeza" (1939), on Portuguese poetry, from O empalhador de passarinho, Andrade rarely mentions Pessoa. Nonetheless, he kept in his library (today at the Institute for Brazilian Studies at the University of São Paulo [IEB-USP]), the first issue of the journal Contemporânea (May 1922), in which Pessoa's "O banqueiro anarquista" was published. He also kept a copy of Homenagem a Fernando Pessoa, published by Carlos Queirós in 1936, one year after the poet's death (Saraiva 1986, 211–13).

It is also worth highlighting the mediating role played by Brazilian diplomats serving in Portugal in the 1930s and 1940s, as they were also writers, in general linked to modernism, among them Ronald de Carvalho, Ribeiro Couto, and the critic Álvaro Lins. Having gained prestige for his participation in the 1922 "Modern Art Week," de Carvalho was a career diplomat who failed to rise to the top of the hierarchy because of his untimely death. He met Pessoa in 1914, and they began a correspondence. He was the co-director, with Luis de Montalvor, of the important Portuguese modernist journal Orpheu, which Pessoa endeavored so strenuously to promote. Though an enthusiastic member of the Orpheu circle, de Carvalho was involved only in the first issue: his name did not appear in the second. In any case, he wrote nothing about Pessoa.

Another career diplomat, the modernist Ribeiro Couto, served as the chargé d'affaires in Lisbon from 1944 to 1946. Couto's friendship with Casais Monteiro was particularly influential, in that Couto introduced Casais to contemporary Brazilian literature. Casais became interested in his friend's work, publishing in 1935 a small book of poetry called A poesia de Ribeiro Couto (Perrone-Moisés 2002, 56–57). Their correspondence has recently been collected and edited.³

The critic Álvaro Lins, who, unlike his predecessors, was not a career diplomat but would hold high offices abroad, taught languages in Lisbon between 1952 and 1954, and went on to serve as ambassador to Portugal between 1956

and 1959. He co-wrote, with Aurélio Buarque de Holanda, the two volumes of the Roteiro Literário do Brasil e de Portugal (1956).

Adolfo Casais Monteiro

When Casais Monteiro's article on Pessoa was published in the Boletim de Ariel in April 1938, the Portuguese critic was setting out on the journey that would establish him as a great Pessoa scholar. Pessoa had addressed the famous handwritten letter of the heteronyms to him, a unique document in the genre. An influential critic, Casais Monteiro in 1931 became the director of the journal Presença, which closed down in 1940. His anthology Fernando Pessoa—Poesia of 1942, as noted above, was crucial to the study and growing reputation of our poet.

In 1954, after being arrested several times in Portugal and banned from teaching or publishing there, Casais Monteiro was left with no other alternative but to seek exile in Brazil. His immigration was carefully planned; in addition to the warm welcome and support he received from the Brazilians, his arrival coincided with the lavish celebration of São Paulo's quadricentennial. The events included the opening of Ibirapuera Park, with its gigantic Monumento às Bandeiras, modeled in stone by the country's greatest sculptor, the modernist Victor Brecheret. There were art exhibits, processions, parades, parties in the streets, a film festival attended by foreign celebrities and, last but not least, an international writers' congress featuring Nobel laureate William Faulkner and poet Robert Frost—a meeting that would prove of great importance for Casais Monteiro and for Fernando Pessoa's critical fortunes.

Ostensibly, Casais was traveling to Brazil only for the writers' congress, but plans had been made in secret for him to stay. To ensure that the plan would succeed and to discourage Salazar from intervening—with the disastrous consequences that might result—the spotlight was turned on Casais, granting him high visibility and the guarantee that he could remain in Brazil unscathed. It was he who made the speech opening the proceedings on the first day of the celebration. He was one of the party appointed by Congress to lay a bouquet of flowers on Mário de Andrade's tomb. He also joined the committee that wrote the Brazilian Declaration of Principles, a clear repudiation of dictatorship and a strong endorsement of freedom of expression. Formally appointed to act as a spokesperson for the foreigners who attended the quadricentennial, he spoke on their behalf at the opening ceremony.⁴ In short, his presence was given the greatest possible attention so as to prevent obstacles to his being granted asylum in Brazil.

Casais was the only person at the writers' congress to be invited to contribute two articles (the other writers were asked to write only one) and both were published in the annals of the congress. He chose to write one of those articles on Pessoa: "Fernando Pessoa, o insincero verídico." Alguns dos 35 sonetos de Fernando Pessoa was published the same year in a bilingual edition, with translations by Casais and Jorge de Sena. This not only ensured Casais's visibility but also consolidated his status as a leading Pessoa critic, a status he would hold throughout his long and productive career in Brazil, where he worked as a university professor, newspaper critic, contributor to the famous literary supplement of O Estado de S. Paulo, and author of books on Pessoa. By then Casais had already secured two trump cards back in Portugal: the letter of the heteronyms and the organization of the first anthology of Pessoa's poetry.

Even so, when Agir Publishers decided in 1957 to publish the anthology Nossos Clássicos with the Portuguese Pessoa, Brazilian critics responded with nationalistic protest, a form of chauvinism that Casais Monteiro denounced (Perrone-Moisés 2002, 57). It was then that Casais began to address the convergences between the two Portuguese-speaking nations' cultural legacies, speaking and writing regularly on the subject with great vigor and analytical depth.

Casais's lifelong dedication to Pessoa culminated in the publication in Brazil of Estudos sobre a poesia de Fernando Pessoa (1958) and the anthology A poesia de Presença (1959). In addition to his published work, he lectured indefatigably at the universities where he taught, introducing Pessoa's work to countless students of language and literature. These students in turn broadcast Pessoa's importance in their secondary school classes. At the Department of Philosophy on Maria Antonia Street, whence most of them graduated, it became fashionable to carry under one's arm the Ática volumes, recognizable from the little winged horse on the cover, a sure sign that the bearer was one of the initiated.

Os Jograis: The Jesters

In the 1950s the city of São Paulo had an urban center where writers, performers, musicians, and other artists congregated and where "everything happened." Those years saw the rise of exciting initiatives like Vera Cruz and the TBC (Teatro Brasileiro de Comédia, or Brazilian Comedy Theater). Vera Cruz was a film company with Hollywoodian ambition that for some time produced films of the greatest relevance, jump-starting Brazilian cinema and lifting it out of amateurism and randomness. The TBC raised Brazil's theatrical art to a pro-

fessional level and enlarged the local repertoire, thus laying the foundations of modern theater in Brazil.

The University of São Paulo's Faculties of Philosophy, Architecture, and Economics, and its School of Sociology and Politics, along with the Mackenzie secondary and university educational system and the high schools Rio Branco and Caetano de Campos, were all located downtown. Nearby were sophisticated bookstores like Pioneira, Duas Cidades, Jaraguá, Partenon, and Francesa. The design formed a metropolitan urban complex that had been in the making since the days of the foreign teaching body at the Faculty of Philosophy in 1934.⁵

The urban mesh of the city's center was made up of a great many rich and varied cultural offerings. There was the Municipal Theater, the Theater for Artistic Culture (Teatro de Cultura Artística), and the Mário de Andrade Municipal Library, open daily, especially for the "worshippers of the statue," who gathered at the foot of the statue of Minerva in the lobby. Concentrated in a dozen blocks one could find the Artists and Friends of Art Club (Clube dos Artistas e Amigos da Arte), affectionately dubbed the Little Club (Clubinho), the Children's Library, the Leopoldo Fróis Theater, and the Alliance Française school.

In addition to the Museum of Modern Art on 7 de Abril Street, with its bar, and a very active Filmoteca (as the future Cinematheque was called then), the city center offered a constellation of majestic movie theaters, all with at least a thousand seats, among them the Art Palácio, with more than three thousand seats, built by the illustrious architect Rino Lévi, and the Marabá, the Ipiranga, the Normandie, the República, and the Metro, among others (Simões 1999). The Marrocos hosted the international film festival at São Paulo's quadricentennial, which boasted not only a delegation of Hollywood stars to dazzle the crowds but also such monuments of the seventh art as Erich von Stroheim, Abel Gance, Henri Langlois, and André Bazin (Festival Internacional de Cinema 2004, 4–59). The film festival featured a retrospective of Stroheim's silent movies, as well as the great Gance's silent classic Napoléon (once the director's demands for several projectors had been met). Henri Langlois was the creator and, later, director of the Cinemathèque Française; his dismissal by the French government would trigger the protests of May 1968 in Paris. André Bazin is often considered the greatest critic cinema has ever had.

Including just a dozen blocks, this was the city's most effervescent perimeter. At its heart was the brand-new Arena Theater, owned by José Renato, with the Redondo bar, always crowded, right next door. It was in this theater that

Os Jograis, at once a reflection and a disseminator of Pessoa's popularity, premiered the Fernando Pessoa Recital. It remained for a long season, becoming a must-see in São Paulo's entertainment world.

Os Jograis, a quartet of men who recited poetry dressed in tuxedos, debuted on 16 May 1955. Their leader, Ruy Affonso—whose friendship with Cecília Meireles (Affonso 2007, 299) would be decisive in the choice to launch the group with the Portuguese poet's work—was the only permanent member, while the others rotated, including over time Rubem de Falco, Felipe Wagner, Ítalo Rossi, Maurício Barroso, Carlos Vergueiro, Raul Cortez, Carlos Zara, and many others. Pagu was one of the fans who would see the show and then write about it.

Os Jograis were an immediate and thunderous success, and when they went on tour to Rio de Janeiro the following year, the reputation earned in São Paulo preceding them, they performed on an extraordinarily prestigious stage, the auditorium of the Ministry of Education. Brazil's first modernist public building, designed by Lúcio Costa and Oscar Niemeyer, was celebrated by chroniclers and poets alike. To this building Vinicius de Moraes dedicated his poem "Azul e branco," the refrain of which honors the Portinari wall tiles as dubbed by Pedro Nava: "Concha e cavalo marinho." The building was the architectural incarnation of the new aesthetics at a time when Brasília, to be inaugurated in 1960, was barely a shimmering line on the horizon. Two thousand people squeezed into this eight-hundred-seat auditorium to see the group open their Rio de Janeiro season (Affonso 2007, 299).

Os Jograis soon recorded the album Fernando Pessoa (1957), which became so sought after that it required several releases. The group became a mandatory act in Brazil's national and cultural celebrations, including Rio de Janeiro's quadricentennial in 1965 and the fiftieth anniversary of Modern Art Week in 1972.

The success of Os Jograis, which has endured for more than half a century now, can be explained by its contribution to the Portuguese language, if not with a neologism then at least with a semantic shift. By using their labels as litotes, they sought in their humbleness to identify their performance with that of traveling artists like the minstrels and the troubadours. But as they began to be imitated in every school and parish party, "fazer um jogral" (to go jesting) became synonymous with any collective declamation. The new meaning did not make it into the Aurélio dictionary, but with the date of entrance into the Portuguese lexicon duly recorded, it did get listed in the Houaiss. The expression is still used today.

The name of the group prompted other uses. It christened the nightclub O Jogral, located in the Galeria Metrópole mall at the time, one of São Paulo's epicenters, a block behind the Mário de Andrade Municipal Library, the location also of the Paribar, the Barbazul, and the Arpège on São Luiz Avenue, among other pubs. A little farther along, the João Sebastião Bar, with its bossa nova shows, thrived for a while. Among the many nightclubs in the area, the Michel, the Baiúca, and the Oasis stood out for their ability to attract customers. O Jogral moved to Avanhandava Street, still downtown, in 1968, where it endured until 1971, when it closed its doors after the death of its owner, the composer Luiz Carlos Paraná, a partner of Adauto Santos, who used to play the guitar at the club. The bar was patronized by intellectuals and artists of all kinds, including Marcus Pereira and Paulo Vanzolini, who used to sing there for fun.

Back in 1948, Ruy Affonso had been one of the founders of the TBC, a theater initially intended for amateur troupe performances as part of the University Theater Group, led by Decio de Almeida Prado. As the offspring of the TBC, Os Jograis could not deny this connection, but even more important than mere affiliation, they represented TBC diction: typical São-Paulo-City-haute-bourgeoisie pronunciation, cleansed of any foreign traces (the Italian accent, mostly), as was common to São Paulo in general. The voice projection acquired in the laboratory of their masters gave them an air of family, with a slightly pompous delivery that can still be heard on their recordings.

Os Jograis dedicated their recitation shows to other poets as well. They performed twelve hundred recitals with thirty-five different programs in tours all over Brazil, Portugal, Angola, and Mexico. In Portugal, they performed at the D. Maria II Theater by invitation of the Portuguese government, and were so successful that they ended up touring the whole country in 1957, with forty shows, that contributed to popularizing Fernando Pessoa there. Celebrating a Portuguese Pessoa pundit, they did a show in Araraquara in late 1965 in homage to Jorge de Sena, who was moving to the United States.

After Ruy Affonso's death, Alex Ribeiro carried on the group's tradition. The Os Jograis archive is quite thorough in its documentation; the Web site contains photographs of every program, broken down into its tiniest details, plus historical background and comprehensive information on the recordings.

This brief account of Pessoa's critical reception in Brazil is dedicated to recapturing the first phases of its prehistory. Since that long-ago beginning, count-

less articles, courses, colloquia, and publications of all sorts on Pessoa have appeared, including the oft-cited 1960 Aguilar edition of Obra poética. Some of its volumes, focusing specifically on the work of Pessoa, have become highlights of Brazilian literary criticism.

NOTES

- K. David Jackson is about to release a four-volume anthology of Galvão's work:
 vol. 1, O jornalismo de Patrícia Galvão: A denunciada denuncia; Pagu e a política (1931–1954); vol.
 Da necessidade da literatura (de arte e literatura/lições de literatura); vol. 3, Palcos e Atores: Teatro mundial contemporâneo; vol. 4, Antologia da literatura estrangeira: Os grandes autores mundiais.
- 2. The anthology by Cecília Meireles (Poetas novos de Portugal, 1944) appeared two years after the publication of Adolfo Casais Monteiro's collection of Pessoa's poetry, in which Casais broke new ground in Pessoa scholarship, becoming one of the greatest authorities on Pessoa.
- 3. Correspondência Casais Monteiro-Ribeiro Couto (1931–1962), ed. Rui Moreira Leite (São Paulo: Unesp Press, forthcoming).
- 4. For an account of these events, see Walnice Nogueira Galvão, "O Congresso Internacional de Escritores de 1954: A chegada de Adolfo Casais Monteiro," in A missão portuguesa: Rotas entrecruzadas, ed. F. Lemos and Rui Moreira Leite, São Paulo: Unesp/Unesc, 2002.
- 5. Only after 1968 would this harmonious complex be torn down, its debris scattered all over the city. Since then São Paulo has become polycentric—characterized by small centers distributed across the neighborhoods. As the downtown declined, the area's dwellers moved out and it became doomed to follow the fate of America's inner cities. After many years of abandonment, it still stubbornly resists efforts at revitalization.
- 6. Cláudia de Arruda Campos's book on the Arena Theater—Zumbi, Tiradentes e outras histórias contadas pelo Teatro de Arena de São Paulo—is fundamental for an analysis of the theater's origins, connections with the rest of the downtown area, and sociability.
- 7. On the creation of Os Jograis, see Ruy Affonso, "De como nasceram Os Jograis," Teatro Brasileiro 5 (23 March 1956).

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