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The Art of Drama According to Browning and Pessoa

**ABSTRACT:** In this article we analyze Robert Browning’s and Fernando Pessoa’s interpretations and understandings of the concept of *drama*. Both writers, other than privileging the dramatic procedure of creation in literature, explored the limits of literary genres in their attempts to establish themselves as dramatic poets. Through an analysis of theoretical texts by Browning and Pessoa, we verify the points at which their conceptions both converge and diverge. To conclude, we discuss the relation of the English writer’s dramatic monologues to the heteronymic project.

**KEYWORDS:** dramatic monologue, Fernando Pessoa, Robert Browning

1.

I shall live by forgetting myself. This assertion could be applied to the poetic projects of some of the main exponents of modern poetry. Such an assertion is founded on impersonality, defined as when the poet expresses the individuality of other selves, which should not be confused with their own. Accordingly, the statement that begins this section could also relate to Fernando Pessoa, whose conception of flight from personality led him to formalizing in heteronymy (or heteronymism) his detachment from any pretense of unity of the individual. However, the assertion does not refer to any particular poet of modernity, despite being formulated by one. In fact, it is a verse from the poem “Browning resuelve ser poeta” (“Browning Decides to be a Poet”) in which the mechanism of lyrical expression to which the persona of Jorge Luis Borges’s poem aspires is synthesized: he endeavors to assume the position of different personae in order to make clear that the voice materialized in the poem does not correspond to the author’s.

Writers have already begun to explore the affinity between Browning’s and Pessoa’s writings; they include Adolfo Casais Monteiro and Georg Rudolf Lind, as well as Georges Güntert, based on brief statements made by Jacinto do Prado Coelho, who devoted himself to the topic. More recently, George Mont-...
with its presentation consisting of five parts that could be related to the acts of a Shakespearean tragedy. As Browning explains shortly thereafter, the work constitutes "an attempt [. . .] to reverse the method usually adopted by writers [. . .]; instead of having recourse to an external machinery of incidents to create and evolve the crisis I desire to produce, I have ventured to display somewhat minutely the mood itself in its rise and progress."12

In other words, Pantalbus does not refuse the fundamental principle of drama—the action—but rather dislocates it: no longer a product of external events, the conflict arises from previous tensions whose development and explosion are expressed by the characters through speech rather than actions. As we shall see, Pessoa's static theater dialogues with this dramatic model.

So far, the fundamentally lyrical conception of theater is clear. The problem is that, according to Browning's assertions, we do not necessarily have a play before our eyes: "I have endeavoured to write a poem, not a drama"; nor would it be a dramatic poem in the sense of a drama in verses to be staged: "I do not very well understand what is called a Dramatic Poem."13 In spite of the external appearance and even the text dynamics, far from the standard dramaturgical model without denying it as a whole, Browning conceives Pantalbus solely as a poem. It is possible to see some arbitrariness in this procedure, which is thought of, above all, as a strategy to depart from the tradition of a genre and, therefore, liberate the poet from observing certain principles inherent in it. Curiously, the theoretical assumptions to which the writer alludes fail to contradict the current ideas in Europe during the first decades of the nineteenth century.

Clyde de L. Ryle14 argues that the philosophical empirical tradition, appealing to causality during investigations of moral and physical phenomena, changed the way dramatic action was conceived. When the absolute nature of external events was questioned, the relation between the action and character came to be inverted: the first element ceases to embody the second and thus becomes subject to it. In other words, the action, although not negated, is seen as deprived of meaning when the mental states that prompted it are not considered. As stated by John Henry Newman in 1829, "The action then will be more justly viewed as the vehicle for introducing the personages of the drama, than as the principal object of the poet's art; it is not in the plot, but in the characters, sentiments, and diction, that the actual merit and poetry of the composition are found."15

Although Browning feared Pantalbus would be misunderstood, the play was well received. John Forster published his extensive review, "Evidences of a New Genius for Dramatic Poetry,"16 and the renowned actor William Charles Macready was soon in touch with the writer, encouraging him to devote himself to drama. The fact that Macready assumed management of Covent Garden in 1837 was a key event that motivated Browning to write his first play in the strict sense of the term, Strafford: A Tragedy, which would be staged in that theater.

The first edition of this play was also accompanied by a brief preface, whose beginning inverts the previous premise: "I had for some time been engaged in a Poem of a very different nature, when induced to make the present attempt."17 Even though Strafford assumes the form of a drama to be staged, Browning once again establishes the strategy of relativizing the tradition of a genre. If in Pantalbus the reader is confronted with a text that resembles a play but is, in fact, a poem, the situation now involves an actual play that wishes to be understood also as a poem. Thus, a decrease in boundaries between the genres is produced, and was fully attained in Dramatic Lyrics (1842). This experiment was foreseen, in a way, when Browning anticipated the failure of his first foray into theater: "While a trifling success would much gratify, failure will not wholly discourage me from another effort: experience is to come, and earnest endeavours may yet remove many disadvantages."18

In fact, Strafford was very far from the success the playwright originally desired, as the play saw only five presentations. Despite the existing affinity between Browning's dramatic conception and those of his contemporaries, the play's failure revealed the distinguishing characteristic of the author's work: the emphasis on the development of a soul19 that weakened the plot beyond the public's acceptable limit. Regardless of the diminished nature of the action, the lyrical intensity, a focal point of actors and playwrights when creating a character, still presupposed the construction of the plot. This is highlighted by James Patton McCormick, when contrasting Browning's next experience in the theater, with specific regard to King Victor and King Charles (1842), and to successful plays such as Rithelina (1839), by Edward Bulwer-Lytton. McCormick notes in this contrasting analysis that what separates Browning from his contemporaries is that Bulwer-Lytton's work is characterized by "misplaced letters, mistaken identities, the cloak-and-dagger intrigue of courtiers trying to usurp the throne, and several subplots involving romantic love surging violently across the stage."20 Regarding Browning's work, this series of intrigues is never fully accomplished onstage, but is rather symbolically present in the scenes throughout the play, suggested by the narration of the characters. This often results in the audience
members' displeasure, because they are unable to see the characters' intense mental action reflected in physical action, such as with fights involving guns, for example.

Browning owes most of his failure as a popular playwright to these factors. Let us hold back, however, one last aspect of the preface to Strayford, which dialogues more clearly with the purpose achieved in his book Dramatic Lyrics: the idea that this play would be one of "Action in Character rather than Character in Action." The notion of soul-in-development pervades a great deal of Browning's literary efforts. This is most evident in the body of poems he would later gather for Dramatic Lyrics, in which the introduction reads, "Such Poems as the majority in this volume might also come properly enough, I suppose, under the head of 'Dramatic Pieces'; being, though often Lyric in expression, always Dramatic in principle, and so many utterances of so many imaginary persons, not mine."

By convention, readers are accustomed to referring to these poems as dramatic monologues. But the author himself, in fact, never actually used that term; nor did he adhere to the generic designation of "dramatic lyrics," as can be seen from the following titles: Dramatic Romances (1845), Men and Women (1855), and Dramatis Personae (1864). The expression is, thus, a critical category, used not only because of its previous theorization by the poet, but as a result of the clarifying power it grants to the reading of these poems. There is no consensus as to what effectively constitutes these texts that unite lyrical and dramatic elements; therefore, it is necessary to accurately determine the conception of dramatic monologue. Because our purpose is not to set critical parameters for its understanding, we will discuss some fundamental characteristics of the form by comparing the poetics of Browning and Pessoa. But first, we will analyze the question of "drama" as it is developed in the work of Pessoa.

3.

There are several allusions to the dramatic element of Pessoa's poetry in his letters and critical-theoretical texts, as well as in his "Tabula bibliográfica" (Bibliographical table), published in 1928, which allows for the elucidation of specific aspects of his notion of drama. Regarding his letters, three are noteworthy: in the first, Pessoa mentions to Armando Côrtes-Rodrigues the "proposito de lançar pseudonimamente a obra Caesá-Reis-Campos," whose speech "é sentido na pessoa de outro; é escrito dramaticamente, mas é sincero [... ] como é
O primeiro grau da poesia lírica é aquele em que o poeta, de temperamento intenso e sensível, escreve com paixão e intensidade. É um tipo de poesia que reflete a realidade e expressa emoções de forma directa e pessoal.

O segundo grau da poesia lírica é aquele em que o poeta, de temperamento reflexivo e intelectual, escreve com sensibilidade e refinamento. É um tipo de poesia que transmite ideias e conceitos de forma lógica e racional.

O terceiro grau da poesia lírica é aquele em que o poeta, de temperamento abstrato e imaginativo, escreve com criatividade e originalidade. É um tipo de poesia que evoca imagens e sentimentos de forma poética e surreal.

Cada um destes graus da poesia lírica é diferente e único, mas todos têm em comum a capacidade de comunicar emoções e ideias de forma poderosa e eficaz.
equivalent to feeling in a dramatic way; that is, it is far from any sentiment originating from the empirical “I.”

In this letter, Pessoa not only presents a particular conception of artistic creation, but also foregrounds a criterion of objective value, established in the allusion to Shakespeare. In offering such a conception, Pessoa occasionally defines the sort of poetry he writes in those texts that attempt to theorize literary creation. This is the case of two distinct texts whose titles have been ascribed by their editors after the arrangement of the book in which they appear: “Os heterônomos e os graus de lírica” (“The Heteronyms and the Grades of Lyricism”) (undated) and “Os graus da poesia lírica” (“The Grades of Lyrical Poetry”) (possibly from 1930). In both texts, the fluidity between lyrical and dramatic poetry is examined by listing the successive degrees of depersonalization required for the full transition from the first to the second. Following this reasoning, such “desdobramentos de personalidade ou, antes, invencões de personalidades diferentes” would allow the poet to be “vários poetas, um poeta dramático escrevendo em poesia lírica.” This would lead to “poesia dramática, sem, todavia, se lhe dar a forma do drama, nem explícita nem implicitamente.” Later, Pessoa speculates: “Suponhamos que um supremo despersonalizado como Shakespeare, em vez de criar o personagem de Hamlet como parte de um drama, o criava como simples personagem, sem drama. Teria escrito, por assim dizer, um drama de uma só personagem, um monólogo prolongado e analítico. (Let us suppose that a supremely depersonalized writer such as Shakespeare, instead of creating the character of Hamlet as part of a play, had actually created him as simply a character without a play. He would have written, so to speak, a one-character play, a prolonged analytic monologue.) Não seria legítimo ir buscar a esse personagem uma definição dos sentimentos e dos pensamentos de Shakespeare, a não ser que o personagem fosse falhado, porque o mau dramaturgo é o que se revela.”

Even though Pessoa’s ideas regarding drama and the dramatic develop in more than one direction, the specific creation of characters deserves a privileged place. This is synthesized in a fragment composed of only two sentences: “O romance é uma explicação dum caráter; o drama é apenas a criação dele.” This definition, however, does not dismiss the development of the action nor the building of the plot, for in another text Pessoa would consider inadequate the “introdução em um drama de uma cena em que, por grande que seja a força ou a graça própria, a acção pára ou não progride, ou, o que é pior, se atrase.” The several fragments that constitute his unfinished “Ensaios sobre o drama” (“Essay on Drama”) distinguish the foundation of the dramaturgical text within the harmony between the three elements of character, action, and plot: “Toda obra dramática, no seu conjunto orgânico, se compõe de três partes: a psicologia dos personagens; a psicologia da sua interação; e a construção do enredo, por meio e através, da qual essa interação se produz.”

These ideas, however, do not correspond to the ideas Pessoa put into effect. When he claims, to Casais Monteiro, that he is essentially a playwright, this designation refers to the poet, the creator of heteronyms, rather than the artist behind a play such as O Marinheiro. In fact, Pessoa’s concept of drama is so ahead of the conventions of the genre that Teresa Rita Lopes, when referring to the writer’s relations with symbolist drama, notes that Pessoa tried to distill himself from traditional notions of theater and dramaturgy by committing himself to the creation of a new drama—free, in its structure, from the characteristics common to the dramatic genre. Lopes emphasizes that, regardless of the connection with that movement, O Marinheiro (The Sailor) presents greater formal and psychological refinement than do the plays written by Maeterlinck in this period. Nonetheless, Lopes points out that it is in Pessoa’s heteronymic work that his dramatic genius is manifest, not only expressing detachment, but also overcoming the symbolist model. In other words, in Pessoa’s work, drama is performed in full “outside” drama. In this sense, the following Pessoa statements are revealing: “Álvaro de Campos é o personagem de uma peça; o que falta é a peça”; “Façamos de conta, ao escrever versos, que estamos escrevendo uma peça.”

Certainly, in his future work, Pessoa assigned a prominent place to drama itself. O Marinheiro, the only play he finished, highlights the level of importance that the accomplishment of such an extensive theatrical work would assume in his artistic-literary projects. Were this not true, it would make no sense that, almost two decades after publishing the work, Pessoa would see it as “sujeito a emendas”; nor would the poet have engaged in writing tens of other dramas if he did not aspire to become a playwright who disrupts the logic of drama “inside” the drama and who, through the creation of heteronyms, redesigns it beyond the drama. Thus, Pessoa’s work relativizes the categories “playwright” and “dramatic poet,” because he desired both the creation of drama outside drama (the heteronymic and oronymic production) and the composition of dramas that, being dramas strictly speaking, are not attached to the main con-
vitations of the genre (the action is practically nonexistent, and empty dialogue occurs between characters of little or no distinction).

Here, the paradox is designed as syllabus: the theater of poetry, the poetry of theater; the play whose features are more lyrical than dramatic, the poem whose features are more dramatic than lyrical. Pessoa’s ideal of poetic creation, in which the notion of drama is refracted, is guided by a purpose of conjunction based on both the overcoming of clear boundaries between lyrical and dramatic genres and the certainty of the impossibility of giving birth to works perfectly adjusted to the tradition of a genre.37

4.

Pessoa makes specific references to Browning in his prose. For example, in “A nova poesia portuguesa sociologicamente considerada” (1912), the Victorian poet integrates, along similar lines with Coleridge and Shelley, the group of “figuras que, sem serem supremas, são [...] grandes indiscutivelmente.” Around 1916, when proposing the edition of an anthology of Portuguese “sensationist” poetry to an English publisher, Pessoa initially mentions Browning: “Suppose English romanticism had, instead of retrograding to the Tennysonian-Rossetti-Browning level, progressed right onward from Shelley [...].” Shortly after this, the “Elegy” of Teixeira de Pascoaes is presented as “certainly transcendental” Browning’s ‘Last Ride Together’ as a love-poem.”39 Another unflattering opinion emerges in a recently published note: “Browning parece pensar em voz alta sem ter mais do poeta do que oter ramos.”40 A reference also appears in a letter to João de Castro Osório (then director of Lusitânia Editora), in which Pessoa offers to translate, among many other authors’ poems, the “most important poems” of Robert Browning.41 Although Pessoa claims these translations are in an advanced stage of development, one finds in his files, among several lists of English anthologies, merely a list of five of his poems as well as some sketches of “The Pied Piper of Hamelin.” Arnaldo Saraiva argues, however, that Pessoa would also have been responsible for the anonymous translation of “Up a villa—down in the city” present in the twentieth volume of Biblioteca internacional de obras célebres.42

The most significant allusion to Browning is found in a text already mentioned, “Os graus da poesia lírica,” in which the degrees of lyric poetry are listed. There, Pessoa elaborates a literary axiology guided by the criterion of depersonalization. Examples in English perpetually recur, and the author asserts that the first degree is characterized by “aquele em que o poeta, de temperamento intenso e emotivo, exprime espontaneamente ou reflectivamente esse temperamento das emoções” (the one in which the poet, of intense and emotive temperament, expresses spontaneously or reflectively that temperament and those emotions); this is the “têpo mais vulgar do poeta lírico [...].” O e seus poemas giram em torno de determinado número, em geral pequeno, de emoções.”44 A range of themes and emotions distinguishes the poet belonging to the second degree, who is still close to the previous one. Despite this specific characterization, the poet of the second degree does not necessarily express how to feel the emotions evoked by the work; Swinburne would represent this category of poet.

Browning arises as the preeminent example of the third-degree poet, in which the depersonalization is already foreseen to the extent that the emotions represented in the poem have their origin in what the poet feels “não já porque sente, mas porque pensa que sente” (no longer because he does feel, but because he thinks he feels). In other words, the poet feels with the imagination, not with the heart. This idea, which aligns with the one Pessoa presented to Francisco Costa, places the drama beyond the dramaturgical structure, propelling the following action: “Estamos na antecâmara da poesia dramática, na sua essência íntima. O temperamento do poeta, seja qual for, está dissolvido pela inteligência. A sua obra será unificada só pelo estilo, último reduito da sua unidade espiritual, da sua coexistência consigo mesmo. Assim é Tennyson, escrevendo por igual ‘Ulysses’ e ‘The Lady of Shalott,’ assim, e mais, é Browning, escrevendo o que chamou ‘poemas dramáticos,’ que não são dialogados, mas monólogos revelando almas diversas, com que o poeta não tem identidade, não a pretende ter e muitas vezes não a quer ter.” (We are in the antechamber of dramatic poetry, in its essential intimacy. The poet’s temperament, whatever one it is, is dissolved by intelligence. His work will have only the unity of style, the final residue of his spiritual unity, of his coexistence with himself. Thus Tennyson, writing both ‘Ulysses’ and “The Lady of Shalott,” and even more so, Browning, writing what he called “dramatic poems,” which are not dialogic, but monologues revealing diverse souls with whom the poet neither identifies nor pretends to and many times has no desire to so identify.)45

In these statements by Pessoa, only his reference to poems that include no dialogue must be corrected. In the poem “In a Gondola,” for example, presented in Dramatic Lyrics, voices of a man and a woman alternate and perform a brief, yet tragic love scene. By contrast, in the poem “In a Balcony,” published in
Men and Woman, the dialogic structure is built in terms that truly resemble a dramaturgical text, presenting not only three characters—Norbert, Constance, and the Queen—but also a love triangle that allows the conflicts among them to develop. This is maintained throughout the nearly 1,000 verses that constitute the text.

When contemplating the fourth degree, “muito mais raro” (a much rarer thing), in which the poet is fully depersonalized, Pessoa mentions Browning once again. However, Pessoa does not necessarily place Browning in the highest rank, because that is reserved for Shakespeare. The fourth-degree poet not only uses the intellect to feel emotions that he does not have, but is also capable of living them—an ability that, in many cases, leads to

poesia dramática, propriamente dita, como fez Shakespeare, poeta substancialmente lírico erguido a dramático pelo espantoso grau de despersonalização que atingiu [as did Shakespeare, substantially a lyric poet raised to the dramatic level by the astounding degree of depersonalization he attained].

Num ou noutro caso continuará sendo, embora dramaticamente, poeta lírico. É esse o caso de Browning, etc. (ut supra) Nem já o estilo define a unidade do homem: só o que no estilo há de intelectual é denota. Assim é em Shakespeare, em quem o relevo inesperado da frase, a sutileza e a complexidade do dizer, são a única coisa que aproxima o falar de Hamlet do do Rel Lear, o de Falstaff do de Lady Macbeth. É assim é Browning através dos Men and Woman e dos Dramatic Poems. [No longer does style itself define the unity of the man, but only what the style possesses of intellect. That’s how it is with Shakespeare, in which the unexpected exaltation of phrase, the subtlety and complexity of expression, are the only things that link Hamlet’s speech with that of King Lear, Falstaff’s with Lady Macbeth’s. The same is true of Browning’s Men and Woman and his Dramatic Poems.]

The fact that Browning is present in both the third (in which the poet “começa a despersonalizar-se” [begins to depersonalize himself]) and the fourth degree (in which the poet “entra em plena despersonalização” [becomes completely depersonalized]) exposes the inconsistency of the system Pessoa proposed. Even though the high ranking assigned to Shakespeare indicates the supremacy of the fourth degree over the third, it is clear that the determining factor in this fourth degree concerns both: “Num ou noutro caso continuará sendo, embora dramaticamente, poeta lírico” (emphasis added).
dramatic poetry to acquire other features besides the “vulgar or more obvious form of drama—scene & dialogue.” 54 In this process, in which the two poets elaborated strategies to relativize the tradition of a specific literary genre, inventing souls was chosen as the privileged way of expression and, therefore, emphasized dramatic monologue.

The use of this form of drama can be identified in hundreds of texts throughout literary history, since, at least, Ancient Greece—hence Pessoa’s discovery of “poesia lírica posta na boca de diversos personagens”55 in Aeschylus’s dramas. 56 Specifically concerning the English-speaking tradition, we can refer to this form’s beginnings, in poems such as The Wanderer and The Seafarer, and even in the versified stories of The Canterbury Tales by Chaucer.57 Thus, in a broader sense, the soliloquies in Shakespeare’s plays can be likewise understood as dramatic monologues, a notion also suggested by Pessoa when he imagined the hypothetical creation of Hamlet as a “simples personagem, sem drama” (simply a character without a play) and speculated that Shakespeare would have written “um drama de uma só personagem, um monólogo prolongado e analítico.”58

Studies on the genre of dramatic monologue normally tend to consider Browning’s poems as a reference. This is because in his poems, the lyric form is established as self-sufficient and no longer associated with a greater dramatic or narrative context. The principle of dramatic monologue is then set as a technique that allows for the formalization of the discourse of an individual character. However, this character is then made alien to the poet, by addressing one or more people (occasionally itself). Therefore, one finds a moment of communication encapsulated in the text in which the reader has access to a scene that, although independent of a broader context, does not refrain from assuming that context, and thus offers a universe of suggestions from which the “state of soul” of that subject, in Pessoa’s terms, is designed.

Through the multiplicity of subjects that arise from Browning’s monologues, which cover a wide range of themes and epochs, Browning satisfies the longing for totality already seen in his previous works. Such is the case in Pauline, his first published poem, in which the speaker claims to himself “a centre to all things, / Most potent to create, and rule, and call / Upon all things to minister to it; / And to a principle of restlessness / Which would be all, have, see, know, taste, feel, all—I This is myself.”59 In Paracelsus, in the moment when the title character asks Aprille to “[t]ell me what thou wouldst be, and what I am,” s/he answers him with a lengthy exaltation of the “eternal, infinite love,” in which the desire “to perfect and consummate all” is prominent.60 Thus, the many literary masks created by Browning lead the reader through a universe of historical periods as distinct as the Italian Renaissance (“Fra Lippo Lippi”), the English Civil War (“Cavalier Tunes”) or the fights for independence in Algeria (“Through the Medjidja to Abd-el-Kadr”). Browning mobilizes myths of Ancient Greece (“Artemis Prologizes”) and folk tales (“The Pied Piper of Hamelin”); and involves monks (“Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister”), noblemen (“My Last Duchess”), soldiers (“Incident of the French Camp”), and other poets as well (“Rabbi Ben Ezra”).

The reader familiar with Pessoa will be able to recognize, in this wide range of characters, the foreshadowing of the notion “sentir tudo de todas as maneiras” (to feel everything in every way) discussed by the Portuguese poet. This is not only seen in the words he ascribed to Álvaro de Campos, according to the text signed in his own name, in which he argues to “[a]bolir o dogma da personalidade: cada um de nós deve ser muitos.”61 George Monteiro even identifies in the Pessoa formulation, “um drama em gente, em vez de em actos” (a drama in people, instead of acts),62 an echo of the expression used in the preface to Strafford: “Action in Character rather than Character in Action.” This suggests the indebtedness of the heteronymic project to Browning’s work.

Despite his speculation about the presence of Browning’s dramatic monologues in the creation of Pessoa’s heteronyms, Monteiro emphasizes the element that distinguishes Pessoa from Browning: Pessoa’s characters are writers and, therefore, able to create the poems wherein they will be known. Something similar can be stated regarding Shakespeare’s characters, obviously not outlined as writers, but whose precedence Pessoa claims when he “erases” the reference to Browning in his text on the heteronyms and the degrees of poetry. Although Shakespeare’s soliloquies can be read as autonomous poems, they were not written with the intention of being categorized as such: far from being conceived as self-centered forms, they guide the action in the play in which they are implemented, presenting a less lyrical purpose than a dramatic one. Browning’s poems, in turn, despite functioning as independent plays, refer to the circumstance wherein they originated and from which it is possible to reconstruct the broader scene in which they are placed. In Pessoa’s poetry, however, it is the poem itself that configures the scene.
Pessoa’s poetic project also exhibits particular differences in comparison to Browning’s. Regarding the position in which the two poets endeavored to situate themselves within the universe they had created, Browning alluded to his dramatic poems as “performances,” that is, plays in which he himself would have been the actor.59 Pessoa, on the other hand, by involving his own name in the context of heteronym, did not seek to maintain his distance from it, but rather to mingle himself within it, shaping a literary mask with the same physiognomy of the empirical “I.”

By radicalizing the procedures of Browning’s monologues when creating the heteronyms, Pessoa distanced himself from one of the models that possibly inspired him. It is curious, however, that he comes close to this model in Mensagem, exactly the work that, in its appearance, is so distinct from heteronym, thus demonstrating the true length of the axis of comparison between the two poets.

Mensagem is a rather epic work—whether for its prophetic or messianic tone or for its grandiloquent discourse—in which the lyrical expression is, nevertheless, dramatic in essence. The arrangement of voices continuously staged in the poem brings it closer to the Browning monologue. This occurs when the author employs historical figures that assume the role of speaker and arouse the revision of past events through the outflow of emotions, even when the first person singular is not used. Because the reference in the title to these characters releases the multiplicity of voices that represent ghosts from a glorious past, the characters then enter the discourse of the poem and have a dialogue among themselves.

Therefore, throughout Mensagem, both the dissolution of the unity of the speaker, presented in the diversity of personae evoked in the work, and the stability of literary genres is articulated in so far as the epic element is added to the dramatization of the lyrical expression proposed. This articulation thus highlights the reconciliation of the convergence of poetry and drama also desired by Browning. From this perspective, the one collection of verses published by Pessoa in Portuguese can be read as a materialization of his literary project, which, among other factors, is based on a dynamic approach to and detachment from tradition.

NOTES

1. As emphasized by Cabral Martins and Richard Zenith, Pessoa never use the word heteronym. See Fernando Pessoa, Teoria da heterónomia, ed. Fernando Cabral Martins and Richard Zenith (Lisbon: Assírio & Alvim, 2012), 211. However, in the famous letter to
13. Ibid.
37. On this issue, Kenneth David Jackson’s hypothesis is that "Pessoa invented and refined a technique of adverse genres, playing against against formal conventions [ ... ] part of a paradoxical juxtaposition whereby poetic genres selected from different historical periods in the Western tradition are filled with an incongruent and inauthentic content, subverting the familiarity of generic expression." In K. David Jackson, Adverse Genres in Fernando Pessoa (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 15–17.
40. Pessoa 2013, 71.
43. See Arnaldo Saraiva, Fernando Pessoa poeta-tradutor de poetas: Os Poemas traduzidos e o repertório original (São Paulo: Nova Fronteira, 1999), 5–58.
47. Translation: ibid., 63.
49. Pessoa 2013, 72.
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60. Ibid., “Paracelsus,” 37.
63. See the preface to the edition of 1888 of Pauline, there designated as “the first of my performances.

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