

Pessoa, Anon, and the Natal Colony Retracing an Imperial Matrix

ABSTRACT: Fernando Pessoa's years in Durban (1896–1905) have often been sidelined by critics. Conversely, the memory and reception of Pessoa in South Africa have been slight, sustained by only a few individuals. By contextualizing Pessoa's placement in the historically peculiar Natal Colony, and by reading some early work by Pessoa's English literary persona Charles Robert Anon against the backdrop of the Anglo-Boer War (1899–1902), this article adds to the emergent understanding of the Durban years as deeply formative for Pessoa's work. It is here, not least, that we can trace the early formation of the imperial view of history that also becomes a strange limitation to his thinking. The "empire" as a frame of reference, an object of desire, a cause for ridicule, and a lofty ideal, recurs repeatedly in Pessoa's writing, and even when Anon expresses severe criticism of British imperial conduct, he remains beholden to an imperial optic, almost by default restricted to a white outlook on events in southern Africa. We find thereby in the early work the makings of an imperial ambivalence that is then dispersed and refracted through multiple poetic voices in Pessoa's oeuvre.

KEYWORDS: Fernando Pessoa, Charles Robert Anon, Roy Campbell, Natal Colony, Anglo-Boer War, imperialism

This article is written under the shadow of a double elusiveness. One concerns the traces of Fernando Pessoa in South Africa, the other the traces of South Africa in Fernando Pessoa. To what extent, we must ask ourselves, do the two cross paths in a meaningful way?

The external facts are familiar enough: after his mother remarried, Pessoa's family settled in Durban, where his stepfather worked in the Portuguese consulate. Between 1896 and 1905, young Fernando would live in this subtropical coastal town, with a population of under 30,000 at the time. He attended, famously, Durban High School (DHS), a boys' school founded in 1866. At the age

of seventeen, having failed to secure an Oxford scholarship, Pessoa returned to Portugal, where he lived for the remaining thirty years of his life.¹

In other words, Pessoa the individual intersects with South Africa during the most impressionable years of any young person's life. And yet a common impression has been that little remains of this experience, both in public memory in South Africa and in the work of Pessoa himself. The poet Roy Campbell (1901–1957), probably the first of the few South Africans who have publicized Pessoa's significance as a poet to an English-speaking audience, even saw this period as completely immaterial to Pessoa's work: "His ten years in Durban, where he learnt the English language so well, that he had no trace of a colonial accent, and where he stripped most of the school-prizes from his British colonial competitors, left absolutely no trace on his writings except that he corresponded for twenty years with his friend, Mr. Ormond."²

Campbell was himself a Durbanite and a DHS boy, and some of the most evocative passages in his sketch of Pessoa's life concern his own recollections of early twentieth-century Durban. He remembers that the name "F. Pessoa" was carved into the lid of his own desk at DHS, and waxes nostalgic about the city of yore:

Nowhere in the world were there more beautiful gardens, though most of the houses had ugly corrugated iron roofs. In those days, each house reposed amidst several acres of fruit trees and flowers. Flowering trees, Jacaranda, Tulip-trees, Flame-trees, Golden Shower, Flamboyants, Kaffirboom (the most brilliant of all) and Mimosa succeed each other throughout the year (like phoenixes taking fire from each others ashes) to culminate in the gorgeous blaze of the winter-flowering Kaffirboom [a contentious name; now it is called "coral tree"]. As the Pessoa's were neighbours of ours, on the Berea, they must have had a house and garden very much like ours.³

This is about as close as we will get to the sensuous immediacy of young Pessoa's surroundings in Durban. In his own work, "impersonal" from the beginning, the city is mostly filtered out, displaced, or transcoded, hence lending credence to the perception that Durban left no, or at least very few, traces on his writing. (A rare exception would be the late poem "Un Soir à Lima," with its powerful evocation of a domestic interior in Durban.)⁴

Against this, given not only our more detailed and thorough understanding of Pessoa's oeuvre today, but also a greater preparedness to think outside the

boxes of national and European literary historiography, one could list a number of general as well as specific reasons that the Durban years should be granted prominence in Pessoa scholarship. The first and most obvious is the reason mentioned by Campbell: the persistence of the English language throughout Pessoa's life. He corresponded with English journals, published poetry in English, and continued above all to write and read in English. As George Monteiro and Irene Ramalho Santos, among others, have shown, the importance of English-language poetry in Pessoa's work, from Shakespeare to Walt Whitman, can hardly be overstated.⁵ Even in Pessoa's Lusophone poetry—for instance, Álvaro de Campos's *Ode marítima* and "Ultimatum"—English words and phrases appear. It is barely conceivable that this intellectual commerce with the Anglophone world would have occurred without those childhood years in Durban.

In a similar vein, it may be argued that Pessoa would never have become Pessoa without the migrant experience of being a Portuguese child in exile, educated in the most excessively British, colonial part of southern Africa, not just at the peak of the British high-imperial period, but also during the dramatic years of the Anglo-Boer War (1899–1902). The very conservative brand of Britishness of the Natal Colony, which contrasts both with the white liberalism of the Cape Colony and the Afrikanerdom of Transvaal and the Orange Free State, should be highlighted in this context. If the colonial histories of other parts of South Africa had been rather checkered, and the boom town of Johannesburg (founded in 1886) was rapidly becoming a cosmopolitan metropolis, the Natal Colony—where segregationist policies were implemented very early—was staunchly and self-consciously a part of the British Empire.⁶ It is for good reason that Pietermaritzburg, the administrative capital of Natal (and of KwaZulu-Natal today), 70 kilometers inland from Durban, bears the popular slogan "the last outpost of the empire."⁷ If what passed for "English" identity in much of South Africa took shape against the Boer (or Afrikaner) other, in Natal it was mainly the Zulu nation that provided a foil for Englishness. Add to this the fact that South Africa was formed as a political union only in 1910, after Pessoa's departure. In other words, it was a very specific, and specifically English, colonial African setting that Pessoa entered as a child.

Here we can trace the early formation of the imperial view of history that is so prominent in his work and, in its way, also becomes a strange limitation to his thinking. The *empire* as a frame of reference, an object of desire, a cause for ridicule, and a lofty ideal, would recur again and again in his writing. This is

commonly read as a poetic conceit serving to promote the notion of an “empire of culture” rather than “actual” imperialism, but the historical basis of Pessoa’s rarefied idea of empire cannot be ignored.⁸ In notes that he prepared for *Mensagem* (*Message*), for example, he states the following: “Foi a civilização moderna creada pela concentração e europeização da alma antiga, e isso foi obra da Italia; pela abertura de todas as portas do mundo, e o descobrimento d’elle, e isso foi a obra de Portugal; e pela restituição da idéa de Grande Imperio, e isso foi obra de Inglaterra. Tudo o mais é de segunda ordem.” (Modern civilization was created by the concentration and Europeanization of the spirit of antiquity, which was the achievement of Italy; by the discovery of the world and the opening of all its harbors, which was done by Portugal; and by the restitution of the idea of the Grand Empire, which was achieved by England. Whatever remains is of a second order.)⁹

This emphasis on a European—and particularly English and Portuguese—imperial history as a keystone of modern civilization is foreshadowed, refracted, and reformulated across Pessoa’s unruly oeuvre. We recognize it in his musings in *Mensagem* and elsewhere about Portugal as the “Fifth Empire” (after “Greece, Rome, Christianity and Europe”);¹⁰ but also, in Álvaro de Campos’s wild (to say the least) diatribe against all of contemporary Europe and the Americas in his 1917 “Ultimatum,”¹¹ the imperial frame of reference structures much of the poem, mainly to lament the lack of imperial grandeur in contemporary Europe:

Tu, ambição italiana, cão de collo chamado Cesar!

[. . .]

Tu, organização britannica, com Kitchener¹² no fundo do mar desde o principio da guerra!

[. . .]

Tu, cultura alemã, Sparta pôdre com azeite de christismo e vinagre de nietzschização, colmeia de lata, transbordeamento imperialoide de servilismo engatado!

[. . .]

Nenhuma idéa grande, ou noção completa ou ambição imperial de imperador-nato!

Nenhuma idéa de uma estrutura, nenhum senso do Edificio, nenhuma ansia do Organico-Creado!

Nem um pequeno Pitt, nem um Goethe de cartão, nem um Napoleão de Nürnberg!

(You, Italian ambition, lap-dog called Caesar!

[. . .]

You, British organization, with Kitchener in the bottom of the sea from the beginning of the war!

You, German culture, putrid Sparta with oil of Christianity and vinegar of Nietzscheanisation, tin-can beehive, imperialoid transgression of misguided servility!

[. . .]

Not a single grand idea, nor a complete notion or imperial ambition of the born emperor!

Not a single idea of a structure, no sense of an Edifice, no longing for Organic-Creation!

Not even a small Pitt, not even a cardboard Goethe, not even a Nuremburg Napoleon!)¹³

Even South Africa—through the imperial mediation of Kipling—enjoys a brief, derogatory mention in “Ultimatum”: “Fóra tu, mercadoria Kipling, homem-pratico do verso, imperialista das sucatas, epico para Majuba e Colenso, Empire-Day do calão das fardas, tramp-steamer da baixa immortalidade!” (Out with you, you merchant-like Kipling, practical-man of poetry, pig-iron imperialist, epic bard of Majuba and Colenso, Empire-Day of the slang of the uniforms, tramp-steamer of base immortality! [Majuba and Colenso were the sites of two Anglo-Boer battles]).

Pessoa’s early work from his South African years helps us notice the very matrix of this imperial thinking. To substantiate this, let us look briefly at a small set of early texts: his 1905 letter to the *Natal Mercury*, the sonnets that accompanied this letter, and the newly discovered fragmentary poem “Steal, Steal, Steal” dated 1906. Pessoa was at this time experimenting with the literary persona Charles Robert Anon, who would later merge with Alexander Search. The latter would become Pessoa’s most prominent Anglophone persona, but critics today agree that Search emerged after the Durban years; the first evidence we have of his name dates from 1906.¹⁴ The letter to the *Natal Mercury* is signed Charles Robert Anon, and although the accompanying sonnets in manuscript form extant in Pessoa’s archive bear the name Alexander Search, this is a later addi-

tion. There is another minor equivocation: in the letter, Anon says that he is attaching three sonnets, but there are four sonnets that clearly belong together thematically—two of them called “To England.” I will treat all four as connected to the concerns expressed in the letter.

Despite the lack of an explicit reference to the Russo-Japanese War (1904–1905), we can safely assume that this is what prompted Pessoa/Anon to express his dissatisfaction in July 1905: “I have been somewhat astonished, in the perusal of the ‘Natal Mercury,’ and especially of your column, to perceive how meanly, and in what slavish way, sarcasm and irony are heaped on the Russians, on their army, and on their Emperor.”¹⁵

His complaint concerns, above all, the lack of tact and delicacy in the face of another’s defeat, and a concomitant refusal to realize that “grief and misery ennobles.” This compassionate and humanistic rejoinder is nonetheless combined with the Realpolitik of geopolitical considerations: “It is quite clear, I believe, that our hearty amusement may be constructed [sic], not even by one malicious, into a joy from the relief we now have from fears of an Indian disturbance. Russia does not now threaten our Eastern possession; and is it therefore that we laugh?”¹⁶

It was indeed the case that Japan, which emerged victorious from the war, had been allied with Britain, and that Russia was a contender in the “Great Game” of imperial rule in Asia. Anon’s complaint is in that respect motivated and even perceptive, but what is particularly interesting is the speaking position that he constructs for himself in the letter. Anon speaks unequivocally of “us, Englishmen” and the mention of India as “our Eastern possession” is hardly ironic. The problem is certain attitudes and the conduct of the British, not the British Empire or imperial ambitions. In this respect, Pessoa/Anon seems typical of his time: another European foreigner in the British Empire, Joseph Conrad, would similarly voice criticism of colonial conduct, but without questioning the imperial system.¹⁷ More important, Pessoa, with Anon as his mouthpiece, is displaying how powerful the interpellation of British imperial subjects in Durban could be. Even as a Portuguese child, Pessoa’s schooling enabled him to identify (and made him want to identify) as English.

These observations are borne out by the sonnets and the poem “Steal, Steal, Steal.” As mentioned, two of the sonnets bear the title “To England”; the other two are called “Joseph Chamberlain” and “Liberty.”¹⁸ Geopolitically, only one of the “To England” sonnets concerns itself directly with the Russo-Japanese

War: “Our enemies are fallen; other hands / Than ours have struck them, and our joy is great / To know that now at length our fears abate / From hint and menace on great Eastern lands.”¹⁹ The other three either speak idealistically in the abstract of the conduct of nations and men, or move closer to home by thematizing aspects of the Anglo-Boer War. In “Liberty,” we read,

Oh, sacred Liberty, dear mother of Fame!
What are men here that they should expel thee?
What right of theirs, save power, makes others be
The pawns, as if unfeeling, in their game?

Ireland and the Transvaal, ye are a shame
On England and a blot! Oh, shall we see
For ever crushed and held who should be free
By human creatures without human name?²⁰

And “Joseph Chamberlain” begins like this: “Their blood on thy head, whom the Afric waste / Saw struggling, puppets with unwilful hand, / Brother and brother: their bought souls shall brand / Thine own with horrors. [. . .]”²¹ Finally, the rediscovered unfinished poem is also locally inflected and no less harsh in its judgement:

Steal, steal, steal
Wherefore are ye strong
Steal, steal, steal
The weak are ever wrong

Englishmen remember all
The example your nation doth deal
Scotland, Ireland, the Transvaal
Many a land []
So steal, steal, steal!

Wherefore strength if not to oppress
Wherefore might if not to make distress
Wherefore []
So, men of England, continue your work
And steal, steal, steal!²²

Pessoa, "Steal, Steal, Steal." BNP/E3,
49A¹-28^r.

49A 28

July 1906.

Steal, steal, steal
 Wherefore are ye strong
 While ye are strong and others
 G. D. 2^d occur
 The weak are ever many
 Steal, steal, steal

Englishmen remember all
 The example your nation
 doth deal
 Scotland, Ireland, the Transvaal
 Many a land
 So steal, steal, steal!

Wherefore strength if not
 to oppress
 Wherefore might if not to
 make distress

Wherefore
 So, men of England continue
 your work
 And steal, steal, steal!

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How should we assess these instances of rhetorical accusatio against Britain? It is evident, first, that Pessoa/Anon is animated more by the Anglo-Boer War of 1899–1902 than the Russo-Japanese War. This is hardly surprising, given Pessoa's geographical positioning. The Anglo-Boer had been a moment of deep crisis for the British Empire and a Pyrrhic victory—in retrospect, the first decisive turning

point in the empire's fortunes. Although it deserves repeating that Pessoa's Durban years coincided with the high point of empire, we see how the poems also register the seismic shock of this crisis. If colonial propaganda, predictably, supported the war, as the stepson of a Portuguese consul, Pessoa would also have been exposed to the more common continental European perception that this was an unjust act of aggression against a small, freedom-loving people (i.e., the Boers).²³ The lines "Ireland and the Transvaal, ye are a shame / On England and a blot!" convey thereby the damage wrought by the war on the *image* of the British Empire. Irish volunteers had fought on the Boer side, identifying not with the Afrikaner ambition to maintain a quasi-feudal racist order, but with the nationalist David struggling against the imperialist British Goliath.

There was indeed little doubt, even on the British side, that the annexation of Transvaal had to do with anything other than economic interest. The conflict had been preceded by the infamous Jameson raid, a failed attempt in 1895 to take control of Johannesburg and the Transvaal. It had not directly involved British troops, but the scheme had been devised by a group of influential British politicians and capitalists (most prominent among them Cecil Rhodes) and was aimed at provoking an interstate conflict. We know today, of course, that not only was the raid carried out with the tacit blessing of Joseph Chamberlain—then British secretary of state for the colonies—but its ultimate outcome would be the outbreak of the war in October 1899.²⁴

We begin to see, in other words, how the poems draw on a web of contemporary political references, all of them emerging from a British imperial frame of reference, but that they do so with a critical purpose. Chamberlain is likened to a puppet-master, and British aggression is seen in terms of naked power politics: "Wherefore strength if not to oppress." Articulating such criticism while adopting a fully English persona and mastering the meters and rhythms of English verse, often perfectly, is of course an ambivalent performance by the teen-aged Pessoa. Consider, for example, the flawless iambic pentameter of "Joseph Chamberlain" in lines such as "To know that now at length our fears abate," or the carefully rendered ictic verse of "Steal, Steal, Steal" which—recalling Tennyson's "Break, Break, Break"—relies on three or four beats per line rather than stresses to form a dynamic rhythm.²⁵ This is the work of a young poet wanting to display his mastery of his acquired language, English, even if the performance sometimes strikes an odd and antiquated note (especially on a lexical level) to an English ear. The letter, as can be seen in the earlier quotation, uses "constructed"

in a strange way, and the lines in “Liberty” about Ireland and Transvaal being a “shame” and “a blot” not only employ the archaic “ye,” but also read back to front at first, as though the poet were criticizing Ireland and Transvaal rather than England. The ventriloquizing aspect of Anon’s letter and these poems cuts both ways: even as Pessoa is being ventriloquized by the English language, he himself is ventriloquizing the English persona of Anon and subtly, probably unintentionally, infusing Anon’s English with a slight foreignness.

The ambivalence of this early work deepens yet further if we consider that the essay that won Pessoa the Queen Victoria Memorial Prize in 1903—at the age of fifteen—was nothing less than a critical appraisal of the work of Thomas Babington Macaulay, these days routinely identified as a key figure in the articulation of British imperialist ideology.²⁶ His “Minute on Indian Education” (1835) promoted, notoriously, the formation of “a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect.”²⁷ Besides what his engagement with Macaulay tells us of Pessoa’s deep exposure to a British imperial outlook, however, we should recognize the uncanny resonance between Macaulay’s words in “Minute” and Pessoa’s early heteronymic experiments, wherein English and Portuguese elements mix and contrast with each other. Through Anon, he endeavored to be “English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect,” while still cultivating a remaining sense of otherness and estrangement toward Englishness.

There are four provisional conclusions we can draw from the discussion thus far. One is that from the young to the mature Pessoa, there is a consistent preoccupation with empires as political, supranational, and imagined constructs. This vindicates earlier claims by George Monteiro, Irene Ramalho Santos, António Sousa Ribeiro and Onésimo Almeida, although the Anon pieces make it difficult to transpose this exclusively to an apolitical, literary realm, or what Ribeiro calls a “fiction of a decentred centre.”²⁸ One could say that insofar as Pessoa did concern himself with geopolitics, empires were the main organizing principle by which he made sense of the wider world.

The second conclusion is that this imperial preoccupation, already in Durban, is critical and contradictory. Empire, in Pessoa’s view, can be based on strength as well as culture, or spirit, and his writings tend to favor the idealistic notion of an empire of the spirit. I would call this *imperial ambivalence*, and it is played out between heteronyms (or preheteronyms) as well as between heteronyms and the orthonymic poetry of Pessoa. This is demonstrated convincingly in Monteiro’s

discussion of “O Menino da sua mãe,” with its compassionate and elegiac view of the “webs of empire,” as opposed to the imperial aggressiveness of Álvaro de Campos. Pessoa’s imperial ambivalence, one could say, is dispersed across the multiple voices that make up his work.

The third conclusion is that—adopting a term from Laura Doyle—Pessoa already at an early age cultivated an inter-imperial outlook. Doyle develops her idea of inter-imperiality from within a deep-time view of world history, and explains that it “lays a certain kind of stress on art’s foundational entanglement in a multilateral and sedimented geopolitics [. . .] Situating the institutions and conventions of literature within such geopolitical histories, an inter-imperial analysis tracks the signs of that political history in texts—not to reduce them to political treatises but rather to reveal the dynamic onto-political conditions of their production and circulation” (original emphasis).²⁹

This, it seems to me, is of great explanatory value in our reading of Pessoa. The inter-imperial dimension is apparent in the letter to the *Mercury*, as well as in the notes for *Mensagem* and the rant of “Ultimatum”: Pessoa makes sense of the world as a Great Game between British, Russian, Portuguese, French, and other imperial powers. Even the title “Ultimatum” recalls the ultimatum of 1890 when Britain, as part of the ongoing scramble for Africa, challenged Portuguese claims to imperial sovereignty over territories that today comprise Zimbabwe and Zambia. This inter-imperial political crisis—which was completely oblivious to the will and fate of the African populations in these regions—must undoubtedly have reverberated in the memory of the small Portuguese community in Durban in Pessoa’s day, and nurtured the type of imperial ambivalence we can detect in Anon’s sonnets.

Yet this also leads to the fourth conclusion: Pessoa’s outlook on the world was ultimately and fatally limited by this early imperial conditioning in Durban. If we see the Anglo-Boer War as a foundational if curiously refracted event in Pessoa’s life, we need to recall that it was fought, as T. R. H. Davenport puts it, “to determine which white authority held real power in South Africa” (emphasis added).³⁰ There is no evidence in Pessoa’s early poems that he was aware of anything other than white concerns in southern Africa. Anon speaks of “Afric waste,” as though the continent were an empty playing field for white interests. And although Pessoa was in Durban at the same time that Mahatma Gandhi lived there, publishing *Indian Opinion* and promoting the rights of Indians in Natal, this does not enter his frame of reference at the time.³¹ When Pessoa does

write about Gandhi later in his life—and extols him as a saintly figure—this is evidently in response to international reporting on Gandhi.³²

I am not claiming that Pessoa was unusual. On the contrary, he was—much like Roy Campbell—a fully representative product of Durban, in which white society created its own world, resolutely set apart from the African reality around it. This stakes out with grim finality the limits of the criticism articulated by the poems discussed in this article. But as other work produced by white South African writers in the colonial era shows, from the abolitionist and egalitarian poetry of Thomas Pringle in the 1820s to Olive Schreiner's scathing denunciation of Cecil Rhodes's conquest of Zimbabwe in *Trooper Peter Halket of Mashonaland* (1897), these limits should not falsely be taken as impermeable. Given that Pessoa related to the world through writing and reading, one could well imagine that had he stayed longer in Durban, these more trenchant literary critiques of the colonial order in southern Africa would eventually have caught his attention. But this is speculation. What we can say is that Durban made Pessoa *imperial* but never sufficiently *colonial* to engage seriously with the political and ethical dynamics of Natal and southern Africa.

This, in turn, also serves to explain why Pessoa is and probably will remain such a minority interest in South Africa itself. A handful of South African critics and writers, from Roy Campbell and Hubert Jennings to Charles Eglinton and Stephen Gray, have kept the memory of Pessoa alive in South Africa and the English-speaking world.³³ However, the fact that all are white males does tell us something about the historical compartmentalization of South African literature, and the fact that so few local readers have engaged directly with Pessoa's Lusophone poetry also tells us something about the limits of multilingualism in South Africa. Campbell produced some good translations of Pessoa, but his memory has been compromised by his lapse into fascism.³⁴ (He died in Portugal in 1957 as an enthusiastic supporter of both Franco and Salazar.) Jennings, as we have seen, was instrumental in reconstructing the memory of Pessoa's years at DHS, although this too was done from within the tight enclosure of Durbanite whiteness. Gray, who belongs to a younger generation, is a different case: a highly respected critic, his key contribution to literary studies in southern Africa has been to conceive of literature on a regional rather than a racial or linguistic basis. This has enabled him to include both Camões and Pessoa in his numerous anthologizing projects, such as *The Penguin Book of Southern African Verse*.³⁵ Arguably the finest South African tribute to Pessoa has been, however,

the set of poems that Charles Eglington (1918–1971) wrote in response to some of Pessoa's poetry in Portuguese. Here is Eglington's "Horizon," written as a counterpart to Pessoa's "Horizonte":³⁶

The early mariners perhaps
 Were first to understand the pure
 Aesthetic of horizons: chart
 And instrument were insecure
 Against the treacheries of sky
 And ocean; often as they watched
 They saw the ancient portents fade
 On winds of promise, or reveal
 Their shining menace; then, afraid
 Because they found no hallowed sign
 To prosper them, they sought in awe
 The low horizon's thin, cold line.³⁷

It is in the elusive horizons of this finely wrought iambic tetrameter, we might say, that Pessoa and South Africa cross paths most meaningfully. Insofar as Pessoa is one of the strongest examples we have of life being usurped by writing, then it is also through language and verse that it becomes possible to meet Pessoa on his own terms. Eglington the poet achieves in that way what critics, forced to approach Pessoa from the outside, will be unable to match. For that reason, I also read Eglington's lines in a cautionary vein, directed at what I have been attempting to explain here. This is true, not only because this article cannot pretend to be more than a footnote to Pessoa studies, but more pointedly because my "chart / And instrument" of contextual critique will easily risk misreading the "sky / And ocean" of Pessoa's work. If I embrace this risk openly, it is for the simple reason that we cannot afford to ignore the cold historical horizon of my reading: the conflicted world that is the legacy of European imperialisms. The imperial backdrop to Pessoa's oeuvre needs to be taken seriously, therefore, not in a narrowly moralistic sense, but as its problematic onto-political condition of possibility.

NOTES

1. The most informative account of Pessoa's DHS years I have come across is in Hubert D. Jennings, *The D. H. S. Story, 1866–1966* (Durban: Durban High School and Old Boys' Memorial Trust, 1966), 99–110.

2. George Monteiro, "Fernando Pessoa: An Unfinished Manuscript by Roy Campbell," *Portuguese Studies* 10 (1994), 152. It should be noted that the correspondence between Ormond and Pessoa has disappeared, if indeed it ever existed.

3. Monteiro, "Fernando Pessoa," 149.

4. Fernando Pessoa, *Novas poesias inéditas*, ed. Maria do Rosário Marques Sabino and Adelaide Maria Monteiro Sereno (Lisbon: Ática, 1973), 137; and Fernando Pessoa, *Poemas de Fernando Pessoa: 1934–1935*, ed. Luís Prista (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional–Casa da Moeda, 2000), 232–41.

5. George Monteiro, *Fernando Pessoa and Nineteenth-Century Anglo-American Literature* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2000); Irene Ramalho de Sousa Santos, *Atlantic Poets: Fernando Pessoa's Turn in Anglo-American Modernism* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 2002).

6. T. R. H. Davenport, *South Africa: A Modern History* (London: Macmillan, 1991), 101–8; Saul Dubow, *The Commonwealth of Knowledge: Science, Sensibility, and White South Africa 1820–2000* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 18–35.

7. Obvious nuances can be added to this picture. The Cape Colony had been British ever since the early nineteenth century, and Grahamstown in the eastern Cape was also a markedly British "outpost." But the Dutch colonial legacy in the Cape was mostly absent in Natal.

8. Irene Ramalho de Sousa Santos, "An Imperialism of Poets: The Modernism of Fernando Pessoa and Hart Crane," *Luso-Brazilian Review* 29.1 (1992), 90.

9. BNP/E3, 14²–69^r; cf. Fernando Pessoa, *Mensagem* (Lisbon: Relógio d'Água, 2013), 29.

10. Pessoa, *Mensagem*, 125.

11. First published in *Portugal Futurista* in 1917. Fernando Pessoa, *Sensacionismo e outros ismos*, ed. Jerónimo Pizarro (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional–Casa da Moeda), 2011. See also *Obra completa de Álvaro de Campos* (Álvaro de Campos's Complete Works) Pessoa, 2014.

12. There exists a fragmentary sonnet titled "Kitchener" (BNP/E3, 49B¹–100^v), datable from 1907, that opens, "Oh hireling son of tyranny & hate." We thank Carlos Pittella-Leite for this finding. Editors' note.

13. My translation.

14. See João Dionísio, "Introdução," in Fernando Pessoa, *Poemas Ingleses: Poemas de Alexander Search*, Tome II, ed. João Dionísio (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional–Casa da Moeda, 1997), 7–21. It should be noted that Anon transformed into Search sometime around 1906, and then Search was retrospectively imposed on part of Anon's work, so these two personae are to a great extent virtually interchangeable. See Fernando Pessoa, *Eu sou uma antologia*, ed. Jerónimo Pizarro and Patricio Ferrari (Lisbon: Tinta-da-China, 2013), 139–44, 227–33.

15. BNP/E3, 114¹-52¹ to 55¹. Fernando Pessoa, *Pessoa inédito*, ed. Teresa Rita Lopes (Lisbon: Livros Horizonte, 1993), 168.
16. *Ibid.*
17. This can be seen in the much-debated case of Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*.
18. "Liberty" also appears in one of the three existing lists for the book *Death of God* (BNP/E3, 48C-9^v).
19. Pessoa, *Poemas Ingleses*, 303.
20. *Ibid.*, 301.
21. *Ibid.*, 304.
22. BNP/E3, 49A¹-28¹. Transcribed by Patricio Ferrari. Poem dated July 1906. Although unsigned, this poem appears in one of the three lists existing for the book titled *Death of God* (BNP/E3, 48C-11^r). In one of these, the list bears Charles Robert Anon's seal (BNP/E3, 48C-9^r). The third list may be found in BNP/E3, 48C-10. In 49A¹-28a^r we find three lines that could be either the continuation of this poem or the beginning of yet another unfinished piece: "Murder and rapine hallows / How many a hero, were there no wars / Had ended in the gallows."
23. Davenport, *South Africa*, 195.
24. *Ibid.*, 188-92.
25. For a discussion of ictic verse, see Martin J. Duffell, *A New History of English Metre* (London: Legenda, 2008), 65-66.
26. For more on the essay, see Jennings, *The D. H. S. Story*, 90-110.
27. Thomas Babington Macaulay, "Minute on Indian Education," in *Selected Writings*, eds. John Clive and Thomas Pinner (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972), 249.
28. António Sousa Ribeiro, "'A Tradition of Empire': Fernando Pessoa and Germany," *Portuguese Studies* 21 (2005), 203.
29. Laura Doyle, "Inter-Imperiality," *Interventions* 16 (2014), 183.
30. Davenport, *South Africa*, 198.
31. Isabel Hofmeyr, *Gandhi's Printing Press: Experiments in Slow Reading* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013). In a recent article, Leela Gandhi makes a point similar to mine but deliberately juxtaposes Pessoa and Gandhi, to see how Pessoaan heteronymy and a Gandhian conception of democracy may resonate with one another. Leela Gandhi, "Pessoa's Gahndi: Meditating on a Lost Heteronym," in *Gender, Empire, and Postcolony: Luso-Afro-Brazilian Intersections*, ed. Hilary Owen and Anna M. Klobucka (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 19-32.
32. Jerónimo Pizarro, Patricio Ferrari, and Antonio Cardiello, "Os Orientes de Fernando Pessoa," *Cultura Entre Culturas* 3 (2011), 166-67. See also Gandhi, "Pessoa's Gahndi.

33. For a thorough bibliographical account of the English-language (including South African) reception of Pessoa, see José Blanco, "Fernando Pessoa's Critical and Editorial Fortune in English: A Selective Chronological Overview," *Portuguese Studies* 24.2 (2008), 13–32.
34. Roy Campbell, *Collected Works II: Poetry Translations* (Johannesburg: Ad Donker, 1985).
35. Stephen Gray, ed., *The Penguin Book of Southern African Verse* (London: Penguin, 1989), 1–26, 167–70.
36. Pessoa, *Mensagem*, 52.
37. Charles Beaumont Eglinton, *Under the Horizon* (Cape Town: Purnell, 1977), 3.

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