

“Fernando Pessoa,” a document *not* by Fernando Pessoa

Filipa de Freitas*

Keywords

Fernando Pessoa, Hubert Jennings, Jennings literary estate, Espólio 3, BNP/E3, Manuela Nogueira literary estate, authorship issues in Pessoa.

Abstract

Here we present a typed and unsigned document found among the papers that constitute the literary estate of Manuela Nogueira, the niece of Fernando Pessoa. The text, an essay on Fernando Pessoa and his heteronymism, includes reflections on the heteronyms Alberto Caeiro, Álvaro de Campos and, to a lesser degree, Ricardo Reis. It also offers English translations of poems signed by Pessoa, Campos and Caeiro. Preceding the facsimile and transcription, an introduction analyzes characteristics of the document that point to Hubert Jennings as its author.

Palavras-chave

Fernando Pessoa, Hubert Jennings, espólio literário Jennings, Espólio 3, BNP/E3, espólio Manuela Nogueira, questões autorais em Pessoa.

Resumo

Apresenta-se, aqui, um documento datilografado, sem autoria explícita, encontrado no espólio literário de Manuela Nogueira, sobrinha de Fernando Pessoa. O texto, um ensaio sobre Fernando Pessoa e seu heteronimismo, inclui reflexões sobre os heterónimos Alberto Caeiro, Álvaro de Campos e, em menor grau, Ricardo Reis; contém, ainda, traduções inglesas de poemas de Pessoa, Campos e Caeiro. Precedendo o facsímile e a transcrição, uma introdução analisa características do documento que apontam para Hubert Jennings como o seu autor.

* Universidade Nova de Lisboa.

The document that follows this introduction is titled “Fernando Pessoa” and, until the discovery of the Jennings literary estate, had no known author. It belongs to Pessoa’s family archives, which to date is *not* housed by the Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal (Portuguese National Library), where most of Pessoa’s papers are located. Some factors we will expose seem to point to Hubert Jennings as the author of the document.

The document consists of eleven pieces of paper (typed on one side, with blank versos), describing Fernando Pessoa’s life and heteronymous creations, and intending to give an introduction to the author’s work. It explains how the heteronymism appears on Pessoa’s life and how the main heteronyms—Alberto Caeiro, Álvaro de Campos and Ricardo Reis—can be understood as different points of view, different attempts of Pessoa to somehow fulfill his dramatic nature and a need to fictionalize his extraordinarily imaginative character. It seems, though, that this document was not complete, because it lacks an analysis of Ricardo Reis (while it contains one of Caeiro and Campos). We know that Jennings intended to write a book on Pessoa’s heteronymism, for he had a fellowship granted by Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, and spent almost two years in Lisbon contacting Pessoa’s family and consulting Pessoa’s original papers (*vide* JENNINGS, 1971). Could this unpublished document be a first attempt at the book Jennings had wished to produce? This is our hypothesis.

In the correspondence between Jennings and one of Pessoa’s half-brothers—Michael—there is one letter in which Michael speaks of some translations (made by Jennings), that he received, and gives some ideas for the book Jennings is preparing:

I see that you have completed the translation of the poems of Alberto Caeiro and Fernando Pessoa’s comments under the name of Ricardo Reis and Álvaro de Campos. I have discussed with my sister and her husband your idea of the above plus a short biography as the first book. Our idea is that the first book should not be too long as a short one would probably find a wider market and open the way to further long books. What about a biography, not too compressed, followed by some translations of a few poems of Fernando as Fernando, then the complete Alberto Caeiro poems and ending with a few poems of Ricardo Reis and Álvaro de Campos.

(apud BROWN, 2015)¹

Could the document we are presenting be a sample of some ideas announced in this letter?

We must examine the structure of the text: the first paragraph offers a small biography of Pessoa’s life, followed by his connections with the literary movements of his time and the creation of heteronymism. The question of sincerity in Pessoa’s poetry is focused on, in order to justify the first translation that appears on the document—the poem titled “Isto” (This), under Fernando Pessoa’s

¹ Susan Brown introduced and annotated the full letter for this issue of *Pessoa Plural*.

signature. After a brief description of Pessoa's interest in metaphysical and occultist ideas, a second English rendition of a poem under Pessoa's name is presented—the rendition of “Ela canta, pobre ceifeira” (She sings, poor reaping girl). A third Pessoa poem is then translated—“Ó sino da minha aldeia” (Oh church-bell of my village)—before the introduction of the first heteronym, Alberto Caeiro. After the heteronym's introduction, we have translations of two poems from *O Guardador de Rebanhos* (translated *The Shepherd*), under Caeiro's name. In the last part of the document, we find a long description of Álvaro de Campos and a complete translation of his poem “Tabacaria” (Tobacco Kiosk).

The scheme suggested by Michael in his letter to Jennings seems to correspond somewhat to the structure presented in the document in question. Only Reis was not contemplated, which could be explained if the document was merely a sample and not a definitive version Jennings sent to Pessoa's family.

Reading the document, which has no manuscript notes, we find another reference that points to Jennings as its author—the poet Roy Campbell, who translated many of Pessoa's poems and was also a pupil at Durban High School, though younger than the Portuguese poet: “It [Campos's poetry] is also a noisy attempt, particularly in the vast *Ode Marítima*², which Roy Campbell called the noisiest poem ever written.” Among Jennings's papers, we have more than one reference to Campbell, namely: in articles published in the magazine *Contrast* (1971 & 1979), in his book *The Poet with Many Faces* (unpublished), and in another typed document titled “Campbell and Pessoa,”³ where a similar idea concerning the *noise* of Campos's odes is expressed: “They did not understand this poem [the ‘Ode Triunfal’ (Triumphal Ode)] when it was published in Lisbon in 1914. Neither did Campbell when he translated part of it for his last book, *Portugal*, in 1957. He calls it ‘the loudest poem in literary history’.”

Another element of the unpublished text is significant: the translation of Caeiro's poem XXVIII from *O Guardador de Rebanhos*. The first time Jennings wrote about Pessoa was in his book *The DHS Story* (1966), where we can find a very similar translation of Caeiro's poem. The similarity between these two translations—in the book and in the document—strengthens our hypothesis that Jennings is the author of both. In fact, this specific poem never appears again in Jennings's subsequent published works.

Document, undated, p. 6	<i>The DHS Story</i> , 1966, p. 107
To-day I read almost two pages Of a book by a mystic poet, And I laughed like one who has wept.	Today I read almost two pages From the book of a mystic poet, And I laughed like one who has shed many tears.

² “Ode Marítima,” unstressed and without italics in the document. See Jennings's complete translation of that poem (*Maritime Ode* in English), studied by Filipa de Freitas in this issue.

³ Pedro Marques introduced and annotated this document for this issue of *Pessoa Plural*.

Mystic poets are sick philosophers,
 And philosophers are mad fools.
 Because mystic poets say that flowers feel
 And they say that stones have souls
 And that rivers experience ecstasies in the
 moonlight.

But if flowers could feel they would not be
 flowers,
 They would be people;
 And if stones had souls, they would be alive,
 and not be stones;
 And if rivers experienced ecstasies in the
 moonlight,
 Rivers would be sick men.

He must be ignorant of what flowers and stones
 and rivers are
 Who speaks of their feelings.
 To speak of the souls of flowers, of rivers,

Is to speak of oneself and of one's own false
 thoughts.
 Thanks be to God that stones are only stones
 And that rivers are not other than rivers,
 And that flowers are only flowers.

As for me, I write the prose of my poems
 And am content,
 Because I know I understand Nature from
 outside;
 And I do not understand her from inside
 Because Nature has no inside;
 Otherwise she would not be Nature.

Mystic poets are sick philosophers,
 And philosophers are madmen.
 For mystic poets say that flowers feel
 And that stones have a soul
 And that rivers swoon in the moonlight.

But if flowers felt they would not be flowers
 They would be people;
 If stones had a soul they would be living
 things not stones;
 And if rivers felt such ecstasies in the
 moonlight,
 Then rivers would be sick men.

Only one who does not know flowers, stones,
 rivers,
 Can speak of their feelings.
 To talk of the soul of stones, flowers and
 rivers
 Is to speak of oneself and one's false
 thoughts.
 Stones, thank God, are nothing but stones.
 And rivers only rivers,
 And flowers can be nothing but flowers.

As for me, I write the plain prose of my verse
 And am altogether content,
 Because I know that I understand Nature
 from without;
 I do not understand it from within
 Because Nature has no within,
 Or how could it be Nature?

Another element strengthens our hypothesis: only two poems translated in the document never appear again in other works of Jennings—the poem “Isto” and the poem “Ó sino da minha aldeia.” The other translations of Caeiro’s and Campos’s poems are also published elsewhere (in articles or books) or are part of Jennings’s unpublished works. However, a comparison of the translations shows differences between them. Could the document present earlier versions of some of the published translations?

We have few clues that could help us date this document. The most concrete information we can extract from the text is the reference to two volumes of Pessoa’s poetry: “In the poetry written in his own name, and which, with the fairly

recent addition of two volumes of hitherto unpublished poems, constitutes the major part of his poetical works.”

Ática published six volumes of the *Obras Completas de Fernando Pessoa* (Complete Works of Fernando Pessoa), between 1942 and 1954. Then, in 1955 and 1956, the publishing house released two new volumes of Pessoa’s poetry under his own name, respectively: *Poesias Inéditas 1930-1935* and *Poesias Inéditas 1919-1930*; these were the seventh and eighth volumes of Ática’s editorial project for the works of Pessoa. In 1973, a third book of Pessoa’s unpublished poetry was brought to light by Ática: *Novas Poesias Inéditas*, the tenth volume of the series.

If the document references the two first volumes of Pessoa’s unpublished poetry (the ones from 1955 and 1956) as a “recent addition”, we can surmise that this document was written not long after 1960.

Due to the essay “In Search of Fernando Pessoa,” which Jennings wrote for *Contrast*⁴ (1979: 17), we know that his interest in the Portuguese poet began in 1959, and that Jennings contacted Pessoa’s translators in the next few years. We are not sure when the contact with Pessoa’s family started, but it was before 1966—the date of Michael’s letter, in which Michael discusses having already received Jennings’s translations and sent (to Jennings) a copy of some poems by Pessoa. And, as we saw, Jennings’s 1966 book *The D.H.S. Story* contains a similar translation of the poem found in the document.

Because of all this, we can only estimate (but not be completely sure) that the document (if authored by Jennings) was written before 1966—for it could also have been sent (from Jennings to Michael) after Michael’s letter. Jennings’s translations published in 1971, in *Contrast*, have significant differences from the ones found here. Considering Jennings made revisions of his work (which led to different published translations), and the reference to the then recent publications of Pessoa’s poetry, we can trace the document to the 1960s.

Although the text is unsigned, incomplete, and cannot be dated, it reveals an attempt to define Pessoa’s heteronymism based on biographical information (Jennings had access to it through the studies about Pessoa already published, and especially through Pessoa’s family), and on the close reading of Pessoa’s poems (Jennings had a privileged contact with the poems, as Michael’s letter suggests). This document was written in English, and Jennings, being a foreign scholar learning Portuguese, intended to write a book in his native language. Analysis of these combined elements points to Hubert Jennings as the author.

⁴ See the review of Jennings’s *Contrast* essays by Geoffrey Haresnape, also in this issue.

Bibliography

- BROWN, Susan M. (2015). "From Michael and Teca: two unpublished letters to Hubert Jennings," in *Pessoa Plural—A Journal of Fernando Pessoa Studies*, n.º 8 (Special Jennings Issue). Providence; Warwick; Bogotá: Brown University, Warwick University, Universidad de los Andes.
- CAMPBELL, Roy (1957). *Portugal*. London: Max Reinhardt.
- HARESNAPE, Geoffrey (2015). "The Primacy of the Imagination: Jennings, Pessoa and *Contrast* magazine," in *Pessoa Plural—A Journal of Fernando Pessoa Studies*, n.º 8 (Special Jennings Issue). Providence; Warwick; Bogotá: Brown University, Warwick University, Universidad de los Andes.
- JENNINGS, Hubert D. (1986). *Fernando Pessoa in Durban [FPD]*. Durban: Durban Corporation.
- ____ (1979). "In Search of Fernando Pessoa," in *Contrast: South African Quarterly*, vol. 12, n.º 3, pp. 16-40.
- ____ (1971). "The Many Faces of Pessoa," in *Contrast: South African Quarterly*, vol. 7, n.º 3, pp. 51-64.
- ____ (1966). *The D. H. S. Story, 1866-1966 [DHS]*. Durban: The Durban High School & Old Boys' Memorial Trust.
- MARQUES, Pedro (2015). "Jennings on the Trail of Pessoa, or dimensions of poetical music," in *Pessoa Plural—A Journal of Fernando Pessoa Studies*, n.º 8 (Special Jennings Issue). Providence; Warwick; Bogotá: Brown University, Warwick University, Universidad de los Andes.
- PESSOA, Fernando (1973). *Novas Poesias Inéditas. Obras completas de Fernando Pessoa*, No. 10. Ed. Maria do Rosário Marques Sabino & Adelaide Maria Monteiro Sereno. Lisbon: Ática.
- ____ (1955). *Poesias Inéditas 1930-1935. Obras completas de Fernando Pessoa*, No. 7. Lisbon: Ática.
- ____ (1956). *Poesias Inéditas 1919-1930. Obras completas de Fernando Pessoa*, No. 8. Lisbon: Ática.

Documents

I. Unpublished. Eleven numbered pages (eleven pieces of paper typed on one side, with blank versos), found under the label "avulsos" (loose papers) in the literary estate of Manuela Nogueira, niece of Fernando Pessoa. Datable to circa 1966.

FERNANDO PESSOA

Fernando Pessoa is one of the most complex figures in all literature. He was born in Lisbon in 1888. His father, a consumptive music critic, died when the future poet was very young, and, according to himself, Pessoa became a complete orphan when his mother re-married. His stepfather being a diplomat, young Fernando was transported from his beloved Lisbon at the age of seven and spent a number of years in Durban. He attended Durban High School, where he distinguished himself particularly in English, winning the Queen Victoria Essay Prize. At this time, and for some time even after his return to Portugal, English was the language he preferred and in which he wrote his first poetry. He spent a short time at Cape Town University, after which he was sent back to Portugal to study at Lisbon University. He did matriculate and begin a course at that University, but followed it for a very short time. His life after this was spent entirely in Portugal - except in his imagination - and was the factually uneventful and financially miserable one of commercial correspondent for various Lisbon businesses with foreign connections. He died in 1935 from alcohol poisoning, having published only one book, which won second prize in a national propaganda competition.

Fernando Pessoa first entered the Portuguese literary scene as the critical apologist of a group of poets known as the "saudosistas", whose movement had appeared just at the right time to fit in with the literary theories Pessoa was elaborating as part of his vision of a rebirth of the Portuguese nation. He soon realized that the poets of *A Águia* (the organ of "saudosismo") did not conceal in their ranks the "super-Camões" whose birth he had been announcing in his critical articles, and began to write poetry of his own to proclaim the new theories he had evolved. In the process he wrote the virtually untranslatable, and later disavowed, poem *País*, which gave its name to the abortive literary movement of which Sá-Carneiro, not Pessoa, was the chief and only natural exponent.

Soon afterwards occurred what was probably the most important single event in the poet's life: the birth of the first of his heteronyms, to whom he gave the name Alberto Caeiro. From letters which he wrote many years later, we learn of his childhood loneliness and his natural tendency to create and dramatize characters to entertain him. The mainspring of Pessoa's genius was, as he himself said, dramatic: but not dramatic in the usual sense. The characters he created did not appear in stage plays, instead they each produced a whole body of poetry. Much has been written about Pessoa's heteronyms and the problem of his sincerity, but this is not the time nor the place to go into what is a very complicated problem.

Page 2.

Personally—even taking into account the tendency to mystification inherent in Pessoa and his generation - I accept the fundamental sincerity of these creations, as Pessoa expressed it in a letter to his friend Armando Cortes-Rodrigues, when he wrote: "This is felt in the person of someone else; it is written dramatically, but it is sincere in the same way as what King Lear says is sincere, and he is not Shakespeare but a creation of his." Soon after the birth of Alberto Caeiro, Pessoa's main trio of heteronyms was completed by the appearance of Álvaro de Campos and Ricardo Reis. So real were these creations for Pessoa, that, like a novelist, he gave them complete physical and intellectual personalities. Each is equipped with a complete biography and background, an education and profession, and so successfully that, like their creator, we come to wonder which of them is the creator and which the creations! Pessoa's attitude to sincerity was basically that only artistic sincerity is important in the artist. His preoccupation with sincerity appears in many of his poems, and the poem *Isto* (This), which follows, is one of a number in which the poet attempts to summarize his attitude.

They say that all my poems
Are lies or inventions. But no.
It is simply that I feel
With my imagination alone.
I do not use my heart.

All that I dream or experience,
All that I fail in or finish,
Is like a terrace
Onto something else, something further.
That something is what has beauty.

For this in my writing I plunge
Into that which is not close to me,
Free from perturbed emotion,
Serious about what is unreal.
Feeling? That's for the reader!

In the poetry written in his own name, and which, with the fairly recent addition of two volumes of hitherto unpublished poems, constitutes the major part of his poetical works, Fernando Pessoa is basically a metaphysical poet. He passes through the phase of occultism in the sonnet sequence *Passos da Cruz*, where he introduces the idea that as a poet he is the medium of some hidden power. One of the problems the poet examines is that of consciousness, and here the influence of his first heteronym, Caeiro, is manifest. For Caeiro consciousness is evil, unconsciousness good. For Pessoa the problem is more complex. It is more one of happiness: happiness is to be found in unconsciousness, but it cannot be complete unless one can be conscious of one's unconsciousness! This he expresses in the following verses:

Page 3.

She sings, poor reaping girl,
 And thinks herself happy perhaps;
 She sings, and reaps, and her voice,
 Breathing solitude, joyful, unnamed,

Undulates like the song of a bird
 In the threshold-clean air of day,
 And there are curves in the gentle maze
 Of the sound which fills her song.

To hear her cheers and saddens,
 In her voice are the fields and her toil,
 And she sings as if she had
 More reasons to sing than life.

Oh sing, sing without reasons!
 What feels deep in me is thinking.
 Pour, pour into my heart
 Your uncertain wavering voice!

Oh, to be you, yet be myself!
 Have your joyful unconsciousness,
 And be conscious of it! O sky!
 O field! O song! Knowledge

Is so heavy and life so short!
 Enter into me, enter! Make
 My soul the light shadow of you
 And then, bearing me with you, pass on!

It is no surprise to find that childhood reminiscences are frequent in Pessoa's poetry, as also in that of Alvaro de Campos, the heteronym closest to him poetically. He aspires to a period of his childhood before his mother remarried and, as was the case with Baudelaire, "betrayed" him. He is aspiring to a complete unconscious happiness which he knows to be impossible.

It was probably Fernando Pessoa who introduced into Portuguese poetry the short poem which has since become so popular: to seize the passing moment, a sensation or an emotion fused into a sigh of the breeze, the scudding of clouds, a ripple on water, or anything the poet sees, hears, touches or tastes and which he intimately connects with some deeper sense within him. This fishing for moments, this playing with fragments, are natural in one whose poetry ultimately springs from what in Portuguese is called *tédio*. It is a physical and spiritual state of impotence resulting from the premature abandonment of the search for a faith, for something positive. In this fragmentary expression Pessoa takes up the traditional sources of imagery in Portuguese poetry, natural surroundings: the sky, the stars, the fields and trees, the sea, and aspects of village life.

Page 4.

But Pessoa is no sentimental bucolic, nor even a nature poet in the traditional sense of the term. The natural imagery he uses is, as it were, within himself, so that he is frequently able to achieve a fusion of concrete and abstract, of objective and subjective. A fine and wellknown example of this type of short poem is the poem *O sino da minha aldeia* (O church bell of my village), which expresses beautifully the poet's sense of loss and, in the slow unceasing clanging of the bell, the inevitable *tédio*.

O church-bell of my village,
Aching in the calm afternoon,
Each clang of your chimes
Echoes deep in my soul.

And your ringing is so slow,
So much as if tired of life,
That even the first time you strike
It sounds like a stroke repeated.

Close though you strike my ear,
When I saunter past, lost in thought,
For me you are like a dream,
You sound distant in my soul.

At each of your echoing chimes
Vibrating in the free sky,
I feel the past more distant,
And nostalgia nearer my heart.

Alberto Caeiro, Pessoa's first heteronym, appeared at a time when his creator was lost in a maze, and acted as a poetical purge. He represents for Pessoa an apprenticeship of unlearning. The poet's approach, according to Caeiro, has become confused by religious and literary traditions, by metaphysical over-subtleties. It is time to open the eyes and look around, to accept external appearances for what they are, and not make them into anything else. This is the attitude expressed by the now notorious phrase of Gertrude Stein "A rose is a rose is a rose," and the less well-known exhortation of the Spanish poet Jorge Guillén: "Mira! - Ves? Basta!" The world of the senses is the only one to be trusted - an attitude not alien to certain trends in twentieth-century philosophy; while hypostatic qualities, such as Beauty, are regarded from the point of view which we find in I.A. Richards's Principles of Literary Criticism, and which is summed up in Caeiro's lines:

Beauty is the name of something which does not exist
Which I give to things in exchange for the pleasure they
give me.

Page 5.

The tone of Caetano's poetry is anti-traditional, even anti-poetical, and his verse form is equally anti-traditional. It is in Caetano's poetry that free verse was first used systematically in Portuguese literature. All this is part of the plan, as it were. Caetano is described by Pessoa as a countryman of little education. Accordingly he uses a simple, limited vocabulary, intentionally free from abstract terminology. Throughout his poetry there is the insistence on external reality and an uncompromising rejection of metaphysics. This is explained at the outset in the second poem of the sequence *O Guardador de Rebanhos* (The Shepherd).

My gaze is as clear as a sun-flower.
It is my habit to walk along roads
Looking to right and to left,
And sometimes looking behind...
And what I see at each moment
Is something I had never seen before,
And I can observe this very well...
I am capable of the essential spasm
Which a new-born child would have, if, at birth,
It could realize it had really been born...
I feel myself being born at every moment
Into the eternal novelty of the World...

I believe in the world as I do in a marigold,
Because I see it. But I do not think about it
Because to think is not to understand...
The world was not made for us to think about it
(To think is to have an affliction of the eyes)
But for us to look at it and be in harmony with it...

I have no philosophy: I have senses...
If I talk of Nature it is not because I know her,
But because I love her, and I love her for this reason,
Because to love is not to know one loves,
Nor why, nor what love is...

Loving is eternal innocence,
And the only innocence is not to think...

The purge operated on Pessoa by Caetano was directed specifically at the elements of *saudosismo* in Pessoa's own poetry, and serves also as a criticism of *saudosismo* by Pessoa. Caetano actually wrote four short poems in which he parodied the maudlin Franciscanism of those poets—four poems in which the tone is exactly that of *saudosista* poetry, except for a jarring note at the end which reveals the parody. The poem which follows (number XXVIII of *O Guardador de Rebanhos*) is a direct attack on *saudosista* poetry, and at the same time outlines some of the characteristics of their poetry.

Page 6.

To-day I read almost two pages
Of a book by a mystic poet,
And I laughed like one who has wept.

Mystic poets are sick philosophers,
And philosophers are mad fools.

Because mystic poets say that flowers feel
And they say that stones have souls
And that rivers experience ecstasies in the moonlight.

But if flowers could feel they would not be flowers,
They would be people;
And if stones had souls, they would be alive, and not
be stones;
And if rivers experienced ecstasies in the moonlight,
Rivers would be sick men.
He must be ignorant of what flowers and stones and
rivers are
Who speaks of their feelings.
To speak of the souls of flowers, of rivers,
Is to speak of oneself and of one's own false thoughts.
Thanks be to God that stones are only stones
And that rivers are not other than rivers,
And that flowers are only flowers.

As for me, I write the prose of my poems
And am content,
Because I know I understand Nature from outside;
And I do not understand her from inside
Because Nature has no inside;
Otherwise she would not be Nature.

It may interest you to know that most of the forty-nine poems which make up the collection entitled *O Guardador de Rebanhos* were written at a single sitting - or rather standing, since Pessoa, in common with many earlier writers, often wrote in this position.

Almost immediately after this effort, Pessoa changed from an uncultured pagan into a highly educated, progress-mad city dweller, passing briefly through the first phase of the cultured paganism of Ricardo Reis, whom we shall consider below, and the *Ode Triunfal* of Alvaro de Campos was written on a typewriter with hardly a moment's pause. The free verse of Caeiro is carried further in the poetry of Campos, where it takes on very definite Whitmanian accents. Campos it was who introduced the poetry of Whitman to his fellow-countrymen. Campos it was who liberated Portuguese poetry in this technical respect, and made possible all the use of and experiments with free verse which Portuguese poets have since made. Campos is

Page 7.

undoubtedly the strongest of the four poetic personalities that constitute the genius of Fernando Pessoa. Much of his poetry is noisy, for one thing, and further he it was who signed the manifesto entitled *Ultimatum*, in which he proclaimed his revolutionary artistic theories. Like Caetano - whom he more than once calls his Master - Campos begins by making a clean sweep of the past, but not content with this includes the present also in his vast dismissal of what he calls the Mandarins of Europe. He starts afresh with a non-Christian, non-Aristotelian approach to art, the mainspring of which is FORCE, the exaltation of aggressive movement, as opposed to BEAUTY, the Aristotelian ideal. In the *Ode Triunfal* already mentioned, Campos begins to crystallize his theories, affirming the continuity and simultaneity of past, present and future, plunging into the diversity and multiplicity of life around him - people, machines, ships, cities; in short, all the manifestations of modern progress.

The poetry of Alvaro de Campos represents an attempt by Pessoa to escape from his natural tendency to *tédio* and *abulia* - a magnificent attempt, let it be said from the start, though it soon came to grief. It is also a noisy attempt, particularly in the vast *Ode Marítima*, which Roy Campbell called the noisiest poem ever written. This long poem is a symphony of gigantic proportions, expressing all the diversity and multiplicity of life which the poet desires to possess within himself, very much in the manner of Whitman. Unfortunately Campos is not Whitman, not God; he is not even a pirate, like those who symbolize force in the poem, before whom he bewails his miserable human existence. What for Whitman was a natural identification of himself with the world and all that is in it, is for a Campos a purely cerebral exercise. The slow movement of the poem, with its recollection of past happiness in his early childhood, the lost paradise which he cannot link to the present, despite all his theories, is the reality of Campos, the reality of Pessoa himself, and the germ of the failure of Campos to escape from himself and his *tédio*. After the *Ode Marítima* the decline of *sensacionismo* (Pessoa's name for his own brand of Futurism) is evident, and the cycle of poems in which the liberation was attempted comes to a premature end.

There follows a virtual silence of several years in the dates assigned to Campos's poetry, and we next encounter the post-sensacionista period. The poet's attitude has changed completely meanwhile: from the desire to identify himself with the world, he goes to the other end of the scale, to isolationism, the desire to be left alone, with his grief and his *tédio*. The basis of this is revealed in a poem with an English title *Lisbon Revisited* (1923): it is the need to live an ordinary working and social life which has led the poet to disillusionment. From this it is but a step to a full confession of failure, and this we find in the long poem *Tabacaria* (Tobacco Kiosk). It is a poem which exhales a long, all-embracing *tédio*, of which the tobacconist's kiosk, expressing reality and symbolizing the poet's failure, is representative.

Page 8.

I am nothing.
 I shall never be anything.
 I cannot wish to be anything.
 This apart, I have in me all the dreams in the world.

Windows of my room,
 Of this room of one of the world's millions whom no one
 knows
 (And if they knew, what would they know?),
 You look onto the mystery of a street perpetually crossed
 by people,
 Onto a street inaccessible to every thought,
 Real, impossibly real, certain, its certainty unknown,
 With the mystery of things underneath stones and creatures,
 With death putting damp on the walls and white hairs on
 men's heads,
 With Destiny pulling the cart of all along the street of
 nothing.

To-day I am beaten, as if I knew the truth.
 To-day I am lucid, as if I were about to die,
 And had no more brotherhood with things
 Other than a farewell, this house and this side of the
 street
 Becoming a line of carriages on a train, and a departure
 signalled
 By a whistle inside my head,
 And a jerk of my nerves and a creaking of bones as the
 train goes.

To-day I am confused, like one who has thought, found
 truth and then forgotten.
 To-day I am torn between the loyalty I owe
 To the Tobacconist's across the street, as a thing of
 external reality,
 And to this feeling that all is a dream, as a thing of
 internal reality.

I have failed in everything.
 Since I had no purpose, perhaps it was all nothing.
 The apprenticeship I was given,
 I slipped down from it by the back window.
 I went into the country with great intentions.
 But all I found there was grass and trees,
 And when there were people they were just like the others.
 I leave the window, and sit down in a chair. What am I to
 think about?

What do I know of what I shall be, I who do not know
 what I am?
 Be what I am in my thoughts? But I think of being so
 many things!

Page 9.

And there are so many who dream of being the same thing
 that they cannot all be it!
 Genius? At this moment
 A hundred thousand brains dream they are geniuses like
 myself,
 Yet history will perhaps not remember a single one,
 They will only be the dung of many future conquests.
 No, I do not believe in myself.
 In every asylum there are mad fools with so many certainties!
 I, who have no certainties, am I more or less certain?
 No, not even in myself...
 In how many attics and non-attics of this world
 Are not self-styled geniuses dreaming?
 How many lofty, noble, lucid aspirations-
 Yes, truly lofty, noble and lucid-
 And perhaps capable of realization,
 Will never see real sunlight, will never find a hearing?
 The world is for those born to conquer
 And not for those who dream they can conquer-even though
 they are right.
 I have dreamt more than Napoleon did.
 I have pressed to a hypothetical breast more humanities
 than Christ.
 I have formed philosophies in secret that no Kant ever wrote.
 But I am, and perhaps shall always be, the man in the attic,
 Even though I do not live in it;
 I shall always be the one who was not born for this;
 I shall always be just the one who had possibilities;
 I shall always be he who waited for the opening of the door
 by a wall without a door,
 He who sang the song of Infinity in a hen-coop,
 And heard the voice of God in a closed well.
 Believe in myself? No, nor in anything else.
 Let Nature pour onto my feverish head
 Her sun, her rain, the wind that gets into my hair,
 And the rest, let it come if it will, or has to come, or let it
 not come.
 Cardiac slaves of the stars,
 We have conquered the whole world before getting out of bed;
 But we woke up and the world is opaque,
 We have got up and the world is foreign,
 We have left the house and the world is the whole earth,
 Plus the solar system and the Milky Way and Limitless Space.

 (Eat your chocolates, little girl;
 Eat your chocolates!
 Chocolates are the only metaphysics of this world.
 All the religions put together do not teach as much as a
 sweet shop.
 Eat, dirty little girl, eat!
 If only I could eat chocolates with the same truth as you-do!

Page 10.

But I think, and when I unwrap the silver paper, which is
only tinfoil,
I throw the whole lot on the floor, just as I have thrown
away my life.)

But at least I still have some of the bitterness of knowing
I shall never be
The rapid script of these lines,
A broken gate onto the Impossible.
But at least I devote to myself a tearless scorn,
Noble at least in the broad gesture with which I throw
The dirty washing which is me, without a laundry list, into
the passage of things,
And stay at home without a shirt.

(You, who console, who do not exist and thus console,
Be you a Greek goddess, conceived as a statue that should live,
Or a Roman dame, impossibly noble and ill-fated,
Or a troubadours' princess, a gentle, vivid creature,
Or an eighteenth-century marquise, décolletée and distant,
Or a famous courtesan of our fathers' time,
Or something very modern-I can't quite think what-
All this, be what it may, be it, if it can inspire then let it
do so!

My heart is an empty bucket.
Just as those accustomed to invoke spirits invoke spirits I
invoke

Myself and find nothing.
I go to the window and see the street with stark lucidity.
I see the shops, I see the pavements, I see the passing cars,
I see clothed living beings who pass each other by,
I see dogs which also exist,
And all this is a burden to me, as if it were a banishment,
And all this is foreign to me, like all things.)

I have lived, I have studied, I have loved, I have even believed
And to-day there is not a single beggar I do not envy just
because he is not me.

I see them all-their rags, their wounds, their untruth,
And I think to myself: perhaps you never lived, studied,
loved nor believed.

(Because one can do all these materially yet not do any of
them);

Perhaps you have just existed, like a lizard whose tail is
cut off

And is just a tail wriggling apart from the lizard.

I have made of myself what I could not,
And what I might have made I did not.
I put on someone else's fancy dress.

Page 11.

I was straightway recognized as who I was not, I did not lie
 and was lost.
 When I wanted to take off the mask,
 It was stuck to my face.
 When I pulled it off and saw myself in the mirror,
 I had grown old.
 I was drunk, I could no longer put on the fancy dress I had
 never taken off.
 I threw away the mask and slept in the cloakroom
 Like a dog tolerated by the management
 Because it is harmless
 And I shall write this story to prove I am sublime.

Musical essence of my useless poems,
 Could I but find you in something created by me,
 Instead of always standing opposite the Tobacco Kiosk
 across the road,
 Treading under foot the consciousness of my existence,
 Like a carpet on which a drunkard staggers
 Or a worthless doormat stolen by gypsies.
 But the owner of the Tobacco Kiosk has come to his door
 and stands there.
 I look at him with the discomfort of a half-turned head
 And with the discomfort of a half-comprehending soul.
 We will die and so shall I.
 He will leave his signboard, I my poems.
 Later the signboard will die too, and with it my poems.
 Then later still will disappear the street where the signboard
 hung,
 And the language in which my poems were written.
 Afterwards it will be the turn of the revolving planet in
 which all this happened.
 In other satellites of other systems something like people
 will go on writing things like poems and living under things
 like signboards,
 Always one thing opposite the other,
 Always one thing as useless as the other,
 Always the impossible as stupid as reality,
 Always the fundamental mystery as sure as the slumbering
 mystery of the surface,
 Always one thing or another or neither one nor the other.

But now a man has gone into the Tobacconist's (to buy
 tobacco?),
 And plausible reality falls suddenly upon me.
 I half-stand up energetic, convinced, human,
 And I shall try to write these lines in which I say the
 contrary.
 I light a cigarette as I think of writing them
 And savour in the cigarette the liberation from all thoughts.

[1]⁵

FERNANDO PESSOA

Fernando Pessoa is one of the most complex figures in all literature. He was born in Lisbon in 1888. His father, a consumptive music critic, died when the future poet was very young, and, according to himself, Pessoa became a complete orphan when his mother remarried. His stepfather being a diplomat, young Fernando was transported from his beloved Lisbon at the age of seven and spent a number of years in Durban. He attended Durban High School, where he distinguished himself particularly in English, winning the Queen Victoria Essay Prize. At this time, and for some time even after his return to Portugal, English was the language he preferred and in which he wrote his first poetry. He spent a short time at Cape Town University, after which he was sent back to Portugal to study at Lisbon University. He did matriculate and begin a course at that University, but followed it for a very short time. His life after this was spent entirely in Portugal—except in his imagination—and was the factually uneventful and financially miserable one of commercial correspondent for various Lisbon businesses with foreign connections. He died in 1935 from alcohol poisoning, having published only one book, which won second prize in a national propaganda competition.

Fernando Pessoa first entered the Portuguese literary scene as the critical apologist of a group of poets known as the “saudosistas”, whose movement had appeared just at the right time to fit in with the literary theories Pessoa was elaborating as part of his vision of a rebirth of the Portuguese nation. He soon realized that the poets of *A Águia*⁶ (the organ of “saudosismo”) did not conceal in their ranks the “super-Camões” whose birth he had been announcing in his critical articles, and began to write poetry of his own to proclaim the new theories he had evolved. In the process he wrote the virtually untranslatable, and later disavowed, poem “Paúis,”⁷ which gave its name to the abortive literary movement of which Sá-Carneiro, not Pessoa, was the chief and only natural exponent.

Soon afterwards occurred what was probably the most important single event in the poet’s life: the birth of the first of his heteronyms, to whom he gave the name Alberto Caeiro. From letters which he wrote many years later, we learn of his childhood loneliness and his natural tendency to create and dramatize characters to entertain him. The mainspring of Pessoa’s genius was, as he himself said, dramatic: but not dramatic in the usual sense. The characters he created did not appear in stage plays, instead they each produced a whole body of poetry. Much

⁵ From p. 2 onward, the document presents page numbers centered in the top margins; we indicate these numbers in brackets to avoid interrupting the text flow.

⁶ Though not underlined in the document, here we italicized the name of this publication—as well as any book titles, whether in Portuguese or English.

⁷ Differing from the document, we present any poem titles with quotation marks.

has been written about Pessoa's heteronyms and the problem of his sincerity, but this is not the time nor the place to go into what is a very complicated problem.

[2] Personally—even taking into account the tendency to mystification inherent in Pessoa and his generation—I accept the fundamental sincerity of these creations, as Pessoa expressed it in a letter to his friend Armando Cortes-Rodrigues, when he wrote: “This is felt in the person of someone else; it is written dramatically, but it is sincere in the same way as what King Lear says is sincere, and he is not Shakespeare but a creation of his.” Soon after the birth of Alberto Caeiro, Pessoa's main trio of heteronyms was completed by the appearance of Álvaro de Campos and Ricardo Reis. So real were these creations for Pessoa, that, like a novelist, he gave them complete physical and intellectual personalities. Each is equipped with a complete biography and background, an education and profession, and so successfully that, like their creator, we come to wonder which of them is the creator and which the creations! Pessoa's attitude to sincerity was basically that only artistic sincerity is important in the artist. His preoccupation with sincerity appears in many of his poems, and the poem “Isto” (This), which follows, is one of a number in which the poet attempts to summarize his attitude.

They say that all my poems
Are lies or inventions. But no.
It is simply that I feel
With my imagination alone.
I do not use my heart.

All that I dream or experience,
All that I fail in or finish,
Is like a terrace
Onto something else, something further.
That something is what has beauty.

For this in my writing I plunge
Into that which is not close to me,
Free from perturbed emotion,
Serious about what is unreal.
Feeling? That's for the reader!

In the poetry written in his own name, and which, with the fairly recent addition of two volumes of hitherto unpublished poems, constitutes the major part of his poetical works, Fernando Pessoa is basically a metaphysical poet. He passes through the phase of occultism in the sonnet sequence “Passos da Cruz,” where he introduces the idea that as a poet he is the medium of some hidden power. One of the problems the poet examines is that of consciousness, and here the influence of his first heteronym, Caeiro, is manifest. For Caeiro consciousness is evil, unconsciousness good. For Pessoa the problem is more complex. It is more one of

happiness: happiness is to be found in unconsciousness, but it cannot be complete unless one can be conscious of one's unconsciousness! This he expresses in the following verses:

[3] She sings, poor reaping girl,
 And thinks herself happy perhaps;
 She sings, and reaps, and her voice,
 Breathing solitude, joyful, unnamed,

 Undulates like the song of a bird
 In the threshold-clean air of day,
 And there are curves in the gentle maze
 Of the sound which fills her song.

 To hear her cheers and saddens,
 In her voice are the fields and her toil,
 And she sings as if she had
 More reasons to sing than life.

 Oh sing, sing without reasons!
 What feels deep in me is thinking.
 Pour, pour into my heart
 Your uncertain wavering voice!

 Oh, to be you, yet be myself!
 Have your joyful unconsciousness,
 And be conscious of it! O sky!
 O field! O song! Knowledge

 Is so heavy and life so short!
 Enter into me, enter! Make
 My soul the light shadow of you
 And then, bearing me with you, pass on!

It is no surprise to find that childhood reminiscences are frequent in Pessoa's poetry, as also in that of Álvaro de Campos, the heteronym closest to him poetically. He aspires to a period of his childhood before his mother remarried and, as was the case with Baudelaire, "betrayed" him. He is aspiring to a complete unconscious happiness which he knows to be impossible.

It was probably Fernando Pessoa who introduced into Portuguese poetry the short poem which has since become so popular: to seize the passing moment, a sensation or an emotion fused into a sigh of the breeze, the scudding of clouds, a ripple on water, or anything the poet sees, hears, touches or tastes and which he intimately connects with some deeper sense within him. This finishing for moments, this playing with fragments, are natural in one whose poetry ultimately

springs from what in Portuguese is called *tédio*⁸. It is a physical and spiritual state of impotence resulting from the premature abandonment of the search for a faith, for something positive. In this fragmentary expression Pessoa takes up the traditional source of imagery in Portuguese poetry, natural surroundings: the sky, the stars, the fields and trees, the sea, and aspects of village life.

[4] But Pessoa is no sentimental bucolic, nor even a nature poet in the traditional sense of the term. The natural imagery he uses is, as it were, within himself, so that he is frequently able to achieve a fusion of concrete and abstract, of objective and subjective. A fine and well-known⁹ example of this type of short poem is the poem “Ó sino da minha aldeia” (O church bell of my village), which expresses beautifully the poet’s sense of loss and, in the slow unceasing clanging of the bell, the inevitable *tédio*.

O church-bell of my village,
Aching in the calm afternoon,
Each clang of you chimes
Echoes deep in my soul.

And your ringing is so slow,
So much as if tired of life,
That even the first time you strike
It sounds like a stroke repeated.

Close though you strike my ear,
When I saunter past, lost in thought,
For me you are like a dream,
You sound distant in my soul.

At each of your echoing chimes
Vibrating in the free sky,
I feel the past more distant,
And nostalgia nearer my heart.

Alberto Caeiro, Pessoa’s first heteronym, appeared at a time when his creator was lost in a maze, and acted as a poetical purge. He represents for Pessoa an apprenticeship of unlearning. The poet’s approach, according to Caeiro, has become confused by religious and literary traditions, by metaphysical over-subtleties. It is time to open the eyes and look around, to accept external appearances for what they are, and not make them into anything else. This is the attitude expressed by the now notorious phrase of Gertrude Stein “A rose is a rose is a rose,” and the less well-known exhortation of the Spanish poet Jorge Guillén: “Mira!—Vas? Basta!” The world of the senses is the only one to be trusted—an

⁸ We italicize here any Portuguese words (except for proper names and words already in quotes).

⁹ “wellknown” in the document.

attitude not alien to certain trends in twentieth-century philosophy; while hypostatic qualities, such as Beauty, are regarded from the point of view which we find in I. A. Richard's *Principles of Literary Criticism*, and which is summed up in Caetano's lines:

Beauty is the name of something which does not exist
Which I give to things in exchange for the pleasure they give me.

[5] The tone of Caetano's poetry is anti-traditional, even anti-poetical, and his verse form is equally anti-traditional. It is in Caetano's poetry that free verse was first used systematically in Portuguese literature. All this is part of the plan, as it were. Caetano is described by Pessoa as a countryman of little education. Accordingly he uses a simple, limited vocabulary, intentionally free from abstract terminology. Throughout his poetry there is the insistence on external reality and an uncompromising rejection of metaphysics. This is explained at the outset in the second poem of the sequence *O Guardador de Rebanhos* (*The Shepherd*).

My gaze is as clear as a sun-flower.
It is my habit to walk along roads
Looking to right and to left,
And sometimes looking behind...
And what I see at each moment
Is something I had never seen before,
And I can observe this very well...
I am capable of the essential spasm
Which a new-born child would have, if, at birth,
It could realize it had really been born...
I feel myself being born at every moment
Into the eternal novelty of the World...

I believe in the world as I do in a marigold,
Because I see it. But I do not think about it
Because to think is not to understand...
The world was not made for us to think about it
(To think is to have an affliction of the eyes)
But for us to look at it and be in harmony with it...

I have no philosophy: I have senses...
If I talk of Nature it is not because I know her,
But because I love her, and I love her for this reason,
Because to love is not to know one loves,
Nor why, nor what love is...

Loving is eternal innocence,
And the only innocence is not to think...

The purge operated on Pessoa by Caeiro was directed specifically at the elements of *saudosismo* in Pessoa's own poetry, and serves also as a criticism of *saudosismo* by Pessoa. Caeiro actually wrote four short poems in which he parodied the maudlin Franciscanism of those poets—four poems in which the tone is exactly that of *saudosista* poetry, except for a jarring note at the end which reveals the parody. The poem which follows (number XXVIII of *O Guardador de Rebanhos*) is a direct attack on *saudosista* poetry, and at the same time outlines some of the characteristics of their poetry.

[6] To-day I read almost two pages
Of a book by a mystic poet,
And I laughed like one who has wept.

Mystic poets are sick philosophers,
And philosophers are mad fools.

Because mystic poets say that flowers feel
And they say that stones have souls
And that rivers experience ecstasies in the moonlight.

But if flowers could feel they would not be flowers,
They would be people;
And if stones had souls, they would be alive, and not be stones;
And if rivers experienced ecstasies in the moonlight,
Rivers would be sick men.
He must be ignorant of what flowers and stones and rivers are
Who speaks of their feelings.
To speak of the souls of flowers, of rivers,
Is to speak of oneself and of one's own false thoughts.
Thanks be to God that stones are only stones
And that rivers are not other than rivers,
And that flowers are only flowers.

As for me, I write the prose of my poems
And am content,
Because I know I understand Nature from outside;
And I do not understand her from inside
Because Nature has no inside;
Otherwise she would not be Nature.

It may interest you to know that most of the forty-nine poems which make up the collection entitled *O Guardador de Rebanhos* were written at a single sitting—or rather standing, since Pessoa, in common with many earlier writers, often wrote in this position.

Almost immediately after this effort, Pessoa changed from an uncultured pagan into a highly educated, progress-mad city dweller, passing briefly through

the first phase of the cultured paganism of Ricardo Reis, whom we shall consider below, and the “Ode Triunfal” of Álvaro de Campos was written on a typewriter with hardly a moment’s pause. The free verse of Caeiro is carried further in the poetry of Campos, where it takes on very definite Whitmanian accents. Campos it was who introduced the poetry of Whitman to his fellow-countryman. Campos it was who liberated Portuguese poetry in this technical respect, and made possible all the use of and experiments with free verse which Portuguese poets have since made. Campos is [7] undoubtedly the strongest of the four poetic personalities that constitute the genius of Fernando Pessoa. Much of his poetry is noisy, for one thing, and further he it was who signed the manifesto entitled “Ultimatum,” in which he proclaimed his revolutionary artistic theories. Like Caeiro—whom he more than once calls his Master—Campos begins by making a clean sweep of the past, but not content with this includes the present also in his vast dismissal of what he calls the Mandarins of Europe. He starts afresh with a non-Christian, non-Aristotelian approach to art, the mainspring of which is FORCE, the exaltation of aggressive movement, as opposed to BEAUTY, the Aristotelian ideal. In the “Ode Triunfal” already mentioned, Campos begins to crystallize his theories, affirming the continuity and simultaneity of past, present and future, plunging into the diversity and multiplicity of life around him—people, machines, ships, cities; in short, all the manifestations of modern progress.

The poetry of Álvaro de Campos represents an attempt by Pessoa to escape from his natural tendency to *tédio* and *abulia*—a magnificent attempt, let it be said from the start, though it soon came to grief. It is also a noisy attempt, particularly in the vast “Ode Marítima¹⁰,” which Roy Campbell called the noisiest poem ever written. This long poem is a symphony of gigantic proportions, expressing all the diversity and multiplicity of life which the poet desires to possess within himself, very much in the manner of Whitman. Unfortunately Campos is not Whitman, not God; he is not even a pirate, like those who symbolize force in the poem, before whom he bewails his miserable human existence. What for Whitman was a natural identification of himself with the world and all that is in it, is for a Campos a purely cerebral exercise. The slow movement of the poem, with its recollection of past happiness in his early childhood, the lost paradise which he cannot link to the present, despite all his theories, is the reality of Campos, the reality of Pessoa himself, and the germ of the failure of Campos to escape from himself and his *tédio*. After the “Ode Marítima” the decline of *sensacionismo* (Pessoa’s name for his own brand of Futurism¹¹ is evident, and the cycle of poems in which the liberation was attempted comes to a premature end.

¹⁰ “Marítima,” always unstressed in the document.

¹¹ The document displays the sign / after “Futurism,” probably a typo.

There follows a virtual silence of several years in the dates assigned to Campos's poetry, and we next encounter the post-*sensacionista* period. The poet's attitude has changed completely meanwhile: from the desire to identify himself with the world, he goes to the other end of the scale, to isolationism, the desire to be left alone with his grief and his *tédio*. The basis of this is revealed in a poem with an English title "Lisbon Revisited (1923)": it is the need to live an ordinary working and social life which has led the poet to disillusionment. From this it is but a step to a full confession of failure, and this we find in the long poem "Tabacaria" (Tobacco Kiosk). It is a poem which exhales a long, all-embracing *tédio*, of which the tobac[c]onist's kiosk, expressing reality and symbolizing the poet's failure, is representative.

[8] I am nothing.
I shall never be anything.
I cannot wish to be anything.
This apart, I have in me all the dreams in the world.

Windows of my room,
Of this room of one of the world's millions whom no one knows
(And if they knew, what would they know?),
You look onto the mystery of a street perpetually crossed by people,
Onto a street inaccessible to every thought,
Real, impossibly real, certain, its certainty unknown,
With the mystery of things underneath stones and creatures,
With death putting damp on the walls and white hairs on men's heads,
With Destiny pulling the cart of all along the street of nothing,
To-day I am beaten, as if I knew the truth.
To-day I am lucid, as if I were about to die,
And had no more brotherhood with things
Other than a farewell, this house and this side of the street
Becoming a line of carriages on a train, and a departure signalled
By a whistle inside my head,
And a jerk of my nerves and a creaking of bones as the train goes.

To-day I am confused, like one who has thought, found truth and then forgotten.
To-day I am torn between the loyalty I owe
To the Tobacconist's across the street, as a thing of external reality,
And to this feeling that all is a dream, as a thing of internal reality.

I have failed in everything.
Since I had no purpose, perhaps it was all nothing.
The apprenticeship I was given,
I slipped down from it by the back window.
I went into the country with great intentions.
But all I found there was grass and trees,
And when there were people they were just like the others.
I leave the window, and sit down in a chair. What am I to think about?

- What do I know of what I shall be, I who do not know what I am?
 Be what I am in my thoughts? But I think of being so many things!
 [9] And there are so many who dream of being the same thing that they cannot all be it!
 Genius? At this moment
 A hundred thousand brains dream they are geniuses like myself,
 Yet history will perhaps not remember a single one,
 They will only be the dung of many future conquests.
 No, I do not believe in myself.
 In every asylum there are mad fools with so many certainties!
 I, who have no certainties, am I more or less certain?
 No, not even in myself...
 In how many attics and non-attics of this world
 Are not self-styled geniuses¹² dreaming?
 How many lofty, noble, lucid aspirations—
 Yes, truly lofty, noble and lucid—,
 And perhaps capable of realization,
 Will never see real sunlight, will never find a hearing?
 The world is for those born to conquer
 And not for those who dream they can conquer—even though they are right.
 I have dreamt more than Napoleon did.
 I have pressed to a hypothetical breast more humanities than Christ.
 I have formed philosophies in secret that no Kant ever wrote.
 But I am, and perhaps shall always be, the man in the attic,
 Even though I do not live in it;
 I shall always be the one who was not born for this;
 I shall always be just the one who had possibilities;
 I shall always be he who waited for the opening of the door by a wall without a door,
 He who sang the song of Infinity in a hen-coop,
 And heard the voice of God in a closed well.
 Believe in myself? No, nor in anything else.
 Let Nature pour onto my feverish head
 Her sun, her rain, the wind that gets into my hair,
 And the rest, let it come if it will, or has to come, or let it not come.
 Cardiac slaves of the stars,
 We have conquered the whole world before getting out of bed;
 But we woke up and the world is opaque,
 We have got up and the world is foreign,
 We have left the house and the world is the whole earth,
 Plus the solar system and the Milky Way and Limitless Space.
- (Eat your chocolates, little girl;
 Eat your chocolates!
 Chocolates are the only metaphysics of this world.
 All the religions put together do not teach as much as a sweet shop.
 Eat, dirty little girl, eat!
 If only I could eat chocolates with the same truth as you do!
 [10] But I think, and when I unwrap the silver paper, which is only tinfoil,

¹² “genuises” in the document, a typo.

I throw the whole lot on the floor, just as I have thrown away my life.)

But at least I still have some of the bitterness of knowing
 I shall never be
 The rapid script of these lines,
 A broken gate onto the Impossible.
 But at least I devote to myself a tearless scorn,
 Noble at least in the broad gesture with which I throw
 The dirty washing which is me, without a laundry list, into the passage of things,
 And stay at home without a shirt.

(You, who console, who do not exist and thus console,
 Be you a Greek goddess, conceived as a statue that should live,
 Or a Roman dame, impossibly noble and ill-fated,
 Or a troubadours' princess, a gentle, vivid creature,
 Or an eighteenth-century marquise, décolletée and distant,
 Or a famous courtesan of our fathers' time,
 Or something very modern—I can't quite think what—,
 All this, be what it may, be it, if it can inspire then let it do so!
 My heart is an empty bucket.
 Just as those accustomed to invoke spirits invoke spirits I invoke
 Myself and find nothing.
 I go to the window and see the street with stark lucidity.
 I see the shops, I see the pavements, I see the passing cars,
 I see clothed living beings who pass each other by,
 I see dogs which also exist,
 And all this is a burden to me, as if it were a banishment,
 And all this is foreign to me, like all things.)

I have lived, I have studied, I have loved, I have even believed
 And to-day there is not a single beggar I do not envy just because he is not me.
 I see them all—their rags, their wounds, their untruth,
 And I think to myself: perhaps you never lived, studied, loved nor believed.
 (Because one can do all these materially yet not do any of them);
 Perhaps you have just existed, like a lizard whose tail is cut off
 And is just a tail wriggling apart from the lizard.

I have made of myself what I could not,
 And what I might have made I did not.
 I put on someone else's fancy dress.

- [11] I was straightway recognized as who I was not, I did not lie and was lost.
 When I wanted to take off the mask,
 It was stuck to my face.
 When I pulled it off and saw myself in the mirror,
 I had grown old.
 I was drunk, I could no longer put on the fancy dress I had never taken off.
 I threw away the mask and slept in the cloakroom
 Like a dog tolerated by the management
 Because it is harmless
 And I shall write this story to prove I am sublime.

Musical essence of my useless poems,
Could I but find you in something created by me,
Instead of always standing opposite the Tobacco Kiosk across the road,
Treading under foot the consciousness of my existence,
Like a carpet on which a drunkard staggers
Or a worthless doormat stolen by gypsies.
But the owner of the Tobacco Kiosk has come to his door and stands there.
I look at him with the discomfort of a half-turned head
And with the discomfort of a half-comprehending soul.
He will die and so shall I.
He will leave his signboard, I my poems.
Later the signboard will die too, and with it my poems.
Then later still will disappear the street where the signboard hung,
And the language in which my poems were written.
Afterwards it will be the turn of the revolving planet in which all this happened.
In other satellites of other systems something like people
Will go on writing things like poems and living under things like signboards,
Always one thing opposite the other,
Always one thing as useless as the other,
Always the impossible as stupid as reality,
Always the fundamental mystery as sure as the slumbering mystery of the surface,
Always one thing or another or neither one nor the other.

But now a man has gone into the Tobacconist's (to buy tobacco?),
And plausible reality falls suddenly upon me.
I half-stand up energetic, convinced, human,
And I shall try to write these lines in which I say the contrary.
I light a cigarette as I think of writing them
And savour in the cigarette the liberation from all thoughts.