

## The Problem With Paradox: Authorship in Sadlier's Fernando Pessoa

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on Darlene Sadlier.

*An Introduction to Fernando Pessoa: Modernism and the Paradoxes of Authorship.*  
Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1998.

The publication of Harold Bloom's *The Western Canon* in 1994 sets arguably the highest point in the scholarship of Fernando Pessoa in the United States. Bloom famously included Pessoa in a list of twenty-six authors that might come to constitute the literary canon of the western world. Alongside authors as diverse as Shakespeare, Cervantes and Milton, Bloom dedicates a chapter to three writers he considers to be the "Hispanic-Portuguese" quasi-epigonous counterparts of Walt Whitman: Pessoa, Borges and Neruda. The selection of Pessoa—a well needed boost to Lusophile pride—does not appear to have been based on what a Lusophile would consider to be the "right reasons." Pessoa was chosen more for his relationship with Whitman—whose subjective division, according to Bloom, Pessoa's own "heteronyms" would mirror—than for the evident quality of his poems. Pessoa's Campos, Caeiro and Reis are presented as counterparts of, respectively, Whitman's "my self," "the real me" and "my soul." Bloom exaggerates when he introduces Maria Irene Ramalho de Sousa Santos to the American reader as "Pessoa's canonical critic" (*The Western Canon* 452) and, not surprisingly, chooses the following excerpt—which is intensely about Whitman—to illustrate his point: "(Pessoa's heteronyms would be Pessoa's) reading, half in complicity, half in disgust with Whitman, not only of Whitman's poetry, but also of Whitman's sexuality and politics" (Santos, quoted in *The Western Canon* 452; my parentheses).

Bloom's perspective as an outsider in the realm of Lusophone studies allows him to refreshingly and provocatively claim, among other things, that Reis is an "interesting minor poet" (*The Western Canon* 452). Despite Bloom's welcomed critical contribution, the history of Pessoa's scholarship in the U.S. is relatively uneventful, which helps explain why Bloom's text stands out in the North-American critical landscape. Following Bloom's text and Saramago's (still pre-Nobel) success, an interest in Pessoa and

Portuguese letters in general seems to increasingly occupy scholars who are not specialists in Lusophone studies: for example, in 1996 George Steiner published an important article on Fernando Pessoa in *The New Yorker* magazine which included suggestive references to the excellent volume, *A Centenary Pessoa* and to Saramago's *The Year of the Death of Ricardo Reis*. Besides successfully initiating the American reader to the problematics of Pessoa's fourfold subjectivity, this article presents two curiosities: it considers Pessoa's name as "justly listed" among the twenty-six writers in *The Western Canon*, even though the listing itself is considered "somewhat juvenile;" surprisingly, it includes "Brazilian literature" in the field of "Portuguese literature" (instead of characterizing it as "Portuguese-language literature" or "Lusophone literature") and, not so suprisingly, as a type of literature he considers to be almost incorrigibly "foreign to an American audience":

Portuguese is a resistant tongue. Its gutturals make of it something like a Slavic member of the Romance-language family. In the absence, moreover, of any adequate translation into English of Camões's *Os Lusíadas*, that great epic of exploration and tragic empire, to most of us Portuguese literature (*which, of course, includes that of Brazil*) remains foreign. (Steiner, "Foursome: the art of Fernando Pessoa" 78-79; my italics)

Among other texts of note by non-Lusophiles are the ten pages dedicated to Pessoa in Michael Hamburger's seminal book, *The Truth of Poetry*. In a chapter titled "Multiple Personalities," Hamburger compares Pessoa's various personalities to Hart Crane's own diverse *personas*, a comparison curiously repeated by Bloom, Steiner and Darlene Sadlier in their respective main works on Pessoa. Unlike the other authors mentioned, Hamburger's critical vocabulary appears dated since some degree of faithfulness to an empirical self is presented as a fair characterization of Pessoa's subjectivity:

It is the feelings of the empirical self which poetry enlarges, complements or even replaces with fictitious ones, but only because the empirical self is not the whole self, cramped as it is in its shell of convention, habit and circumstance. Pessoa's disguises did not impair his truthfulness because he used them not to hoodwink others, but to explore reality and establish the full identity of multiple, potential selves. (*The Truth of Poetry* 146-47)

Ferlinghetti, Ginsberg and Hollander are just a few of the better known American poets who have produced texts inspired by Pessoa's work. Translations of Pessoa's poems have been multiplying steadily since Thomas Merton's 1966 introduction of Alberto Caeiro to the American public—thanks to the well-acknowledged contributions of Edwin Honig, George Monteiro<sup>1</sup> and Richard Zenith, among others. During the nineties we witnessed some of the most significant developments not only in what concerns Pessoa's scholarship but also in what relates to Pessoa's body of translated works: for example, four English translations of *O Livro do Desassossego* (known in English as *The Book of Disquiet* or *The Book of Disquietude*) were released in 1991.

The most recent of these contributions is Darlene Sadlier's book aptly titled, *An Introduction to Fernando Pessoa: modernism and the paradoxes of authorship*. The book fulfills the promise implicit in the title: it provides the general reader with a thorough initiation to the main questions raised by Pessoa's heteronymous poetry. Sadlier's strongest chapter—titled "Pessoa's Juvenilia and the Origins of 'Heteronymous' Poetry"—interestingly reveals how Pessoa's vocation for heteronymous writing was already noticeable in his juvenile experiments with poetry, in his journalistic fantasies and charade writing. (For instance, Sadlier guides us through Pessoa's long-hand written newspapers, whose different "collaborators" are Pessoa's own authorial creations—making them precursors of the heteronyms).

Sadlier's stated "overriding purpose" is to introduce the poems "to a broad readership in the English-speaking world while offering a commentary on their writings (the four heteronyms) that will also interest the specialist of Portuguese literature" (Sadlier 2; my parentheses). Sadlier also states that the general objective of the book is "to combine an overview of the major heteronyms with a detailed analysis of the origins and cultural implications of Pessoa's enterprise as a whole" (Sadlier 2). A secondary purpose of the book, as suggested in the subtitle—to articulate the concepts of "modernism" and "authorship" with an analysis of Pessoa's work—falls short of being achieved, while posing very interesting problems.

The main claims made in the book are the following: a) Pessoa's well-known classification as an introducer and major representative of modernism in Portugal fails adequately to mention his indebtedness to the pre-modern poetic traditions that preceded him. His poetry would constitute a vaguely postmodern combination of both modernist and pre-modernist schools; b)

Pessoa's heteronymous writing problematizes the concept of authorship as rendered by a conventional perspective. His poetics can best be described by some type of "deconstruction of the author," the concept of "author" being an artificial category applied retrospectively by critics in order to curb the ever "effervescent," potentially subversive nature of texts; c) the concept of "text," as opposed to the concept of "work," is the most adequate to classify Pessoa's production and Pessoa's "case." The concept of "text," unlike the concept of "work," would preclude the critic, or ultimately the reader, from freezing a text's polysemic "self-expansion" by imposing on it the institutional entity we call "authorship." The well-known editorial problems raised by Pessoa's posthumous work, such as a significant amount of unsigned manuscripts (among others), would provide a perfect application for this model.

What prevents us from dismissing Sadlier's three main claims as *unproven*, *improbable*, or *even uninteresting* is quite simply the fact that she presents each of them accompanied by what seems to be their own opposite homologue. In other words, it is difficult to contradict Sadlier's arguments because she—knowingly—contradicts herself before anyone else does. Each position taken is followed by its own "softening" correction. The price an author pays for this methodological *style* is, quite evidently, a loss of methodological *strength* or *assertiveness* in the sense Harold Bloom would use the words. The general idea being (if not necessarily what Sadlier had in mind): if an argument is made soft enough (or *debole* enough, as Vattimo would put it) it should be able to withstand any type of criticism by any type of critic.

Sadlier claims that her positions are based on Foucault's and Barthes's understanding of "authorship" in, respectively, the articles "What is an Author?" and "The Death of the Author." Her concept of "text" as seen in the very important last chapter, "Text versus Work," is based on Barthes own model of "text" vs. "work" as presented in "From Work to Text."

Going back to the three main claims of *An Introduction to Fernando Pessoa* listed above, we shall briefly consider Pessoa's relationship to the concept of modernism. Sadlier attempts to challenge both the conceptions of Pessoa as an author predominantly closer to traditional Portuguese poetry and Pessoa as mostly a representative of cosmopolitan, modernist values. She concludes that Pessoa was equally "drawn to Portuguese nationalism and to a new continental literature" (36) after considering an alleged editorial mistake made when the poem "Impressões do Crepúsculo" was first published after Pessoa's death.

According to Sadlier, the famous, very traditional, and formally very conservative poem “Ó Sino da Minha Aldeia” had been originally written as an integral part of the very avant-garde “Impressões do Crepúsculo,”<sup>2</sup> a text considered to be a model of futuristic sensitivity and a foundational text for the Pessoa created literary school of paulismo. For Pessoa, however, as it is well known, it is very unusual to write *one* poem containing very different styles. One of the main goals of heteronymous writing is, precisely, to justify the difference in styles by attributing each of them to a fictional literary personality. The myth of authorship, if we want to call it that—following Sadlier’s suggestions and readings of Barthes and Foucault—plays obviously an important role in heteronymous writing. (“Authorship” being probably the notion upon which this game depends the most; one of the objectives of heteronymous writing, or at least one of the major effects, being precisely the relatively consistent creation of “authors,” accompanied by their matching biographies, and the manuscripts supposedly left unpublished after their death, mirroring Pessoa’s own biography). For these reasons, I do not consider it justified for these two texts—which have been addressed separately by critics until now—to be read as one from now on, even if it was proven that they had originally been written together. Since, according to Sadlier, Fernando Pessoa is known to have left for posterity a considerable number of unsigned, unfinished, fragmentary texts, and he is also known to have changed the authorship of some of these texts, this indeterminacy should provide the reader—or the critic—with enough authority to consider Pessoa’s decision as one without special consequences for the general understanding of his work. Sadlier, nevertheless, chooses to read the text “Impressões do Crepúsculo” (which is made to include, by her own decision, “Ó Sino da Minha Aldeia”):

[...] more in keeping with the development of the heteronyms [...] (as to) emphasize the dialectical relation between the two parts. Like the ‘mote and glosa,’ ‘Impressões do Crepúsculo’ gives us a theme and variation, meanwhile representing two phases in the history of literary fashion; but it also has the feeling of a montage, setting its parts in conflict with each other and allowing them a certain autonomy. (Sadlier 37)

Based on the newly found—and allegedly postmodern—“hybridity” of the poem, Sadlier attempts to strengthen her claim to Pessoa’s special brand of ambivalent modernism, which she associates to a Janus-faced figure

simultaneously looking to the glorious past of Portugal and to the future of Europe; in other words, a figure facing both Portugal's traditional poetry and Europe's avant-garde poetry.

On one hand, he attempted to define an "authentic" national tradition, expressing nostalgia for the epic glories of a Lusitanian empire; on the other hand, he was keenly aware of vanguard poetic movements, and he participated in the worldwide drive to 'make it new.' (Sadlier 28)

This line of reasoning assumes—perhaps too quickly—something that is not easily demonstrable. Sadlier is clearly implying that Pessoa's literary nationalism is somewhat contradictory in relation to Pessoa's modernism. It is far from evident that there is any degree of incompatibility between these two tendencies, one pointing inward and the other outward. It remains to be proven that Pessoa's poetic self is experiencing any type of subjective dilemma or tragic fragmentation when he celebrates a cosmopolitan set of values while remaining loyal to a traditional, literary, Portuguese core. Surprisingly, it was Sadlier herself who, a few pages earlier, had associated a preference for national literary resources with authors of a high-modernist period, which suggests more than only a certain compatibility between the two ideas; it indicates rather a clear implication between being a high-modernist poet and a nationalist poet:

It seems clear that, like many other figures of the high-modernist generation, Pessoa was preserving or constructing an elite literary heritage through a process of imitation or quotation [...]. By creating what he called 'a fusion of past elements,' he paradoxically generated a kind of metapoetry that was both versatile and distinctly his own. (Sadlier 26)

The very complex—but not necessarily paradoxical—question of authorship in the poetry of Fernando Pessoa is the second problem Darlene Sadlier fails to solve by not taking a well-defined stand, and by not addressing it clearly or thoroughly enough. We learn that Pessoa *is* and *is not* a representative of a tendency to impersonality and subjective loss in Modernist poetry—whose main representative would be T.S.Eliot and the school of *New Criticism*. Pessoa *is* and *is not* a model of authorial ambition and subjective strength—as in Bloom's definition of *strong poet*. These two

positions are not necessarily contradictory, yet for a critic to preserve their simultaneous validity, a detailed explanation, or clarification should be expected. The two types of subjectivity do not entirely cancel each other out but they are certainly not immediately compatible, and it is the difficulty created by this tension that should have been—but was not—carefully analyzed by Sadlier. In other words, if a critic is simultaneously proposing both types of subjectivity, he or she is creating a new problem rather than solving a previous one. The new problem being, precisely: how can these two seemingly opposite characteristics co-exist? Far from easing this tension, Sadlier seems comfortably divided between the two positions. (And when one position—usually the subversive *loss* of authorial identity—becomes dominant, no explanation is provided as to why the other is not being entirely dismissed):

In certain ways, these various characters, which he called “heteronyms,” are symptomatic of modernist literary technique in general; [...] (they are) a logical outgrowth of modernism’s attempt to make poetry seem impersonal or purely dramatic. (Sadlier 1; my parentheses)

[...]but he was also a strong (literary) ego who believed that his career was linked to the future of the Portuguese nation. One of his most spirited essays predicts a cultural revolution to be ushered in by a ‘Supra Camões’ or a poet like ‘himself,’ who would somehow transcend Portugal’s most celebrated Renaissance author. (Sadlier 2; my parentheses)

This problem is indeed a typically modernist one, previously raised by the work of many modernist authors, even though seldom addressed by critics. Unfairly, when one thinks of modernism one tends to think of impersonality, not subjective hypertrophy. Unlike what is commonly believed, modernist poets do not necessarily write about impersonality from an impersonal perspective, some write about subjectivity from a very subjective perspective. (And still others, like Pessoa, seem to do both things—yet this supplementary difficulty remains to be properly interpreted, both by Sadlier and other scholars). Modernist poetry is about the crisis of identity, and this crisis can manifest itself either through an identity that is invisible or fragmented, or through an hypertrophied, super-human, ultra-ambitious, almost cosmic identity—authorial or otherwise. (Let us evoke Campos’s last words at the

end of "Ode Marítima": "Ah, I wish I could be everyone and everywhere!"). We should use the word "crisis" since both of these positions are extreme and problematic. By definition, both an "impersonal identity" and a "super-human" or "multiple identity" border the concept of paradox. Eysteinnsson comments here on this rarely acknowledged double nature of modernism:

On the one hand, it seems that modernism is built on highly subjectivist premises; by directing its attention so predominantly toward individual or subjective experience, it elevates the ego in proportion to a diminishing awareness of objective or coherent outside reality. It is customary to point to the preeminence of such subjectivist poetics in expressionist and surrealist literature, and more specifically in certain techniques, such as manipulation of 'centers of consciousness' in modern fiction. On the other hand, modernism is often held to draw its legitimacy primarily from writing based on highly antisubjective or impersonal poetics. T.S. Eliot was one of the most adamant spokesmen of a neoclassical reaction against poetry: 'Poetry is not a turning loose of emotion, but an escape from emotion; it is not the expression of personality but an escape from personality.' Hence, 'the progress of an artist is a continual self-sacrifice, a continual extinction of personality' [...] (Eysteinnsson, *The Concept of Modernism* 26-27)

Paul de Man goes as far as associating modernism, literary excellence and a preoccupation with identity when he claims that "The best modern writers and philosophers have made human consciousness the center of their concern and language the medium of their exploration" (de Man, *Critical Writings* 143). Even though Sadlier's expositions are based on the premise that the concept of author is or should be doubted, challenged or strategically weakened, she rejects the idea of the "death of the author" and claims that neither Barthes nor Foucault would have agreed with the "elimination" of the author (Sadlier, 8). Once again, Sadlier's trademark, non-committing style of softly weaving her thesis out of conflicting positions is more visible when we present these two excerpts side by side. On the one hand, Sadlier intelligently claims that Pessoa's different heteronyms were ultimately posthumous "constructions" of the critics; on the other hand, the different "constructions" originate in materials that existed previously, before the first approach of the critic. In other words, not everything in the concept of "author" is a construction, which takes the reader back to more familiar, more traditional



ground, while preventing Sadlier's thesis from becoming more penetrating. Furthermore, she claims that the different "images" of the different heteronyms were a result of an "intellectual rage for order" (8) on the part of the critics. However, Sadlier prefers not to say that "Pessoa's editors or any subsequent critics were making an error" (8). Somewhat confusingly, we later learned that it is not true that "Pessoa can be read any way one wishes" (8). Meanwhile, she seems to have shifted from the initial objective of her work, by restricting its general purpose to the following point, which is to show "[...] simply that Pessoa's evolving identities need to be placed in a cultural context, and that we need to pay some attention to the shifting critical reception of his verse" (8).

About the adequacy of the concept of "author" to address Pessoa's work, she maintains, not surprisingly, the following ambivalent positions: we learn that Pessoa's authorship *is* and *is not* unified and fragmented, defined and undefined, individual and multiple, weak and strong, etc. Still, the predominant proposal seems to be a weakening of the more conventional authorial assumptions, visible when she claims that Pessoa's subjectivity does not lead us to the idea of the 'death of the author,' but rather to what she calls the "loosening of the sway of the author":

I'm certainly not writing a book about the "death of the author"[...]. On the contrary, I am trying to show that Pessoa was a creative individual who desired fame and who posthumously achieved many of his authorial ambitions. At the same time, I want to show that he was one of those peculiarly modern writers who [...] seemed to 'loosen' what Barthes has called the 'sway of the author' (Sadlier 8)

This ambivalence, as I see it, does more than water down her thesis; it weakens its interest and usefulness. Sadlier's last chapter—"Text versus Work"—is the one that raises the most methodological difficulties. It presupposes the use of Barthes's category "work" as presented, for example, in the article "From Work to Text." Some of the main ideas seem to be: the different Portuguese critics and the different circumstances transformed Pessoa's writings from the boundless "text"—which seems even more "boundless" when a trunk filled with problematic manuscripts is left for posterity—into the well-defined "work." In other words, through the "imposition" of certain kinds of ideologically motivated authorships, an operation implicit in the

concept of “work,” the critics managed to contain and institutionalize what otherwise would have been a potentially subversive “text.” It should be helpful to evoke Barthes’s own explanation on the difference between “text” and “work,” since, as we know, Sadlier’s chapter uses Barthes’s text as a theoretical background. For Barthes, the passage from “work” to “text” does not bear the seriousness of a real epistemological “break,” but is comparable to an epistemological “slide” (“From Work to Text” 155). What separates the two categories—“text” and “work”—more than a matter of degree seems to be a matter of nature. One “work” does not necessarily yield one or more “texts.” “Work” and “text” are not interchangeable entities, nor even, in a sense, comparable entities. The first is an object that can be analyzed; the second is a particular methodological strategy:

the work is a fragment of substance, occupying a part of the space of books (in a library for example), the Text is a methodological field [...] the one is displayed, the other demonstrated; likewise, the work can be seen (in bookshops, in catalogues, in exam syllabuses), the text is a process of demonstration, speaks according to certain rules (or against certain rules); the work can be held in the hand, the text is held in language, only exists in the movement of a discourse (or rather, it is Text for the very reason that it knows itself as text) [...]. In the same way, the Text does not stop at (good) Literature; it cannot be contained in a hierarchy, even in a simple division of genres. What constitutes the Text is, on the contrary (or precisely), its subversive force in respect of old classifications [...]. If the Text poses problems of classification (which is furthermore one of its ‘social’ functions), this is because it always involves a certain experience of limits [...]. (Barthes, “From Work to Text” 157; my italics)

(the text is what cannot be deciphered) [...] since the Text is that social space which leaves no language safe, outside, nor any subject of the enunciation in position as judge, master, analyst, confessor, decoder. The theory of the Text can coincide only with a practice of writing. (Barthes, “From Work to Text” 164; my parentheses)

It seems clear to me that the idea of writing a book with such didactic objectives as to introduce the poetry of Fernando Pessoa primarily to a non-specialized American audience is not compatible with the use of the very subversive category—or rather “reading strategy”—Barthes calls “text.” It

does not seem appropriate to “organize” and “classify” a set of literary impressions by using a category—“text”—whose institutional or social function is precisely a resistance to classification. Sadlier criticizes (or laments) in Pessoa’s numerous exegists, classifiers and organizers, their heavy reliance on the institutional concepts of “work” and “author,” instead of favoring the more subversive concepts of “text” and—“postmodern,” Barthesian, Foucauldian—authorship. Although Sadlier herself recognizes the chronological impossibility of these methodological choices to have been made in the 1930’s (after Pessoa’s death) or the 1970’s (particularly after the 1974 revolution), she fails to convince us of their possibility—or necessity—in the late 1990’s.

The same way the model that favors “text” at the expense of “work” seems inadequate for this kind of project, so does the radical Foucauldian concept of “author.” Foucault claims that “The author is [...] the ideological figure by which one marks the manner in which we fear the proliferation of meaning” (Foucault, “What is an Author?” 159). Yet, what kind of thesis can be successfully designed and defended—or introductory book written—in a situation where the “proliferation of meaning” would not be feared? Is not all scholarly writing (except perhaps a radically “deconstructionist” one) a response to this fear, the fear of ever-proliferating meanings? Is it not about choosing *one* interpretation leading to a meaning from many possible *other* interpretations leading to other meanings? Similarly, according to Barthes, the concept of “work”—as opposed to “text”—would also be used to curb the uncontrollable expansion of meaning. By the end of Sadlier’s book, it seems evident to everyone (including Barthes, Foucault and Sadlier herself) that we cannot *really* avoid the use of concepts such as “work” and “author.” Sadlier is as much a “classifier” as the legion of scholars that preceded her, and the necessary didacticism and structure of any *Introduction to Fernando Pessoa* requires conventions such as “work” and “author” to be taken into consideration, even if Sadlier’s arguing could somehow succeed in pushing them into the background.

Despite the evident problems created by Sadlier’s methodological choices, I do not doubt that the loosening of these notions can be useful and that it will probably help redefine—even to the sophisticated non-specialist—the rigidity and *a priori* status of the models of “author” and “work” when it comes to the study of Pessoa. The next generation of “classifiers” of Pessoa in the U.S. and abroad will probably put Sadlier’s insights to good use. It remains to be seen how soon this will happen and how good a use it will be.

Clearly, in the particular case of Fernando Pessoa, the concept of “author” is one of the most critically suggestive and fertile. We evidently owe today’s problematic—and critically fashionable—multiple images of Fernando Pessoa to the fact that he challenges such key notions as “work” and “author.” What makes him academically “marketable”—particularly to a overstimulated and novelty-hungry North American readership—is the fact that he can make himself other than the “author” he is, and that he can make his “work” *different* (as in the Derridian model: to be *different* and to be *deferred*) from itself and its meaning.

Pessoa effectively subverts the idea of authorship because of the natural inexorability of authorship. Never does Pessoa imagine himself as not having an identity, or as having something *less* than an identity; he imagines himself rather as having as many identities as possible, which, in a sense, is equivalent to imagining himself as having a super-identity. A literary identity always implies for Pessoa a distinctiveness of voice or style, which is undoubtedly a very pre-modern, orthodox, romantic expectation. This seems to be the paradox Sadlier continuously refers to, rarely exploring its intricacies or consequences for a “postmodern” reading of Pessoa, as in this excerpt: “Pessoa’s authority is achieved paradoxically by a subordination of romantic authorship to a kind of ever-changing mimicry or textual performance” (Sadlier, 8). According to Harold Bloom, even authors that challenge the notions of literary identity and authorship—such as Barthes and Foucault—need to be, as authors, at least as ambitious as their statements:

[...]The various waves of Modernism from Eliot to the belated Modernism of Barthes and Foucault have played at emptying out the authorial subject, but this is an ancient play, and recurs in every Modernism from second-century B.C. Alexandria down to our moment.

Personality, in any case, cannot be voided except by personality, it being an oddity (perhaps) that Eliot and Barthes matter as critics because they are indeed critical personalities, if less intense and vivid say than Hazlitt and Wilde.”(Bloom, *Agon* 48)

Unexpectedly, or maybe not, Sadlier ends her book by proposing an understanding of authorship as an ideologically motivated “construction” which is, simultaneously, firmly grounded on certain unchallengeable “traces,” either editorial or literary. The most successful authors—the ones

more fit to resist the unpredictable “archeological” endeavors of posterity—are precisely the ones whose (complex) works are the most vulnerable to interpretation; or, in other words, the ones whose works are the most resistant to the proliferation of interpretation.

The poetry of his major heteronyms can be arranged into relatively unified volumes, which are subject to the same kind of analysis we give to any other writer. (Sadlier 133)

The ‘great authors’ are complex figures, situated in contradictory historical moments, open to a variety of uses. The critics who construct Pessoa and interpret his works are therefore not manufacturing his personality out of thin air. The meanings and structures they produce are in some sense ‘there,’ like historical traces. (Sadlier 134)

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> The author of an important recent volume on the influence of Pessoa in English-language writers called *The Presence of Pessoa*.

<sup>2</sup> These are the first four lines of each of the two poems Sadlier considers to be the two constituting parts of “Impressões do Crepúsculo” (Sadlier is the author of the English translations):

I. Ó sino da minha aldeia,  
 Dolente na tarde calma,  
 Cada tua badalada  
 Soa dentro da minh'alma.  
 (Oh bell of my village,  
 Dolorous in the calm afternoon,  
 Each one of your peals,  
 Rings deep within my soul)

II. Paúis de roçarem ânsias pela minh'alma em ouro...  
 Dobre longínquo de Outros Sinos...Empalidece o louro  
 Trigo na cinza do poente...Corre um fio carnal por minh'alma...  
 Tão sempre a mesma, a Hora!...Balouçar de cimos de palma...  
 (Quagmires grazing qualms of anguish through my soul in gold...  
 Distant tolling of Other Bells...The gold wheat  
 Pales in the cinders of sunset.. A carnal thread runs through my soul...  
 So always the same, the Hour!...Swaying tops of palms...)  
 (*An Introduction to Fernando Pessoa* 33-34)

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