

WHITMAN

and PESSOA:
GEOMETRIAS DO
ABISMO

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*E eu, verdadeiramente eu, sou o centro que não
há nisto senão por uma geometria do abismo; sou
o nada em torno do qual este movimento gira, só
para que gire, sem que esse centro exista senão
porque todo o círculo o tem. Eu verdadeiramente
eu, sou o poço sem muros, mas com a viscosidade
dos muros, o centro de tudo com o nada à roda.*

Fernando Pessoa/Bernardo Soares, *Livro do Desassossego*: 238

I begin by drawing attention to the poet whose name goes unmentioned in the title; the still largely ignored poet whose function it is to reveal the transition from the orthonymic to the heteronymic Pessoa or, put another way, whose function it is to help illuminate the nature of Pessoa's self-translation as a result of his encounter with Walt Whitman. I am referring to Alexander Search, Pessoa's earliest experiment with a fictionalized poetic self whose pre-heteronymic English poems (approximately 130, not including the fragments) were written over a period of roughly seven years (1904-1910), and whose value as a hovering bridge-like presence is incalculable for anyone interested in the genesis of Pessoa's world of multiple voices. It is precisely that imminent presence and role as mediator between the two Pessoas, the pre-heteronymic and post-heteronymic, that I want to discuss.

With that in mind, I offer this second quote from *O Livro do Desassossego* as a succinct translation of the above epigraph: *Nós nunca nos realizamos. Somos dois abismos – um poço fitando o céu.* I propose we see just how much can be teased out of these self-reflecting heuristic tools. The combination of brevity and clarity in the second quote makes it fly like a perfectly aimed arrow shooting through all the hot air and going straight to the heart of the matter as far as identifying what the drama in the *drama em gente* really involves, something nobody has yet done in a thoroughly satisfactory and convincing manner. If we keep

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in mind that the crucial feature of Alexander Search's intertextual presence within the *drama em gente* is the radical dualism and gnostic nature¹ of his consciousness, we put ourselves in a position to discern within the two metaphors of abyss consciousness, the sky (*céu*) and the well (*poço*), the personae of Alberto Caeiro and Álvaro de Campos respectively, for these twin yet opposite image-voices of the soul are already present as rough drafts in the divided self of Alexander Search. Viewing the heteronymic world through the Search prism, the drama looks more and more like a subjective tragedy in which the heteronyms dramatize the fatal loss of that which anchors consciousness within the self. The central conflict is located very specifically in the implicit dialogue between Campos' personification of the modern sensibility and Caeiro's personification of the irretrievably lost soul. What we hear when we place these two heteronymic poets in conversation with one another are clear and undeniable echoes from Alexander Search's unmasked account of the mind's abrupt and uncontrollable shifts as it darts back and forth between two forms of a rudderless consciousness. Viewing the heteronymic world in the light of a Search blueprint obliges us to define the drama as the process itself by which consciousness moves, and this is because the Search poems, when taken as a whole, highlight the dynamics of an inner warfare and portray the *psychomachia* or desperate battle between two opposing states of mind: the one, luminous and godlike in its poetic power; the other, infernal darkness, negative transcendence, and poetic impotence.

This schism within consciousness is identified in the following three short stanzas of one of his many epitaph poems, an early one (1907), simply entitled "Epitaph":

He lived in powerless egotism,
His soul tumultuous and disordered
By thought and feelings's endless schism.

He of himself did ever sing,
Incapable of modesty,
Lock'd in his wild imagining.

He was a thing that God had wrought
And to the sin of having lived
He joined the crime of having thought.
(Pessoa/Search, Trans. Freire, 1999: 122-23)

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We should note the implicit allusion to the early Christian gnostic roots of Search's mythopoetic framework, an allusion that confirms what Yvette Centeno has said for decades² and that obliges us to take this into account when discussing the meaning(s) of the heteronymic world.

The fact of Search's divided self alludes, in my view, not only to his ontological origins within the context of Pessoa's profound interest in the occult — particularly the occult of the early pagan Christians; it also refers to his deep entrenchment within the post-romantic predicament. One of the many advantages of the Search poems is to correct the misconception that Pessoa was an anomaly, isolated from other poets of the same general period who were responding to similar conflicts within consciousness, by placing him within the literary context of that transitional moment when romanticism first began to lose its vitality and spiritual energy. A key feature of this sensibility is the loss of what Walter Benjamin calls the aura: the persistence of the belief in an Ideal Unity and the sense that the soul and world harmonize.³ Experience of the aura, as Benjamin explains, rests on the transposition of a response common in human relationships to the relationship between the inanimate or natural object and man. To perceive the aura of an object gazed at means to invest it with the ability to return that gaze. In all of Pessoa's poetry but perhaps nowhere more keenly

depicted than in the Search poems is the post-romantic consciousness of the poet exposed and analyzed. Search is both the inhabitant and the observer of that consciousness, and his most intimate and searching poems are about the absurd yet real nostalgia for an impossibly lost Unity, a yearning to bridge what he ultimately knows is an unbridgeable distance and re-identify with (re-member) the lost intuitive sense of himself as unconscious and undifferentiated godlike being. The paradoxical condition of his knowing (in his feeling self) and his knowing that he cannot know (in his thinking self) how to decipher spiritual meaning in the external world and thereby see himself transcendently mirrored in a higher realm is rendered in one simple line from his 1907 poem "The Circle"⁴: "my thinking is condemned to symbol and analogy." (Pessoa/Search: 120).

It is the way Search expresses this transitional state of mind between romanticism and emerging modernism that interests me. Torn between his intuitive belief in a world of correspondences and his self-awareness as a poet in exile, forced to exist without meaning in a fallen world while striving in vain to remember a former godlike self, his poems provide a remarkably vivid diagnosis of the "disease" killing him, what he calls in one poem "an ill that will not go away". This ill has to do with the inner dichotomy of two incompatible forms of knowledge: the analogical and the ironic. To quote Octavio Paz:

In a world where identity — Christian eternity — has disappeared, death becomes the great exception which absorbs all others and eliminates rules and laws. The cure for the universal exception is twofold: irony, the aesthetics of the grotesque, the bizarre and the unique: analogy, the aesthetics of correspondences. Irony and analogy are irreconcilable. The first is the child of linear, sequential, and unrepeatable time: the second is the manifestation of cyclical time: the future is in the past and both are in the present. (Paz, 1974: 109)

Search represents the awakening to ironic knowledge, but his tone remains romantic melancholy. Only later will the lyrical voice of irony explode in the poems of Álvaro de Campos, the heteronym who so accurately dramatizes Search's predicament with caustic, self-mocking humor and a posed self-detachment. Nor, as we have already seen, does Search embody analogical knowledge, described by Paz as "poetry's other way of confronting otherness":

Analogy is the metaphor in which otherness dreams of itself as unity, and difference projects itself illusively as identity. By means of analogy the confused landscape of plurality becomes ordered and intelligible.[...] Analogy is poetry's way of confronting otherness. (Paz, *idem*: 107-08)

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Neither one nor the other, neither voice of analogy nor voice of irony, Search inhabits that in-between state, the no man's land of a dangling and disembodied consciousness. It is there in the hollow spaces of his double consciousness that two latent voices, those of some pre-Caeiro and pre-Campos, vie within his brain and rehearse their roles for a later release in the imaginative explosion of the heteronyms.

If we were to make a map of Search's solipsistic world and chart the various moments of consciousness within it, we would have to think in terms of angular distances from the ecliptic, the intersection plane of the earth's orbit with the celestial sphere. A map of the world as we know it would not do. This is because our two original metaphors for Search's inner world are vertical images requiring infinitude both above and below the latitudinal line representing the Great Divide between thought and feeling. The divide is an ontological one that separates two opposite modes of being. Above is the prelapsarian world of dream and unconsciousness before the fall from innocence; below is the fallen world of exile within existence. A near absolute metaphysical distance blocks any possible mediation between these two states of mind. The timeless feeling self is the

awakened state of consciousness experienced in the dream-like sensation of merging with the world. Search depicts that state of mind, later to be personified by Caeiro, in his 1906 poem "Nirvana."

A non-existence deeply within being,
A sentient nothingness ethereal,
A more than real ideality, agreeing
Of subject and of object, all in all.

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Nor Life, nor Death, nor sense nor senselessness,
But a deep feeling of not feeling aught:
A calm how deep! Much deeper than distress,
Haply as thinking is without the thought.

All that we weep, all that to which we aspire
Is there, and like an infant on the breast,
We shall e'er be with more than we desire
And our accursed souls at last shall rest.
(Pessoa/Search: 94-96)

While Nirvana represents gnostic, "morning knowledge,"⁵ embodied by the master soul of the heteronyms, Álvaro de Campos personifies the "twilight of reason," or "evening knowledge," and the things that characterize his benighted persona are the very things that drown, in Search, the "flooded soul."⁶

Abyss-consciousness in Search is very much a Blakean and Emersonian All or Nothing understanding of Being whereby nothing exists ultimately but the world of one's own making in the realm of the imagination. There, both heaven and hell are possible as states of mind. The difference dividing them lies in the nature of perception. To see *with* the eye is to dwell in the fallen world; to see *through* the eye is to resurrect the buried self and dwell again in the blinding light of pure vision. In this connection, I quote his 1906 sonnet "The Blind Eagle":

What is thy name? and is it true that thou
A land unknown for men inhabitest?
What pain obscure is figured on thy brow?
What cares upon thy heart contrive their nest?

Of human things the purest and the best
No constant beauty doth thy soul allow;
And through the world thou bear'st they deep unrest
Lock'd in a smile thine eyes do disavow.

Being of wild and weird imaginings,
Whose thought are greater than mere things can bind,
What is the thing thou seekest within things?

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What is that thought thy thinking cannot find?
For what high air has they strong spirit wings?
To what high vision aches it to be blind?
(Pessoa/Search: 92-94.)

Ostensibly addressed to a bird, the poem in fact is an evocation of the poet-seer that Search aspires to be: the poet who sees *through* the eye and in so doing transforms the experience of abyss-consciousness to a blinding epiphany of abyss-radiance. It is the poet's role to mediate, like Orpheus, those two worlds. The following quote comes from a journal entry Pessoa wrote, under his own name, presumably around the time he stopped writing under the name of Search. It beautifully elaborates this point by making the crucial connection between the role of memory and perception in order to define the task of the modern poet in a fallen world. It is a long quote, written in English. Here is the long final paragraph:

Mine inner sense predominates in such a way over my five senses that it sees things in this life — I do believe it — in a way different from other men. There is for me — there was — a wealth of meaning in a thing so ridiculous as a door-key, a nail on a wall, a cat's whiskers. There is to me a fullness of spiritual suggestion in a fowl of chickens strutting across the road. There is to me a meaning deeper than human tears in the

smell of sandalwood, in the old tins on a dirt heap, in a match box lying in the gutter, in two dirty papers which, on a windy day, will roll and chase each other down the street. For poetry is astonishment, admiration, as of a being fallen from the skies taking full consciousness of his fall, astonished about things. As of one who knew things in their souls, striving to remember this knowledge, remembering that it was not thus he knew them, not under these forms and these conditions, but remembering nothing more. (Pessoa, n.d., ed. Lind and Coelho: 13-14)

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It is instructive to juxtapose this long passage with a 1907 poem of Search entitled "Mania of Doubt."⁷ Like the passage above, it's about the effect the mystery of things produces in the poet. Unlike the passage above, no sense of self-liberation and imaginative impulse is conveyed, and the admiration and astonishment evoked in the prose passage are here feelings of failure, cowardice, "disturbing pain" and "dreadful hesitation".

All things unto me are queries
That from normalness depart,
And their ceaseless asking wearies
My heart.
Things are and seem, and nothing bears
The secret of the life it wears.

All things' presence e'er is asking
Questions of disturbing pain
With dreadful hesitation tasking
My brain.
How false is truth? How much doth seem
Since dreams are all and all's a dream.

Before mystery my will faileth
Torn with war within my mind,
And Reason like a coward quail
To find
More than themselves all things reveal
Yet that they with themselves conceal.
(Pessoa/Search: 116)

As a kind of sequel, both logically and chronologically, "Approaching," written two years later in 1909, is a vivid rendition of Search's obsessive preoccupation with madness, whose imminence may very well be what eventually silences Search altogether.

With dragging steps ever, like creeping hate,
Through the black silence of my conscious brain
I hear the madness advance, and feel with pain
The ground it treads on writhe and palpitate.

How to avoid it coming, soon or late?
How not to feel the mind's ground vainly strain.
But rooted lie awaiting its dread reign
That cometh inopposable as fate?

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If only madness came as lightening doth —
Suddenly — that were the least greatest ill...
But oh! To feel with consciousness' clear sight

Reason's day go on to twilight in swift growth,
And the twilight of reason, pale and chill,
Darken towards impenetrable night.
(Pessoa/Search: 264-66)

Taken as a whole, the Search poems offer us a detailed allegory of the soul. To the extent that the allegorical narration is about the life of consciousness, it is about the death of poetry. Alexander Search is nothing if not the dead poet walking through the graveyard of his consciousness. What survives his demise is the madness: what brings him to his end but also what subsequently compels the heteronymic eruption into multiple and self-contradicting image-voices of abyss consciousness.⁸ Once we see this, we understand why there are so many epitaph poems and elegies, poems about sepulchers, about death in life, and we also begin to hear the voice of the self-surviving cadaver in much of his poetry, the voice of the near-madman that is left after the true self has been buried alive. In this connection, it is

hard not to think of the many instances in the poetry of Álvaro de Campos where he refers to the insanity of his condition as a postponed corpse. Like a Beckett character recording his own voice in the act of losing his mind and thus, poetically speaking, dying, Search repeats the ritual act of self-annihilation in poem after poem:

Of my thoughts I no longer am master.
Ceasing is now all control.
My mind doth decay – take your pasture
Ravings, ye worms of the soul!
(Pessoa/Search: 234)

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Like Poe before him and with whom he has much in common, nothing in his *waking* experience points towards transcendence. When he speaks of God, it is nearly always in the negative.⁹ To speak of self-transcendence in Search is to allude to the answer he gives Mother Nature in the 1907 poem "Aspiration" when asked "What desirest thou?":

"Something more near to me in space
Than my body is. In fine
Something than myself more mine.
Something (in what words to trace
Its nature?) nearer in its bliss
To me than my own consciousness.
The Something I desire is this.
It lies further than far away
And yet (its nature how to find?)
Closer to me than my mind,
Nearer to me than to-day."
(Pessoa/Search: 178)

With the appearance of the master heteronym, Alberto Caeiro, the "something" above will assume form and voice. Caeiro is that something "nearer in its bliss" than consciousness yet "further than far away." It is no accident that the master or soul of Caeiro – the menino Jesus, the "god that was missing" – lies

embedded in the dream vision of Poem VIII, for as Search has already told us in the last line of his short, undated poem entitled "Epigram": "I love the Real when I love my dreams." (p. 292) Only in the occult "unreal reality"¹⁰ of dream and hermetic unconsciousness can Pessoa find release from the Search condition, for the unconscious act of remembering a former self can only occur when the "black silence" of his "conscious brain" is itself silenced.

In the final analysis, Search's failure is a formal one. As a poet, his need is for a self-expressive language of paradox and contradiction, expansive and flexible enough to project with imagination and subtlety the excesses of his subjectivity. He clarifies this point in an early poem of 1904 entitled "Sonnet":

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Could I say what I think, could I express
My every hidden and too-silent thought,
And bring my feelings, in perfection wrought,
To one unforced point of living stress:

Could I breathe forth my soul, could I confess
The innermost secrets to my nature brought:
I might be great, yet none to me hath taught
A language well to figure my distress.

Yet day and night to me new whispers brings,
And night and day from me old whispers take...
Oh for a word, one phrase in which to fling

All that I think and feel and so to wake
The world: but I am dumb and cannot sing,
Dumb as you clouds before the thunders break.
(Pessoa/Search: 30)

The last line hints at an imminent eruption of voice about to explode, but it will take another ten years before an authentic and thoroughly modern voice will project the full lyrical and dramatic range of abyss consciousness. When it occurs, there is no mistaking the twin intertextual presences of a recycled

Search and a transmogrified Whitman at the very core of the double consciousness personified by Caeiro and Campos.

Eduardo Lourenço's insights on the importance of *Leaves of Grass* as a catalyzing force in the heteronymic explosion as well as on the transformed echos of Whitman in two of the heteronyms broke new ground in Pessoa studies more than thirty years ago. Those essays continue to be the best that exists on the subject, and my own thinking about the Whitman/Pessoa connection is heavily indebted to his pioneering work.¹¹

46>47 In my view, Pessoa ingeniously appropriated both the Whitman voice and the Whitman structure of personal identity as an open-ended, cosmic persona in order to inscribe his own version of Whitman as abyss consciousness in which the center is everywhere (Caeiro) and the circumference is nowhere (Campos). The example of Whitman's mythic, all encompassing persona offered Pessoa precisely the model he needed — and that Alexander Search had searched for in vain — for an evolving epistemology of the self. His dialectical treatment of personal identity as a dynamic interaction between the timeless "Me myself" and the "Walt Whitman, a kosmos [...] turbulent, fleshy, sensual, eating, drinking, and breeding" was paradigmatic for Pessoa's creation of an abstract self. In the light of close textual scrutiny of his two annotated copies of *Leaves of Grass*, his various references to Whitman in essays and his celebratory poem "Saudação a Walt Whitman," it is clear that Pessoa viewed Whitman as the modern muse, the way into modernity. Yet he also understood that Whitman was quintessentially a romantic. It is useful, in this regard, to recall one of Pessoa's most illuminating critiques of the romantic self:

A personagem individual e imponente, que os românticos figuravam em si mesmos, várias vezes, em sonho, a tentei viver, e, tantas vezes, quantas a tentei viver, me encontrei a rir alto da minha ideia de vivê-la. O homem fatal, afinal, existe nos sonhos próprios de todos os homens vulgares, e o romantismo não é senão o virar do avesso do domínio

quotidiano de nós mesmos. Quase todos os homens sonham, nos segredos do seu ser, um grande imperialismo próprio, a sujeição de todos os homens, a entrega de todas as mulheres, a adoração dos povos, e, nos mais nobres, de todas as eras. Poucas são como eu habituados ao sonho, são por isso lúcidos bastante para rir da possibilidade estética de se sonhar assim.

A maior acusação ao romantismo não se fez ainda: é a de que ele representa a verdade interior da natureza humana. Os seus exageros, os seus ridículos, os seus poderes vários de comover e de seduzir, residem em que ele é a figuração exterior do que há mais dentro na alma, mas concreto, visualizado, até possível, se o ser possível dependesse de outra coisa que não o Destino. (Pessoa/Bernardo Soares, Trans. Zenith: 86-87)

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Pessoa saw Whitman's persona as an ideal representation of the romantic construct — as the dream of Being's possibility — and he deconstructed that ideal in order to give shape to his own version of a single separate person's identity as the self-propagating heteronymic persona of self as otherness, as what one is not but dreams one is.

In one of the most startling transformational maneuvers in literary history, Pessoa divided and conquered the myth of his predecessor, his "brother in the Universe," as he calls him in his identification poem, "Saudação a Walt Whitman." From the implicit dialogue in Whitman between the me and Me myself, Pessoa carved two explicitly distinct images of voice. Whitman, earlier, by virtue of a connective, organic consciousness, was able to weave these two voices together into one dynamic whole. Pessoa, coming a half century later, would have to discover a new strategy for expressing the self in Whitmanian fashion, both technically and philosophically. In detecting two potentially opposing selves in *Leaves of Grass*, and particularly in "Song of Myself," Pessoa found the means for inscribing the perpetual flux of a single consciousness that shifts in fits and starts between two essential attitudes towards Being. Caeiro and Campos, together re-sing Whitman's "Song of Myself" as a duet, with the main voice of the soloist

(Campos) forever haunted by the remote echoes and impalpable presence of the other (Caeiro).

Reading one persona as an essential part of the other provides a new reading of the heteronyms. It also loops us back to the Search material where we can now discern the blueprint for both Caeiro and Campos. Thus we can conclude, as we come full circle in our hermeneutic circle of interpretation, that the special value of Alexander Search for Pessoa's *drama em gente* lies in its singular capacity to locate and explicate both the *drama* and the *gente*. That such is the case compels us to refine, maybe even redefine, what Pessoa's project of "othering" really entails. <<

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NOTAS

[1] It bears remembering that on March 30, 1935, exactly eight months before his death, Pessoa wrote that he was a Christian Gnostic, entirely opposed to all organized churches, particularly the Church of Rome, and that he was faithful to the secret Christian Tradition, which in turn approximated the secret Jewish Tradition of the Holy Kabbalah and the occult essence of the Free Masons. Furthermore, a vast amount of material on early Christianity can be found in Pessoa's personal library, a catalogue of which is available at the Casa de Fernando Pessoa. For an in-depth and entirely readable introduction to the subject, see *The Gnostic Religion: the message of the alien god and the beginnings of Christianity* by Hans Jonas, the most distinguished philosophical historian of Gnosticism. Also see the following in *Agon* by Harold Bloom: "A Prelude to Gnosis", Chapter 2: "Lying Against Time: Gnosis, Poetry, Criticism," and Chapter 6: "Emerson: The American Religion."

[2] In the Introduction to her volume of Pessoa's unpublished manuscripts on hermeticism, Y.K. Centeno writes: "Já várias vezes afirmei, a propósito da datação possível do seu interesse pela filosofia hermética e pelo ocultismo em geral, que certos poemas de Alexander Search, o heterónimo juvenil, e certas notas de leitura do caderno assinado pelo mesmo, e referentes ao ano de 1906 (Esp. 144H-7, 144H-13 e 144H-26), mostram que é antiga a sua curiosidade e a sua relação com tais matérias." A bit later she clarifies: "Trata-se para ele de dar corpo a vários corpos, a partir de um corpo só, de dar voz a várias vozes, a partir de uma só voz. A iniciação, única e sempre a mesma, que encontramos no pensamento filosófico como na actividade literária, é a do desdobramento que na criação se verifica desde o primeiro ser, o Adão primordial de gnósticos, kabalistas, alquimistas — todos os que se dizem herdeiros de uma tradição hermética. Desdobramento, multiplicação, que só depois de assumidos e esgotados permitem a unidade." *Fernando Pessoa e a Filosofia Hermética: Fragmentos do Espólio*, pp.9:11. In her essay "Fernando Pessoa e o ocultismo," in *Fernando Pessoa*:

O Amor, A Morte, A Iniciação, she writes: "A sensação de ser habitado e conduzido por outrem surge frequentemente na poesia heteronímica, mas não vou deter-me a analisá-la aqui. Mais interessante é detectar a raiz destas preocupações em Alexander Search, o poeta imaturo, e ver como depois, nos textos herméticos, virão a ser resolvidas." (pp. 51-56)

[3] For Benjamin's discussion of the aura, see his essay "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire," section XI, pp. 186-92. Useful parallels between Baudelaire and Search — both of whom were heavily indebted to Poe, discussed at some length at the beginning of Benjamin's essay — can be made here in terms of the loss of the aura. As Benjamin says at the end of the essay, referring to Baudelaire: "He indicated the price for which the sensation of the modern age may be had: the disintegration of the aura in the experience of shock. He paid dearly for consenting to this disintegration — but it is the law of his poetry, which shines in the sky of the Second Empire as "a star without atmosphere." There are also useful parallels to be drawn between the way Pessoa and Benjamin deal primarily with models of experience for which there is an overt disjunction — shock, dream, melancholy — and the way each seems compelled to explore more dynamic models of language in order to express that discrepancy. In the final section of *The Origin of the German Tragic Drama* (pp. 159-235) — his study of the German baroque *Trauerspiel* (mourning play) — Benjamin rejects the tyranny of the symbol as the privileged model for art theory in the nineteenth century and proposes a model in which allegory and symbol are understood not as different modes from which a writer may choose but as features of a language inevitably co-present in any discourse. With the symbol, image should coincide with substance; allegory, by comparison, calls attention not, as is often thought, to the ways in which language fails to signify, but to the strange co-presence of distinct semantic levels of a text. The tension thus created is famously captured with his claim: "Allegories are, in the realm of thoughts, what ruins are in the realm of things." (*Origin*, 178). What allegory presents is not a hidden meaning but an overtly negative relationship between content and mode of expression. What allegory represents is not the loss of sense or meaning, but the inability of the medium to account for the nature of its own presentation. All this is pertinent for a reading of Search. In fact, the greatest significance of the Search poems may be the way in which they suggest a reading of the heteronyms as an allegory of consciousness. The most famous contemporary treatment of this question is still Paul de Man's "The Rhetoric of Temporality."

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[4] In other places (see Works Cited) I have suggested that what Master Caeiro most significantly embodies of Whitman is the gnostic knowledge of his master Ralph Waldo Emerson: an unbinding, liberating knowledge of what in the self is divine, a knowledge of oneself as beyond time, beyond the cosmos, even beyond God. This is the knowledge that Emerson's Orphic poet possesses, and it is succinctly articulated toward the end of Emerson's long and essay "Nature" of 1836. See especially the last five paragraphs of the final chapter, beginning with the famous sentence "Man is the dwarf of himself." In this connection, it is worth noting that Emerson's essay entitled "Circles," which begins thus — "The eye is the first circle; the horizon which it forms is the second; and throughout nature this primary figure is repeated without end. It is the highest emblem in the cipher of the world. St. Augustine described the nature of God as a circle whose centre was everywhere, and its circumference nowhere" — was partially bracketed by Pessoa in his copy of Emerson. Furthermore, Campos' "Saudação a Walt Whitman" invokes the circle more than once as a way of describing

Whitman's infinite capacity to be everywhere and feel everything simultaneously. Finally, Y.K. Centeno has this to say about the poem: "Ainda de Search é o poema «The Circle», datado de 1907. Aqui se lida com esse «estranho e místico» símbolo, e se conclui que a mente está «condenada» ao símbolo e à analogia. E refere-se ainda o «humor cabalístico» do poeta, no momento em que desenha o círculo que devia ser mágico e redundante em fracasso. Fracasso. Chegamos a um ponto crucial na iniciação, ou busca, de Fernando Pessoa. Foi sucesso ou fracasso? Desceu sobre ele a luz da iluminação ou apenas o sofrimento e a treva?" (*Fernando Pessoa: o Amor, A Morte, A Iniciação*, pp. 51-52).

[5] In the aforementioned passage from Emerson's essay "Nature", Emerson writes the following in reference to numerous miracles known through various religious traditions: "These are examples of Reason's momentary grasp of the scepter; the exertions of a power which exists not in time or space, but an instantaneous in-streaming causing power. The difference between the actual and the ideal force of man is happily figured by the schoolmen, in saying, that the knowledge of man is an evening knowledge, *vespertina cognitio*, but that of God is a morning knowledge, *matutina cognitio*".

[6] In the following three lines from the long 1907 poem, "In the Street", where allusion is made to the "flooded soul" one discerns the two "elements" within "the aching heart" that will evolve into full-blown heteronymic presences: The aching heart whose mind has brooded / Till thought turned raving wild hath flooded / The soul that gave it birth (Pessoa/Search: 156).

[7] Two things are worth noting in this connection. First, one of Whitman's copies of *Leaves of Grass* was signed by Alexander Search. Secondly, there is a connection to be made between the title of the Search poem, "Mania of Doubt," and the relatively recent discovery of the following note, written most likely around 1907-1908 and very likely Pessoa's earliest reference to Whitman: "Walt Whitman united all three tendencies, for he united mania of doubt, exaltation of personality and euphoria of physical ego." The quote is taken from Richard Zenith's essay "Caeiro Triunfal," in *Alberto Caeiro/Poesia*, p. 1254.

[8] The following lines in "Hora Absurda" are pivotal in this regard: "O que é que me tortura? . . . Se até a tua face calma / só me enche de tédios e de ópios de ócios medonhos. . . / Não sei. . . Eu sou um doido que estranha a sua própria alma. . . / eu fui amado em efígie num país para além dos sonhos." Here, for the first time, madness is asserted, claimed as identity, thus setting the heteronymic stage for the "caravana de hístriões" as he refers to it in another spot in the same poem.

[9] Exceptions to this are his occasional prayer and reverie poems. Here are lines from the beginning of his 1908 poem "Prayer":

"Oh God, if Thou be'st anything / Hear this frail prayer that I fling / Like a flame leaping past control / From out the hell that is my soul: / Oh God, let me not fall insane! / I know that half-mad I am now; (...) / I suffer much, yet let me not, / Though thus I suffered not at all, / Pass into emptiness of thought, / To madness deep which is a gall / Filling the soul till bitterness, / Becoming part of us, doth steep / The whole soul in unconsciousness. / A little sense, oh, let me keep!" (Pessoa/Search: 222-24)

Only in the poems of reverie can he find an escape from the downward spiraling movement of consciousness. Significantly, these poems often bespeak the same kind of relationship found in Poem VIII of Alberto Caeiro. "Regret" (1907) is an example of what I mean:

"I would that I were a child / And a child you sweet and pure, / That we might be free and wild / In our consciousness obscure, / That we might play fantastic games / Under trees silent and shady, / That we might have fairy-book names, / I be a lord, you a lady. / And all were a strong ignorance / And a healthy want of thought, / And many a prank, many a dance / Our unresting feet had wrought, / And I would act well a clown's part / To your childish laughter winning, / And I would call you my sweetheart / And the name would have no meaning. / Or sitting close we each other would move / With tales that now gone are sad, / We would have no sex, would feel no love, / Good without fighting the bad. / And a flower would be our life's delight / And a nutshell boat our treasure: / We would lock it in a cupboard at night / As in memory a pleasure. / We would spend hours and days like a wealth / Of goodness too great to cloy, / We would deep enjoy innocence and health / Knowing not we did enjoy... / Ah, what bitterest is that-alone / Now one feeling in me I trace — / That knowledge of what from us hath gone / And of what it left in its place."
(Pessoa/Search: 108-10)

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[10] My use of this rather awkward expression is not gratuitous. Not only does Pessoa use it often but it is pertinent to as a way of formulating the necessary distinction between the *unreal* reality of Campos and the dream, or real unreal of Caeiro's poetics or "science" (as he calls it) of perception.

[11] See "A curiosa singularidade de mestre Caeiro" and "O mistério-Caeiro na luz de Campos e vice-versa" in *Pessoa Revisitado*, pp. 37-50; 73-86.

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