

Fernando Pessoa's Detective Fiction

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in Medieval and Modern Languages

Trinity Term 2016

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D.Phil. Thesis – Short Abstract
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In this thesis I set out to write the first in-depth study of Pessoa's detective stories. I approached this task in three steps: firstly, by tracing Pessoa's interest in the genre of crime fiction, his readings and influences. Secondly, by analysing the themes and structure of the Quaresma stories. Thirdly, by placing them in the context of Pessoa's written output. The first step is addressed in the first two chapters of the thesis, where I study the connections between Pessoa and Anglo-American detective fiction, as well as how he adapted foreign models to a Portuguese context. The second step of my approach is developed in chapters 3 to 5. In the first of these I focus on the construction of Quaresma as a literary character. My key finding is that the texts featuring him are composed by two kinds of writing: on the one hand narrative prose, including descriptions, actions and elements that further the plot; on the other, an essayistic prose which consists of Quaresma's long speeches expounding his theories on criminal investigation, philosophy, psychology, and reasoning. Chapters 4 and 5 study several of the Quaresma stories from the point of view of gender relations and how these shape the construction of plot and character. At this juncture I use Lacanian and Derridean readings on Poe's 'The Purloined Letter', having previously established that author's influence on Pessoa. The third and final step of my thesis is an attempt to interpret Pessoa's detective fiction in relation to his wider work: I propose a reading of the Quaresma stories, other prose texts and heteronymy as parts of a literary project of creating non-narrative fictions.

Fernando Pessoa's Detective Fiction

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D.Phil. Thesis – Long Abstract
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In this thesis I set out to write the first in-depth study of Pessoa's detective stories. This group of texts had warranted little critical attention until recently due to the fact that they had never been thoroughly edited and published in book form. Ana Maria de Freitas' editions *Quaresma, Decifrador* (2008) and *Histórias do Raciocínio e o ensaio História Policial* (2012) opened this grouping of Pessoa's writings to a wider readership, while simultaneously allowing a critical reading that had previously been hindered by the fact that the stories are fragmented, often unfinished, and spread out in the envelopes in the Pessoa estate at the Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal. The most salient creation of this body of work is the character Abílio Quaresma, Pessoa's Portuguese detective and the main character of the stories collected in the 2008 edition.

My work builds on Maria de Lurdes Sampaio's doctoral thesis *História Crítica do Género Policial em Portugal (1870-1970): transfusões e transferências* (2007), which includes a chapter on Pessoa's detective stories. It is the most serious attempt to engage with the texts, alongside her article 'The Disquiet of Archaeology: Fernando Pessoa's Detective Writings' (2008). Her work provides the basis for my initial analysis, particularly concerning the relationship between the Quaresma stories and Anglo-American detective fiction. Precursors to Sampaio include Américo Lindeza Diogo

(1994) and Fernando Luso Soares (1976). Luso Soares has the merit of being the first book-length work calling attention to Quaresma's character as literary creation of Pessoa's, as well as of remarking on the investigative methods of the detective. Nonetheless, it provides little by the way of analysis of the texts themselves. Diogo's work, although it only features a short chapter devoted to the Quaresma stories, goes a little further in establishing a cultural context for the texts, drawing parallels with Sherlock Holmes and Agatha Christie's novels. My thesis, benefitting from Freitas' editorial work, offers a new and fully developed analysis of the most representative pieces of the Quaresma corpus. It leads to an attempt to read Pessoa's prose fiction in relation to his wider work, proposing the category of non-narrative fiction as a means to understand not only the stories themselves but Pessoa's literary project as a whole.

Pessoa's famous letter to Adolfo Casais Monteiro on 13 January 1935, where he explains the "origin" of his heteronyms and discusses publication plans, contains a sentence that helped me to formulate my research questions:

Quando às vezes pensava na ordem de uma futura publicação de obras minhas, (...) Hesitava entre se deveria começar por um livro de versos grande (...), englobando as várias subpersonalidades de Fernando Pessoa ele mesmo, ou se deveria abrir com uma novela policiária, que ainda não consegui completar. (Pessoa 1999: 338)

This asserts how the detective stories were at the forefront of Pessoa's mind and publication plans, on a par with his poetic work, where he privileged the heteronymic production. Considering that the strength of the latter firmly established Pessoa's canonicity as an author, the parallel made there with almost unknown texts struck me as requiring attention: what characterizes Pessoa's detective stories and what is their relationship with the rest of his textual output?

I approached this question in three steps. Firstly, by tracing Pessoa's interest in the genre of crime fiction, his readings and influences. Secondly, by analysing the themes and structure of the Quaresma stories. Thirdly, by placing them in the context of Pessoa's written output.

The first step is addressed in the first two chapters of the thesis. The initial text that I read is Pessoa's essay "Detective Story", written in English and published for the first time by Freitas (2012). It includes a list of authors in the detective genre that Pessoa deemed relevant, discussing their relative merits and flaws. Drawing on Sampaio's work and consulting Pessoa's personal library, I reinforced the links made by her and Diogo between Pessoa's practice of detective fiction and two 19th century authors, Edgar Allan Poe and Arthur Conan Doyle, which constitute the centerpiece of his essay. More important, however, is the connection between Pessoa and his contemporary Anglo-American authors and critics of crime fiction, especially Dorothy Sayers and E.M. Wrong, who edited and prefaced anthologies of detective fiction that Pessoa read and extensively annotated. My conclusion is that Pessoa wrote fiction in the same vein of the English 'cozies', i.e. detective stories set in genteel social environments where a murder story is presented as a puzzle to be solved by the detective. Moving on to the second chapter, I study the Portuguese elements in Pessoa's stories, paying special attention the fact that his models are foreign and the genre itself was perceived as foreign, as argued by Sampaio. By setting his stories mostly in Lisbon, Pessoa adapts the rules and models of the 'cozies' to a Portuguese setting. I interpreted this as an attempt to claim for Portugal and Portuguese literature a status on a par with that of the countries that at the

time of his writing, and to this day, are most associated with crime fiction: the United States, and, more relevantly in Pessoa's case, the United Kingdom. An example of this is the use of plot elements including, in 'O Caso Vargas', the hypothetical construction of revolutionary submarines in Portugal at time of the Anglo-German naval rivalry. More commonly, Pessoa's Portuguese markers are essentially geographical: almost all of the stories take place in Lisbon or its vicinity; or social, and depict upper-class Portuguese society in the first quarter of the 20th century. In this, his work mirrors that of Sayers or Christie in England. The idiosyncrasy of his crime fiction, however, becomes more apparent when I study a brief fragment, not included in Freitas' 2008 edition, in which Quaresma investigates the death of Sidónio Pais. This text further illustrates Pessoa's concern with Portugal in his crime fiction, but it simultaneously constitutes a glaring example of his willingness to discuss real-life events and people in fictional texts, and conversely to use the "reality" of those events and people to destabilize the supposed fictional status of his texts, claiming for them a "truth value". This is a point that traverses the remainder of the thesis, leading up to the final chapter and the proposals contained therein.

The second step of my approach is developed in chapters 3 to 5. In the first of these I focus on the construction of Quaresma as a literary character in the stories 'O Caso Vargas', 'O Pergaminho Roubado', and 'O Caso da Janela Estreita'. I chose these stories not only due to their higher degree of completion, particularly 'O Caso Vargas', which is the longest in the corpus, but also because they provide instances of Quaresma's actions and thoughts that epitomize him. My key finding is that the texts

interlace two kinds of writing: on the one hand narrative prose, including descriptions, actions and elements that further the plot; on the other, an essayistic prose which consists of Quaresma's long speeches expounding his theories on criminal investigation, philosophy, psychology, and reasoning. These essayistic texts frequently echo Pessoa's own opinions on those subjects expressed elsewhere in his writings. The proximity between Quaresma and his creator is reinforced by descriptions of both physical and character attributes of the detective that display a striking resemblance to Pessoa's. Abílio Quaresma emerges from this reading as a literary character that is built by the interaction between the two prose modes: while the narrative establishes physical appearance, social status and such qualities, the essayistic mode fleshes out his personality, preoccupations and, crucially, investigative method.

Chapters 4 and 5 study several of Quaresma's stories from the point of view of gender relations and how these shape the construction of plot and characters. Three stories in particular, 'A Carta Mágica', 'Tale X ou a Morte de D. João', and 'Cúmplices ou Tribunal' provide examples of different levels of the misogynistic bent in Pessoa's crime fiction. Furthermore, they present points of comparison with Pessoa's letters and poetry, as himself or heteronymic, especially in what concerns the psychological analysis of characters undertaken by Quaresma. In 'A Carta Mágica' in particular, the character Marta is described in terms very similar to those used by Pessoa to describe himself. At this juncture I use Lacanian and Derridean readings on Poe's 'The Purloined Letter', having previously established that author's influence on Pessoa. The two stories share similar plot elements and structure that reveal how the power dynamics between

women and men involved in the theft of a letter inform the narrative structure of the text itself. Pessoa's famed self-analysis as a "histero-neurasthenic" – in the same 1935 letter where he puts his poetry and his crime fiction at the same level in term of his publishing plans – echoes Marta's diagnosis by Quaresma as a "histérica" who wants to "intrujar o mundo". Moving on in Chapter 5 to 'Tale X' and 'Cúmplices', we find male figures of authority – a policeman and a lawyer – as the main characters, who commit murder as a reaction to the manifestation of their sister and wife's sexuality respectively. Moreover, these texts reinforce the links found in 'A Carta Mágica' with other texts by Pessoa, especially in terms of possible associations between mental illness, literary creativity, and crime. 'Tale X' in particular, referencing the Great War throughout, finds parallels in Álvaro de Campos and Pessoa-himself's poetry.

The conclusions of this analysis of Quaresma's character and of the structural features of the stories form the groundwork for the third and final step of my thesis: to propose an interpretation of them as encapsulations of Pessoa's literary project of creating non-narrative fictions. To do this, I use Genette's categorization of paratexts and their relationship with texts, reframing the connections between Pessoa's correspondence and essays on the one hand, and his literary work on the other. I show that both are textual corpora operating at the same level in order to lead towards the creation of fictional characters, the heteronyms. This is the same procedure that can be more easily discerned in the Quaresma stories, where narrative and essayistic prose are juxtaposed and marshalled in the creation of a literary character. This is of particular importance by keeping in mind the fragmentary status of the Quaresma narratives, as

most of Pessoa's other writings: the gaps between texts, or the "intervals", as Medeiros (2015) calls them, can be read in terms of promoting a relationship that creates meaning between fragments, as his reading of *Livro do Desassossego* demonstrates.

In order to understand what that meaning might be, I focus on prose works and newspaper articles, drawing from Kendall Walton's theory of fiction as make-believe to shed light on how the interaction between separate, individual texts orchestrated or written by Pessoa can result in the creation of fictional events, characters and actions that lack a traditional narrative or dramatic structure to sustain them, instead taking place in the mind of the reader. When I turn my attention to the Crowley affair in particular, Pessoa's willingness to mix texts that operate on the premises of telling fictional or real-life events emerges as a defining characteristic of his project.

The main consequence of my proposal is how it sets itself to escape the loop of traditional Pessoaan criticism, which tends to regard Pessoa's analysis of his own work not only as separate from that work but also as a privileged viewpoint to understand it – indeed, taking it as "literary criticism". Ivo Castro (1990) and more recently Feijó (2015) have called attention to discrepancies and inconsistencies in Pessoa's 'myth', for instance the specific dating of the "Dia Triunfal" to 8 March 1914 when many of the texts supposedly written that day can be clearly dated to later periods. I find affinities in this healthy skeptical approach to Pessoa's statements, to which Pizarro (2012) also greatly contributed with his editorial work. However, by using literary theory (Lacan, Derrida, Genette) and philosophy (Walton) in my interpretation of the Quaresma stories and Pessoa's work, my thesis is closer in methodology and arguments to Comparative

Literature, and hence to critics such as Santos (2003), Eiras (2005) or Medeiros (2013, 2015). In short, this thesis, both in its object and method, contributes to the field of Pessoaan studies in two ways: firstly, it studies in detail for the first time the Quaresma stories; secondly, it promotes an interpretation of these texts that, when extended to Pessoa's wider work, may encourage greater openness with regard to the methodology used in Pessoaan studies.

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Introduction

This is the first in-depth study of Fernando Pessoa's detective fiction. It is only possible due to the editorial work of Ana Maria de Freitas, which led to the publication of two volumes collecting Pessoa's crime stories. The first of these was *Quaresma, Decifrador* (2008), which includes almost all the texts featuring detective Abílio Quaresma, Pessoa's most fully developed and articulated literary character. It includes a total of thirteen unfinished stories of various lengths, written in Portuguese. These texts, written between 1912 and 1935 (Freitas, *in* Pessoa 2008: 16-17), constitute the author's major engagement with the genre. They constitute my main primary sources for this thesis. One of their primary characteristics is their fragmentary aspect: none of the stories are completed and many have long gaps between different sections of the story, frequently interfering with the construction of plot. These fragments, in turn, and most importantly in more developed stories such as 'O Caso Vargas', 'O Pergaminho Roubado' or 'A Carta Mágica', can be divided in two modes: narrative prose and essayistic prose. The characteristics of these modes and the interplay between the two is a crucial point that my thesis discusses.

The second of Freitas' editions is *Histórias de um Raciocinador e o Ensaio 'História Policial'* (2012). It includes Pessoa's texts written originally in English, some of which are crime stories featuring an English detective, Sergeant William Byng. It also includes an essay titled 'Detective Story' in which the author lays down an assessment of the genre's history and condition at the time of his writing. Freitas dates most of these texts to an earlier period than the Quaresma stories: 1906 or 1907 (Freitas *in* Pessoa

2012a: 5-9). They are even more fragmentary than the Quaresma corpus, and I draw from them mostly as a way of documenting Pessoa's interest for the genre since his youth. The essay contained in the volume, however, was reworked by Pessoa at later moments in his life and is crucial to understand his aesthetics of the detective genre. One other important text for my thesis is the fragment 'The Stolen Document', also published in the 2012 edition, which sets out to offer an alternative ending to Poe's 'The Purloined Letter' (1844). These two texts support my reading of the Quaresma stories.

Importing a foreign genre: the Portuguese case

Sampaio calls attention to a discourse that frames detective fiction as a "foreign genre" to a Portuguese audience. She references Gomes Monteiro's chapter devoted to "Literatura Policial" in Albino Forjaz de Sampaio's 1932 *História da Literatura Portuguesa, Ilustrada, dos Séculos XIX e XX*, stating that crime fiction is a "Género inteiramente no estrangeiro, também em Portugal despertou cultores" (Sampaio 2007: 37).¹ Further on, when she focuses on the profusion and popularity of crime fiction in Portugal from the 40s onwards, Sampaio references a survey conducted by the magazine *Ler* in 1953, in which booksellers were asked about their biggest sales. Porto's Livraria Simões Lopes provides the following testimony: "Bem sabemos que para o êxito

¹ Gomes Monteiro mentions Eça's and Ramalho's *O Mistério da Estrada de Sintra* (1871), as well as Francisco Leite Bastos and Alfredo Hogan, authors of novels in the vein of Eça and Ramalho's work. (Monteiro in Forjaz Sampaio 1932: 258-267).

comercial, muitos autores portugueses estão a escrever nessas colecções policiais e de romances cor-de-rosa com pseudónimos estrangeiros, mas a procura dos seus livros é feita pelo sabor do rótulo estrangeiro” (Sampaio 2007: 166-167).² The bookseller’s statement establishes two things: first, that crime fiction was still seen, as late as the 1950s, as a foreign genre in Portugal; and second, that such foreignness was in itself an added attraction for the reading public. Compounding perceived foreignness, Sampaio also argues that crime fiction occupies a particularly fixed role as a “minor” genre in the Portuguese cultural field until very recently. How this perception may have affected the reception (or lack thereof) of Pessoa’s crime fiction is illustrated by the role of Gaspar Simões as critic.

In 1945 Gaspar Simões published the anthology *Mestres do Conto Policial*, in the ‘Antologias Universais’ series. She considers the publication of this volume to be a decisive moment in the history of detective fiction in Portugal, since it is the first time that a respectable critic devoted his attention to the genre. The fact that it is none other than Pessoa’s first editor and biographer to perform this task is striking. In addition to considerations on the history and “rules” of the genre, Simões briefly covers its presence

² The foreign pennames refers to authors and works such as Edgar Powell, a.k.a Guedes de Amorim, *Al Capone* (1932); Adam Fulton, a.k.a Américo Faria, *O Roubo do Grão Mogol* (1945); Dick Haskins, a.k.a António de Andrade Albuquerque, *O Sono da Morte* (1955); Ross Pynn, a.k.a Roussado Pinto, *Cemitério sem Cruzes* (1956); Simon Gannett a.k.a António Carlos Pereira da Silva, *O Sangue sobre o Mar* (1964); Frank Gold, a.k.a Luís Campos, *Caso de Morte* (1965); or Dennis McShade, a.k.a Dinis Machado, *Mão Direita do Diabo* (1967). Guedes de Amorim is the only author to have written during Pessoa’s time and it serves to illustrate how in the 1930s the appeal of foreign pen names in Portuguese detective fiction had its beginnings.

in Portugal, most of it comprised of translations. Sampaio calls attention to the fact that Pessoa's name is omitted:

Uma omissão, porventura, mais intrigante é a de Fernando Pessoa. Gaspar Simões não faz qualquer referência às experiências escritas e leituras, neste campo, por parte de Fernando Pessoa. Omissão esta que se explica, eventualmente, em função da impossível exemplaridade de Pessoa nesta altura. Gaspar Simões empenhava-se, então, na consagração de Pessoa como um dos nossos maiores poetas modernistas. A mínima alusão a esta vertente pessoana poderia revelar-se, no contexto a que se alude, mais prejudicial do que benéfica. Mas (...) a sucinta teoria do policial que o autor presenciava expõe é, no essencial, a teoria de Pessoa. (Sampaio 2007: 307)³

The reference to Simões' effort in canonizing Pessoa as one of the greatest Portuguese modernist poets is likely to be concerned with the publication of the first edition of *Obras Completas de Fernando Pessoa*, in 4 volumes, edited by Simões and Luís de Montalvor for Ática between 1942 and 1945. I agree with Sampaio's explanation for the exclusion of Pessoa from Simões' preface: it is part of a project of canonizing Pessoa, highlighting his poetry as his most representative work. This is based on a division between highbrow and lowbrow, with the canonical or "serious" texts held in higher regard by the literary field personified in the role of Simões as gatekeeper. On the other hand, the division is reinforced and perpetuated by the exclusion of texts – and authors – that Simões, and by extension the Portuguese literary and cultural field, perceived as less serious. In this group, the Quaresma stories emerge as peccadilloes of an otherwise high-minded author.

³ He was also the author of a preface to the volume, much in the same vein as Sayers' and Wrong's prefaces which will be studied in the first chapter of this thesis. Sampaio mentions Sayers' anthology as a possible source for Simões own preface (Sampaio 2007: 306).

More recently, however, they have obtained recognition in Sampaio's work and, crucially, with the first full publication of the corpus.⁴ This could be explained by the canonical status of their author, but also as a consequence of the fact that they belong to a genre ennobled by the rhetoric of Modernist authors and critics into a higher status, despite its mass appeal. The association between the Golden Age of Detective fiction, in which tradition Pessoa can be inserted, and Modernism is made convincingly by Michael Holquist:

Now is it precisely during the 20s and 30s of this century, when Modernism was in its deep-diving prime, achieving its most completely realized persons and its densest world, that the detective story had its golden age. It is a period when the two strands, experimental literature-high culture, on the one hand, and popular literature-the detective story, on the other, are more than ordinarily split in their techniques, basic assumptions and effect. (Holquist 1971: 146)

The split Holquist points out, however, is one that occurs at a structural rather than a thematic level. The association that he finds is at the level of the theme of "reason", or thought, and its operations, as he clarifies:

It was during the same period when the upper reaches of literature were dramatizing the limits of reason by experimenting with such irrational modes as myth and the sub-conscious, that the lower reaches of literature were dramatizing the power of reason in such figures as Inspector Poirot and Ellery Queen. What must be remembered here is that it is essentially the same group of intellectuals who were reading both. (Holquist 1971: 147)

⁴ Luso Soares (1976) and Miraglia (1988) are predecessors of Freitas in editing selections of the corpus. Luso Soares, furthermore, provides a brief analysis of the use of psychology as a method of investigation in 'A Carta Mágica' and 'O Caso Vargas', also drawing attention to the intellectual character of Quaresma. Nonetheless, even after the Freitas editions the texts have attracted little critical attention. For instance, they are notably absent from *Portuguese Literary and Cultural Studies*, 28, (2014), an issue of the journal entirely devoted to Pessoa's relationship and English-speaking cultures.

Pessoa's status as *a/the* canonical Portuguese Modernist poet, with an English language upbringing, is an interpretive backdrop against which his detective stories must be read. He is of the company of those intellectuals that Holquist identifies elsewhere in his essay.⁵

Drama and fiction: Simões, Coelho, Lopes, Jackson

A traditional *topos* of Pessoaan studies is reading his work in the terms of his expression “drama em gente”, which first appeared in print in *Presença*, Nº17, December 1928. In the short essay “Tábua Bibliográfica”, the author himself lays much of the basis of subsequent interpretations by describing the structure and dynamics of the three major heteronyms:

As obras destes três poetas formam, como se disse, um conjunto dramático; e está devidamente estudada a entreacção intelectual das personalidades, assim como as suas próprias relações pessoais. Tudo isto constará de biografias a fazer, acompanhadas, quando se publicarem, de horóscopos e, talvez, de fotografias. É um drama em gente, em vez de em actos. (Pessoa 1999: 404-407)

In 1947 Coelho's *Diversidade e Unidade em Fernando Pessoa* heteronymity is consecrated as the most salient feature of Pessoa's work, setting the tone for the following decades of Pessoaan studies. For Coelho, however, the most important aspect of the heteronyms is the contrast between the plurality of their styles and their

⁵ Notably Eliot, for his critical interest in the genre, but also authors of a later period who drew on the structure of the detective story in their literary works, notably Borges or Nabokov. Sampaio offers this same connection with post/modernist uses of detective fiction (Sampaio 2008: 161)

authorship by a single real-life author. Successive revised editions took into account the development of the line of interpretation that approximates Pessoa's work to the structure and logic of drama. The most important of these is Gaspar Simões' *Vida e Obra de Fernando Pessoa*, which discusses the heteronyms in a part entitled "Drama em Gente" (1950: 229-279). Simões also explores a crucial strand of interpretation, namely the tension between sincerity and insincerity in Pessoa: "A *boutade*, o paradoxo, a mistificação, o gosto de *épater*, a *blague* estiveram presentes desde o primeiro dia, à mesa do café a que Fernando Pessoa se sentou com os seus amigos (...)" (Simões 1950: 245). Tracing a biographical and largely anecdotal interest of Pessoa in creating short-lived lies for his friends, Simões establishes a link between this personal characteristic and heteronymy as a form of mystification:

os heterónimos, sendo, como são, uma forma de mistificação, representam afinal, na ética literária de Fernando Pessoa e na sua metafísica, uma das mais sérias manifestações de sinceridade de que ele foi capaz em vida. Por não saber harmonizar a *sinceridade* que a poesia exige com a *insinceridade* que viver implica é que Fernando Pessoa lançou mão do expediente *insincero* dos heterónimos (Simões 1950: 251).⁶

I disagree with Simões' superficial reading, but he does lay the finger on a problem at the heart of Pessoa's work, in Simões' terms "sincerity" and "insincerity". The critic tries to describe the relationship between Pessoa's literary work and an outside reality – that of the author's thoughts and feelings. Bypassing such a psychologization, I argue that this problem can only be safely analyzed intratextually, where the "insincerity", or what I

⁶ Italics in the original.

call “fiction”, subsumes and is a precondition to any possible “sincerity”. In short, Pessoa’s work is, above all, an exploration of the possibilities of fiction.

This angle found a different approach in Teresa Rita Lopes’ *Fernando Pessoa et le Drame Symboliste* (1977).⁷ Lopes engaged with Pessoa’s work from the standpoint of French symbolist drama, tracing firstly the connection between Mallarmé and Maeterlinck to Pessoa’s dramatic writings *O Marinheiro* and *Fausto*. She then emphasizes the theatrical aspect of the composition of the heteronyms, about which she writes:

Le lecteur de Pessoa ne pourra jamais saisir la véritable portée de son oeuvre s’il se limite (...) à considérer chaque hétéronyme comme un tout. (...) D’ailleurs, Fernando Pessoa a été le premier à envisager cette mise-en-scène, en proposant de considérer chaque monologue de ses hétéronymes comme un drame et “tous ensemble un autre drame”. Et il a même ajouté: “C’est un drame en personnes au lieu d’être un drame en actes” (Lopes 1977: 265)⁸

The second part of her seminal book studies each of the major three heteronyms, as well as Pessoa’s oronymic work, as monologues by characters in a would-be drama with no action or, indeed, very few similarities to traditional notions of theatre other than their status as characters and Pessoa’s conception of the “drama em gente”.

Lopes lists Quaresma in the subsection of her work titled “Des Voix en Quête d’un Personnage” where she briefly considers the minor heteronyms (Lopes 1977: 266-

⁷ José Augusto Seabra’s *Pessoa ou o Poetodrama* (1974) explores in greater depth the dynamics and relationships between each of the heteronyms. It also includes the first in depth studies of *O Marinheiro* and *Fausto*. It is a landmark in Pessoa studies, but for the purposes of this introduction it should be mentioned primarily as a forerunner to Lopes’ work.

⁸ Pessoa’s quotations are translated into French by Lopes. The original sources are in Portuguese, from the essay “Tábua Bibliográfica” to which I refer above.

283). The fact that Quaresma is present there shouldn't be surprising, considering the relative lack of publications or critical attention the Quaresma stories had had by the time of Lopes' publication (1977). Lopes calls him a "auteur-personnage", considering however that "on ne peut évidemment considérer Quaresma comme un hétéronyme ou un candidat à hétéronyme au même titre que d'autres" (Lopes 1977: 274), indicating that such was the opinion of A. Pina Coelho.⁹ Lopes offers no critical judgement on Quaresma's role in Pessoa's work, suggesting only that "À travers les exercices ludiques des raisonnements de Quaresma, Pessoa s'évadait du quotidien et cherchait une vérité qui était pourtant tout à fait à l'échelle humaine, et qui, par conséquent, ne lui faisait pas peur" (Lopes 1977: 275). This dismissal of the Quaresma stories is symptomatic of what has been called a "marginalization" (Sampaio 2007: 190) of crime fiction in Portugal during the 20th century.¹⁰ Once placed in his role as an autonomous creation, a literary character whose existence is grounded on texts, which were intended to be published as "novelas policárias", then we depart in a different direction, stressing the element of fictionality underpinning the entirety of Pessoa's work.

Pessoa's terms seem to justify to a certain extent this interpretation of his output, particularly the writings of and about the heteronyms, in terms of drama. What is more, the importance of dialogue and speech in the Quaresma stories, arguably reinforces

⁹ 'Algumas peças de ficção ainda inéditas de Fernando Pessoa', in *Brotéria*, vol. LXXXIII (Lisbon, 1966), p.342.

¹⁰ Sampaio quotes Arnaldo Saraiva: "Entre essa literatura marginal, marginalizada e que é frequentemente produzida por marginais, contam-se os slogans, os anúncios, os comics, as bandas desenhadas, os folhetins, as fotonovelas, as reportagens, os romances policiais, a ficção científica, as canções, e inúmeros textos "underground" ou contraculturais. (Saraiva 1980: 7).

Lopes' reading: the scarcity of narration compared to the preponderance of dialogue and essayistic writing. The latter is, in the internal logic of the detective stories, a form of speech uttered by a character, and it could point to a theatrical structure within the detective stories. Lopes suggests a similar reading when she underlines the lack of action in *O Marinheiro* and *Fausto*: "Mais, soit en composant des poèmes dramatiques «extérieurement comme tels», soit en fuyant cette extériorité, Pessoa n'a jamais introduit l'action dramatique, au sens traditionnel du terme, dans ses poèmes." (Lopes 1977: 173). Lopes' way to by-pass the issue of the unorthodox dramatic quality of Pessoa's work is to compare it with Symbolist static drama. I find two main problems with this approach, the most important of which is how it privileges Pessoa's own account of his work as the way to understand it. Pessoa is effectively raised to the status of being the most effective critic of his literary work. As my final chapter will dispute, this is only possible if Pessoa's letters, essays and analytical pieces are taken as having a separate textual status from his poetry and literary prose. My proposal is to abolish that divide. The second issue with Lopes reading is how it overemphasizes heteronymy, to the detriment of the considerable amount of Pessoa's other literary texts, which include the Quaresma stories, *Livro do Desassossego*, other short stories and so on. Lopes does, however, highlight the problem of hybrid or atypical practices of literary genres in Pessoa, which bring me to a more recent critic whose work is decisive in my reading of the Quaresma stories and their place in Pessoa's work.

In order to understand the diversity of Pessoa's literary output and to establish a relationship between disparate works, it is useful to draw on a more recent work: K.

David Jackson's *Adverse Genres in Fernando Pessoa* (2010). The crux of his argument is that "Pessoa invented and refined a technique of adverse genres, playing content against formal conventions" (Jackson: 15). Some examples given by the critic include: the treatment of philosophical themes in poems using folk verse form, such as 'Autopsicografia', and other texts grouped by Pessoa under the title *Cancioneiro* (59-76); Campos' twist on the Whitmanian song of the self where the over-affirmative subject proves to be a void (77-92); the parody of Aristotelian syllogisms and Socratic dialogue in 'O Banqueiro Anarquista' (108-116); the misleading superficiality of Caeiro's take on the pastoral (117-131); or the faux-neoclassicism of Reis' odes, a modernist repetition, and hence reinvention, of a antiquated genre (132-143).¹¹ Regarding prose fiction in Pessoa's work, besides the already mentioned chapter on 'O Banqueiro Anarquista', Jackson devotes chapters to Bernardo Soares (161-176) and the early short story 'A Very Original Dinner' (28-36).

What unites these readings is their common argument for a tension between content in Pessoa's texts that is at odds with either their form or the tradition in which they can be inserted. I would suggest that the essayistic elements in the Quaresma stories offer another example to illustrate this theory. Detective fiction was in Pessoa's time a highly codified genre, with set rules and canons to which authors conformed. Quaresma's long digressions would qualify as a departure from those norms, and hence

¹¹ Jackson also covers the play *O Marinheiro* as well as Pessoa's love letters to Ofélia in other chapters. The latter's status as non-fiction would demand an attention that is outside of the scope of the present dissertation.

yet another adverse genre. Pizarro's publication of several excerpts taken from the Quaresma stories, together with essays and letters with supposedly no fictional element to them, in *Escritos sobre Génio and Loucura* (2012) emphasizes this characteristic of the essayistic element in Pessoa's detective stories.

These detective stories become, however, a more interesting case of content/form dissonance once we consider that they are among the few works of prose fiction written by Pessoa. The problem is more complex than the content/form dichotomy, constituting rather a case of friction and contrast between two modes of prose writing. In the Quaresma short story 'O Caso do Quarto Fechado', the centerpiece of Quaresma's appearance is, as with the vast majority of the other stories, his exposition of psychological theories which he applies to the case (Pessoa 2008: 315-343). The narration of the story and the evolution of plot are suspended as its main character engages in explaining his processes of thought as if they had universal value. The genre of the detective story, as formulated and practiced until the early 1940s, is undermined by a content that is closer to essayistic writing than prose fiction. The relationship between these adverse "genres", when encountered in texts billed by the author as "novelas policiárias", points to the central problem in Pessoa's work: the creation of fictions that are not sustained by traditional plot structure or character development.

The "adversity" is not only in genres or form and content but rather in the opposition of the categories of fiction and non-fiction. The fact that the non-fictional aspect of the Quaresma texts largely derives from the author's own theories – or, rather, reception of theories popular during his life – concerning the processes and workings of

the human mind, reframes the problem as one between a textuality which is inherently fictional and its relationship to an extra-textual reality. That this extra-textual reality takes, in Quaresma's speeches, the form of disquisitions into the structure of thought highlights the metafictional aspect of the Quaresma stories and, by extension, of Pessoa's wider work. This metafiction is part of what Jackson refers to as "avant-garde play":

While there is doubtlessly an element of avant-garde play in the labyrinth – Teresa Rita Lopes cast Pessoa's the theater director of a "drama with people" (*drama em gente*) – there is a more serious and overriding contradiction: the art of avoiding a single inner core of being is Pessoa's real condition. (Jackson: 14)

Jackson draws attention to the elements of contradiction and the avoidance of a univocal text in Pessoa. Whereas the critic explores this in terms of content/form, my contention goes in the direction of highlighting the conflict between a narrative mode and an essayistic mode in Quaresma's stories. This functions as a means of constructing non-narrative fictions, mirroring the dynamics of heteronymy.

Structure

My thesis has three main goals: to contextualize Pessoa's works in terms of the Anglo-American canon of the genre at the time of his writing; to analyze the most salient features of the Quaresma stories in terms of structure and themes; to provide an interpretation of the place they may occupy in his wider work.

My initial two chapters are concerned with the first of these goals. In the first chapter I trace Pessoa's relationship with Anglo-American detective fiction, testified by

his own declarations on the subject in a variety of manuscripts, as well as by the extant copies of crime anthologies and novels present in his personal library. Several of these books are heavily annotated by him and provide insights into his opinions of several authors, especially Edgar Allan Poe and Arthur Conan Doyle. Two sources of this kind are particularly important: *Crime and Detection* (1926), with a critical preface by historian and fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford, E.M. Wrong; and *Great Short Stories of Detection, Mystery and Horror* (1928), with a critical preface by Dorothy Sayers. These two introductory texts analyse the history of the genre and comment on developments in the 1920s. Pessoa's handwritten annotations help to contextualize his essay 'Detective Story', which is very similar in structure and purpose to Wrong's and Sayers'. An important aspect of this analysis is how critics and practitioners of the genre alike from Poe until the 1930s place the faculty of "reason", frequently in opposition to "feeling" or "sensation", as the preeminent characteristic of the detective as a recognizable character and of the stories featuring him. Frequently, this pre-eminence takes the form of affirming the status of science as the form of knowledge with the highest truth-value. Pessoa conforms to this rule.

The second chapter studies how Pessoa adapted to a Portuguese context a genre so heavily associated, at the time of his writing and since then, with Anglo-Saxon culture. To understand how this operation takes place I briefly analyse the socio-cultural contexts of Anglo-American detective fiction and its development since Poe and Conan

Doyle, the forebears of the genre, up until the early 1940s, the period immediately after the moment of Pessoa's writing.¹² This involves examining the implications of privileging "science" and "reason" as the methods to understand, evaluate, and control societies that are organized in urban and industrial contexts according to the tenets of capitalist imperatives. Poe's and Conan Doyle's stories are set in Paris and London. Pessoa's stories take place in Lisbon, a city that did not go through the same pace of growth and industrialization as the other two. Pessoa tries to deal with this difference by fundamentally not addressing it, resorting to plots where landed aristocrats and civil servants face similar problems as the characters in Anglo-American fiction. His goal is to claim for Lisbon the same relevance as those foreign metropolises. I also examine a fragment not included in *Quaresma, Decifrador* which shows the detective investigating the assassination of Sidónio Pais, an element that confirms Pessoa's engagement with contemporary Portuguese issues and society in his stories, while simultaneously providing further evidence of the blurring between fiction and historical reality in his literary work.

The third chapter is devoted to an in-depth examination of Abílio Quaresma as a literary character. Singularly, Quaresma is constructed mostly through his long speeches, which are articulated as if they were essays. This is what I call Pessoa's essayistic prose in his fiction. Quaresma, trained as a medical doctor, solves his crimes by applying his

¹² The reason for considering this broad period and indeed for considering texts written after Pessoa's death is the fact that in the early 1940s American authors, especially Raymond Chandler and Dashiell Hammet revolutionized the genre in ways that, to a certain extent, Pessoa's stories anticipate.

take on psychology and psychiatry, using terms and concepts, first expounded by Cesare Lombroso or Max Nordau. This is Pessoa's singularity as a crime writer: the use of mind sciences to solve crimes by reconstructing the psychology of the murderer. Simultaneously, it inserts him in the canon of reason-centric authors by whom he was influenced. The Quaresma stories, however, also include a more traditional narrative mode, which is essential in setting the plot and providing descriptions of actions and characters. Pessoa's detective is thus a fictional character constructed by both narrative and essayistic writing, with the essayistic element exerting a predominant influence: Quaresma is in effect constructed by his speeches, albeit within the framework of the narrative elements of each text. A point raised by this argument is that such structure mirrors the creation of the heteronyms, which is articulated by the relationship between Pessoa's letters and self-analytical essays on the one hand, and the poetry of each heteronym on the other. To substantiate this I examine both the preface to 'O Caso Vargas' and that story itself, as well as 'O Pergaminho Roubado' and 'O Caso da Janela Estreita'.

The fourth chapter strengthens the connections made with Poe by providing a comparative reading of Pessoa's 'A Carta Mágica' and Poe's 'The Purloined Letter' (1844). Both stories are about the theft of a letter, but more importantly both display similar dynamics of power between thief, victim and detective. I use Jacques Lacan's 'Seminar on 'The Purloined Letter'', and the comments made on it by Jacques Derrida and Barbara Johnson, as a way to investigate how these relationships unfold. Significantly, Lacan's argument places gender identities at the forefront of Poe's text,

and many of his points can illuminate ‘A Carta Mágica’. This allows me to address issues of gender, which feature prominently in several of the Quaresma stories. In the case of ‘A Carta Mágica’, the prime suspect is a woman, Marta. Her gender plays a decisive role in Quaresma’s psychological method of investigation, which frequently addresses problems of male-female relationships, both in sexual and family contexts. This in turn is part of the interaction between what I have called the narrative and the essayistic elements of the texts.

The fifth chapter expands this line of research with an analysis of the story ‘Tale X ou A Morte de João’ and ‘Cúmplices ou Tribunal’. In these stories Quaresma becomes a secondary character, while male figures of authority, a policeman in ‘Tale X’ and a lawyer in ‘Cúmplices’, are the focal points of each narrative. In both texts the essayistic element of the Quaresma corpus is less present, and as I argue in Chapter 3 the Pessoaan detective is largely constructed by his speeches. Unlike in ‘A Carta Mágica’, the different stereotypical attributes of masculinities are the main element in Quaresma’s analysis.

The sixth and final chapter provides an interpretation of the place of Pessoa’s detective stories in his wider work by comparing several of the features described in earlier chapters with examples of Pessoa’s better-known prose work and poetry, specifically ‘O Banqueiro Anarquista’, the texts relevant to the Crowley affair, and prose pieces concerned with heteronymity, including letters, interviews and other documents, as well as *Livro do Desassossego*. Its main thrust is the proposal of a new category that may unify the author’s textual output as a project of non-narrative fiction. This does not

mean a complete exclusion of traditional narrative techniques, such as description of character and action, but the subordination and inclusion of such techniques as occasional instruments, on a par with different strategies, directed towards the creation of fictional worlds and characters. Those other strategies take primarily the form of the juxtaposition of essayistic or prose work (such as letters, analytical essays and newspaper articles) with more traditionally literary texts such as poetry or short stories. To support my reading I draw from both literary theory and philosophy, specifically the work of Gérard Genette on the categories of text and paratext, and Kendall Walton's theory of fiction. The Quaresma stories show this *in nuce*: essayistic and narrative fragments are brought together in their creation of Abílio Quaresma as a fictional character.

At this juncture, building on recent Pessoaan criticism, including Castro (2016), Sepúlveda (2013) and Medeiros (2014), I argue that heteronymity has essentially the same structure, once we consider Pessoa's letters and essays on the subject not as interpretive devices on the poetry of the heteronyms but as texts functioning at the same level. Together they create the heteronyms as fictional characters of a non-narrative nature.

Chapter 1

Fernando Pessoa and Anglo-American Detective Fiction

This chapter studies Pessoa's relationship with Anglo-American crime fiction, especially in what concerns the founding figures of the genre, Poe and Conan Doyle, but to a certain extent also in the context of some of his lesser-known contemporaries. Pessoa's engagement with English-speaking cultures has been well established (Monteiro 2000) and is a active field of research (Castro 2013, 2016); but the recent publication of his detective stories has opened the possibility of a new approach to the study of the interaction between Pessoa and the foundational texts of detective fiction. To study the Quaresma stories, however, it becomes necessary to trace Pessoa's interest in the genre of crime fiction. This will be done by firstly approaching Pessoa's critical work on the genre, specifically his essay 'Detective Story'. Secondly, I'll study relevant instances of criticism present in his personal library, specifically his copies of two short-story anthologies, *Crime and Detection* (1926) and *Great Short Stories of Detection, Mystery and Horror* (1928), both of which include introductory essays on the genre which are extensively annotated by Pessoa's hand. Pessoa's library includes a total of 31 volumes relating to detective fiction. There are 12 other titles in the catalog that could be pieces of detective fiction but they are not part of the Casa Fernando Pessoa's collection, being held in private hands.

One problem arising from this survey is its relatively small size: the BFP collection has 1142 volumes, the total collection of Pessoa's private library goes up to

1429. Pessoa's reference to authors and books not included in his library in the essay “Detective Story”, as well as his reading lists and notes in catalogs of collections included in several of the extant volumes – all of Ernest Benn's series - indicates a much wider reading. Reference should also be made to the presence of several books by the Baroness Orczy, R Austin Freeman and one by Arthur Morrison, all of which are referenced in “Detective Story”. On a similar note, the relative scarcity of Conan Doyle in the library perhaps justifies the opinions expressed by Pessoa in his essay, generally preferring Poe to Doyle.¹³

The most important texts, however, for the purposes of understanding Pessoa's tastes in the genre, are the prefaces by Wrong and Sayers, considering the extensive annotations made by Pessoa. By mapping out his references in the genre through these texts I investigate whether there is such a thing as the “Pessoan detective”, and if that is the case, how it stands in relation to its predecessors and contemporaries. This is crucial groundwork so that we can understand better the formation of his Portuguese detective, Abílio Quaresma, who will be analyzed in greater depth in subsequent chapters.

¹³ It is also worth noticing, in terms of bibliographical interest, how most of the detective titles found in the library were published either by Gottfried Benn (London), Victor Gollancz (London), or the Tauchnitz Press (Hamburg, Paris, Bologna), major publishers of the genre. In this line, the occurrence of several books belonging to The Albatross Continental Library, a publishing house founded in 1932 by employees of Tauchnitz, including Kurt Enoch, who would collaborate with Allen Lane in the founding of Penguin Books and later head its north-american branch, as well as Arnoldo Mondadori, founder of Arnoldo Mondadori Editore, which would go on to become the biggest publishing house in Italy. The Albatross plays a pivotal role in the formation of the contemporary book industry. The fact that a copy of a book published by *The Albatross* appears in Pessoa's personal library only a few years after its founding – he dies in 1935 – testifies to his contact with the main centres of intellectual life in Europe. See the appendix for a full list of the works.

‘Detective Story’ – Pessoa as critic

Pessoa’s interest in the incipient crime genre dates to his youth in South Africa, as the English language works grouped under the title *Tales of a Reasoner* testify (Pessoa 2008). Ana Maria de Freitas has traced their inception to the years 1906 and 1907 while the author was still living in Durban (Freitas, in Pessoa 2008: 5). The protagonist of these earlier stories is William Byng, a retired sergeant in whom many of the characteristics of his successor Quaresma can already be found. Byng is introduced by a preface written supposedly after the character’s death, a device which is replicated in the Quaresma stories. The sergeant is described as a man who “had an intellect of extraordinary acuteness”, a person “of a mental activity so phenomenal that the narrator has no hesitation in assenting to what he said, that he reasoned and argued even in dreams” (Pessoa 2008: 17). Simultaneously, “[Byng] was a drunkard by temperament”, being also described as “that man who drinks” (Pessoa 2008: 18). Alongside the Byng stories, the essay titled ‘Detective Story’ warrants a closer and crucial attention. Started in 1906 and then worked upon for the rest of the author’s life (Freitas in Pessoa 2008: 109), it provides evidence of Pessoa’s interest and opinions on the detective genre. As most of his writings pertaining to this topic, it was never completed. It opens with the following plan:

Essay on Detective Literature.
Part One.
Popularity of Detective stories & reasons for it.
What are detective stories?
Necessary points of these tales.

Obstacles in the way of detective-story writers

Part Two.

Edgar Allan Poe.

~~Gaboriau & Boisgobey.~~

~~Mrs. A.K. Green.~~

Conan Doyle.

A. Morrison & others. (Pessoa 2008: 236)¹⁴

The structure, then, suggests a first section where a critical approach to the genre is to be attempted, which in fact is the basis for the majority of the surviving fragments. The second part would seem to be a collection of case studies, wherein three of the authors are crossed out. This fact warrants further comment, particularly considering the relative obscurity of Gaboriau, Boisgobey and A.K. Green, i.e. Anne Katherine Green, side by side with Poe and Conan Doyle.¹⁵ A. Morrison, i.e. Arthur Morrison, closes the list in yet another obscure note to the modern reader.

The list is organized chronologically, if one looks at the date of publication of the first works of each of these authors: Poe, *The Murders at Rue Morgue* (1841), Gaboriau, *L'affaire Lerouge* (1866), Boisgobey, *Une affaire mystérieuse* (1878), Anna Katherine Green, *The Leavenworth Case* (1878), Conan Doyle, *A Study in Scarlet* (1886) and Arthur Morrison, *Martin Hewitt, Investigator* (1894). This group of authors provides a gateway into Pessoa's relationship with his models and predecessors.

¹⁴ The names are crossed out in the original text. The italicized text also respects Freitas edition. I edited out of this quote numbers that appeared to the side of each entry and that are immaterial to an analysis of the list.

The first of those names is Edgar Allan Poe, of whom Pessoa possessed three works in his personal library, including a 1902 edition of selected works prefaced by Baudelaire.¹⁶ The importance of Edgar Allan Poe to the detective genre has long since become a common-place. Messac 1929, the first major work of criticism on the detective genre, aptly titled *Le «Detective Novel» et l'influence de la pensée scientifique*, dedicates a whole chapter to Poe's works, effectively canonizing him as the "creator" of the genre. This would almost certainly place Pessoa's essay as a forerunner of the assertion. Nonetheless, the metaliterary quality of detective novels was already at work in affirming the preeminence of Poe. In Conan Doyle's first work featuring Sherlock Holmes, *A Study in Scarlet* (1887), the link with Poe's Auguste Dupin is affirmed by Watson:

"It is simple enough as you explain it," I said, smiling. "You remind me of Edgar Allan Poe's Dupin. I had no idea that such individuals did exist outside of stories."

Sherlock Holmes rose and lit his pipe. "No doubt you think that you are complimenting me in comparing me to Dupin," he observed. "Now, in my opinion, Dupin was a very inferior fellow. That trick of his of breaking in on his friends' thoughts with an apropos remark after a quarter of an hour's silence is really very showy and superficial. He had some analytical genius, no doubt; but he was by no means such a phenomenon as Poe appeared to imagine." (Conan Doyle [1887] 1981: 24)

Upon hearing that Holmes is a consulting detective, Watson thinks of Poe's creation first, adding his incredulity regarding the real life existence of "such individuals". The

¹⁶ *The Choice Works of Edgar Alan Poe*, London: Chatto and Windus. The pastedown endpaper on the reverse of the cover displays a document issued by the University of Cape of Good Hope attesting that the book is part of the Queen Victoria Memorial Prize, won by Pessoa upon application to the University in 1903.

fact that the line is spoken by a character in yet another story in another book is an early instance of the metaliterary aspect of the detective genre.¹⁷

Returning to Pessoa's list of authors, the names of Gaboriau and Boisgobey feature together in the same line, no doubt because both wrote stories featuring Monsieur Lecoq, a detective largely drawn from the exploits of real-life investigator Vidocq, another frequently argued predecessor of the detective novel (Messac: 133). Gaboriau invented the character in *L'Affaire Lerouge* but Boisgobey wrote other stories for the same character after Gaboriau's death. This autonomous existence of the character outside of the books where he was first presented is arguably further proof of the special status of the detective as a literary character in the crime genre. The character transcends the limits of the specific work that first featured him, his characteristics becoming fixtures of a whole genre. Pessoa shows awareness of this characteristic by grouping two authors into one sub-heading in his abortive essay, though the fact that they are physically crossed off the list indicates a change of mind at later period, presumably because of the dominance of the Anglo-American authors in his mind.

The other crossed-out name is Anne Katharine Green. Pessoa translated and published a third of *The Leavenworth Case* in 1926 under the title *O Mistério da 5a*

¹⁷ Effron, Malcah, 2010, *If Only this were a Detective Novel: Self-referentiality as Metafictionality in Detective Fiction*, PhD thesis submitted at Newcastle University, covers this topic in Golden Age detective fiction (1920-40), particularly in Ellery Queen, Dorothy Sayers, Agatha Christie and S.S. van Dine.

Avenida in the daily newspaper *Sol*.¹⁸ Green's current minor status in the canon of Detective fiction, considering her relative obscurity even in recent criticism, does not reflect her popularity in the late 19th century and up to the time of Pessoa's essay and his detective stories: "*The Leavenworth Case* [was] one of the true milestones of the genre. It beat Holmes to the post by almost a decade (...) it was one of the all-time best-sellers in the literature." (Haycraft 1942: 83). Her presence in the list confirms his engagement with the American author, but also his misgivings. The fact that her name is crossed out is related to the negative opinion he expresses about *The Leavenworth Case* in 'Detective Story' when he moves on to discuss the relative merits of various authors: "we have a novel, with a love plot and a mystery, the mystery subject to the love plot." (Pessoa 2012a: 244). He considers that "the detective novel is to be severely distinguished from the novel in which the detective comes in only to solve the problem."

¹⁸ Freitas, in Pessoa 2008: 266. The newspaper was short-lived due, presumably, to its republican, anti-fascist orientation: "O diário *Sol*, dirigido por Celestino Soares, publicou-se entre 30 de Outubro e 1 de Dezembro de 1926, ou seja, durante 33 dias (...). O *Sol* era um jornal de tendência republicana e antifascista, que se publicou no ambiente político hostil da Ditadura Militar, instaurada em 28 de Maio do mesmo ano, e sujeito ao regime de censura prévia à imprensa recentemente instaurado. O diário *Sol* sucedera a um "bissemanário republicano" do mesmo nome, também dirigido por Celestino Soares, que se publicou entre Julho e Agosto de 1926 (seis números), em "edição da grande revista *Contemporânea*", e do qual Augusto Ferreira Gomes, íntimo de Pessoa, foi secretário de redacção a partir do n.o 3" (Barreto 2012: 231).

Pessoa's translation wasn't his only contribution to the paper. Barreto's essay centers on a purported interview written by Pessoa with an Italian antifascist activist, Giovanni B. Angioletti. A person by that name did exist but he did not correspond to the description provided by Pessoa in the text, nor did he ever visit Lisbon, according to Barreto. It is an imaginary interview, mixing fact and fiction, much like the pieces pertaining to Aleister Crowley and the hoax perpetrated by him and Pessoa concerning the former's faked suicide. It is also worth noting Ferreira Gomes' involvement in the biweekly *Sol*, shortly before the establishment of the daily with the same title, given that Ferreira Gomes was instrumental in the Crowley affair, as will be discussed in chapter 6.

(Pessoa 2012a: 244), the latter being the category in which *The Leavenworth Case* would be included. Pessoa goes even further in his criticism:

The first and necessary attributes of a detective story demand that it be short and that the detective (should) be the central figure. If we lose sight of the first attribute the tale becomes a novel; if we disregard the second it is not a detective story at all. Thus it is a mistake to call the novels of Mrs A. [Anne] K. [Katharine] Green detective stories; they are always unpleasantly long, and the detective's figure is not made prominent, on account of some silly love affairs and unimaginative embroilments. A detective story, let it be remembered, is not a vehicle for sentiment or passion; it is a cold, intellectual composition, the delight which it causes being intellectual merely [sic]. (Pessoa 2012a: 250)

Pessoa's contention with emotions and love plots in detective stories may have ulterior motivations, as Chapter 4 of this dissertation will argue, namely a bias against what Pessoa considered to be "feminine".

Conan Doyle, on the other hand, causes no surprise in that list. Again, his inclusion is in keeping with the canon of detective fiction as built since Messac, but Pessoa does not entirely eulogize his works. Concerning *A Study in Scarlet*, for instance, he writes that "the American narrative could have been struck out or condensed in a paragraph or two" (Pessoa 2008: 240). "The American narrative" alludes to 'The Country of the Saints', the long flashback in the second part of the novella, taking place in Utah, with the background story of Jefferson Hope, the murderer.

Arthur Morrison, the creator of Inspector Hewitt, is the last entry in Pessoa's list and also the most recurrent mention in the main part of his essay. Like Green, Morrison has been greatly forgotten from anthologies and criticism. He is regarded as an exponent of Victorian sensation fiction mainly through his work *A Child of the Jago* (1896) (Pittard 2010: 205). His Inspector Hewitt stories, however, are quoted by Pessoa several

times, who writes a longer excerpt about the first of them, ‘The Lenton Croft Robberies’, comparing it with Poe’s ‘The Murders in the Rue Morgue’:

Let us now take the first detective book of Mr. Morrison – *Martin Hewitt, Investigator*. It is here that we find one of the best detective stories that have ever been written. *The Lenton Croft Robberies* stands by the side of Poe’s *Rue Morgue* in overcoming the difficulty of making the discovery of the criminal a surprise, by making the criminal an animal – that is to say, by turning a question of generality into a question of type – animal type in this case. (Pessoa 2012a: 245)¹⁹

The reference to animals is indeed justified, since in Poe’s story an escaped orangutan is discovered to be the real culprit behind the crime, i.e. the murder of Madame L’Espanaye and her daughter, while in Morrison’s story a parrot is the means through which Mr. Lloyd, Sir James Norris’ secretary, steals valuable jewellery from the house he lives in. Only a small bird could make its way into the locked-room situation described in ‘The Lenton Croft Robberies’, just as only a large ape could perform the feats of strength described in Poe’s story – climbing up and down chimneys, and, decisively, produce noises that could be interpreted by all the different hearing witnesses of the crime as a variety of foreign languages - among which Italian, English or Dutch. The comparison made by Pessoa, however, fails to discuss two points which I regard as particularly important to understand both stories.

Firstly, while in both narratives animal skills, characteristics and dexterity are essential for the performance of the crime, in Morrison’s story the parrot had been trained to perform that crime, to seek out and abscond with golden objects, whereas in

¹⁹ The italics are Pessoa’s.

“Rue Morgue” the orangutan cuts off Madame L’Espanaye’s head in imitation of his master’s shaving routine which he had learned from observation. The question of criminal intent adds a further shade to Pessoa’s analysis. Secondly, it reinforces the importance of actions and events alone for the solution of the crime and the conclusion of the narrative. As much as a perceptive reader may be aware of this difference – focused training versus spontaneous learning, or rather the animal as a means in the case of ‘The Lenton Croft Robberies’ versus the animal as agent in ‘The Murders in the Rue Morgue’ – what emerges is still the irrelevance of that fact for the “decipherment”, as Quaresma will later put it, of the intellectual puzzle at hand.

A passage worth greater discussion in Pessoa’s essay is its general introduction, where a theory of epistemology is articulated: “A customary analysis which, like the system of the universe, may be false, but which like it, has no better working substitute – has divided our psychic operations into the three sections of thought, feeling, and will” (Pessoa 2012a: 237).

This remarkable sentence compares the analysis of “psychic operations” and its consequent division into the headings of thought, feeling and will with the “system of the universe”, positing the possible falsehood of both but stating a lack of “better working substitutes”. The syntax of the sentence juxtaposes a matter of “customary analysis” with the system of the universe itself, not an interpretation of it which would be in keeping with the vocabulary employed. That this system may be a falsehood, and that its principal quality is that of “working” – since no substitute for that need has been

found – introduces an element of doubt to its reality. This element is as a springboard for

Pessoa's theory of fiction:

Fiction has for its purpose either (1) to describe actions, referring to its maximum □ or actions, and sentiments only in so far as they are purposes (...) directly linked with action; or (2) to describe sentiments, that is, to apply itself rather than to describe acts or study purposes (...) another (3) to describe □ (Pessoa 2012a: 237-238).

The incompleteness of the original manuscript allows little more than a speculative reading, but it clearly shows how Pessoa articulated an interest in a theory of fiction in his criticism of the detective genre, an articulation that finds its practice in his detective stories. The first type of fiction seems to be one concerned with the narration of events, sentiments being only considered as purposes. This would be a fiction of will, if I am to use his own terms. The second, by emphasizing sentiments, seems to be the kind he ascribes to A. K. Green, and for which he shows little interest. The third category of fiction in his division is left blank, and is perhaps the direction towards which he intended to work with his own detective stories: the description of thoughts. A form of fiction that describes neither actions nor sentiments would be the form of his reason-centred prose works, but it can also arguably be interpreted as a driving force in his wider work, as I will argue in the last chapter of this thesis. At the present juncture, I turn to a study of Pessoa's models in the criticism of detective fiction: E. M. Wrong and Dorothy Sayers.

Pessoa's critical readings on Detective fiction

E.M. Wrong's preface

An important volume of crime fiction present in Pessoa's library is *Crime and Detection* (1926), a short story anthology edited by Edward Murray Wrong, a historian and Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford. Although it precedes in date of publication Dorothy Sayers' anthology (1928) and it is in many ways comparable to the latter work: several detective stories are brought together and introduced by a critical preface where the editor offers a brief history of the detective genre, analyzing the merits of particular authors and works. Both prefaces in Pessoa's copies are extensively underlined and annotated, which justifies the need to study them in an attempt to trace the critical thinking of Pessoa on detective fiction.

The importance of such prefaces in the history of criticism of detective fiction cannot be understated. It is a genre of fairly recent creation: as Wrong states in his preface, in a passage underlined by Pessoa, "Detective fiction as we know it begins with Poe." (Wrong: xi). This attribution to the American author has been generally accepted, and would therefore locate with unusual precision the inception of an entire genre of literature in 1841, the first publication of Poe's 'The Murders in Rue Morgue'.²⁰ Many of the first attempts at critical overviews of this new type of fiction took place in the

²⁰ To put it squarely, "We may argue about the birth of tragedy, whence arose comedy, the antiquity of the lyric or the rise of the novel. But about the first detective story there can be no such uncertainty. We know the precise time and place of its origin. It was in Graham's Magazine of April, 1841, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, U.S.A., that the Murders in the Rue Morgue appeared." (Holquist 1971: 140)

form of prefaces and introductions to anthologies such as the ones edited by Wrong and Sayers, as was the case with S.S. Van Dine's *The World's Greatest Detective Stories* (1928). As part of what has been described by Scraggs: 2006 as the "self canonization" process of crime fiction, it is noteworthy how often the critic is also an author – Van Dine, Sayers, but also, later, Raymond Chandler in the United States. That was not the case with Wrong, an academic who only ever published works of criticism or history in his brief life.²¹ Nonetheless, the importance of theory for the practice of detective fiction demands a closer look at Pessoa's reading of this preface, how it relates with Sayers' text and, ultimately, what impact it may have had on his work.

One first point of comparison to be made with Sayers's anthology is the selection of texts that form both works. Sayers' anthology amounts to 1250 pages and 66 short stories, whereas Wrong's is much shorter, at 400 pages and 12 stories. Both include works by Poe, Conan Doyle, R Austin Freeman, G. K. Chesterton, Ernest Bramah, H. C. Bailey, E. W Hornung and Barry Pain. The only author that is included exclusively in Wrong's anthology is Arthur Morrison, incidentally one of the names included by Pessoa in the plan for his essay 'Detective Story', as we will shortly see. Wrong himself comments on the profusion of anthologies published at this time, and Pessoa underlines his remark that "omission, though different ones" (Wrong: v) are unavoidable in any

²¹ According to the biographical note in the leaflet *George M Wrong Family, B-2004-0010*, Toronto: University of Toronto Archives & Records Management Services, 2005. Available at www.library.utoronto.ca/utarms/findingaids/B2004-0010fa.pdf

anthology. It is remarkable, however, that different stories are picked for each author, with no repetition in the two volumes, which emphasizes the variety and abundance of texts related to the genre at the time both works were published, a point also mentioned by Sayers. (Sayers: 38)

The first critical remark of Wrong's underlined by Pessoa plunges into a comparison with classics of English literature:

Defoe would have made an admirable detective writer had he been drawn to the subject, for his love of piling detail on detail would have concealed all relevant clues from the ordinary reader while leaving them in plain the whole time. (Wrong: x)²²

This preoccupation with literary ancestry and canonical justification is a trait of detective fiction and criticism of this period, in this case by establishing a connection between a judgment on Daniel Defoe's work – an attention to detail – and the necessity of such skill in writing detective stories. Leaving aside the foundation for this opinion, what is interesting here is the connection that Wrong tries to construct between the processes of writing canonical fiction and writing detective stories. He goes on citing Balzac's character Vautrin as a predecessor of detectives – a point made and studied in depth by Messac – and asserting that “Our ancestors indeed took a great interest in homicide”, a tongue in cheek remark that is, again, underlined by Pessoa's hand.

Still as part of this interest in drawing parallels between “highbrow” fiction and the mystery genre, Wrong states the following, highlighted by Pessoa:

²² Underlined by Pessoa in the original.

As the theme, the detective story is obviously not concerned with any very exalted actions, but *The Ring and the Book* finds its subject in the Old Bailey of Rome, and Agamemnon's quarrel with Achilles did not spring from any lofty motives. (Wrong: xi)

The references here are to Robert Browning's long narrative poem *The Ring and the Book* (1868-69), which relates a murder trial that had taken place in Rome in 1698, describing the court where it took place as "the Old Bailey of Rome" by reference to the nickname of the Central criminal court of London, "Old Bailey". "Agamemnon's quarrel with Achilles" is an allusion to an episode in Book 1 of the *Iliad* when the two Achaean commanders dispute possession of the captive Briseis. Tradition is invoked continuously to defend detective fiction and its status in literature. Wrong further adds that

some criticize detective fiction because it is not realistic, gives inadequate scope for character drawing, looks chiefly to one thing only, and that mechanism is its nature, but there is an art of plot as well as an art of the mimicry of life; art is not limited to realism but can show itself in diverse forms." (Wrong: xi)²³

It is this centrality of plot and an argument for an aesthetics of it that the rest of the introduction tries to defend. This can be seen in the following highlighted passage, referring to an unfinished short story with mystery elements by Charles Dickens, *Edwin Drood* (1870). Wrong suggests that "whatever the secret [behind the murder], every lover of detective fiction would sooner have the unwritten chapters than all the lost books of Livy" (Wrong: xii), bemoaning the uncompleted plot of the story started by Dickens and cut short by his death and suggesting a comparison between it and the lost works of Roman historian Livy (59 BC – AD17).

²³ Underlined by Pessoa in the original.

Wrong seems even more eager than Sayers to establish possible associations between detective fiction and canonical texts, a strategy that Pessoa seems to endorse, judging by his annotations. After declaring that “Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s name must stand, in the history of the detective story, only a little lower than Poe’s” – a sentence highlighted by Pessoa -, Wrong quotes Horace’s Odes, “*Vixere fortes ante Agamemnona*”, “valorous men have lived before Agamemnon”, adding that “we have forgotten them, and tend to think of the pre-Holmes detectives as of the pre-Shakespearean drama; to call them precursors only.” (Wrong: xiv) The invocation of erudite reference here reaches an apex, with the character of Sherlock Holmes being implicitly compared to Shakespeare’s works, and detectives before Holmes to pre-Shakespearean drama - via Horace. When further expounding on the role of Watson in the structure of a friend of the detective as narrator, Wrong describes this as a “dual capacity of very average reader and of Greek chorus; he comments freely on what he does not understand”, an opinion which, again, Pessoa highlights. The appeal to tradition is excessive, repetitive and often unnecessary as a means to explain or illustrate a critical or historical point such as the preeminence of Sherlock Holmes as the archetypal detective in crime fiction.

Though much thought is given to canonical literature in Wrong’s preface, he does also discuss some of the authors that make up his selection, and Pessoa follows this discussion too. Of particular relevance is the mention of R. Austin Freeman, who is called “the master of tales where the criminal fights to the end”. (Wrong: xxi, xxii) It is worth remembering that Pessoa possessed at least seven novels by Freeman, which

attests to his knowledge and engagement with writers active during the time the Quaresma stories were written.²⁴ In yet another passage, Wrong proclaims that Thorndyke, Freeman's creation, is "the greatest detective now in business" (Wrong: xxiii), a compliment that is counterpointed by one particular defect in an assessment underlined by Pessoa:

The chief blemish in Thorndyke is the deplorable habit his associates possess of falling in love in the course of an investigation. The record of detection should in general be as cold as a scientific experiment, and to mix romance with it is in some measure to spoil it. A detective ought to remain single or at least not obtrude his own family affairs on us, and the same applies to the victim, the criminal, and the associate, save only when a love affair forms an integral part of the mystery. (Wrong: xxvi)

The objection to romantic elements or subplots in detective stories also occurs in both Sayers and Pessoa. Wrong's reference to the "deplorable habit" of his associates is *The Eye of Osiris*, in which Dr. Jervis, Dr. Thorndyke's sidekick, falls in love with Becky Smith, daughter of a colleague of the victim, John Bellingham. A point that is opened from the insistence on this precept, concerning Pessoa's Quaresma stories, is the representation of romantic relationships, particularly in 'A Carta Mágica', where the disappearance of an important envelope from a locked room is the starting point for a long psychological exploration of the personalities of a married couple, Francisco and his wife Marta, as well as the nature and dynamics of their relationship.

²⁴ These books are *The Eye of Osiris* (1911), *Helen Vardon's Confession* (1922), *The Cat's Eye* (1923), *The Shadow of the Wolf* (1925), *The Magic Casket* (1927), *The Surprising Experience of Mr. Shuttlebury Cobb* (1927), and *The Mystery of 31 New Inn* (ND).

Wrong's preface is mostly of supplementary value in assessing the importance of Sayers' preface in Pessoa's writing. The impact of Sayers' work on future generations of readers and critics as well as the length and depth of her preface are strong ground for its importance, but Wrong's text reinforces and confirms conclusions that could be derived from Pessoa's essay 'Detective Story' and his notes on Sayers, specifically: the fundamental importance of plot structure in opposition to the portrayal of characters; the references to canonical authors and "highbrow" literature as a means to justify and validate the writing and study of detective fiction; and finally, the absence of romantic elements that are not related to the centrality of the mystery that must be solved by the detective.

Dorothy Sayers' Preface

An analysis of Fernando Pessoa's theory of the detective novel must take into consideration his reading of *Great Short Stories of Detection, Mystery and Horror* (1928), an anthology edited and prefaced by Dorothy Sayers. Sayers is celebrated by Howard Haycraft as "one of the most brilliant and prescient artists the genre has yet produced" (Haycraft 1942: 135).²⁵ The book holds interest not only because it is one of the earliest anthologies of the mystery genre to have been published, but also and especially because of its preface, where Sayers outlines a critical history of

²⁵ Incidentally, Haycraft counts Sayers' and Wrong's prefaces as two of the most important instances of criticism in English on the detective genre to have been produced in the 1920s (Haycraft 1942: 273). Pessoa seemed indeed to be well aware of the most important developments at the time of his writing.

this type of fiction. Pessoa's personal copy presents several underlined excerpts and marginal notes that may provide us with insights into his own writings related to crime fiction, specifically the essay 'Detective Story'.

Sayers' preface is 38 pages long and it is divided in the following sections: "Early History of Detective Fiction", "Edgar Allan Poe: Evolution of the Detective", "Edgar Allan Poe: Evolution of the Plot", "Intellectual and Sensational Lines of Development", "The Pre-Doyle Period", "Sherlock Holmes and his Influence", "The Scientific Detective", "The Modern 'Fair-Play' Method", "Importance of the Viewpoint", "Artistic Status of the Detective Story", "Love Interest", "Future Developments: Fashions and Formulae", "The Most Unlikely Person", "The Unexpected Means", and finally, "Tales of Mystery and Horror". The word "detective" here is used as an adjective rather than a noun, referring to the act of detecting the solution for an enigma, rather than the person engaged in such activity, much less the professional figure readers have come to know as epitomized by Auguste Dupin, Sherlock Holmes, Lord Peter Wimsey or Sam Spade. This division can be organized in terms of before Poe and after Doyle, considering the fact that they are the only names mentioned directly. Attention is paid to the "Early History", which Sayers takes back to Herodotus, the *Aeneid* and Jewish Apocrypha (!).²⁶

²⁶ Régis Messac in 1929 similarly argues for the parentage between *Oedipus Rex*, the Book of Daniel or Voltaire's *Zadig*, and modern Detective fiction, by privileging the plot elements of mystery and solution to said mystery in those works (Messac: 17)

The inter Poe-Doyle years are briefly analyzed in terms of two separate strands of mystery and Detective fiction that pursue either “intellectual or sensational lines of development”, but it is only after Doyle and the creation of Sherlock Holmes that Sayers addresses in depth her contemporary situation, as Pessoa does too in his own essay, where he includes Arthur Morrison in his list and then writing brief studies on the Baroness Orczy, R. Austin Freeman and Freeman Wills Crofts. Sayers’ emphasis on the roles of Poe and Conan Doyle in forming the canon of detective fiction prefigures Messac and Haycraft. It is also closely followed by Pessoa’s own model considering the scheme outlined in the opening pages of “Detective Fiction”, where the names of Poe and Conan Doyle are offered as the first to be approached in the projected study.

Besides schematic similarities, the importance of Sayers’ critical thinking on Pessoa can perhaps be best measured by studying the highlighted, underlined and annotated sections of the author’s personal copy, the first two of which are in the subsection “Edgar Allan Poe: Evolution of Plot”:

But in Poe’s day [his plots] represented a new technique. As a matter of fact, it is doubtful whether there are more than half a dozen deception in the mystery-monger’s bag of tricks, and we shall find that Poe has got most of them, at any rate in embryo. (Sayers: 17)

In [*The Murders in the Rue Morgue*] also are enunciated for the first time those two great aphorisms of detective science: first, that when you have eliminated all the impossibilities, then, whatever remains, however improbable [sic] must be the truth; and, secondly, that the most outré [sic] a case may appear, the easier it is to solve. (Sayers: 17)

Pessoa also stresses the importance of Poe and in particular of ‘The Murders of Rue Morgue’, a story that is pronounced in ‘Detective Story’ as a text that “approaches very nearly to [sic] perfection” (Pessoa 2012a: 248). In another fragment he affirms that “A perfect detective story has not yet been written, though the *Murders in the Rue Morgue*

[sic] of Poe comes very near to the ideal.” (Pessoa 2012a: 252). Sayers, while giving considerable importance to Poe’s story, reserves a similar judgment to the one Pessoa expressed, towards Wilkie Collins: “Taking everything into consideration, *The Moonstone* is probably the very finest detective story ever written.” (Sayers: 25), referring to Collins’ 1868 novel. A similar enthusiastic opinion about Collins’ work had already been expressed in 1913 by G.K. Chesterton, who stated that “*The Moonstone* is probably the best detective tale in the world” (Chesterton: 132) and in 1927 by T.S. Eliot, who called it famously “the first, the longest, and the best of modern English detective novels”, going on to attribute the creation of the detective genre to Collins rather than Poe (Eliot 1999 [1927]: 464). There is no reference or remark on Collins in Pessoa’s published works, so it is difficult to assess how his enthusiastic appreciation of Poe would relate to it, but the underlined excerpt in Sayers preface indicates at least a degree of agreement.

Pessoa also highlights points of interest in footnotes, specifically concerning bibliography, as occurs in footnotes 1 and 2 of the preface (Sayers: 34), where further information and criticism of the solution to Agatha Christie’ *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd* (1926) is given, specifically in “Mr. W.H Wright’s” *The Great Detective Stories*, published in 1927 by the publishing house Scribners. W. H. Wright is Willard Huntington Wright, perhaps better known as S.S. van Dine, one of the foremost authors of detective fiction in the 1920s, who penned the famous “Twenty Rules for Writing

Detective Stories” in 1928 (Haycraft 1946: 42, 1942: 225). Three novels of his can still be found in Pessoa’s library.²⁷ The book in question is an anthology, much like Sayers’, again with a lengthy critical preface that lays the ground for the academic study of the crime genre. The second highlighted reference is to *The Craft of Fiction* (1921) by Percy Lubbock, presented as relevant to study “the question of viewpoint in fiction”. Literary criticism of modern languages in an academic context was itself a budding field at the time, and this monograph is considered by Michela Bronstein as “one of the first major works of literary criticism to focus on the novel as a form”, stressing how.²⁸ At his juncture, I wish to call attention to these parallel efforts in theorizing and pursuing academic respectability not only for a genre but for the broader study of contemporary literature. Pessoa seems to be in tune with his times in displaying an interest for these references. The story ‘O Roubo na Quinta das Vinhas’ is a particularly relevant example of this interest. The narrator introduces himself as Augusto Claro, stating that Chief Guedes asked him to write down the affair in which he was involved. The case hinges on the theft of government bonds from a safe in the Quinta das Vinhas while several guests are staying. Suspicion falls on the son of the owner of the house, José Alves. When it comes to revealing the identity of the thief, the following dialogue takes place, between Quaresma and Claro:

²⁷ Specifically, *The Canary Murder Case* (1927), *The Benson Murder Case* (1926) and *The Bishop Murder* (1932). Pessoa’s practice of buying and selling books from his library throughout his life has been documented as early as 1950 by Gaspar Simões.

²⁸ In *The Modernism Lab at Yale University*, http://modernism.research.yale.edu/wiki/index.php/The_Craft_of_Fiction, last accessed at 19:12, 02/11/2013.

- E o sr. dr. Quaresma já sabe quem é o criminoso?
- Sei. Quer que eu salve o José Alves?
- Quero, disse eu hesitantemente sem perceber o que se seguiria.
- Só o posso fazer pondo a mão no verdadeiro criminoso.
- Então faça-o, sr. dr. Quaresma.

Quaresma desdobrou as mãos, estendeu a dextra e tocou-me no ombro. (Pessoa 2008: 272)

Effectively, Pessoa offers the same surprising ending as in Christie's *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd* (1926), where the character Shepperd, who is also the narrator, is revealed to be the murderer by Poirot in the penultimate chapter.²⁹ This raises the issue of a relationship between the two texts, but unfortunately any dating of Pessoa's story is difficult. Freitas notes that some of the fragments are written in letter headed pages of F.A. Pessoa, an import-export company of which Pessoa was a partner together with Augusto Ferreira Gomes e Geraldo Coelho de Jesus.³⁰ The company was short lived, since it stopped functioning in 1918. The paper hence only proves that the text was written after that period. Considering Sayers' preface, it is impossible to tell whether Pessoa was copying Christie's revolutionary plot twist or whether he innovated in creating that solution.

The next underlined passage in Sayers' essay is again a footnote, this time referring to detective stories where the reader is "taken into the confidence of the author behind the investigator's back". Sayers adds that "those tales where the action is punctuated by eavesdropping of this kind on the reader's part belong to the merely

²⁹ Lindeza Diogo calls attention to this similarity of plot without hazing conclusions (Diogo 1995: 14).

³⁰ Gomes would later collaborate with Pessoa in the "Crowley affair" – see Chapter 6.

Sensational class of detective-story, and rapidly decline into melodrama.” (Sayers: 36) The ideas of “merely sensational”, as well as a “decline into melodrama”, seek to establish a hierarchy of fiction, particularly if one considers the references to Lubbock and to two other literary critics in this section of the text, E.M. Forster and E.M. Wrong. Pessoa’s marking of these passages can arguably be an endorsement of such positions, particularly if one considers the arguments for the “highbrow” strand of crime fiction propounded in ‘Detective Story’ – the “intellectual developments” after Poe, described by Sayers and defended in her preface. Pessoa defines a detective story, characteristically, as “a tale of imagination, where a problem is intellectually resolved” (Pessoa 2012a: 243), a definition that allows for the inclusion of literary antecedents to the genre such as the ones mentioned by Sayers and Messac – the reclaiming of a textual lineage that draws from the centre of the canon and the classics.

This appeal to an “intellectual” over an “emotional” art continues being noted and endorsed by Pessoa in the following underlined passage:

Apart from such unusual instances as these, the less love in a detective-story, the better, “L’amour au théâtre,” says Racine, “ne peut pas être en seconde place,” and this holds good of detective fiction. A casual and perfunctory love-story is worse than no love-story at all, and since the mystery must, by hypothesis, take the first place, the love is better left out (Sayers: 40)

This can be directly juxtaposed to Pessoa’s criticism on detective writer Anne Katherine Green, author of *The Leavenworth Case* (1878), already discussed in referenee to his

essay 'Detective Story'.³¹ Pessoa's scathing remarks on what he perceives as the "silly love affairs" and "unimaginative embroilments" are arguably more pugnacious than Sayers' broad admonition that "the love is better left out". Sayers' position on romantic elements in detective stories, though leaning toward the disapproving, seems to be more nuanced than Pessoa's virulent condemnation. A.K. Green's works are also mentioned in Sayers' preface, which asserts that

They are genuine detective-stories, often of considerable ingenuity but marred by an uncritical sentimentality of style and treatment which makes them difficult reading for the modern student. They are, however important by their volume and by their influence on other American authors. (Sayers: 28)

Pessoa does not highlight this passage in any way, a fact that may suggest how low his opinion of the work in question was.

Still regarding Sayers' treatment of romantic elements in detective stories, she provides examples of romantic subplots that are, according to her own standards, well embedded in the mystery plot of detective stories, specifically in *The Moonstone*, confirming yet again her admiration for Collins' work. She also refers to A.E.W Mason's *The House of the Arrow* (1924) and *No Other Tiger* (1927), the latter being praised as having "the convincing psychological structure of the novel of character" (Sayers: 40). She adds:

"The characters are presented as a novelist presents them – romantically, it is true, but without that stark insistence on classifying and explaining which turns the persons of the ordinary detective-story into a collection of museum exhibits." (Sayers: 40)

³¹ Green has been called "the mother, grandmother, and godmother of the detective story" (Haycraft 1942: 84).

The phrase “stark insistence on classifying and explaining” is of particular relevance considering Pessoa’s practice as a detective fiction writer, especially his Quaresma series, where ever so frequently the largest section of the text is precisely an attempt at the structured exposition of a system of thought. An example occurs in the following excerpt, taken from ‘O Caso Vargas’:

Comecemos por investigar o que seja um criminoso por temperamento. Um criminoso é, em primeiro lugar, um anormal; o que é um anormal? Um anormal é um ser que não procede habitualmente com os outros seres da sua espécie; e isto quer dizer que é um ser que não é como os outros da sua espécie, pois o procedimento habitual nasce daquilo que esse ser é. As funções de mente – ou as qualidades da alma, se assim se preferir dizer – são classificáveis em três categorias distintas: o intelecto, a emoção e a vontade. Um anormal será, portanto, um indivíduo que ou não pensa como os outros, ou não sente como os outros, ou não quer como os outros, quando não acumule mais do que uma destas disparidades da norma. (Pessoa 2008: 105)

The excerpt comes midway into Quaresma’s explanations regarding his investigating method, brought to bear on the Vargas murder case. This method, as exemplified here, draws heavily on the vocabulary of late 19th and early 20th century psychology. The divisions made between “normal”, and “abnormal” man, as well as the biological approach to consider individual humans first and foremost as individuals of a species are frequent not only in ‘O Caso Vargas’ but also in Pessoa’s other writing related to psychology and philosophy.³² In such sections, Pessoa does seem to relish the presentation of characters as a “collection of museum exhibits”, especially since in

³² The key evidence for Pessoa’s involvement with this field is his writings published in 2006 and edited by Jerónimo Pizarro with the title *Escritos Sobre o Génio e a Loucura*. Krabbenhoft in 2011 provides historical and bibliographical background to this dimension of Pessoa’s work in *Fernando Pessoa e as Doenças do Fim de Século*. Chapters 3 and 4 Explores this in greater depth with reference to the two authors.

keeping with his theoretical positions, the Quaresma stories have no romantic subplot – or any subplot at all. This is a point that is explored in greater detail in the final section of the present chapter.

There is yet another recommendation on plot highlighted by Pessoa in Sayers:

(...) of the three questions, Who? How? and Why? How is at present the one which offers most scope for surprise and ingenuity, and is capable of sustaining an entire book on its own, though a combination of all three naturally provides the best entertainment. (Sayers: 43)

The three questions mentioned there refer of course to the “mystery” at the heart of detective stories: a crime is committed, but the detective must find who did it and why - hence the expression ‘whodunit’ to refer to these books. The interest on the ‘how’ relates to the elaborate plots where the actual committing of the crime is often contorted and perplexing. Pessoa’s interest is in keeping with the importance he gives to careful plotting, which arguably is at play in the organization of his surviving Quaresma stories, where chapters are planned out and summed up in introductory notes.

One last point to draw from Sayers’ remarks on love stories in detective stories is her use of a quotation by Racine to justify her argument, which directly relates to the last sections of her essays highlighted by Pessoa:

There certainly does seem a possibility that the detective-story [sic] will some time come to an end, simply because the public will have learned all the tricks. But it has probably many years to go yet, and in the meantime a new and less rigid formula will probably have developed, linking it more closely to the novel of manners and separating it more widely from the novel of adventure. The latter will, no doubt, last as long as humanity, and while

crime exists, the crime thriller will hold its place. It is, as always, the higher type that is threatened with extinction.³³ (Sayers: 44)

The hierarchy of fiction to which the paragraph alludes takes up again the underlying argument for “highbrow” fiction, and more specifically for a “highbrow”, intellectualized detective fiction, that is found in Sayers’ and Pessoa’s respective essays, as seen above in the references to classics such as Racine, or even the Bible. The importance of this particular paragraph however lies in its prescience relatively to the evolution of the detective novel in the 20th century, especially the growth of “thrillers”. The following highlighted passages develop this preoccupation with the interplay between “low” and “high” strands in crime fiction, with a close attention to the tastes of the public:

the detective story is part of the literature of escape, and not of expression (...) “The detective-story,” says Phillip Guedalla, “is the normal recreation of noble minds.” (...) “The detective-novel of to-day [sic] is extremely well written, and there are few good living writers who have not tried their hand at it one time or another. (Sayers: 44)

These remarks find clear echoes in a passing comment of Pessoa’s on his own reading habits, where he states that:

Um dos poucos divertimentos intelectuais que ainda restam ao que ainda resta de intelectual na humanidade é a leitura de romances policiais. Entre o número áureo e reduzido de horas felizes que a Vida deixa que eu passe, conto por do melhor aquelas em que a leitura de Conan Doyle ou Arthur Morrison me pega na consciência ao colo. Um destes volumes de um destes autores, um cigarro de 45 no pacote, a ideia de uma chávena de café – trindade cujo ser-uma é o conjugar a felicidade para mim – resume-se nisto a minha felicidade. Será pouco para tanto, é verdade. É que não pode aspirar a muito mais uma criatura com sentimentos intelectuais e estéticos no meio europeu actual. Talvez seja para os senhores como que causa de pasmo, não o eu ter estes por meus autores predilectos e de quarto de cama, mas o eu confessar que assim os tenho. (Pessoa 2003: 150)

³³ Underlined in the original text.

The references to a decaying contemporary world – “o que resta de intelectual na humanidade”, “o meio europeu actual” in which “uma criatura de sentimentos intelectuais e estéticos” can’t aspire to more than reading a detective-novel while smoking a cigarette and drinking coffee: all of these allusions point to the escapist element in detective fiction outlined by Sayers. It is a pleasure to be enjoyed by those that have “noble minds”, according to Philip Guedalla, a historian active in 1920s-40s. The citation clearly points to the elitist approach to detective-fiction in terms of writing and readership advocated by Sayers and subscribed by Pessoa mentioned above.

The last underlined passage in the preface comments on how “the study of psychology has produced (...) a new kind of terror – the nightmare country between sanity and madness; the pressure of mind upon living mind, and the lonely horror of the dark places of the soul.”³⁴ (Sayers: 45). Sayers is referring here to a “new kind of terror” in “Mystery and Horror” fiction, as a genre to be distinguished from detective novels by the inclusion of supernatural themes. This reconfirms Pessoa’s interest in psychology and its connection with mystery and detective stories, an interest, which is more developed in his detective stories themselves.

The very last annotation made by Pessoa is a short highlighted sentence, where Sayers declares that “each day the public [of fiction] demands a greater subtlety of theme and treatment” (Sayers: 45). Brief and passing as the remark may be, the fact that

³⁴ Only the underlined expression is so in the original text. The rest of the sentence is quoted to contextualize it as before.

Pessoa's attention was drawn to it reinforces the idea of his engagement with the public and preoccupation with the reception of his works – specifically of his detective stories. In the much-quoted letter to Adolfo Casais Monteiro dated from January 13th, 1935, Pessoa indicated that

Quando às vezes pensava na ordem de uma future publicação, nunca um livro do género da Mensagem figurava em número um. Hesitava entre se devia começar por um livro de versos grande – um livro de umas 350 páginas -, englobando as várias subpersonalidades de Fernando Pessoa ele-mesmo, ou se deveria abrir com uma novela policiária, que ainda não consegui completar. (Pessoa 1999: 338)

To what extent the intention to publish shaped the texts themselves is a problem to be approached in my final chapter, but the importance of Sayers' critical thought to the development of Pessoa's own, as critic and writer of detective fiction, is undeniably formative.

*

At this stage the central point to keep in mind is the preeminence of British and American influences on Pessoa's detective fiction, and how this dictates the centrality of the concept of "reason" as the defining characteristic of the detective. Before I move on to analyze this in greater depth, however, I must address two matters: firstly, as a complement to the parallels made in this chapter with the Anglo-American tradition, I must consider the cultural specificities of the Portuguese social context present in Pessoa's crime fiction. These are the topics of the following chapter. Secondly, I must study in greater depth the status of Abílio Quaresma as a literary character and how he is

formed in the texts featuring him. This is of central importance to clarify how he stands with regard to Pessoa's heteronyms and will be the focus of the third chapter.

Chapter 2

Portuguese markers in the Quaresma stories

The previous chapter focused on the links between Pessoa and the Anglo-American canon of crime fiction. An organizing vector for my inquiry was the relationship between the mass culture appeal of detective stories and a highbrow discourse that sought to legitimize this new genre in the late 19th and early 20th century. This attempt at legitimization took the form of the construction of a canon and heritage, resorting to the authority of supposed precursors of the genre as far back as the *Bible*, Sophocles, and *Gilgamesh*. I also introduced the subject of the pivotal role played by the categories of reason and science in ‘O Caso Vargas’, and more widely in detective fiction. In this chapter, I study the political implications of the function of such categories in crime fiction, especially when seen as an object of mass culture. This is rendered more complex once it is put in a transcultural perspective, i.e. when we consider how the genre of detective fiction came to be regarded as essentially Anglo-American, and how texts produced in different cultural contexts negotiated this strong association.

My main reference to understand the practice of crime fiction in Portugal is Maria de Lurdes Sampaio’s doctoral dissertation, the first in-depth study on the development of crime fiction in Portugal. The focus of her research is crime fiction after the 1940s, with particular emphasis on the 50s and 60s. This was the belated Golden Age of crime fiction in Portugal. Nonetheless, Sampaio’s analysis of that period contains

arguments that may be usefully appropriated to study the transcultural character of the Quaresma stories.

In the second section of this chapter I discuss the merits of a sociological approach to crime fiction and, specifically for the purpose of studying Pessoa's texts, the ideological implications of detective fiction up to the 1940s. This refines the analysis provided in the previous chapter and helps to understand the wider cultural and social background in which Pessoa wrote his stories, before I approach them with a stronger emphasis on the relationship between form and content in subsequent chapters. In the final section, I study the social and geographical markers in Quaresma's stories, as a way to understand how a Portuguese setting of what was perceived at the time of his writing as an essentially Anglo-American genre affects those narratives. A case study for this is the fragmentary text where Quaresma investigates the assassination of President Sidónio Pais.

Anglo-American detective fiction and literary geographies

According to Porter:

(...) mainstream detective fiction respects the conventions of the realist tradition. That is to say, it situates its actions in contemporary social reality, limits the type of crime and the methods of detection to what passes for rationally plausible, and chooses as its characters easily identifiable human or social types (Porter: 115).

His citation suggests a standard against which individual pieces of detective fiction might be studied in what concerns the representation of reality, implying issues of verisimilitude. Porter considers as "mainstream" detective fiction some of its major

exponents, Poe and Conan Doyle among them (Porter: 24, 28), arguing furthermore that “detective stories present themselves to their readers as substitute worlds or mirrors that reflect directly the reality beyond.” (Porter: 115). The main argument here is that detective fiction is engaged with its immediate contemporary reality, seeking to depict it in the vein of the realist/naturalist aesthetics of late 19th century. Porter concentrates most of his discussion on hard-boiled American detective fiction (post 1940s), refining his arguments: “Hammett and Chandler have, of course, the reputation of being realists in crime (...) like all literary realisms, Hammett’s and Chandler’s is a matter of stylization.” (Porter: 130). Drawing from Barthes’ readings on Realism and Naturalism, Porter critiques the hard-boiled crime fiction’s claim to a greater degree of faithfulness to reality. The stylization he refers to is found in the literary use of colloquialisms, a simplified language, references to seedier elements of urban life, in order to convey a supposed greater faithfulness to reality. The final dialogue between Marlowe and Vivian in Chandler’s *The Big Sleep* (1939) is a good example of it:

«Do you know a man named Canino?»
She drew her fine black brows together in thought. «Vaguely. I seem to remember the name.»
«Eddie Mars' trigger man. A tough hombre, they said. I guess he was. Without a little help from a lady I'd be where he is— in the morgue.»
«The ladies seem to— « She stopped dead and whitened. «I can't joke about it,» she said simply. (Chandler 1939 [2000]: 158)

The terms “trigger man”, the use of the hispanism “hombre”, and the very short sentences point to what Porter referred as “the implied preference for directness over formality, lower-class speech over upper, popular over high culture, American forthrightness over English gentility. The language chosen is a mode of address, a style

of self-presentation, and affirmation of American manliness.” (Porter: 139) Although the critic does not elaborate on this “American manliness”, I would add that, by opposition to Hammett and Chandler, their 20th century British precursors while denigrated as snobbish are also surreptitiously accused of being effeminate. The fact that the two most noteworthy practitioners of the subgenre were Christie and Sayers may have contributed to the accusations laid against a whole mode of writing perceived as feminine or effeminate. Gender issues and politics are at the heart of detective fiction,³⁵ as I will develop when I turn to detailed analyses of Pessoa’s stories.

At this juncture, the crucial point to keep in mind is the ambitions of realism at the core of the hardboiled genre, which was launched in opposition to the puzzle mysteries that preceded it. It is a central point of Chandler’s literary project, as established in his essay, better read as a manifesto, ‘The Simple Art of Murder’ (1944): “Fiction in any form has always intended to be realistic. Old fashioned novels which now seem stilted and artificial to the point of burlesque did not appear that way to the people who first read them.” (Chandler 1950: 318). The aim of being realistic, however, emerges in opposition to what Chandler considers to be his immediate predecessors,

³⁵ In the context of Anglo-American detective fiction see for instance Plain, Gill, 2001. *Twentieth-century Crime Fiction: gender, sexuality and the body*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. Forter, Greg, 2000. *Murdering Masculinities: fantasies of gender and violence in the American crime novel*, New York, London: NYU Press. Both works focus on post 1940 crime fiction, almost exclusively American, presumably due to the enduring appeal of the hard-boiled genre and its tropes, notably in contributing to the creation of film noir. The exception is Gill’s chapter on Agatha Christie, which argues that the British author’s work displays similar attitudes toward gender roles as later developed by Chandler: “Raymond Chandler has become renowned for his misogynistic deployment of female stereotypes, but a number of Christie novels are dependent upon almost identical typologies of female behavior.” (Gill: 30).

going so far as naming names, the usual suspects: Dorothy Sayers and Agatha Christie.

Dashiell Hammett is championed as model of what ought to be done:

Hammett wrote at first (and almost to the end) for people with a sharp, aggressive attitude to life. They were not afraid of the seamy side of things; they lived there. Violence did not dismay them; it was right down their street. Hammett gave murder back to the kind of people that commit it for reasons, not just to provide a corpse; and with the means at hand, not with handwrought dueling [sic] pistols, curare, and tropical fish. (Chandler 1950: 330)

Chandler comments sarcastically on the over-elaborate methods for murder found in earlier British detective stories, juxtaposing them to what supposedly would be the more “realistic” methods depicted in Hammett’s novels, usually a gun and a simple-enough motive. When he considers Hammett’s readership as people with “a sharp, aggressive attitude to life”, he paves the way for the main argument of Porter’s work: detective fiction, at times under the guise of “realism”, is shaped by class ideology. It reflects and constructs the preoccupations, worldviews and immediate social realities of its target audience. Porter draws on Gramsci and Voloshinov to ground his close readings of the language of narrators and characters in Christie, Hammett and Chandler. He argues that the latter two, while supposedly depicting the “real” crimes and criminals, in fact present a different avatar of an individualistic hero whose morals and powers – intellectual or physical – are above those of the people he interacts with in his path to right wrongs: a model for the American middle-class. The Poe and Conan Doyle line, developed in the puzzle detective fiction of the 1920s and 30s, would then be a stage of this bourgeois literature aimed for a middle class audience. This is where, to an extent, I would argue that the Quaresma stories are inserted.

Stephen Knight explains this:

Chandler shows that his ideology is different from, in some ways an advance upon, the aspects of bourgeois ideology examined so far (...): Poe made isolated intellectualism stand as a sufficient weapon against crime; Doyle set it in a particular social and scientific conjecture; Christie drew the techniques of rational direction back into an archetype of bourgeois collective knowledge (Knight 1980: 163).

The notion of reality and the concept of verisimilitude in detective fiction is, then, a point of debate: “Works of detective fiction regularly consider the problem of realism and acknowledge a great divide between the actual investigation of crime and the investigation of crime in detective fiction.” (Roth: 23, 24). Though that assessment is mostly concerned with the hardboiled variety of the genre – Hammett, Chandler, Cain etc - Roth also comments on the puzzle-mysteries that are closer to Pessoa’s practice, following the dicta of Sayers and Wrong: “At the threshold of analytic fiction, social and political history was put under a ban by a generic boundary line, which hard-boiled detective fiction and the spy thriller would also respect.” (Roth: 27). Roth offers as an example of this ban the scene in *A Study in Scarlet* where Holmes pointedly ignores the word ‘Rache’ [revenge] written on the wall where the murder was committed. Roth quotes Holmes as declaring “it was simply a blind intended to put the police upon the wrong track, by suggesting Socialism and secret societies (...) Simply a ruse to divert inquiry into a wrong channel” (Roth: 27). Roth’s suggestion is that “the wrong channel is social reality.” (Roth: 27). Though I agree with what Roth sees as a swift denial of social reality in that particular case and in other novels from the 1910s to the 1930s – specifically given the genteel settings of Christie and Sayers’ novels – I believe that the suppression of a representation of those “social realities” can be seen as a stage in the development of what can be called a reactionary genre, conservative in social and political outlook, particularly during the Golden Age era. Knight sums it up:

Christie's central audience was leisured, relatively unskilled but also competitive and self-conscious — the classic anxious bourgeois class. For them she fashioned a form that ratified conservatism, the duty others owe the self, and ultimately the ability of very ordinary powers to cope with the disorder such people faced, in the world and within themselves (Knight 1980: 133).

The changes as the one registered in the turn from puzzles to hardboiled fiction affect the form that conservatism takes, while by and large maintaining the project of making “acceptable the need of policing, first, by demonstrating the need for it on account of the prevalence of crime, and second, by creating agents of law enforcement who conform to a recognizable cultural ideal.” (Porter: 216). The goal of this acceptable need?

Detective novels provide reassurance (...) not only because they deal in identifiable good and evil and end up punishing the latter but also because they propose a world of fixed cultural quantities. They effectively suppress the historical reality that they seem to represent and draw for solutions to the problems posed on cherished, but frequently anachronistic, cultural values. In one way or another a mythic national past is made to appear adequate to the difficulties faced by the national community in the present. (Porter: 218)

Porter emphasizes the national community in his political, class-based, reading of detective fiction. This raises issues when we consider the Quaresma stories which, although written in Portuguese, are prominently modelled on foreign texts. The English-speaking education of Pessoa in South Africa may explain in part his take on the genre, but it is insufficient to clarify whether the only cultural or national specificity of his texts was the language in which they were written. The stories were set in Portugal, mostly in Lisbon or in its vicinity, and this introduces two aspects that must be considered: the importance of geographical and topographical markers in detective fiction, and the social setting of his stories. Porter addresses these issues:

A detective setting about his task finds himself situated in a physical environment whose latent moral significance may be explicit or implicit, apparent from the beginning or

uncovered only at a later date. (...) the landscape which is represented as the backdrop to crime in a detective novel is as ideologically significant as stylistic level and the type of hero. (Porter 1981: 189)

What landscapes are there to be considered? Let us first consider Poe and Conan Doyle, who respectively set their stories in Paris and London. Paris in the mid-1800s was perceived as the centre of European intellectual and cultural life, meriting the title of “the capital of the 19th century” given to it by Benjamin in the *Arcades Project*. London’s role as the centre of the British Empire gave it a new prominence towards the end of the century, and the Holmes stories are part of this new role of the city. Both cities exerted a pull drawing new inhabitants from varied origins: “Paris and London are places to which people come, either from within their countries’ borders or from beyond them” (Moore: 8). This explains in part the exotic elements in Poe and Doyle, both non-human and human, from the orang-utan in ‘The Murders of Rue Morgue’ to the Mormons in a ‘A Study in Scarlet’. The foreign becomes then identified with danger, but it is not its only form. Rather, the foreign element appears in the context of large cities populated by urban masses. The role of the early detective is to tackle that environment, as Moretti points out quoting Conan Doyle:

'My dear fellow', says Holmes to Watson, 'if we could fly out that great window hand in hand, hover over this great city, gently remove the roofs, and peep in at the queer things which are going on ...' ('A Case of Identity'). Holmes exists because Peter Pan does not: it is not yet possible to fly through keyholes. (Moretti 1983: 143)

Strange things go on behind closed doors, and if Holmes does not have the power to fly through keyholes – the safekeepers of bourgeois privacy – he possesses skills which allow him to see through the mystery and deception that can be rife in an urban environment. As observed in the previous chapter, the categories of reason and scientific

thought play a major role in Poe and Doyle, as well as in Pessoa. The fact that Dupin is French and that his adventures take place in Paris is related to Poe's choice: the French Enlightenment tradition of rationality and scientific enquiry justify it, but Porter justifies the choice of London for Doyle's fiction with its place as the focal point for the Second Industrial Revolution. The ideology observed in Poe is mutated by the dramatic change in production relations that serves a backdrop for Doyle, achieving thus a new stage as a cultural product that will go on to find different manifestations in the 20th century – Christie and Chandler among them – without deviating from its central tenet: scientific enquiry applied in the defence of the established social order. The project of the possibility of complete quantifiable knowledge at the heart of Enlightenment is enlisted in the service of the preservation of a bourgeois understanding of social relations, as explained in *The Dialectic of Enlightenment*: “Science itself has no awareness of itself; it is merely a tool. Enlightenment, however, is the philosophy which equates truth with the scientific system.” (Adorno and Horkheimer 2002 [1947]: 86) In this line of thought, the detective is the embodiment of reason and scientific thought, a tool to which the ideology of the Enlightenment ascribes a grander social and political role in the context of the late 19th and early 20th century.

More remains to be said on the construction of setting in Detective fiction, specifically London, in order to flesh out fully the premises necessary to understand what Pessoa is up to in the Quaresma stories from a sociological point of view. Simon

Joyce elaborated on this, supplementing Franco Moretti's *Atlas of the European Novel, 1800-1900*,³⁶ in particular the concept of "literary geography". He considers it a project in which "instead of being relegated to the background of literary analysis, as the mere setting for narrative, representations of physical space are seen as actively involved with in shaping textual meaning." (Joyce 2005: 1). Joyce studies how Victorian detective fiction "builds" an imaginary London, with specific geographical references that become part of collective memory, a project that finds its seeds in Moretti's earlier work and that is part of a sociological approach to literary analysis. Notably, Moretti's *Signs Taken for Wonders* includes an essay on Sherlock Holmes and the creation of mass culture. He writes:

Holmes's culture - just like mass culture, which detective fiction helped found - will reach you anywhere. This culture knows, orders and defines all the significant data of individual existence as part of social existence. Every story reiterates Bentham's Panopticon ideal: the model prison that signals the metamorphosis of liberalism into total scrutability. (Moretti 1983: 143)

The reference to Bentham's Panopticon is an implied mention of Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* (1975), in which Bentham's image of a prison where every inmate can see and be seen by all the other inmates is used as a metaphor for constant surveillance and self-policing as tools of repression in bourgeois society. Holmes is an active agent of this ideal: the "total scrutability" of the Panopticon is that of knowing everything, which in turn is the goal of both the Enlightenment project and the detective as its standard bearer.³⁷

³⁶ Moretti, Franco, 1998, *Atlas of the European Novel, 1800-1900*, London: Verso.

³⁷ See Chapter 3 for a discussion on this subject regarding Quaresma.

A consequence that arises from this preliminary judgment would be, then, the relevance of the social, historical and geographical setting of detective fiction for the development of its narratives. To reinforce this point:

The Paris of Poe's tales, Collins's [sic] Yorkshire, and Doyle's London are fictional locations by means of which the threat and fascination of crime are made more tangible for a reader. They are also the context that makes the crime comprehensible. In the detective novel, at least, you can judge a novel by its relation to crime. In other words if landscape in the sense I am giving it here is so central to stories involving crimes, it is because a relationship is affirmed between site and event. (Porter: 190)

Porter, Moretti, and Joyce acknowledge the importance of location and of the process through which a certain physical space with an existence in the material world is described and recreated in detective fiction. To this layer, Porter and Moretti add social aspects that Roth considers secondary in his approach but that I would argue to be of paramount interest in Pessoa's texts, not the least because of their status as attempts at adapting an essentially "foreign" genre, written in foreign languages and set in foreign contexts, to Portugal between 1907 and 1935 – roughly, the dates around which the stories are set. This time frame has the added relevance of being a crucial period of Portuguese history, encompassing such decisive events as the 1908 regicide; the abolition of monarchy and the instauration of a republican system in 1910; the Great War; the government of Sidónio Pais; the military coup of 1926; and the beginning of the totalitarian Estado Novo from 1928 up until Pessoa's death in 1935, when Salazar was already in power. How can we characterize the society portrayed in the Quaresma stories? How does it stand in relation to its foreign models? More to the point: how relevant is that foreign aspect when a sociological reading is brought to bear?

Portugal in Quaresma's stories: geographical and social settings

The Portuguese setting of Pessoa's stories is an indelible element of their plot structuring. Most of the stories take place in Lisbon with the exception of three: 'O Roubo da Quinta das Vinhas', which takes place in Colares, a village close to Lisbon; 'O Caso do Banco de Viseu', set in the city of Viseu in the northeast of Portugal; and 'O Roubo no Banco da Galicia' which happens in Madrid. The preeminence of Lisbon, however, from a cultural standpoint, is affirmed even in those stories, as in 'O Caso do Banco de Viseu' when the following remark is made about the obscurity of the facts:

O caso que vou narrar não foi daqueles que atraíram notavelmente a atenção do público – não porque não tivesse condições, porque tinha todas, para tal, mas porque coincidiu com vários elementos espalhafatosos do noticiário lisboeta, sob os quais ficou sufocado no provincianismo das terceiras e quartas páginas. (Pessoa 2008: 367)

The paragraph establishes the centrality of Lisbon by its control of the media, which simultaneously reinforces the role of newspapers in society. The dynamics between Lisbon and the "provincianismo", I would suggest, is a reproduction of that between Portugal and the United Kingdom or France in the form of Pessoa's crime fiction, as we shall soon see.

Furthermore, Pessoa's main characters, with few exceptions, are engineers, lawyers and civil servants, reflecting what has been written about Doyle's impact: "The vogue for scientific detectives around the time of Holmes's [sic] success reflects yet another characteristic of modernity: the emergence of the intellectual professions as new

repositories of social power” (Kayman: 46).³⁸ While Poe set the tone for the use of science and reason in detective stories, Doyle and his lesser-known peers, such as the Baroness Orczy so much appreciated by Pessoa, reflect a more developed stage of the ideology patent in the Dupin stories.

Quaresma himself, on the other hand, is an atypical detective of the puzzle mystery: an alcoholic living in shabby conditions with little regard for justice and a decidedly misogynistic outlook, as exemplified by ‘A Carta Mágica’ and ‘Tale X/A Morte de D. João’, analysed respectively in the third and fourth chapters of this dissertation. He is a step closer to later creations, such as Chandler’s Phillip Marlow and Hammett’s the Continental Op in his worldview and character. He does not necessarily conform with established morals, as we will see in ‘O Caso Vargas’. Quaresma’s polished and educated language, however, differentiate him from the two later uncouth American detectives.

In the case of Pessoa, it is not altogether consequent that a Portuguese crime author would set his stories in Portugal. The example of Poe, fetishizing and reinventing Paris as the quintessential large metropolis where the almost leisurely investigation of crime could take place, stands as a looming example of the seduction of the exotic as a setting. Pessoa, writing for a Portuguese audience, decides to write stories that mention precise places and historical facts that would be immediately recognizable from first-

³⁸ The Quaresma stories also contain a significant number of aristocrats, such the counts in ‘O Pergaminho Roubado’ and ‘O Roubo da Quinta das Vinhas’. This reflects the vogue in the British crime novel in the 1920s and its nostalgic longing for the past. As such it is part of the development of the genre in the post-Holmes years.

hand experience by a would-be reader. ‘O Caso Vargas’ opens with very clear indications regarding time, place and “social types”, as Porter alluded to:

Na manhã de 12 de Fevereiro de 1907, muito cedo ainda, não para o dia mas para os usos de Lisboa, apareceu na Estrada de Benfica, um indivíduo novo (...) que perguntou na esquadra de polícia que estar ali havia, pela morada do oficial da marinha Pavia Mendes. (Pessoa 2008: 41)

The man goes on to ask a merceeiro [grocer] and leiteiro [milkman] for Pavia Mendes’ address. A variety of information can be garnered from these first lines, but I shall take the three vectors of time, place, and social makeup, as guidelines to the body of Quaresma stories.

Firstly, the referenced date for the first set of events described in ‘O Caso Vargas’, 12th February 1907. Freitas has dated the original manuscript as having been written as early as 1923 and up to 1935, considering how many of the pages have letterheads of several businesses for which Pessoa worked as a translator during that time span.³⁹ Taking this into account, the year 1907 seems then to be a deliberate choice of Pessoa’s in which to set the story: a recent past with social and historical connotations, specifically, the year immediately before the regicide, at the height of João Franco’s repressive regime. It is one year after Pessoa returns from South Africa at age

³⁹ As suggestive evidence, together with this manuscript is kept an envelope with the story’s title written on it, dated, in English, ‘21 October 1935’. Freitas suggests this envelope could have originally served to keep the manuscript. Freitas also considers the length and degree of completion of ‘O Caso Vargas’ and the references in the letters to Casais Monteiro on the 13th and 20th of January 1935 to a detective story Pessoa was working on, to hypothesize that this may be indeed that story to be worked up for publication and, as such, it had its last (though not finishing) touches in that year (Freitas *in* Pessoa 2008: 17-18).

17, enrolling in a university-level literature course only to drop out during the student strike against Franco, as Serrão points out (Serrão in Pessoa 1978: 11).

Pessoa wrote extensively on the fall of the monarchy and the implementation of the republican system (Pessoa 1978), following closely the historical events that led up to the Estado Novo and Salazar's consolidation of power, thereby demonstrating an active interest in politics. In 'O Caso Vargas', the disappearance of plans for a new submarine designed by the character Pavia Mendes seems initially to be the motive for the murder (Pessoa 2008: 44), although chapter V and VI reveal that the victim no longer had the plans in his possession at the time of the murder, these having been collected by a third party under the inventor's, Pavia Mendes, instructions. Although a red herring, the supposed theft of the plans for a new submarine designed by a Portuguese naval engineer monopolizes the investigation for almost its entirety while undertaken by the police. Quaresma will take a completely different direction, a personal and psychological one for the crime rather than monetary or political, but the idea of a revolutionary military invention made in Portugal in 1907 begs us to consider how its target audience would take this plot element.

It is useful to draw on Sampaio's work to analyse this point. When considering the relationship between the Anglo-American model and both French and Italian practices of crime fiction, she writes

Não obstante os lugares de origem do policial serem para muitos países os países anglo-saxónicos, cada país fazia, naturalmente, uma apropriação específica do género, podendo mesmo signos idênticos (verbais ou icónicos) desempenhar funções diferentes face ao contexto cultural e sociopolítico do país de recepção. (Sampaio 2007: 175)

In the case of Pessoa, the choice of a Portuguese setting seeks to elevate the status of Portugal from the periphery to the centre of a new cultural discourse. As Paris and London were the metropolises of Poe and Doyle, so is Lisbon to Pessoa. Employing plans for a submarine as the McGuffin of 'O Caso Vargas' establishes a continuum with the arms race between the British, French and German Empires ongoing at the time, particularly in the naval field (Ruger: 17). In 1906 the British navy launched the HMS *Dreadnought*, an act of immense cultural impact: "When the the Dreadnought was launched it was embraced by popular culture almost instantly. There were Dreadnought songs, poems, book and films" (Ruger: 9)⁴⁰ In this race, submarines were an innovative weapon. The British navy produced the D-Class submarines from 1907 to 1912, which were to be the a revolutionary model used during World War 1 and providing the basis for the more advanced and effective E-Class, built from 1912 to 1916 (Mccartney: 7-10). The First D-Class was built by the firm Vickers, headquartered in Barrow-in Furness (Mccartney: 7)⁴¹ German U-boats, on the other hand, came to play a very important role in the Great War, the most visible and impacting act being the sinking of the *Lusitania* in 1917, which led to the entry of the United States in the conflict. Writing in the 1930s, Pessoa knew of the role submarines had played, and by locating the action in the Portuguese capital in 1907, he is retrospectively claiming a greater power and

⁴⁰ Cf. Also Padfield, Peter, 2005. *The Great Naval Race: Anglo-German naval rivalry 1900-1914*, Edinburgh: Birlinn.

⁴¹ See chapter 6 for another Barrow-in-Furness connection, where Álvaro de Campos, in a published interview, narrates an anecdote that supposedly had happened to him when working in the northern English city as a naval engineer.

importance for Portugal, particularly since that was the exact year that the groundbreaking D-Class started production in the United Kingdom. Nonetheless, this power is never materialized, it takes the form of squandered opportunity, and, at best, possibility: the plans are ultimately found to be irrelevant from a technical point of view. What is more, their exact contents bear no relation to the crime or its solution: Borges murdered Vargas not because of the plans but for money. Dreams of Portuguese empire and potency animate a fiction that serves as vehicle or excuse to demonstrate Quaresma's powers of reasoning, and through them Pessoa's skill as a writer. This is the first level of what the Portuguese setting achieves. The turn to the past – 1907 – can here be read as a longing for an ideal time when Portugal was ruled by a king and there remained a possibility of grandeur. Pessoa's stance as a monarchist, as evidenced by his "nota biográfica" written in 1935 justifies this reading, "Considera que o sistema monárquico seria o mais próprio para uma nação organicamente imperial como é Portugal." (Pessoa 2007: 134)

The second is what lies beneath Quaresma's thought as an exponent of bourgeois ideology: by detecting the criminal, and with the decisive support of the police in the form of Guedes, Quaresma re-establishes the status quo. In Portugal, as in France or Britain, even allowing for national differences, the same social system operates. The fact that the criminal-detective dynamic unfolds in Lisbon brings it to the fold of the international order while simultaneously confirming its dominance.

This is the strongest and most consistent element of the Quaresma stories, as we can see in 'O Pergaminho Roubado'. Again, precise dates can be collected which help

us understand the context in which it takes place. The narrative of ‘O Pergaminho Roubado’ supposedly takes place in January 1908 (Pessoa 2008: 143), a little before the regicide of the 1st February, when both the King, D. Carlos I, and the heir to the throne, Prince Luiz Felipe, were killed.⁴² Freitas dates the writing of the narrative around 1918, again relying on the presence of letterhead of companies for which Pessoa worked in that period (Freitas *in* Pessoa 2008: 19), which would explain a later setting than the one in the initial documents. The plot does not include any direct references to the outside historical reality besides the characters’ occupations and their general social makeup: the stolen scroll referenced in the title belongs to a “count”; its former owner, a rival collector, commissioned the crime; a maid servant at the house is brought under suspicion due to her relationship with a former convict. Eventually Quaresma discovers that a locksmith, pretending to be interested in other items of the Count’s collection, substituted the coffer containing the scroll for a copy, after securing a key to the room where it was held. Very few references are made to the world outside of the house where the crime was committed, none of which are in any way relevant to plot development, but it is important to notice how Pessoa’s crimes often occur among a middle to upper class environment, as the analysis of other stories will confirm.

The social setting of ‘O Pergaminho Roubado’ is indeed very similar to those in which the English tradition of “cozies” occurs, referring to crime fiction depicting

⁴² For this particular narrative, this dating highlights Pessoa’s inconsistency since, when investigating one of the suspects, it is discovered that though he possessed a criminal record, on two occasions he had been freed by general amnesties, “um perdão pela Semana Santa de D. Manuel e um outro pela República.” (Pessoa 2008: 155). Necessarily, this couldn’t have happened before the regicide.

genteel characters where the detective is often an amateur who sets out to solve a mystery, usually a murder but not necessarily so, generally in an upper-class environment. G.K. Chesterton, Agatha Christie and Dorothy Sayers are epitomes of the genre, with Father Brown, Hercule Poirot and Lord Peter Wimsey as its emblematic detectives. As outlined in the first chapter, Pessoa's practice of buying and selling books from his library does not allow to trace completely his readings in crime fiction, but his library includes six books by Chesterton, one of which is *The Incredulity of Father Brown* (1926). Furthermore, Sayers' preface to her anthology comments extensively on Christie's *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd*. The period from 1918 to 1930 saw the flourishing of cozies, becoming identified with the genre itself and heralded as its "golden age" (Haycraft 1942: 112,158). Pessoa's interest in crime fiction could not have avoided this type of fiction. The private war waged by collectors of antique manuscripts in 'O Pergaminho Roubado' is an example of this practice, but it is noteworthy how Pessoa does not stick closely to what was, by the time he was writing, a new fashion in terms of setting: rural environments and isolated households. Some of his stories do indeed take place in such a setting, like 'O Roubo da Quinta das Vinhas', but overwhelmingly they take place in Lisbon.

Turning to "Tale X / A Morte de D. João", it has no references to any dates but its plot and central character represent one of the clearest engagements of Pessoa's crime fiction with developments in Portuguese society. It is that engagement that allows us to safely date the narrative as post-1918: the unnamed policeman, eventually revealed to be the murderer, is an army veteran "Serviu na guerra, entrou nuns poucos de combates, foi

ferido três vezes, foi condecorado com a Cruz de Guerra” (Pessoa 2008: 195). But crucially for the purposes of the narrative and its plot, his participation in the war facilitates the murder of his sister Emília’s seducer, after her suicide which was a consequence of the end of the affair. As the unnamed policeman states towards the end of his confession:

A verdade é que esta coisa da guerra tira à gente grande parte da consideração pelo corpo humano. (...) Matei alemães que nunca me fizeram mal, sr. doutor e que talvez, se nos conhecêssemos, fôssemos amigos e então havia de hesitar em matar o homem que tinha causado a morte da minha pequenina? (Pessoa 2008: 212)

The character is portrayed as someone whose experience of war had left him desensitized to the extreme violence with which he perpetrated the killing. As is studied in greater depth in Chapter 4, the sympathy with which the ex-soldier is depicted and treated by Quaresma, belies a patriarchal system which sanctions honour killing as a means to restore a woman’s death and, more than death, the loss of her virtue. Although in this particular story the social setting is very different from the others – the characters are presumably not very educated –, it displays the internalization of ideology by social types other than the bourgeois, a clear example of the functioning of hegemony: “[detective fiction] is an extreme example of liberal bourgeois ideology according to which society must ‘self-regulate’ on the basis of the impersonal and automatic mechanisms of the market economy.” (Moretti 1983: 154). Emília’s life and sexual conduct are goods with a certain use-value to be negotiated among the men who consider themselves to have a claim to them. The seducer’s murder is one such act of self-regulation.

In what concerns a historical dimension to the story, it is worth noting the negative representation of the Great War and its effects on the psychology of an individual, making it, as far as I can ascertain, the first literary representation of the effects of shell shock in Portuguese literature. Although the theme of war was already present in the background of ‘O Caso Vargas’ through the macguffin of the naval plans, in ‘Tale X’ it is directly relevant. I would also argue that, by having war experiences shape the main character, Pessoa is once again drawing a bridge between Portugal and the central powers in Europe. Portugal too had participated in the Great War, and literature had to testify to this participation.

Gender issues continue to be paramount in ‘A Carta Mágica’, produced between 1923 and 1926, again resorting to letterheads of the paper on which it was written. As ‘Tale X’, I will be discussing it emphasising the gender roles and dynamics at play in the narrative, but a new dimension can be added to it by analysing its references to Portugal at the time when it was written. Its central character, who triggers the narrative by approaching the police, Francisco de Almeida e Sá, is an engineer working for CP, the state-owned Portuguese railway company, and he lives in a very central and upmarket street of Lisbon, Rua Barata Salgueiro, 15 2º (Pessoa 2008: 218). As in ‘O Pergaminho Roubado’, the characters are certainly part of the upper echelons of Lisbon society, a fact established by Francisco’s aristocratic sounding surnames⁴³, and his job as an

⁴³ Although these names are changed in the later chapters of the story to “Alvarenga” in one of Pessoa’s characteristic inconsistencies. When asked about his family Francisco begins by telling “A minha família é de Trás-os-Mont...” (Pessoa 2008: 219). This is a truncated reference to one of Portugal’s northernmost

engineer in a country where, in 1920, 70% of its population was illiterate.⁴⁴ His father, we are told, died two years before the story starts, in the town of Caneças, in the vicinity of Lisbon, but what is of more relevance for the narrative, is the fact that its central plot element is a letter written by Almeida e Sá's father, prior to his death, addressed to his business partner Amaro Simas. The letter, and its delayed itinerary, is described in the following way:

Era um envelope formato comercial. Pela espessura poderia conter, vamos, umas cinco ou seis folhas. Carta grande, sim, como carta...Entregou-me esta carta, dizendo que era para entregar ao seu amigo Amaro Simas, que então estava em África, mas eu não lha devia mandar para África, pois ele não queria correr o mais pequeno risco de que a carta se perdesse. Disse que a carta tinha coisas de muita importância para o Simas, e com quem mais ninguém tinha nada. (...) Logo que morreu o meu pai e eu vim para Lisboa, guardei a carta no lugar mais seguro que tinha – um cofre que tenho no Montepio Geral. (Pessoa 2008: 220)

The recipient of the letter is in Africa, presumably Portuguese Africa, a fact confirmed a few lines later, when we are further told about the communications between Almeida e Sá and Simas:

Escrevi-lhe uns quinze a vinte dias depois da morte do meu pai. Escrevi-lhe para lhe dar a notícia do falecimento, e citei a carta, dizendo-lhe, é claro, que não lha podia mandar em virtude da indicação do meu pai. O Simas respondeu logo – logo para Angola –, quer dizer respondeu na volta do correio. (Pessoa 2008: 221)

Angola during the 1920s was part of the Portuguese colonial empire, with a growing population of white settlers. While part of the Portuguese state, its remoteness in relation

provinces, Trás-os-Montes, fleshing out the character by tracing his rural origins. The fact that the family comes from that region though finds itself in Lisbon asserts the centrality of the capital city in the context of the country. Simultaneously, considering the family's social position, it strongly implies that they would be landed aristocracy.

⁴⁴ Direcção Geral de Estatística, 1925, *Censo da População de Portugal no Primeiro de Dezembro de 1920*, Volume II, Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional.

to metropolitan power is established by the text: there is no question of sending the letter for it may be lost. When letters are exchanged between Almeida e Sá and Simas, the latter replies “logo para Angola”, implying that an immediate response to a letter takes a long period of time to arrive when sent from the African territory. Guedes, by this stage promoted to chief and known by the unflattering nickname of “O Guedes Bruto” (Pessoa 2008: 220), is interrogating Almeida e Sá and reinforces this view with yet another Lisbon-centric reference: “verdade seja que Angola não é ali em Cacilhas” (Pessoa 2008: 221), Cacilhas being a small fishing village on the south bank of the river Tagus, facing Lisbon. As the interview proceeds, Almeida e Sá reveals more about Simas: “O Simas não vive em Luanda nem em nenhum dos portos. Vive no interior, onde é gerente de umas minas de que é sócio, e de que o meu pai foi sócio também.” (Pessoa 2008: 221). The social background and status of the characters of ‘A Carta Mágica’ is of paramount importance to its plot, for it is Simas’ business in Angola that prevents him from receiving the letter before, leading to the highly dramatic moment of his return to Portugal aboard the ship “Angoche”⁴⁵ and Marta’s “hysterical” act of stealing the letter. All of this takes place in the geographical and political context of the Portuguese colonial empire: Lisbon, like London or Paris, can be the beating heart of a colonial enterprise too.

⁴⁵ “Angoche” is the name of a historical sultanate in Mozambique, the chief city of which was known as António Eanes during colonial times and Angoche nowadays. Incidentally, a cargo ship of the same name was at the centre of a real life mystery in 1971 as it disappeared off the coast of Mozambique, between Nacala and Porto Amélia, to be later found adrift in the Mozambique Channel, its entire tripulation missing, never to be found. At the time most theories pointed to a Frelimo-led attack though though this has never been confirmed. Cf. Metzner, Leone, 1979, *O Caso Angoche*, Braga and Lisbon: Intervenção.

Quaresma and the Assassination of Sidónio Pais

A very special case of the importance of the Portuguese setting in the Quaresma stories is his investigation of the assassination of Sidónio Pais. Although Freitas' edition is the first comprehensive gathering of the most important of Pessoa's detective stories, some fragments were not included in her 2008 work possibly because they had been previously published elsewhere. These include the text featuring Quaresma included in *Da República* (1978), a collection of Pessoa's musings and reflections on the First Portuguese Republic. Similarly, *Da República* also includes the fragment of an essay where the same line of reasoning shown by Quaresma in the aforementioned text is developed. This is another instance of the fluidity of essayistic themes in Pessoa's oeuvre when considered as a whole, but it also illustrates the interplay between essayistic and narrative prose in the Quaresma stories and its special place in the author's textual output.⁴⁶

In this piece, Quaresma's investigative skills are brought to bear on the assassination of Portuguese dictator Sidónio Pais, which took place on the 14th December 1918. This is the most striking feature of the text: Quaresma, a fictional character, investigates a real life, historical event. Pessoa's willingness to combine in a text fictional and the real events and characters finds here one of its most remarkable

⁴⁶ A version in English of the section of the text which is the exposition of Quaresma's theory, although not referencing the detective in any way, can be found in Lopes 1993: 216. Lopes' source is unclear and unreferenced.

instances, a point to which I will return in Chapter 6. For the moment, my main interest is the political and historical background to the story.

After successfully leading a military coup on 5th December 1917, Sidónio's period in power, albeit short, had a significant impact on the history of the Portugal in the 20th century. It has been called "a República Bonapartista" and comparisons between him and Mussolini or Primo de Rivera were made as early as 1925 (Ramos: 616). More recently this political affinity has been put into question, with comparisons being drawn between Sidónio and Perón due to the populist approach of the Portuguese dictator's government, who "made improving the plight of the poorest in Portuguese society one of the hallmarks of his presidency" (Rothwell: 93). The cult of personality consciously built around his leadership is part of the reason for the comparison with Napoleon implied by Mattoso's succinct formula. This cult was fostered by staged public appearances in full uniform, numerous parades and a rhetoric of national unity that sought to recover the imagery and rituals of the monarchy, while strongly affirming the republican state (Meneses: 227).

The assassin was José Júlio da Costa, a former sergeant who was caught on the spot, not attempting in any way to escape. The political turmoil of the First Republic fostered a number of conspiracy theories surrounding the event, which attributed Costa's motivations to a variety of political and social ideologies, going so far as hypothesizing his adherence to several secret societies, among which Free-Masonry or any of the incipient Communist-inspired organizations known at the time as "bolchevistas" (Medina: 31-33, 90-91, 113-115). The fact that Sidónio's rule had been characterized by

a violent crackdown on such societies, as well as on his opponents in the Democratic Party, fuelled the debate (Medina: 115). To complicate further the matter, there had been a first attempt on Sidónio's life, on the 6th of December, perpetrated by Júlio Baptista, a young man who was a member of the Liga da Juventude Republicana, an organization with close affiliations to the Democratic Party, of which, incidentally, Costa was also a member (Ayala: 333-334). The Democratic Party had close relations with Freemasonry: the Portuguese Grand master of the latter at the time of Sidónio's assassination, Magalhães Lima, was a member of the party (Ayala: 334). Simultaneously, the Russian revolution in 1917 had created a continental-wide panic that contributed to the political and social instability in the context of which the assassination took place. These circumstances contributed to the febrile theories regarding a plot in which Costa would have been merely the acting hand.⁴⁷

Pessoa's attitude towards Sidónio's regime was ambivalent during its heyday, eventually becoming, however, one of outright admiration following the president's death, mirroring the public outpouring of grief that took over Portuguese society after the event (Medina: 18). In the fragmentary essay "Sentido do Sidonismo" he seems to criticize the populist appeal of Sidónio:

Uma demagogia é um governo apoiado em forças (ou classes) populares e sistematicamente dirigido contra as opiniões, as tradições e os interesses das classes médias. Ora, como as classes médias, por estarem entre o instinto popular e a inteligência dos dirigentes (das

⁴⁷ Magalhães Lima was arrested following the assassination and, among other documents, a letter from Costa was found in his possession. The letter had no direct connection with Costa's actions but this incident contributed to the speculations (Medina: 21)

aristocracias), são a média do valor nacional, e os depositários da força do país, segue que tudo quanto seja feito sistematicamente contra as classes médias é feito sistematicamente contra a pátria. (Pessoa 1978: 105)

This fragment is perhaps Pessoa's most obvious moment of nailing his colours to the mast. In this context, his political conservatism and the adherence to bourgeois ideology in his crime fiction find strong grounding. This, however, was written before Sidónio's death. After that event, Pessoa celebrated the dictator with the poem "À Memória do Presidente-Rei Sidónio Pais", in which he reaffirms the monarchic aspect of Sidónio's presidency not only by coining the term "presidente-rei" and attributing it to the dead man but by likening him to 16th century king D. Sebastião: "Flor alta do paul da grei,/Antemanhã da Redenção,/Nele uma hora encarnou el-rei/Dom Sebastião" (Pessoa 1986a: 1177).⁴⁸ In the poem Pessoa compares Sidónio's death to a "Novo Alcácer-Kibir na noite!" referencing the 1578 battle that led to the death of the Portuguese monarch and eventually to the loss of independence to Spain. I would argue that Pessoa reconciles his previous positions with the shock of the president's death – and its attendant fear of social upheaval – by subsuming him into a monarchic role. His populism can be forgiven, for it is not mere pandering to voters: it is a king's proximity to his people.⁴⁹

The Quaresma fragment in question is thus put into context. In this excerpt an unnamed narrator portrays the detective as past his heyday, in keeping with other stories in the corpus:

⁴⁸ The poem was originally published in *Acção*, n^o4, 27/02/20.

⁴⁹ Pessoa also dedicated other articles and essays to Sidónio and to his regime (Pessoa 1978: 96, 97, 103, 104), as well a short story, "Na Farmácia do Evaristo" (Pessoa 1978: 271-294), in which patrons of a barbershop discuss the political turmoils of the First Republic, including Sidónio's period in power.

Havia muito tempo que eu não via o Dr. Abílio Quaresma (...) Dir-se-ia que estava há muito morto (...) Não foi, portanto, sem um sobressalto, como ante um ressuscitado, que antes de ontem, ao virar a esquina estrema da Rua da Madalena, em baixo para a Rua da Alfândega, esbarrei com o Dr. Quaresma. Tinha passado já para ele a sua grande época, que, aliás, nunca foi grande, em que ele foi, no seu género, o maior raciocinador investigador que creio possível existir (...) O seu isolamento agora era absoluto (...) (Pessoa 1978: 262, 263)

The use of specific topographic references ensures that the narrative is clearly set in Lisbon. The narrator sets the stage for this “return” of Quaresma by speaking of him as resurrected, a point that is further elaborated in the following paragraphs:

Nem houve cronista que relatasse o extraordinário raciocínio pelo qual, sem ir ao local do crime (...) Quaresma decifrou integralmente o enigma do Roubo da Quinta das Vinhas, hoje sem dúvida, já esquecido. Nem ficou relato, tão-pouco, de episódios como o de pergaminho roubado, como eu para mim lhe chamo. (Pessoa 1978: 263)

The narrator lists here two of the stories that were actually written and form part of the Quaresma corpus. As discussed in chapter 1, ‘O Roubo da Quinta das Vinhas’ was written in paper marked with the address of the firm F.A. Pessoa which was only active in 1918. ‘O Pergaminho Roubado’, as mentioned above, can be dated to the same year. The factual occurrence of Sidónio’s assassination in December 1918 necessarily dates the fragment to the later moment, but the reference to the unwritten “episodes” suggests that Pessoa was still working on those narratives as he sketched the plan for the Sidónio investigation. This is reinforced by the narrator’s declared interest in becoming the “editor” of the Quaresma narratives:

Um dia talvez, se tiver o tempo mental preciso para disciplinar em mim esses curiosíssimos incidentes, serei eu próprio o coordenador dessa obra de dialética prática, pela qual um raciocinador, sem observar (como Sherlock Holmes), vai de dedução em dedução, reconstruindo um crime inteiro, um incidente completo, de que só conhece dois detalhes, um quarto de dúzia de factos. (Pessoa 1978: 263, 264)

This is, effectively, a statement of purpose that coincides with the Quaresma project, as well as with the narrative device of employing a narrator who is the chronicler of Quaresma's exploits, following the Watson-Holmes standard as will be observed in 'O Caso Vargas' in Chapter 3.

In the course of their conversation, the narrator asks Quaresma whether he had considered the assassination not from a political perspective but rather "pelo velho processo do raciocinador" (Pessoa 1978: 264). Quaresma responds by saying that he had been more preoccupied with chess problems, and that concerning the assassination "a base de factos é insuficiente para um trabalho capaz de indução". (Pessoa 1978: 264). This is consistent with the contradictory news reports following the events. Nonetheless, Quaresma tries to reason them through:

Uma vingança, um crime por ódio é tão natural que fosse planeado pelos bolchevicks, como pelos democráticos; uns, como outros, viram os seus manejos revolucionários dominados pelo Presidente. E, como qualquer grupo tenderia a fazer para se livrar de responsabilidades e represálias, é natural também que os bolchevicks tendessem a atirar com as suspeitas para cima de outro grupo qualquer. Porque escolheriam para isso a Maçonaria? Nada sei das relações que haja, ou possa haver, ou seja natural que haja, entre a M. e os Bs.; mas para o caso nada importa quais elas sejam, pois, quem tenta lançar suspeitas sobre alguém, olha ao aspecto público do acto, cujas suspeitas de Comissão quer lançar, e não a coisas secretas que o público, que é quem há-de suspeitar, desconhece. (Pessoa 1978: 265)

Quaresma lists here the three groups that, after Sidónio's death, were suspected to have been involved in the plot that led to it. Quaresma starts by considering the assassination as possibly an act of revenge or hate, which could have been planned by either the "bolsheviks" or the "democrats" as a reaction to the repression both groups had been subjected to under Sidónio's regime. Quaresma considers first the "bolsheviks", which seem to draw his suspicion due to the fact that the Free-Masons had been under scrutiny

immediately following the event. Quaresma infers that the “bolsheviks” would have tried to orchestrate misinformation by, somehow, framing the Free-Masons. How this could have been accomplished is never explained by the detective, who jumps parts of his reasoning, but it seems to be just a first line of inquiry which would have been ultimately dismissed:

Que razões para atribuir o crime a Maçonaria? As suas relações com os democráticos? Era mais simples atribuir o crime aos democráticos. As suas tendências anticlericais? Essa é a razão da sua ligação com os democráticos — estamos portanto na mesma. O assalto recente a dois dos seus centros? Já isso é mais possível. Examinemos o ponto com mais cuidado. (Pessoa 1978: 266)

Quaresma seems to argue here against the accusations made publicly against the Freemasons. This is remarkable considering the dearth of facts, as averred by Quaresma himself. The detective affirms in ‘O Caso Vargas’ that “Contra argumentos não há factos”, as we will see in the following chapter, but the problem in this particular investigation is that there are almost no arguments either: Pessoa jumped several steps of what would have been reasoning, as he does in many of the other stories of the Quaresma corpus. The defense of Freemasonry is repeated and rephrased in nearly identical paragraphs in quick succession:

Porque é que seria natural atribuir-se este crime à Maçonaria? Por razões possíveis: as suas ligações com o partido democrático, que o Pres. venceu; as suas tendências anticlericais, quando o Pres. protegeu, até certo ponto, os católicos; as suas razões de queixa directas, como fossem os assaltos ao G. Lusitano e ao Club Montanha. (Pessoa 1978: 266)

These add little or nothing to Quaresma’s argument. What can be inferred, however, is the imperative to defend Freemasonry against the accusations laid against it. Pessoa seems to have decided that the organization could not have been involved in the

assassination, but to be struggling for arguments to prove his belief. This is consistent with the opinions he would manifest later in life, famously in the article ‘Associações Secretas’, coming strongly in support of Free-Masonry when attacked by Salazar’s nascent regime: “Não sou maçom, nem pertenço a qualquer outra Ordem semelhante ou diferente. Não sou porém anti-maçom, pois o que sei do assunto me leva a ter uma ideia absolutamente favorável da Ordem Maçónica.” (Pessoa 1978: 132).⁵⁰

This imperative to prove conclusions formed a priori shapes the remainder of the text:

Eis-nos, portanto, na seguinte conclusão: a morte do Presidente foi um crime político, cometido por cálculo e para proveito e não para vingança e por ódio, e que não partiu nem da Maçonaria, nem dos Democráticos, nem dos Soviets. Nesse caso de quem partiu? (Pessoa 1978: 266-267)

This denial of the three original suspects is repeated three times, with different formulations, as before when the detective was concentrating his attention on Freemasonry. The “Bolsheviks” have become the “Soviets”, but nothing else is changed. The difference between a political crime rather than a hate or vengeful one suggests that, in Quaresma’s interpretation, the act had been committed with political gains in sight, rather than as an aggressive reaction to persecutions suffered under Sidónio’s heel. The mystery, however, would never be clarified. The closing lines of the incomplete text offer no solution, pointing to “mais grupos [que] tivessem vantagem em se ver livres do presidente” (Pessoa 1978: 267). This short piece is not fully illustrative of Quaresma’s

⁵⁰ First published in *Diário de Lisboa*, nº 4388, 4 Fev. 1935.

methods. Nevertheless, it exemplifies Pessoa's engagement with politics and his willingness to use problems and references that were of the utmost relevance to his contemporaries. Furthermore, it serves to illustrate Pessoa's willingness to enmesh fact and fiction in his stories, a point that is developed at greater length in Chapter 6.

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The issue of the foreignness of detective fiction relatively to the Portuguese literary field is at the centre of Pessoa's writings. I would go as far as claiming that the relationship established between the Quaresma stories and their Anglo-American models is one of emulation as far as plot and social setting are concerned. The same ideology and similar social types can be found in Poe, Doyle, Pessoa: a bourgeois genre with conservative sensibilities and middle-class preoccupations and anxieties. The main markers of a Portuguese quality are the very precise references to location, specifically streets in Lisbon. These references, however, provide the crucial displacement that Pessoa needs to achieve his goal. Pessoa chose to write these stories in a 'foreign' genre, including plot elements, however secondary, that feed into a discourse of the greatness of Portugal, even if, or particularly because, such greatness is often conceived as squandered possibility, as in the case of the submarine plans. The asymmetrical relationship in terms of cultural and political power between Portugal and Great Britain, France, or the United States, inevitably shapes his crime fiction: similarity of structure and sameness of ideological content have different functions once subjected to this lens.

In part, these idiosyncratically Portuguese elements in Pessoa's crime fiction include a Sebastianist twinge in the same vein as the Supra-Camões prophecy, which I examine in greater depth in the following chapter: the return to a past of national glory. The method to achieve this, however, is fundamentally modern: a new literary genre depicting modern sensibilities, social realities and ambitions. In the following chapters, I will explore this in my reading of several of the Quaresma stories.

Chapter 3

Quaresma: Pessoa's Literary Character

Quaresma stands as Pessoa's preeminent, fully developed literary character in a more traditional sense. This chapter considers this development focusing on four texts. Firstly, the longest of the stories featuring the detective, 'O Caso Vargas', which is the clearest example of the methods deployed by Pessoa in crafting his character: an articulation between narrative and non-narrative text. Of special importance is the preface to this story, which I treat separately considering its role in introducing Quaresma. 'O Pergaminho Roubado' is another short story that can be read as an introduction to Quaresma. It is particularly useful since the narrator is one of the characters, unlike 'O Caso Vargas', which is told by a third-person narrator, supposedly a detached chronicler of Quaresma's exploits, similar to the one we have already seen in the Sidónio Pais fragment. Finally a study of 'O Caso da Janela Estreita' introduces another character, Tio Porco, who through his relationship to Quaresma illuminates certain aspects of the detective's personality. These texts allow us to understand how Quaresma operates in the other stories of the corpus, and ultimately to understand the position they occupy in Pessoa's textual output.

The preface to ‘O Caso Vargas’

The edition prepared by Ana Maria Freitas includes a preface written by Pessoa that the editor considers to be “an introduction to the whole corpus”, in so far as it presents and describes the character of Abílio Quaresma from the point of view of an unnamed first-person narrator. In this section, I shall discuss the construction of Quaresma in that preface, seeking to compare it with possible sources of Pessoa’s text, specifically Arthur Conan Doyle’s first work featuring Sherlock Holmes, *A Study in Scarlet*, and R. Austin Freeman’s collection of stories, *The Singing Bone*, featuring the detective Dr. John Evelyn Thorndyke. The references to these authors in the essay “Detective Novel” justify a closer study of their possible connection with ‘O Caso Vargas’ and its preface.

The narrator commences by announcing the recent death of Abílio Quaresma, in New York, stating the pain he felt not due to any “laços especiais de amizade” that may have tied him with the deceased but rather because the obituary did not mention “o alto valor” that the same narrator recognized in Quaresma. Quaresma dies abroad, and this is the first fact mentioned about him, establishing a connection with a foreign country and a foreign metropolis that is never clarified but that opens possible links with the Anglo-American character of detective fiction at the time of Pessoa’s writing. The narrator then proceeds to claim the task of recording the deeds of Quaresma, described as “sonhador sempre, fechado no seu alcoolismo impenitente e no seu raciocínio já quase automatizado” (Pessoa 2008 : 32). The passage is worth quoting in full:

Tomei por isso sobre mim a tarefa editorial de reunir, de quantos pontos do mundo pude, quantos casos me foi possível obter, em que o raciocínio do dr. Quaresma tinha sido o Édipo de alguma esfinge criminal.

Quaresma's reasoning is then established as his first and foremost trait, but what is perhaps more striking about this passage is how that faculty is portrayed as the protagonist of the cases put together by the narrator. This is the first time any hint at Quaresma's activities as a detective is made, and it is worth remarking how instead of referring to the deceased doctor as the hero of his stories, it is his reasoning that is called an "Oedipus". The reference to Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* enhances the metaphor at play there: not only is "reasoning" itself raised to the level of character, but also of hero – tragic hero – and a very particular one at that. The association between Sophocles' Oedipus, the faculty of reason and the figure of the detective is a feature of criticism in the genre since Messac, where the centrality of the problem of knowledge in the tragedy and the necessity of laying bare in front of society a mystery – that of Oedipus' crime – is pointed as a forerunner of the Detective genre (Messac: 120). The parallel does not stop there, however, for the same argument can be found in recent criticism by Priestman in 1990 and Scaggs in 2005. The narrator's metaphor in Pessoa's text is in keeping with the title that Quaresma later claims for himself as a "decifrador de charadas" (Pessoa 2008: 80), a decipherer of riddles, much like Oedipus' solving the Sphinx's enigma in Sophocles' tragedy, which reinforces the point made by Messac.

The unnamed narrator also introduces the character of Officer Guedes, "Agente Guedes", in 'O Caso Vargas', promoted to Chefe Guedes in the later stories, described as "nobre bruto policial, atento, valoroso e amigo" (Pessoa 2008: 38). The relationship

between private investigators and the police is seldom a straightforward one. In Doyle's *A Study in Scarlet* Inspectors Gregson and Lestrade make their first appearance, largely depicted as well-intentioned albeit inept, fodder to Holmes' mock dismay and assuaged arrogance:

Gregson is the smartest of the Scotland Yarders," my friend remarked; "he and Lestrade are the pick of a bad lot. They are both quick and energetic, but conventional -- shockingly so. They have their knives into one another, too. They are as jealous as a pair of professional beauties.

(...)

My dear fellow, what does it matter to me? Supposing I unravel the whole matter, you may be sure that Gregson, Lestrade, and Co. will pocket all the credit. That comes of being an unofficial personage."

"But [Lestrade] begs you to help him."

"Yes. He knows that I am his superior, and acknowledges it to me; but he would cut his tongue out before he would own it to any third person. However, we may as well go and have a look. I shall work it out on my own hook. I may have a laugh at them if I have nothing else. Come on!" (Conan Doyle 1981: 26-27)

Holmes' arrogance is evident, and the rest of the narrative serves to a great extent to prove the motivations for it as he solves the mystery of the murders of Enoch Drebber and Joseph Stangerson.

In R. Freeman's 'The Case of Oscar Brodski', Superintendent Miller mocks Dr. Thorndyke's scientific and deductive methods of investigation. Simultaneously, Thorndyke's profession as a medical practitioner establishes a link between Conan Doyle's Watson and Abílio Quaresma himself, "médico sem clínica" (Pessoa 2008: 36):

(...) it was a pretty obvious case of murder," said Thorndyke. "As to the motive, the deceased was a diamond merchant and is believed to have had a quantity of stones about his person. I should suggest that you search the body."

The inspector gave an exclamation of disgust. "I see," he said. "It was just a guess on your part. The dead man was a diamond merchant and had valuable property about him: therefore he was murdered." He drew himself up, and, regarding Thorndyke with stern reproach, added: "But you must understand, sir, that this is a judicial inquiry, not a prize competition in a penny paper." (Freeman: 30)

One should note that, in this case, the irony of the policeman's inadequacy set against the sleuth's sagacity is even more staggering considering the particular structure of Freeman's stories: claiming the title of creator of the "inverted detective story" (Freeman: preface, n.pag) in his preface to the first edition of *The Singing Bone*, Freeman does seem to be indeed the first practitioner of a detective story where the crime itself is narrated, satisfying the reader as to the traditional question 'whodunit'. Instead, the mystery Freeman concentrates on is that of the investigation itself, the processes by which the investigator uncovers the crime of which the reader and the criminal are the only people to be fully cognizant. It is also worth noticing how the policeman refers to the situation at hand, rightly so, as a "judicial inquiry", while assuming that Dr Thorndyke is approaching it as "a prize competition in a penny paper". This ludic approach to crime is also attributed to Quaresma in the preface to 'O Caso Vargas':

Charadas, problemas de xadrez, quebra-cabeças geométricos e matemáticos – alimentava-se destas coisas e viva com elas como com uma mulher. O raciocínio aplicado era o seu prazer abstracto. Aquele quarto no 3º andar da Rua dos Fanqueiros, a que era tão fiel como à sua renúncia à vida, conheceu orgias de compreensão e solução que nenhum orgiaco da carne poderia acompanhar na sua experiência. (Pessoa 2008: 34)

The decipherer is fittingly described as someone who feeds on "charades, chess problems and mathematical and geometrical puzzles", but also as someone who "lives with them as if they were a woman". The crime-as-game metaphor acquires here another twist, where "game" or "play" are equated with "nourishment" or "woman". This brings to mind Kracauer's assessment of the detective as "a secular priest" (Kracauer 1979 [1927]: 73), entirely devoted to celebrate the cult of reason: "The desolation of *Ratio* is

complete only when it removes its mask and hurls itself into the void of random abstractions that no longer mimic higher determinations, and when it renounces seductive consonances and desires itself even as a concept” (Kracauer 1995 [1927]: 180).⁵¹ Kracauer has a negative critical attitude towards detective fiction, considering that “it stages a world completely dominated by a blind rationality and entirely alienated from any kind of meaning” (Levin in Kracauer 1995 [1927]: 15). This is in line with the reference to Adorno made above and to the the criticism of mass culture and the Enlightenment made by both authors. Kracauer’s renunciation of “seductive consonances” and the personification of reason as a subject who desires “itself even as a concept” employs a sexualized vocabulary that matches the terms used by Pessoa in the preface. The expression “orgias de compreensão” reinforces even more the apparent oxymoron in Pessoa’s text, where the mental activity of reasoning is related to the physical and emotional experiences of nourishment or “living with a woman”, which in turn calls for analysis of the way they are brought together in the same large simile.

To understand this compound of metaphors it may be helpful to resort to Lakoff and Johnson (1990) and the theory of conceptual metaphor, which has as its basic tenets the ideas “Our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature”,⁵² and that “*The essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another.*” (Lakoff and

⁵¹ Lindeza Diogo 1995: 16 also draws the Kracauer comparison in the context of the role of reason in the Quaresma stories, although he only calls attention to the centrality of the concept of reason.

⁵² I follow the authors’ choice of graphic presentation of individual conceptual metaphors.

Johnson: 2)⁵³ The argument goes on to analyze the usage in everyday language of elaborate systems of metaphors. The first to be presented is ARGUMENT IS WAR, typified by such expressions as “Your claims are *indefensible*”, “He *attacked every weak point in my argument*. His criticisms were *right on target*.” or I *demolished* his argument.”, where all the terms used to describe verbal discussion are taken from another field of human experience, namely that of war (Lakoff and Johnson: 3-5). Ultimately, the authors suggest that the employment of such constructions in language influences the way humans perceive and act upon the physical and cultural world surrounding them. Whereas Lakoff and Johnson seek to make a point about the English language generally, I would like to suggest that reading the passage above in terms of a cluster of conceptual metaphors may not only shed some light onto it, but also prepare my argument for the complexity of the philosophical core of ‘O Caso Vargas’. If we consider, then, that at the heart of the excerpt is a metaphor of GAME AS NOURISHMENT compounded with GAME AS SEX, grounded in the expressions “orgias de compreensão”, where I read “orgy” as “an occasion of feasting or revelry, *esp.* one characterized by excessive drinking and indiscriminate sexual activity”,⁵⁴ I would like to argue that the overarching conceptual metaphor would be MIND AS BODY, a subversion of traditional concepts that cannot go by unnoticed as one enters ‘O Caso Vargas’ with its dense philosophical and epistemological dimension, especially as Quaresma expounds his deductive method.

⁵³ In italics in the original text.

⁵⁴ OED definition, see <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/132515?redirectedFrom=orgy#eid>.

‘O Caso Vargas’

To summarize ‘O Caso Vargas’ - or at least its basic plot elements – is a difficult task considering the incompleteness of the work. The central events, however, can be briefly stated: a man named Custódio Borges calls on a navy officer, Pavia Mendes, to ask after a common friend, Carlos Vargas, whom Borges was supposed to have met the night before, after Vargas had dinner with Mendes. The latter, not knowing Vargas’ whereabouts, becomes alarmed and confides to Borges that Vargas was in possession of the secret plans for a submarine he had invented. The corpse of the missing man is found shortly after, in the middle of a moor on the outskirts of Lisbon, close to Pavia Mendes’ house. The police, in the persons of Judge Francisco da Fonseca, Chief Bastos and Officer Guedes, being baffled by the “Vargas case”, the “decipherer” Abílio Quaresma steps in to provide the solution to the affair.

Any reading of ‘O Caso Vargas’ is necessarily shaped by the fact that the text is incomplete, having been developed to different stages in its separate sections. Freitas operates a division in chapters following Pessoa's notes, but the fact remains that the text is rather a collection of several smaller excerpts, grouped together in a tentative whole with different degrees of cohesion. This can be seen in the several disjunctures in the narrative, the first of which can be found in the break occurring between Borges’ talk with Pavia Mendes and the discovery of the body (Pessoa 2008: 44). These breaks are expressed graphically by the sign **x**, but they are rendered more obvious by sudden interruptions in dialogue or by the inclusion of characters not previously introduced:

when Borges and Pavia Mendes interact with an unnamed policeman discussing whether Vargas killed himself or was murdered, the discovery of his body can only be inferred from this conversation.

In Chapter III, Chief Bastos and Officer Guedes make their first appearance, and up till Chapter VIII, the investigation is carried under two hypotheses: either Vargas was killed because of the submarine plans, or he killed himself for unknown reasons. The case is almost settled as a suicide when Quaresma comes into the picture. His appearance constitutes the core of the text, but it also largely departs from the narrative itself: for 54 out of the 99 pages of the story, Quaresma's thought processes in analyzing the case are expounded in almost essayistic prose that barely refers to any of the details of the crime – and hence what would seem to be the story itself.

As he enters the judge's office, he announces that “decifrei o problema” for the purposes of entertainment. Furthermore, Quaresma announces that he considers it his duty, “mais intelectual do que moral”, to bring forth the solution of the Vargas case, clarifying that such solution is built with arguments rather than facts, since “os factos são coisas duvidosas”. He finishes his preamble by subverting the traditional saying “contra factos não há argumentos”, switching the two elements of the phrase: “Contra argumentos não há factos” (Pessoa 2008: 75). Considering the empiricist echo of the original saying, since it upholds a supposed irrefutability and epistemological precedence of material facts against any idealist discussion or interpretation of them, Quaresma's parody seeks to establish a counterpoint to it in the articulation of reasoned thinking. It is worth pointing out how this parodic strategy had already been employed in

the preface to the novella, but its reemergence at this stage, as Quaresma is about to present his *tour de force*, reintroduces the logic of inversion that seems to animate Pessoa's humourous quips and the play-like quality that in 'Detective Story' he ascribed to detective fiction.

Quaresma opens his arguments by stating that

«A maneira de investigar um caso destes é (...) por 3 estados de raciocínio. O primeiro é determinar se houve de facto crime. O segundo é determinado isso positivamente, determinar como, quando (...) e porquê o crime foi praticado. O terceiro é, por meio de elementos colhidos do decurso desses dois estádios da investigação (...) determinar quem praticou o crime» (Pessoa 2008: 78.)

The narrator further qualifies this introduction by saying that Quaresma “falava com uma precisão que, parecendo literária, era, antes lógica, que parecendo de palavra escrita, era, antes, de palavra exacta” (Pessoa 2008 : 78). These oppositions between literary and logical precisions, between written and exact words, are crucial to understand ‘O Caso Vargas’ and the singularity of Quaresma’s character, not only in this story but in the genre of detective fiction.

At this juncture it is helpful to recall Todorov’s suggestion that “the plot of the classical detective novel comprises two basically separate stories—the story of the crime (which consists of action) and the story of the investigation (which is concerned with knowledge)” (Todorov: 42). ‘O Caso Vargas’ seems to include those two separate stories – Vargas’ murder and the story of the investigation to find his murderer – but also a third, non-narrative element in the form of Quaresma’s speech. Its precision, the narrator tells us, is “logical” and not “literary” – implying mutual exclusion of those two elements. From its incipient enunciation, it is the “exact” word, not the “written” one, and again

mutual exclusion seems to be implied. Quaresma's analysis seems to be posited outside of the realm of fiction or storytelling in Todorov's terms.

After the division of investigation into three "estados de raciocínio", Quaresma elaborates his meta-analysis by distinguishing between two types of reasoning, "raciocínio concreto" and "raciocínio abstracto". He defines the first of these elements as a type of intelligence in the following terms:

a inteligência, trabalha sobre sensações – dados fornecidos pelos sentidos, nossos ou alheios – o que juridicamente se chama testemunho. (...) ao raciocínio que trabalhando sobre os dados dos sentidos, deles extrai os factos, poderemos chamar o raciocínio concreto. (Pessoa 2008: 78)

"Raciocínio abstracto" on the other hand, is established negatively as the type of intelligence to be applied when there is

uma escassez e conseqüente irrelação de dados, e um duvidoso vário de testemunhos que deixa o simples raciocínio concreto mal habilitado, quando não incompleto para descobrir, na sua totalidade a natureza, o que foi o acontecimento. (Pessoa 2008: 78)

This use of reason as a theme follows a tradition set down by early critics of crime fiction, notably Messac's theory that the detective novel is a study on the faculty of reason; Kracauer's theological bent, where the detective is compared to a priest of reason; and even W. H. Auden's 1948 essay 'The Guilty Vicarage', where detective stories are read in the light of Aristotelian aesthetics. In 1960, German Philosopher Ernst Bloch gave a lecture on 'A Philosophical View of the Detective Novel', analyzing Poe, Conan Doyle and Christie from a Marxist perspective, following the footsteps of Kracauer. More recently, Szlavsky (1983) resorts to Kant in order to study the shift from puzzle-like plots in Golden Age Detective Fiction to the moral depth of hard-boiled

American authors such as Chandler and Hammett. In the same year, Eco and Sebeok (1983) compare the deductive reasoning of Dupin and Holmes with the analytic philosophy of Charles S. Pierce.⁵⁵

While my analysis inscribes itself in this line of interpretation, I argue that Pessoa's 'O Caso Vargas' is part of the "analytical" tradition that dominated crime fiction up to the 1940s as defended by Scaggs (2008), producing works where the text is constructed as a "puzzle", and where the enjoyment provided to the reader is fundamentally of an intellectual nature: that of cracking the case. However, a fundamental difference in terms of depth and vocabulary can be seen in Pessoa when compared to his predecessors, specifically the classics Poe and Conan Doyle. Comparing Quaresma's analysis with the foundational text of detective fiction, Poe's 'The Murders in the Rue Morgue', is quite revealing:

The mental features discoursed of as the analytical, are, in themselves, but little susceptible of analysis. We appreciate them only in their effects. We know of them, among other things, that they are always to their possessor, when inordinately possessed, a source of the liveliest enjoyment. As the strong man exults in his physical ability, delighting in such exercises as call his muscles into action, so glories the analyst in that moral activity which disentangles. He derives pleasure from even the most trivial occupations bringing his talent into play. He is fond of enigmas, of conundrums, hieroglyphics; exhibiting in his solutions of each a degree of acumen which appears to the ordinary apprehension praeternatural. His results, brought about by the very soul and essence of method, have, in truth, the whole air of intuition. (Poe: 32)⁵⁶

The quote above is an excerpt from the long, essayistic introductory segment that discusses and illustrates these topics – introducing the image of "xadrez" - until it

⁵⁵ See Bibliography for references.

⁵⁶ This is the first story in the *Crime and Detection* anthology edited by Sayers in 1928 referenced above and included in Pessoa's personal library.

reaches its conclusion with the sentence: “The narrative which follows will appear to the reader somewhat in the light of a commentary upon the propositions just advanced” (Poe: 34). This statement operates a clear division between “propositions” and a “narrative” that performs the function of commentary. As in ‘O Caso Vargas’, a story of mysterious murder and its resolution is enmeshed in a discussion about “mental features” called “analytical”, themselves the means through which that resolution is achieved. Quaresma's speech, much like Poe's introduction, includes almost no narrative elements – be they plot, character or action. This is particularly evident as Quaresma unfolds his reasoning, stating that “abstract reasoning” is needed when there is not enough factual information on an event, and that:

O raciocínio abstracto emprega um, ou mais, de três processos – o processo psicológico, o processo hipotético e o processo histórico. Só o processo psicológico (...): consiste em aprofundar a análise dos dados de que aquele extrai os factos – não para saber só qual foi a natureza dos acontecimentos, mas qual foi o estado mental que o produziu (...) esse acontecimento. (...) O processo hipotético consiste em, baseando-nos nos poucos factos (...) formular uma hipótese do que podia ter sucedido. (...) O processo histórico é análogo ao hipotético, salvo que se serve de exemplos conjecturais (...). (Pessoa 2008: 80-81)

While Poe turns to an illustration of what “analysis” is, operating by analogies and considering its effects, I would argue that Pessoa does exactly what Poe claims cannot be done, by analyzing “mental features discoursed of as the analytical”. Poe's introduction to ‘The Murders in the Rue Morgue’ may be presented as “propositions”, non-narrative in nature, according to his own terms, but Quaresma's speech goes one step further by providing a system of reasoning. All the elements of the story(s) leading up to Quaresma's entrance are referred to only as data that is processed by the system laid out by Quaresma. This treatment of information is arguably typical of Golden Age

detective fiction (Scaggs: 38), being also a development of the characteristics that I emphasized in Poe, which seem to follow Holmes' dictum upon learning that Watson turned his past exploits into narrative in *The Sign of Four* (1890):

Detection is or ought to be, an exact science, and should be treated in the same cold and unemotional manner. You have attempted to tinge it with romanticism, which produces the same effect as if you worked a love-story or an elopement into the fifth proposition of Euclid. (Doyle 1986: 108-9)

Quaresma pursues a similar “cold and unemotional manner” as he proceeds with the application of the “hypothetical method” to the mystery of Vargas' death in the tenth chapter. With the subtitle “Determinação da probabilidade de ser Borges o culpado”, Chapter X does not entirely fulfill what seemed to be its role since Borges is never mentioned. Rather, as Quaresma indicates, the sole function of the thought process is to ascertain whether Vargas' death was accident, suicide or murder: “Com respeito a este acontecimento, há evidentemente, três hipóteses – desastre, suicídio ou homicídio.” (Pessoa 2008: 83) The odds of an accident are considered, such as the possibility that Vargas could have been walking while holding his pistol and that in an elaborate fall he could have accidentally pulled the trigger. The farcicality of such a situation is played down since the hypothetical method strives only for the establishment of possibility, seeking likelihood only after running through all the options.

The second scenario posited by Quaresma is that of suicide. Turning to it, he engages in psychological analysis, by attempting to ascertain possible causes for a “suicidal state of mind” in Vargas. These musings set the stage for the much more profound analysis of the “psychological process”. The most noteworthy feature of this chapter, however, is the fact that nowhere in it – after the first sentence – is murder

directly considered, but only indirectly, via the final guesswork about the disappearance of the plans for the submarine and whether they could have been stolen much after death. Since the closing chapter of the story reveals the true importance of the submarine plans, these brief lines can be a hint that Borges may have been murdered. We can safely assume that this is the hypothesis on which the psychological process will labour, in its attempt to reconstruct the state of mind of the killer, and thus identify him.

The historical method is consigned to a single chapter for which Freitas found no texts. It is briefly outlined in the beginning of Quaresma's speech as a "método de erudição", where a present case is compared to past similar cases in an attempt to elaborate a theory on the chain of events that led to murder. The lack of substantial writing for this abortive chapter, however, allows for little more than a passing mention.

It is in the "psychological process" that Quaresma's decisive ideas can be found. After establishing the likelihood of murder having occurred by the "hypothetical process", Quaresma expounds his theory on the psychology of the criminal mind, defining it in terms of "abnormality" and linking it to two other types of "abnormal": the genius and the insane. The terminology here becomes more familiar to readers of Pessoa, specifically in the way it recalls the group of texts published as *Escritos de Génio e Loucura* (ed. Pizarro, Pessoa: 2006), where among essays and short pieces of indefinite nature, several excerpts of fictional texts are included – Quaresma being one of them. The editorial choice presiding over Pizarro's edition – evidencing the thematic quality of the works – emphasizes content over form, in an attempt to bring together texts whose stage of completion is often unclear but that are clearly linked by a

preoccupation with the subjects of genius and madness. Pessoa's interest in this topic is well documented by the Pizarro edition, but what is particularly relevant is how a larger philosophical grounding is given to the theory of deviation and abnormality that Quaresma goes on to put forward, and crucially how these essayistic, theoretical elements go on to be introduced in the narrative that frames them:

«O homem, como aliás todos os animais, tem uma vida psíquica, ou mental, composta por dois elementos opostos – aquele elemento, vulgarmente resumido à expressão «os sentidos», pelo qual entra em contacto com o mundo chamado externo, dele toma conhecimento, e com ele se relaciona; e aquele elemento que vai desde a consciência de si à inteligência abstracta, pelo qual entra em contacto com o mundo a que podemos chamar interno – o mundo das suas memórias, das suas imaginações, das suas ideias, do seu ser como o pensa e sente. (Pessoa 2008: 90)

Quaresma – for the text is a reproduction of his speech in the Judge's office as the quotation marks indicate – engages in the presentation of a theory that draws on the vocabulary of Platonism, clearly stating a division between an external and internal world to “Man”. From this stage, Quaresma divides “abstract intelligence” into further types, eventually linking criminal, insane, and genius-like behaviour to a deficiency or excess of intelligence and its relationship with other human faculties, namely that of emotion (Pessoa 2008: 91-92). Summing up his opinions in several tables (Pessoa 2008: 103-104, 107-115), Quaresma goes on to apply these principles to Borges' behaviour, effectively bridging the gap between theory and fiction:

“«Epileptizado pelo enxovalho: Custódio Borges □” (Pessoa 2008 : 98) is the first reference made to the character since the beginning of the decipherer's speech, but soon he is the object of deeper analysis:

«O que Borges tem em plena força é a mentalidade do criminoso premeditador (não do estratégico) - □

«Borges tem a mentalidade do estratégico, porque é um criminoso premeditador.

(...)

A mentalidade do criminoso premeditativo é o estado mórbido da mentalidade do estratégico, assim como a do paranoico é o estado mórbido do metafísico. (Pessoa 2008: 114-115)

In this particular instance of the Pessoaan detective story, there is a relationship between essayistic and fictional prose that departs from the tradition of the detective genre at the time of Pessoa's writing. Quaresma's theorizing surpasses what had been done by Dupin, Holmes, Hewitt, Dr. Thorndike or any other detective character mentioned or taking part in the stories commented in the essay 'Detective Story'. I would then claim that an essential difference of Quaresma as a detective character is this elaboration of theoretical/philosophical thought that exceeds that of his "colleagues". Therein lies his originality as a character.

A second difference, a corollary to the first, is the way this theoretical element is incorporated into the narrative that supports it. This becomes more apparent when Quaresma's reasoning is fully laid out, eliciting the following reaction from one of its listeners, Judge Fonseca:

(...) acho qualquer coisa de arrepiante e de diabólico no uso que V.a Ex.a fez desta pobre coisa que é a cabeça, que em geral serve mais para fielmente nos enganarmos lucidamente do que para chegarmos a qualquer conclusão verdadeira. Dá-me a impressão que assisti a uma sorte complicadíssima de prestidigitação, com a agravante de que, à medida que era feita, se me ia mostrando como era feita, e no fim ficou tão pasmosa como se tivesse tido sempre as engrenagens escondidas. (Pessoa 2008: 125)

The return to the narrative mode of the text has substantially changed its language, too, as evidenced by the description of Quaresma's speech as "prestidigitation", working on "cogs". We are returning to the use of metaphor as seen in the preface to the series, when body and mind were subverted and described in each other's terms, but also to that

inverted proverb asserted by Quaresma at the beginning of his exposition “Contra argumentos não há factos”. I would suggest that this return to the metaphorical serving a parodical process highlights the difference between what I have termed the “theoretical” or “philosophical” and the narrative section of the text, where Vargas’ death and the discovery of Borges as his murderer are told. Not only are we brought to the plot but language itself has changed, moving away from the conceptual density and systematic reasoning of Quaresma’s speech. This move is further highlighted by Judge Fonseca, who is not entirely happy with Quaresma’s arguments and offers a rebuttal:

«Se V.a Ex.a, em vez de dos seus admiráveis raciocínios, me tem vindo aqui dizer que havia um indivíduo que estava na Quinta da ... - e que viu o Vulto do Borges a atravessar essa quinta (...) eu não teria tido oportunidade de ouvir a sua espantosa exposição, mas teria elementos seguros para mandar o Borges para juízo (...) V.a Ex.a, compreende, sr. dr. Quaresma: a sua inteligência é científica e não jurídica. Ora as causas julgam-se em tribunais e não em laboratórios. O que faz fé em lógica não é exactamente o que faz fé em juízo. Não lhe digo que isto abone a favor da minha profissão, nem os tribunais, mas assim é.» (Pessoa 2008: 126-127)

The opposition between legal and scientific intelligences, and thus the limitations of Quaresma’s arguments in having an effective role in achieving justice, are highlighted in the conclusion of the narrative in Chapter XV, but not before an ellipsis in the story takes place. The fourteenth chapter, entitled “Bacalhau à Guedes”, is composed of a single line - “«Ele não tem corpo para três aguardentes lhe fazerem mal.» disse o tendeiro intrigado (de Guedes, botequim).” - introduced by the editor’s remark that “[Não foram encontrados documentos para este capítulo. Somente o pequeno fragmento que se segue, não se integrando em nenhum dos outros textos, poderia ser aqui inserido]” (Pessoa 2008: 131). This “small fragment” is another instance of disconnection in the narrative, not giving to the reader any information towards the

resolution of the case. It is directly followed by Borges' confession in chapter XV, titled 'O Depoimento Final', when the murderer, interrogated by Guedes, is presented with evidence not mentioned up till then, namely an envelope found in Borges' possession:

Meteu a faca pelo cimo do envelope e rasgou-o de um só traço. Tirou o papel – um só – que estava lá dentro e desdobrou-o. Era a declaração do Cte. Pavia Mendes de que dava 20% etc., etc., a quem lhe apresentasse aquele papel. (Pessoa 2008: 132)

A document relating, presumably, to the sale of the submarine plans. There is, however, more damning evidence:

O depoimento do seu vizinho da Rua..., o que o viu sair pela porta de trás da casa. O depoimento do guarda municipal que o reconheceu pelo andar como o homem que ele viu a falar com o Vargas à esquina da Azinhaga. O depoimento do vizinho do Artur Ramalho que estava quasi a dormir no quarto dos veigas quando o senhor se atrasou – isso tudo já era muito (...) mas a gente queria isto completo, e o completo era apanhar-lhe este documento. (Pessoa 2008: 132)

Both the envelope and all these witness accounts are information not introduced before and, conveniently, precisely what Judge Fonseca tells Quaresma that the police are lacking. Considering the naming of officer Guedes in the title of Chapter XIV, the jump in events between Quaresma's conclusion and Guedes' indictment of Borges in the final chapter, suggests that action leading to the discovery of that same evidence would have been included there – supposedly by Guedes himself. Confirming it, there is Borges assertion that “nem o dr. Quaresma, nem o juiz de instrução, me teriam apanhado em falso como o agente Guedes....” (Pessoa 2008: 136).

While I do not wish to speculate on what is not written, the missing links I offer are necessary as a precondition to interpretation of the interplay between Quaresma's theoretical brilliance and Guedes' apparently decisive efforts in bringing the two stories,

that of the crime and of its investigation (Todorov 1977: 42), to their conjoined conclusion in the apprehension of the criminal. I would argue that in this finale not only two stories are brought together but crucially so are the two strands of the text, the theoretical and the narrative, under the dominance of the latter: as Guedes eventually catches Borges, so the text drifts back to narrative from predominance of Quaresma's essayistic voice. This a point explored in greater extent in the two final chapters of this dissertation.

'O Pergaminho Roubado'

Fernando Pessoa's 'O Pergaminho Roubado' is the second of his detective stories published in *Quaresma, Decifrador*. Freitas states in her preface that the order of texts presented follows one of the last plans left by Pessoa himself for the publication of his crime fiction (Pessoa 2008: 16). This order is significant for the creation and development of Abílio Quaresma as a literary character, introduced by a specific narrative – 'O Caso Vargas' – but conceived of to appear as the main character in a string of stories of varied length, following the model of Sherlock Holmes and other Victorian and Edwardian detectives evoked in Chapter 1. In 'O Pergaminho Roubado', Quaresma is supposedly already known to the reader, but the necessity to establish his chief characteristics is still present:

Poucos casos foram tão de ordem a mistificar a investigação policial como o curioso caso do pergaminho roubado de casa de Jacinto Correia. Poucos casos são tão bons para revelar como é fácil errar totalmente uma investigação sem que esse erro lance o mais leve desdouro sobre as qualidades do detective. E poucos casos são tão bons para pôr em relevo as faculdades de raciocínio e de subtileza do dr. Abílio Quaresma. (Pessoa 2008: 143)

This is an excerpt from the first paragraph of the story, where an unnamed narrator then proceeds to describe how he asked one of the participants, Jacinto Correia, to tell the rest of it. It is interesting to note how the “case” is presented. A threefold description starts by introducing the bare facts, “the stolen scroll from Jacinto Correia’s house” and how few cases have “mystified police investigation” as much. But it then establishes a link between said case and the “qualities of the detective”, specifically “as faculdades de raciocínio e de subtileza do dr. Abílio Quaresma”. The narrative that follows this brief introduction is thus framed as, primarily, a means for presenting and exalting the characteristics of its main character.⁵⁷

A brief summary of the narrative may be helpful to understand the role of the plot in character development: an ancient scroll disappears from inside an antique chest in the private museum of a collector, a seemingly locked and impenetrable room. The same scroll is later returned with a note claiming that the theft had been motivated by a bet. The police are baffled by the case, and Quaresma is called in. Upon asking questions about the inhabitants of the house and the Collector’s history of acquisitions, Quaresma discovers that the target of the theft wasn’t the scroll but the coffer inside which it was hidden, which had been substituted by a copy. In the process of investigation, the criminals are revealed: the previous owner of the coffer had been the

⁵⁷ The word “mistificar” points to a concept of crucial importance in another Quaresma story, ‘A Carta Mágica’, where the character Marta is said to “intrujar”, or deceive, her husband. These references are entry points to Pessoa’s practice of non-narrative fiction, as described in greater depth in the following chapters. The noun “mistificação” is also employed by Pessoa in the letters and articles concerning the Crowley affair, indeed a mystification involving the police and perpetrated by Pessoa himself, as will be discussed in Chapter 6.

mastermind, a renowned locksmith makes a copy of the key to the museum room, and a petty criminal who, having access to the house due to his romantic relationship with one of the servants, performs the switch.

Quaresma gets on the case, right after the scroll is returned, introducing himself to the narrator, Carlos Domiciano Santos, the secretary of the Collector,⁵⁸ by means of a card presented by a servant of the household, reading “ABÍLIO QUARESMA/DECIFRADOR” (Pessoa 2008: 159). Carlos Santos, the narrator, proceeds to describe the detective physically, using numerous expressions in Latin, “o *facies* dava impressão de uma vaga assimetria” (Pessoa: 160), and French “O mesmo contraste se manifestava na sua atitude física. Essa era (...) desajeitada e *gauche* (...) essa *gaucherie* tomava o aspecto de um *sans-façon* absoluto” (Pessoa 2008: 161). The use of French words by the secretary continues throughout the text, a practice which juxtaposed with the introduction of Quaresma via a calling card and the social environment in which the crime takes place – a collector stealing an antique from another collector – places the narrative in an upper-class context. This is important to understand the discussions that emerge from the investigation as the narrative proceeds, especially the motivations of each character for their actions.

⁵⁸ The documents put together by Ana Maria Freitas refer to the “collector” with different names and titles: Senhor Correia, “O Conde”, “O Visconde”. This can be attributed to the unfinished status of the text and to Pessoa’s hesitation regarding the name or title of the character. Nonetheless, the effort of constructing him as an upper class figure is evident, with consequences for the text. To avoid ambiguity, I will refer to him as the Collector.

At this stage, however, Quaresma's physical description stands out for the detail with which it is given, lacking in 'O Caso Vargas' where it was dealt with summarily in one paragraph (Pessoa 2008: 74). It can be found to a certain extent in the Preface to the series (Pessoa 2008: 31-38), which focuses much more on the character's personality, but it is by far the longest, most meticulous description of Quaresma, or indeed any character, in Pessoa's detective fiction, and it deserves special attention:

Um homem de estatura acima daquela que é média entre portugueses, magro, quasi aquilo a que chamamos escanzelado, bastante curvado, o ar melancólico e deprimido, a cor má, terrosa, baça, o rosto vincado tanto por sulcos tanto de magreza como de depressão. Ao primeiro relance, o *facies* dava a impressão de uma vaga assimetria, que uma análise mais demorava tornava difícil de localizar, enquanto não acertava com a sua sede no acentuado estrabismo divergente, na contração um pouco hemiplégica da boca (...) A cara era comprida, o queixo retraído e débil, a expressão geral de apagamento e hesitação (...) (Pessoa 2008:160)

The overtones of the passage clearly add moral or psychological implications to the physical description. The "ar melancólico e deprimido" condenses the general impression caused by Quaresma on the narrator, but the terms "cor má, terrosa, baça", with the reference to soil preparing the description of his wrinkles as "sulcos", "furrows". Those furrows being taken as the signs of thinness and depression reinforces the negative image thus created: the metaphor expressed is that of Quaresma's face as poor, possibly infertile soil. The metaphor stops there but the references to the natural world in "terrosa" and "sulcos", to imply the psychological state of depression, set the precedent for the use of more specific, medical terms, to imply other psychological and moral traits. There is, indeed, a clinical ring to "*facies*", a Latin term employed to describe the general appearance of a patient. This is reaffirmed by the expressions "acentuado estrabismo divergente" and "contração hemiplégica", the latter implying the

partial paralysis that may follow a stroke. This chain of references to medicine may fit in with Quaresma's training as a doctor, but they also reinforce the pretensions to scientific validity, and to scientific truth as a value, present in detective fiction and to an extent in the Quaresma stories. That such terms are casually dropped, rather than employed in their specific contexts, is arguably another instance of Pessoa's wide albeit careless use of other fields of knowledge in which he was read, as already discussed in connection to the use of philosophical terms in the essay 'Detective Story'. The use of such terminologies is a defining characteristic of Pessoa's work: the recourse to texts, terms, and stories with reference to extra-textual reality to confer a different validity to his literary texts. This is a point that will be developed at greater length in Chapter 6.

The conclusion of the description of Quaresma maintains the tone so far observed:

Todo o hábito exterior do homem desde a sua posição física até ao seu traje – marcava aniquilamento e desleixo, sem que a assinatura de um vício especial ou de um mau hábito notável revelasse uma causa nítida. Todo o homem indicava um desses falhados da vida que nunca são nada, que perdem todas as oportunidades, que desleixam todos os assomos da sorte, mas em quem não há energia para um impulso criminoso, vitalidade para a existência de um vício, ou alegria para a naturalidade de uma *sans-façon* boémia. (Pessoa 2008: 160-161)

Here the possibility of a hidden "vice" or "bad habit" is directly expressed even if only to be discarded. More relevantly, Quaresma is defined as not possessing the energy for a "criminal impulse". Although expressed on the negative, the link between Quaresma's physiognomical description and crime is established.

The conflation of physical attributes and moral characteristics is not only part of the physical portrayal but the main method of presenting Abílio Quaresma as a character

before he intervenes in the narrative of ‘O Pergaminho Roubado’. This mixture of physical and moral qualities follows the precepts of Cesare Lombroso, the likely source for Pessoa’s knowledge regarding psychology and criminology, as already indicated. In a preface dedicated to Max Nordau, another decisive influence on Pessoa’s psychological theory, Lombroso states that “Le criminel-né présente dans sa physionomie les signes clairs de son penchant criminel.” (Lombroso: 15). Although he is not a criminal, Quaresma’s description, both physical and mental, subscribes to this almost complete identification between the two, as Lombroso’s link between appearance and tendency to criminality. This is not an innovation of Lombroso, as physiognomy had long been a feature of culture and literature. His “contribution” was rather to justify the claims that a person’s moral or psychological outlook can be inferred from their physical appearance with arguments for which he claimed scientific validity.⁵⁹

It is also striking how several of the terms used in Quaresma’s description in ‘O Pergaminho Roubado’ recall two other sets of texts: those written by Pessoa about himself and passages of *Livro do Desassossego*: “um desses falhados da vida que nunca são nada, que perdem todas as oportunidades (...)” resonates in fragment 319 of *Livro do Desassossego*: “Reconheço hoje que falhei; só pasmo, às vezes, de não ter previsto que falharia. Que havia em mim que prognosticasse um triunfo? Eu não tinha a força cega dos vencedores ou a visão certa dos loucos... Era lúcido e triste como um dia frio.”

⁵⁹ Cf. The tables and lists of types of criminal divided by physical features such as thick brows, low hairline or lack of beard. (Lombroso 1907: XV, XVI)

(Pessoa 1998a: 298) Notice also the reference to “a visão certa dos loucos”, an ever present topic in Pessoa’s detective fiction. It is even possible to hear in the double negation of the formula “um desses falhados que nunca são nada” the opening lines of Álvaro de Campos’ ‘Tabacaria’, “Não sou nada/Nunca serei nada”.⁶⁰

In this fragment, Abílio Quaresma emerges as a literary character not only with special links to his creator, being arguably a literary self-representation, but also with Pessoa’s heteronyms, specifically Bernardo Soares and Álvaro de Campos. This relationship has been hinted at by Freitas, who quotes the following passage from Pessoa’s self-analytical texts: “Procurei sempre ser espectador da vida, sem me misturar nela. (...) Tenho na vida o interesse de um decifrador de charadas. Paro, decifro e passo adiante.” (Freitas, *in* Pessoa: 15). The expression “decifrador de charadas”, applied here by Pessoa to himself, is the sobriquet of Abílio Quaresma in Pessoa’s detective stories. The shared attributes between Quaresma and the heteronyms confirm how the detective is not an isolated case but part of a wider literary project, whereas the elements of Pessoa himself that mould the character reflect what I would call Pessoa’s use of extra-literary truth values, such as the scientific or autobiographical discourses, in his fiction.

The complex status of Quaresma as a literary character in Pessoa’s broader oeuvre faces then another complication from the presence of essay-like prose and

⁶⁰ Simultaneously, in a letter sent January 20th 1935 to Adolfo Casais Monteiro, on the topic of publishing *O Banqueiro Anarquista* in English and finding a literary agent to help him accomplish this task, Pessoa writes: “Neste ponto, sei o que hei-de fazer e a quem me hei-de dirigir — coisa rara, aliás, em mim, em qualquer circunstância prática da vida.” (Pessoa 2007: 428), effectively declaring his lack of practical sense in everyday life.

scientific topics in the stories in which he takes part. In ‘O Pergaminho Roubado’, following his introduction, Quaresma engages in a theoretical exposition that sets the course of the investigation. It follows the model of the one presented in ‘O Caso Vargas’, namely a discussion on the “art of investigation” couched in psychological and philosophical terms. In describing his activity, Quaresma affirms:

Eu resolvo os meus problemas, em geral, sentado numa cadeira (...) e aplicando ao estudo do problema aquele raciocínio de natureza abstracta que foi o triunfo dos escolásticos e é a glória bizantina dos homens que argumentam sobre puras futilidades. (Pessoa 2008: 162)

From the reference to scholasticism as well as the expression “glória bizantina” onwards, Quaresma traces his intellectual path from philosophy, to artistic ambitions, and finally to criminal investigation:

Pensei em fazer metafísica, em construir, pelo menos para meu uso, uma interpretação do Universo. Isso foi porém, um mero assomo de impudor intelectual que o meu espírito breve dominou. (...) Por isto: um raciocinador, que deveras o seja, precisa de factos (...) para ponto de partida do seu raciocínio. Ora na metafísica nós não temos um facto de que partir. O sistema do universo não é um facto, porque é a soma de todos os factos (...) o sistema do Universo pode ser irreal. (...) do mesmo modo tive de abandonar a esperança de qualquer trabalho artístico. Não falo já das qualidades que porventura me faltassem. Refiro-me só à impossibilidade do raciocinador se entregar à arte. (Pessoa 2008: 163-164)

It is noteworthy that the expression “o sistema do Universo” as well as the possibility of its unreality are also mentioned in Pessoa’s essay ‘Detective Story’: “A customary analysis, which like the system of the universe may be false but which like it, has no better working substitute – has divided our psychic operations into the three sections of thought, feeling and will.” (Pessoa 2012a: 237). The essay then proceeds to discuss different types of fiction, of which the first two are concerned with describing “actions” and “sentiments”, establishing a tentative link with the “psychic operations” enumerated

above. What interests me at this juncture is firstly Pessoa's own writing and ideas as expressed in his essay being reworked into Quaresma's speech in 'O Pergaminho Roubado'; and secondly his reflection on the status of fiction, as well as the division between thought, feeling, and will. Pessoa writes little about will, leaving a blank on any elaboration of that concept, but I would argue that the first two elements, thought and feeling, find an echo in Quaresma's path from metaphysician to artist and eventually to "decipherer".

This progression, or perhaps meander, of a "ratiocinating mind" – Quaresma's – from the realm of metaphysics, to that of art, to finally be employed in solving crimes encapsulates two distinct issues in this text: firstly, the problematic relationship between Quaresma as a literary character and Pessoa himself, as well as the heteronyms, which I have already briefly discussed; secondly, the hybrid character of 'O Pergaminho Roubado' and the other Quaresma stories as both literary fiction and essayistic prose.

I would argue that Quaresma's intellectual path bears a close resemblance to Pessoa's own in what concerns the relationship between philosophical thought and artistic creation. Pessoa famously declared that "I was a poet animated by philosophy, not a philosopher with poetic faculties" (Pessoa 1966: 13).⁶¹, regarding his boyhood and the origin of his interest, as poet, in philosophy. What strikes me in Quaresma's speech

⁶¹ Originally in English.

is the logical consequence established between first engaging with metaphysics, and then with artistic work, two ambitions described as doomed to fail by the detective. Quaresma's stories, and 'O Pergaminho Roubado' as case in point, are themselves an attempt at enmeshing the two fields of mental activity in criminal investigation. The Pessoa/Quaresma relationship finds at this juncture its crucial point: Quaresma solves crimes, whereas Pessoa writes detective stories.

Since the story is told to highlight the abilities of Quaresma, to establish his reality as a character, as the first paragraph tells us, it is fitting that the form in which the story is told is a mixture of essayistic and narrative prose, standing for the metaphysical and artistic ambitions that Quaresma supposedly eschewed before embarking on his career as a "decipherer". Accordingly, the descriptive passages of the text, as well as the moments of physical action, are contrasted to those of systematic exposition of thought. This division is reinforced by Quaresma himself in Chapter IV: upon the conclusion of his reasoning, there is a section called "Intermédio Sensacional" which contains the following line, spoken by the detective: "Os srs. têm estado a ouvir com tanta atenção que merecem que esta monotonia do raciocínio seja cortada por uma pequena sensação." (Pessoa 2008: 178). Pessoa and Quaresma, then, establish a difference between "ratiocination" and "sensation". The same that occurs when Quaresma elaborates between "o raciocinador" and "o artista":

Todo o trabalho humano busca, naturalmente, a perfeição. O raciocinador sobre os factos tem um critério de perfeição na coincidência dos seus resultados com a realidade. O trabalhador artístico não tem critério algum, verdadeiramente impessoal, com que avalie da perfeição, ou da beleza, da sua obra. Para a obra de arte não há critério definitivo. Daí ela ser inaceitável a um raciocinador. (Pessoa 2008: 164)

The text here is in a clearly essayistic tone. No action takes place, no character is described or developed: Quaresma is simply expressing his ideas, which as we have seen are remarkably close to Pessoa's own. The "raciocinador" takes over the "artist" in the expression of ideas over that of "actions" or "sentiments", as Pessoa writes in 'Detective Story'. This is the beginning of a dialogue between Quaresma and a character addressed as Sr. Pereira, possibly a variant of the narrator's name, Carlos Santos. The frequent contradictions of character names and the detachment of the essayistic segments from any precise action in the narrative, while problematic for a literary analysis that would attempt to engage with those elements, only reinforces the argument for Quaresma's special and dominant status in Pessoa's crime fiction, a status that is created by the contrast between essay and narrative.

An example of this contrast is precisely the dialogue in question, where the detective explains his theories about the human mind as a preamble to applying them to solving the mystery of the stolen scroll. This distances the text from fiction as Pessoa defines it and approaches the form of a dialogue of ideas reminiscent of the Socratic template. The first stage of the discussion is whether science contributed to the understanding of the mind, with Quaresma being dismissive of 19th century developments:

A desuetude do introspeccionismo tem impedido imensamente os progressos da ciência (...) Infelizmente, as condições socio-mentais que no século passado educaram, ainda que mal as gerações modernas na observação exterior, foram de ordem a não as educar na observação interior (...) (Pessoa 2008: 164-165)

The opposition between introspection and external observation, the latter considered a hurdle to the progress of science, stands as a validation of Quaresma's sustained defense of reasoning as a superior faculty. The more distanced from outside reality the better it is, as already seen in 'O Caso Vargas', notably in the inversion of the traditional saying "contra factos não há argumentos" into "contra argumentos não há factos" operated by Quaresma (Pessoa 2008: 76), as discussed above. This counter-intuitive insubstantiality of facts is the same seen in the passage about reason and metaphysics, when Quaresma considers that "o sistema do Universo é feito de factos (..) e o sistema do Universo pode ser irreal". It is this consideration that turns the budding detective away from metaphysics and into the path towards crime solving, or as he would put it, "decifrar charadas". The decipherer is quite adamant about his objection to facts, as the dialogue with Pereira goes on to confirm:

- (...) analisemos a questão desde o princípio, o qual princípio é que os factos não existem...
- Que factos não existem...
- Não senhor, existem apenas interpretações de factos. Quem fala em ver ou observar para que o cérebro trabalhe depois sobre o visto ou observado sabe pouca psicologia; porque o ver já em si é trabalhar o cérebro sobre o que há no exterior, e no mero e simples olhar vão subconscientes raciocínios, associações de ideias e deduções e conclusões. Factos?... O dr. [...] etc.
- Deixemos porém estas citações e analisemos nós o assunto. (...) (Pessoa 2008: 166)

Quaresma, then, pursues a disquisition on reality and the purpose of any investigation, using terms such as "subconsciente" and "associação de ideias", relatively new concepts in the field of psychology at the time of the writing of the Quaresma stories (1920s-1935). The jump between the tantalizing "O dr. [...] etc." and the reference to quotations in the following line suggests that precise names would be mentioned to support his anti-materialistic stance. This occurs in a brief moment when Quaresma's interlocutor

suggests two names as possible representatives of the contributions science has made to the study of the mind: Ribot and Bourget (Pessoa 2008: 165). The first is Théodule Ribot (1839-1916), a French doctor and psychologist responsible for the theory of heredity and referenced as one “[d]as figuras mais representativas deste ramo [the influence of heredity in pathologies], no que diz respeito às leituras de Fernando Pessoa” (Krabbenhoft: 35). The second name is likely to be that of Paul Bourget (1852-1935), a now little-read novelist and critic whose works had a heavy emphasis on character psychology. While little can be deduced from such passing references, I wish to underline the act of referencing itself, as well as the apparent intention to quote authority on matters of science – psychology – evidenced above. Such textual marks, I argue, are elements of what I have deemed the “essayistic prose” in Pessoa’s Quaresma narratives, intended to strengthen the exposition of ideas with scholarly foundations.

Quaresma’s persona as “the reasoner”, and his worldview, are constructed and strengthened by the fabric of the text itself, when it distances itself from the narrative and descriptive passages as “sensations”, affirming the superior value of reasoning, embodied in Quaresma and textualised in the essayistic prose that is formed by/forms his speeches. When Quaresma solves the crime, deducing how a key to the museum could have been obtained, who could have wanted what object in the collection, and who had the opportunity to abscond with any of the items in it, that solution seems, as in ‘O Caso Vargas’, a necessity for the conclusion of the narrative. But it is by no means the crucial point of the text for the detective himself, as he wearily comes to the conclusion of events and the apprehension of the culprit.

‘O Caso da Janela Estreita’: Tio Porco’s challenge

Quaresma’s method of investigation can then be juxtaposed to Guedes’,⁶² but there is a third investigator with his own method worth mentioning. In the story ‘O Caso da Janela Estreita’ Tio Porco, Quaresma’s uncle and a “decipherer” in his own right, makes his sole appearance in Pessoa’s crime fiction. The tale is a much smaller cluster of fragments than the main four stories. The affair in question is a theft from a goldsmith in Rua do Ouro, traditionally a place where many workshops and businesses related to gold could be found. The problem as to how the crime could have been performed is the narrowness of a window through which it is assumed that the burglar must have entered. In a section of dialogue in the second chapter where the participants are not identified, a significant suggestion is made: “Se o crime fosse de modo que um animal, tal como um macaco, o pudesse ter cometido, o caso seria outro...” (Pessoa 2008: 349). This is remarkably similar to the famous solution in Poe’s ‘The Murders in the Rue Morgue’, in which an orangutan was found to be responsible for the murders of a mother and her daughter. Unfortunately, ‘O Caso da Janela Estreita’ was left incomplete and we will never know how close it could be to Poe. As it stands, the reference seems minor and possibly tongue-in-cheek, but it confirms once again the American author’s influence on Pessoa.

⁶² And in ‘O Pergaminho Roubado’ the narrator’s.

More relevant to understand the development of Quaresma as a fictional character is the appearance of Tio Porco, Quaresma's absurdly named uncle. In a discussion between Quaresma, Guedes, and Tio Porco about different methods of investigation that presumably were brought to bear on the case, it emerges that Tio Porco was the person responsible for solving the crime. For once, Quaresma has been bested at his role as the "decipherer", by an elder family member. This evokes Sherlock's relationship with his elder brother Mycroft. In 'The Greek Interpreter' (1897), Mycroft is introduced to the readership in the following words, spoken by Sherlock:

"I said that he was my superior in observation and deduction. If the art of the detective began and ended in reasoning from an arm-chair, my brother would be the greatest criminal agent that ever lived. But he has no ambition and no energy. He will not even go out of his way to verify his own solution, and would rather be considered wrong than take the trouble to prove himself right. Again and again I have taken a problem to him, and have received an explanation which has afterwards proved to be the correct one. And yet he was absolutely incapable of working out the practical points which must be gone into before a case could be laid before a judge or jury." (Conan Doyle 1981: 436)

Mycroft is Sherlock's superior in what regards reasoning, much as Tio Porco is shown to be relatively to Quaresma. However, the description of Mycroft given above is strikingly similar to what can be garnered about Quaresma in 'O Caso Vargas' and 'O Pergaminho Roubado': "reasoning from an arm-chair" is very much a summary of his method. The mention in the final sentence to Mycroft's inability to deal with the practical side of bringing a criminal to court as the culminating point of an investigation is the same seen in 'O Caso Vargas' about Quaresma. In that story the dichotomy was Guedes-Quaresma, the first element of the pair being the practical one and the second the intellectual or reasoning one. This had consequences for how the text was shaped, Guedes standing for

narrative prose and Quaresma for essayistic prose. In ‘O Caso da Janela Estreita’ the pair Guedes-Quaresma becomes part of a triangle due to the inclusion of Tio Porco, with new repercussions for the construction of Quaresma as a literary character.

Tio Porco starts by analyzing Quaresma’s way of reasoning: “Aqui o Abílio, quando raciocina, tenta converter-se (...) numa máquina de raciocinar. Despe o Abílio, despe o Fernandes, despe o Quaresma; despe o ter quarenta e tantos anos (...) Despe o ser médico, despe o morar na rua dos Fanqueiros – em resumo (...) separa-se de tudo isso.” (Pessoa 2008: 355). The metaphor of undressing himself of his most personal characteristics, which I read as a shedding of one’s identity, is employed by Pessoa in other texts, whether in poetry or prose: in “Abdicação”, “Despi a realza, corpo e alma” (Pessoa 1998b: 51); as Campos in “Ode Marítima”, “Ir convosco, despir de mim — ah! põe-te daqui pra fora! — /O meu traje de civilizado, a minha brandura de acções” (Pessoa 1998b: 135); as Caeiro, “Procuro despir-me do que aprendi” (Pessoa 2001: 82); as Reis, “Que a fronte despida /Possa reclinar-se,/Serena, onde durma.” (Pessoa 2000: 136); and perhaps more directly pertinent, as Soares: “o fumo de viver despiu os contornos de tudo deixando só as sombras” (Pessoa 1998a: 355); or “Aliás, se amanhã me apartasse deles todos, e despisse este trajo da Rua dos Douradores, a que outra coisa me chegaria — porque a outra me haveria de chegar?, de que outro trajo me vestiria — porque de outro me haveria de vestir?” (Pessoa 1998a: 51).

The fact that the same metaphor is applied by Tio Porco to Quaresma suggests that his nephew’s method of reasoning is achieved by depersonalization, echoing what we have seen in the preface to ‘O Caso Vargas’. The void that this shedding of personal

attributes creates is filled by Quaresma's arguments and theories: he is a fictional character fleshed out by what he has to say rather than by his personal characteristics or relationships. The importance of this method is in its relation to my interpretation of Pessoa's textual output as a project of non-narrative fiction. It is also worth noticing that it is Tio Porco performing this analysis. He speaks in Quaresma's presence, who does not dispute any of his assertions, seemingly concurring with them. This reinforces the esteem or reverence in which Tio Porco is held, and the special place in which we must hold 'O Caso da Janela Estreita' in the Quaresma stories.

As with the stories in which Quaresma is the sole decipherer, Tio Porco engages in a Quaresma-like speech on the subject of different types of intelligence, as a way to provide his solution to the case, beating his nephew to it:

—A inteligência humana, disse o Tio Porco, pertence a uma de três categorias. A primeira categoria é a inteligência científica. É a sua, sr. chefe Guedes. A inteligência científica examina os factos, e tira deles as suas consequências imediatas. (...) A inteligência filosófica – esta é a tua Abílio – aceita, da inteligência científica, os factos já determinados e tira deles as conclusões finais (...) Ora, além desses dois tipos de inteligência, há outro, a meu ver superior, que é a inteligência crítica. Eu tenho a inteligência crítica (...) (Pessoa 2008: 356-357)

Tio Porco, as Quaresma, comes into the scene proclaiming the superiority of his intelligence, but in this story he pointedly asserts that he is superior to Quaresma himself in particular, who submits to it meekly. A ranking of types of intelligence is established, following the pattern by now familiar to the reader. Facts, or as it were, the events that make up the narrative, are the primary focus of Guedes' scientific intelligence, as we saw in 'O Caso Vargas'; Quaresma's "philosophical intelligence" processes the information provided by the first, lower level of analysis, by applying to it, I would add,

a theory that explains and clarifies that information. This, as we have seen, is the central part of Quaresma's appearances in the stories and the main way through which he achieves textual existence. Sampaio analyses accurately Tio Porco's speech:

A classificação tripartida da inteligência não o é realmente, porque a inteligência de tipo superior, a de 3º tipo, que a si próprio o Tio Porco atribui, a inteligência crítica, não se situa ao nível dos outros tipos (...) Esta inteligência crítica (que Pessoa subdivide ainda em instintiva e intelectual) é uma meta-inteligência, pois tem como objecto de conhecimento as operações heurísticas, os pressupostos e preconceitos subjacentes aos outros tipos de inteligência. Neste sentido, o Tio Porco surge como uma espécie de teórico puro e de juiz de último recurso. (Sampaio 2007: 400)

Sampaio's reading, however, follows Tio Porco in inferring what "inteligência crítica" may be only in relation to the other types of intelligence, pursuing a negative definition. Indeed, Pessoa's text is unclear about this point. Tio Porco only states: "A inteligência crítica nem possui a observação que é a base da inteligência científica, nem o raciocínio que é o fundamento da inteligência filosófica. Parasitária, indolente até, por natureza (...) ela vive apenas de ver as falhas que as suas antecessoras, por assim dizer, tiveram." (Pessoa 2008: 357). In his theory, "critical intelligence" has no specific foundation such as observation or reasoning. Its function is to note the mistakes the other two types may commit, but the method or grounding to accomplish this task remains unexplained. Its position is hierarchically superior to the other two, but nowhere does Tio Porco qualify it in the same way he does both the scientific and the philosophical kinds of intelligence. Sampaio offers a possible reading:

Quaresma não é o raciocinador no seu estado puro, como o tio Porco, na sua rígida tipologia, pretende apresentá-lo. Nos procedimentos de Quaresma existe algo mais do que a clássica operação da dedução e do pensamento lógico abstracto; ele possui, também, a inteligência crítica, tal como a define o Tio Porco, embora incorporando também elementos de simples *intuição*. (Sampaio 2007: 401)

Her argument is grounded mainly on Quaresma's actions on 'O Roubo da Quinta das Vinhas' and 'A Janela Estreita', specifically in the attacks made by the detective on the reasoning of other characters, most often Guedes. Nonetheless, I do not find this argument strong enough to support the idea that Quaresma shares Tio Porco's critical intelligence. Sampaio overemphasizes the "parasitic" aspect of critical intelligence, i.e. how it performs a secondary role analyzing other forms of intelligence. Granted, its structure, by relying on lists, systems, and psychological explanations for the characters actions and thoughts is very much the same as Quaresma's. But Tio Porco's self-aggrandizing speech seems to be a way to mask the fact that, according to his definitions, his might be just another manifestation of "philosophical intelligence". The structure and topic of his thought follow Quaresma's pattern, to the detail of how sloppy they can be. When he points out the mistakes that scientific and philosophical intelligences can respectively make, which supposedly validates the role of his critical intelligence, he affirms that scientific intelligence's main fault "é crer que há factos." (Pessoa 2008: 357). This seems a variation of Quaresma's dictum in 'O Caso Vargas', "Contra argumentos não há factos", a sentence that Tio Porco speaks *verbatim* in "A Janela Estreita" (Pessoa 2008: 356). Tio Porco reaffirms Quaresma's lack of belief in the epistemological value of facts.

When addressing the main problem with philosophical intelligence, Tio Porco considers that

o [seu] defeito central é objectivar-se, ou antes objectivar o que não é senão o seu método, quer atribuindo às abstrações (...) um carácter de "coisas", quer atribuindo ao decurso das coisas aquela regularidade, aquela lógica, aquela racionalidade que são forçosamente pertença do raciocínio, mas não daquilo sobre que ele raciocina. (Pessoa 2008: 360)

Tio Porco's case for possessing a different, if not superior, type of intelligence may find its basis on this accusation. His analysis subscribes the Guedes-Quaresma dichotomy but it also lays the finger on the main fault of Quaresma's intelligence: it over-rationalizes and attributes to the world qualities and categories that are entirely its own. Tio Porco's accusation is that Quaresma believes the world is as rational as he is, when it may not necessarily be so. Returning briefly to the Sherlock-Mycroft relation that seems to exist between Quaresma and Tio Porco, it would seem that Quaresma, although occupying Sherlock's submissive position in the pair, in fact possesses Mycroft's type of intelligence. Since Sherlock admits that Mycroft is his superior, so must be Quaresma. Tio Porco, however, by virtue of being dominant in his relationship with his nephew, would appear to be the best of them all. Pessoa in effect institutes a hierarchy of investigators, placing Tio Porco on top and, implicitly, beating Conan Doyle at the game of creating clever sleuths.

When discussing in greater detail the problems inherent to philosophical intelligence, Tio Porco adds: "o raciocinador nunca crê que a razão possa ser substancialmente irracional, que o raciocinador não admite o irracional como elemento positivo e não simplesmente negativo. Olha lá, tu já leste Shakespeare?" (Pessoa 208: 360). Quaresma admits to having read it in French, to which Tio Porco responds, amusingly, that it is worse than never having read it. To further his thought, Tio Porco refers to *All's Well that Ends Well*, quoting a character supposedly called "Beatriz" who, upon being asked by her uncle whether she sees well, replies "Sim, tio, vejo uma igreja ao meio dia." This is a misattribution of quotes. The character called Beatrice who

speaks a similar line is to be found in *Much Ado About Nothing*, where indeed she says “I have a good eye, uncle; I can see a church by daylight.” (Shakespeare: 115) as a response to her uncle Leonato’s comments on her sharp remarks on the process of wooing and marriage.⁶³ Beatrice is not to be taken literally, but rather as expressing how she can see what is obvious. It is impossible to ascertain whether the misquotation was intentional or unintentional on the part of Pessoa. Tio Porco’s speech is cut short as he presumably would embark on an explanation of the relevance of Shakespearean text for the point he is trying to make. Without wading dangerously into the possible meaning of the quote and how it is affected by misattribution, what interests me is the use made by Tio Porco of literary texts to analyze the human mind.

I would argue that he is engaging in literary criticism. Tio Porco is analyzing the Quaresma stories themselves. If we transpose the faults he finds in the two types of intelligence to the Quaresma stories, Quaresma’s fault becomes obvious: he detaches himself so much from what he is supposed to be scrutinizing that he gets lost in his own theory. His abstractions become “things”, his method the subject of the text. I am not suggesting that the character expresses meta-textual awareness, but the parallel is there to be made. Similarly, the attack on the existence of facts and the condemnation of Guedes for believing in them explains in part the gaps in the narrative of each of the

⁶³ Castro mentions this occurrence in her most recent book but does not provide an analysis of it or refer to the fact that it is a misquotation (Castro 2016: 103). She does, however, quote lists of future work written by Pessoa that include essays on the Shakespeare controversy and the Quaresma stories. (Castro 2016: 101) This points to the fact that Pessoa was researching theories on a possible alternative authorship of Shakespeare’s work at the same time as he was writing indeterminate pieces of the Quaresma corpus. The Shakespeare reference in ‘O Caso da Janela Estreita’ would suggest that it is one of such texts.

Quaresma stories: facts do not, textually, exist, for they are very often, not written down. Tio Porco, then, seems to acknowledge that the narration of facts is kept to a minimum, even if their analysis runs the risk of becoming self-absorbed – a fair assessment of the composition of the Quaresma stories.

Tio Porco, despite the possible shortcomings of his speech, justifies to an extent his claim to a superior intelligence, if we interpret his arguments extra-textually. Furthermore, the literary references Tio Porco freely draws from suggest a strongly literary minded character. In his short appearance, besides the misquotation of *All's Well that Ends Well*, Tio Porco mentions Hargrave Jennings and H.G. Wells (Pessoa 2008: 363), as a means to explain how he solved the crime, although infuriatingly Pessoa never wrote how exactly this would have been accomplished. The solution is unclear, as is unclear what had been actually stolen. The culprit is referred to as “o filho do ourives” by Tio Porco when he is explaining what Guedes’ mistake had been (Pessoa 2008: 359), and as “o ourives” when Quaresma’s uncle confronts the guilty man (Pessoa 2008: 363). The references to Jennings and Wells suggest that there would be relations between ‘Janela Estreita’ and those authors, but the lack of detail in Pessoa’s text make it impossible to know what this connection might have been. Tio Porco goes on to accuse Quaresma of “Um dos maiores crimes – a falta de senso estético” (Pessoa 2008: 363). Tio Porco seems, from these references, to be literary minded and perhaps even to possess an interest in art, which may be an underlying characteristic that would justify his claim to possess a different type of intelligence.

The evidence for his artistic temperament that can be gathered from ‘Janela Estreita’ as edited and published by Freitas, however, is flimsy. To support my claim I must turn to Freitas’ notes in the introduction to the collection. She states there, in the segment about ‘Janela Estreita”, that there is a short snippet of dialogue mentioning Tio Porco in a manuscript kept by Pessoa in the same envelope as 11 out of 14 of the manuscripts that she considered related to the story, classified as 27(6) S-1 by the Biblioteca Nacional system. (Freitas, in Pessoa 2008: 22-23) The dialogue goes: “ – O sr. escreve? / Não: sou artista, disse o Tio Porco”. Although not strictly marked as part of the ‘Janela Estreita’, if we consider that the published work is the result of an editor’s work, then we may be justified to open our interpretive criteria to include this short dialogue in an intertextual relation with the short story, not least since ‘O Caso da Janela Estreita’ is the only tale featuring Tio Porco.⁶⁴ Moreover, the same manuscript, written in pencil, includes the poem ‘Levámos o dia em conversa’, dated by Pessoa’s hand to “2/6/1927”. Freitas only references the title of the poem in her preface to *Quaresma, Decifrador*, but she was part of the team of editors that transcribed it in a 2005 edition of Pessoa’s poetry:⁶⁵

Levámos o dia em conversa.
Foi inútil o dia.
Mas quem de maneira diversa,
Se pudesse, o passaria?

⁶⁴ Freitas was guided by Pessoa’s annotations where frequently chapter order for several of the stories is included, as mentioned in my Introduction.

⁶⁵ I may add that I consulted the original manuscript and have confirmed her information. The fact that the poem was separated from the material context in which it was written highlights the point I have made in the Introduction about the role of editors in shaping Pessoa’s work and the preference given to his activity and status as a poet.

Levámos o dia falando
De nada e de tudo,
E o vento (não sei se o havia) era brando,
E o sussurro mudo.
Levámos o dia perdendo-o, □ (Pessoa 2005: 267)

Last but not least, the manuscript includes a short reflection about art: “Cada vez que reflecto em como qualquer obra de arte escrita é, desde que seja um pouco extensa, visivelmente imperfeita, em como tão parca e débil é a vigilância da mente...”.

In a single sheet of paper we find gathered a poem about conversations, an unfinished sentence about the imperfection of any written work of art, and a short dialogue in which Tio Porco proclaims that he does not write, rather that he is an artist. The dialogue in question could be considered a draft to be included in ‘Janela Estreita’ or in a new story featuring Tio Porco. Whichever may have been its intended use, as it is it adds more information about Quaresma’s uncle.⁶⁶ In my interpretation, the three texts are connected by the materiality of the sheet, by a thread of thought that can be observed in all three of them, and by their inclusion by Pessoa in the same envelope. The poem, with its emphasis on conversation and oral speech, signals a reflection about the importance of oral narration and dialogue in ‘A Janela Estreita’ and the Quaresma stories; the essayistic sentence about the imperfection of a written work of art is arguably a display of self-awareness, where Pessoa recognizes the shortcomings of his own short stories; the brief dialogue highlights Tio Porco’s artistic temperament. His

⁶⁶ Incidentally, Freitas scupulous reference to the dialogue in her preface signals an awareness of her creative role as editor in giving final form to Pessoa’s texts, acknowledging the existence of manuscripts that she chose not to include, presumably due to their briefness. It also marks the difficulty of publishing Pessoa in book form.

disavowal of writing is paradoxically opposed to being an artist. It is as if his artistry is to be found in not-writing. When we consider the gaps and absences of narrative passages that are only implied by Quaresma's (or Tio Porco's) theoretical speeches in *Quaresma, Decifrador*, there is in that brief fragment a suggestion of Pessoa's project of non-narrative fiction, here personified in the concept of an artist who does not write.⁶⁷

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Abílio Quaresma in 'O Caso Vargas' emerges as a detective character that displays prominent characteristics of his predecessors, notably, Dupin and Sherlock Holmes, heightened or perhaps even exaggerated to a higher degree, specifically their engagement in analytical activity and detachment from emotions and physicality. 'O Pergaminho Roubado' confirms this, while developing a motif in the Quaresma stories: the use of pieces of paper that go missing, be they submarine plans, scrolls or letters, as in 'A Carta Mágica'. This theme, as well as the relationship with Poe, will be the topic of my next chapter. Pessoa's documented interest in the author of 'The Purloined Letter' explains in part traces of an influence, but the in-depth treatment that Quaresma's theories are given in the story affect substantially Pessoa's reading of Poe. The current chapter covered the main characteristics of Quaresma, but in Chapters 4 and 5 other traits will emerge, specifically a strong misogynistic bent in 'A Carta Mágica' and

⁶⁷ Other possible meanings of the expression, such as Tio Porco implying that he is only a connoisseur or lover of art, or that he might be an artist in a sense other than as a writer – a painter, a sculptor etc – are put aside by the references to literature, however few, found in 'A Janela Estreita'.

‘Cúmplices’, as well as instances where Quaresma’s morals are at odds with the law, in ‘Tale X’ and “O Roubo da Quinta das Vinhas”.

Chapter 4

From Poe to Pessoa: Purloined Letters

Fernando Pessoa's 'A Carta Mágica' is the fourth of the Quaresma narratives edited by Freitas. It tells the story of the theft of a letter, containing unknown but important facts, from a locked room. It is further evidence of two particular interests of Pessoa in the detective genre: the locked-room mystery, as seen in 'O Pergaminho Roubado' and 'O Caso do Quarto Fechado', and the use of the plot device of stolen documents, as seen in 'O Caso Vargas' and again in 'O Pergaminho Roubado'. There is a third detective story written by Pessoa, though in English and featuring neither Quaresma nor his other detective, Byng, that provides a necessary reference for this use of the theft of letters or documents as the McGuffin of the narrative: 'The Stolen Document', a purported sequel to Edgar Allan Poe's 'The Purloined Letter', published in the collection *História de um Raciocinador* (2012). In the opening chapter of this thesis I discussed the relevance of Poe's writing to Pessoa's crime fiction, but 'The Purloined Letter' should be held in special regard not only for the plot affinities I briefly outlined but, decisively, for the critical debate it has sparked concerning its structure and themes.⁶⁸

⁶⁸ Sampaio considers that the reference to Poe has no relevance to 'A Carta Mágica'. (Sampaio 2007: 587) This is a matter of point of view: she focuses on the investigative structure of the plot whereas I, via Lacan/Derrida, by emphasizing gender, bring up possible comparisons.

It is worth recalling succinctly its plot. A letter by a member of a ducal family and potentially embarrassing for the Queen is stolen by her political rival, the Minister D., under the King's eyes but without his knowledge. The Queen realizes the Minister's deed and becomes the target of unspoken and implicit blackmail. She asks her friend the police prefect to recover it for her. Unable to find it despite using the most developed scientific methods at the disposal of the French police force, the prefect turns to Dupin for help. By employing his analytical skills and essentially reconstructing the psychological makeup of the Minister, Dupin finds the letter hidden in plain sight in the perpetrator's office, then proceeds to steal it, substituting it for a similar envelope, again in the Queen's presence. As a parting shot, Dupin leaves in the envelope a quotation suggesting that it was himself who had performed the second "purloining", to make known to D. who was the cause of his political downfall when D. decides to use the letter to harm the Queen.

Poe's story, though one of the foundational texts of detective fiction, differs from the three Dupin stories that preceded it in a decisive way:

With the last of the Dupin tales, 'The Purloined Letter', Poe, in a sense, effaced the messy proliferation of newspaper-oriented detail that clutters 'Marie Rogêt', only to expose detective fiction's inherent analytical mechanisms, recasting the problem of imagined reality as one about analyzing the minds of others. (Rachmann 2010: 25)

The concept of an "analysis of the minds of others" leads me to turn a literary debate between Jacques Lacan and Jacques Derrida that took place from the 1950s through to the 1970s, concerning the alternatively competing and/or supplementary approaches of psychoanalysis and deconstruction in reading 'The Purloined Letter'. This is an important theoretical reference to the study of Poe's story and, ultimately, to its links

with Pessoa's stolen documents motif. The controversy centred on the methods of using the tools of psychoanalysis in the study of literature, as well as the creation or presence/absence of meaning in the letter in Poe's story. While the vocabulary and terms of the discussion are not entirely transferable to Pessoa's text, several of the themes and structures highlighted by the two critics are, particularly the role of the letter and of all the characters that come in contact with it. My intention is to borrow from the two readings to aid my interpretation of 'A Carta Mágica' rather than applying strictly the conclusions to which the two theorists arrive. The reason for this becomes a subproduct of my study of 'A Carta Mágica', namely a critique of the two short pieces by Lacan and Derrida and of their approach to the study of a literary text. Pessoa's story demands a framework that must consider its place in his detective fiction but also in his larger work, thus limiting the usefulness of the Lacan/Derrida debate and taking me, ultimately, to examine the text on Pessoa's own terms.

Lacan's 'Seminar'

Lacan delivered the 'Seminar on the Purloined Letter' for the first time in 1955 in the Société Française de Psychanalyse, the breakaway society for the teaching and development of psychoanalysis.⁶⁹ Eventually written in its present form and circulated

⁶⁹ Founded by Lacan in reaction to the lack of acceptance to his theories and approaches to the psychoanalytical method in the earlier and well-established Société Parisienne de Psychanalyse.

privately in 1956, it was published for the first time in 1966 to introduce the first volume of Lacan's *Écrits*. It was conceived as part of a commentary on Freud's *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, and it stands as a clear example of Lacan's turn on Freud: "Lacan reads Freud (in German) in a manner shaped by the structural linguistics of Saussure and Jakobson" (Muller and Richardson 1988: xi), a judgment which asserts the debt owed by Lacan to linguistics, expressed even better in his dictum that "the unconscious is structured in the most radical way like a language" (Lacan 1977: 159). The opening sentence of the 'Seminar' lays this bare, as Lacan affirms that "Our inquiry has led us to the point of recognizing that the repetition automatism (*Wiederholungszwang*) finds its basis in what we have called the insistence of the signifying chain." (Lacan 1972: 39). In a fell swoop this statement unites Freud's "repetition automatism" mentioned in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, and the key concept of a structure. In the case of Lacan this is a chain of "signifying", a development on Saussure's *Course in General Linguistics*.

What is more relevant to my discussion, however, rather than the consequences for his thought and the wider field of psychoanalysis of the 'Seminar', is Lacan's reading of Poe. A suitable encapsulation of this reading follows:

The main thrust of Lacan's interpretation of this story focuses on two issues: the anomalous nature of the letter, which serves as the true subject of the story; and the pattern of intersubjective relationships that remain constant in the tale, despite the interchanging terms of the relationships, the interchange itself generating the principal interest of the tale. (Muller and Richardson 1988: 57)

The "anomalous nature of the letter" is its status as a signifier with no signified or meaning, considering particularly how its exact contents are never revealed. Instead, it is

wholly dependent on the system of information structured around it – the Minister, the King, the Queen, Dupin, the prefect:

What interests us today is the manner in which the subjects relay each other in their displacement during the intersubjective repetition. We shall see that their displacement is determined by the place which a pure signifier – the purloined letter – comes to occupy in their trio. (Lacan 1972: 45)

The concept of the “pure signifier” is what establishes the letter as an anomaly. Lacan argues that the meaning or contents of the letter are only created by the system surrounding it, but more importantly that this system of creation of meaning of the signifier conditions the individual elements that constitute it. It is from this analysis that Lacan draws conclusions concerning the role of the system of language in maintaining the symbolic structure of the unconscious, but what I would like to emphasize, at this juncture, is the central importance of a “missing” letter as pure signifier, a point to keep in mind before I return to Pessoa’s works.

More importantly for an approximation to ‘A Carta Mágica’, however, is the analysis of gender and power relations in Poe’s story given by Lacan in his “Seminar on ‘The Purloined Letter’”. Albeit framed as secondary for his argument, it provides fruitful discussion for Pessoa. In his analysis, Lacan interprets the repeated thefts of the letter – first by the Minister, then by Dupin, having as victims, respectively, the Queen and the Minister himself – as a gendered power struggle:

The Minister acts as a man who realizes that the police search is his own defence, since we are told he allows them total access by his absences: he nonetheless fails to recognize that outside of that search he is no longer defended. (...) for in playing the part of the one who hides, he is obliged to don the role of the Queen, and even the attributes of femininity and shadow, so propitious to the act of concealing. (Lacan 1972: 61)

As the victim of theft the Minister becomes the Queen, and according to Lacan this makes of him a more feminine character. The reason for this is Lacan's interpretation of the letter as pre-eminently an object of desire:

the purloined letter, like an immense female body, stretch[es] out across the Minister's office when Dupin enters. But just so does he already expect to find it, and has only, with his eyes veiled by green lenses, to undress that huge body. (Lacan 1972: 66)

Lacan interprets the letter as symbolic femininity, "For this sign [the letter] is indeed that of woman, in so far as she invests her very being therein, founding it outside the law, which subsumes her nevertheless (...)" (Lacan 1972: 62). Its theft deprives a character of its possession - female qualities - and, necessarily, invests its new possessor with them:

Thus the aura of apathy, verging at times on an affectation of effeminacy ; the display of an *ennui* bordering on disgust in his conversation (...) everything seems intended for a character, all of whose utterances have revealed the most virile traits, to exude the oddest *odor di femina* when he appears. (Lacan 1972: 66)

This passage analyses the artificial coyness of the Minister while in possession of the letter when visited by Dupin. The content of the document, let us recall, though never clarified, is described via a brief explanation by the Prefect of the consequences of its disclosure:

the disclosure of the document to a third person, who shall be nameless, would bring in question the honor of a personage of most exalted station; and this fact gives the holder of the document an ascendancy over the illustrious personage whose honor and peace are so jeopardized. (Poe: 209)

The "honor" (sic) of the Queen is then at stake, and its theft is interpreted by Lacan as a symbolic rape. This sums Lacan's analysis in terms of gender, though, I should emphasize, the 'Seminar' does not privilege these terms, rather resorting to them to

complement its main arguments concerning the structure of the unconscious and repetition automatism. When looking into Derrida's reading of Lacan several of these concepts become clearer, which leads me to an examination of the former's objections to the latter's arguments.

Derrida's rebuttal

Derrida's response to Lacan came in 1975 with the publication of the text 'Le facteur de la vérité', translated as 'The Purveyor of Truth' in the same year. Derrida sets out to study the relevance of psychoanalytical reading of literary texts. Indeed he starts by praising Lacan for distancing himself from "Marie Bonaparte's psychobiography" (Derrida 1975b: 40), a reference to Bonaparte's *The Life and Works of Edgar Allan Poe: A Psycho-Analytic Interpretation* (1934). This was a pioneer study of Poe resorting to psychoanalysis but it centred on the personality of the author himself, a "traditional psychoanalytical study of literature" as Derrida dismissively calls it. Despite the initial praise, however, several accusations are laid out against Lacan: "Derrida aims his objections at two kinds of targets: 1) what Lacan puts into the letter and 2) what Lacan leaves out of the text." (Johnson 1977: 464).

The first category refers to Derrida's claims that Lacan's reading insists on a preeminence of presence and speech over absence and writing:

The Seminar would show furthermore, that, although [the letter's] meaning (what is written on the note in circulation) is (according to a hypothesis which is itself rigorously inadmissible) indifferent and unknown to us, the meaning of the letter and of its trajectory are necessary, unique and determinable in truth, just like the truth itself. (Derrida 1975b: 58)

Derrida accuses Lacan of turning a supposed lack of meaning of the letter into a form of codified, inevitable meaning by the way its closed circulation is compared to Freudian automatism and the structure of the unconscious. This would be the added meaning of interpretation, what Lacan “puts into the letter”.

The second line of attack identified by Johnson argues that Lacan concentrates on the dialogue between characters, but lacks an analysis of the narrative structure and techniques employed in casting the relations. As such, Lacan neutralizes the narrator and doesn't take into account the literary aspect of the text:

This is certainly the story of a letter, of a theft and of the displacement of a signifier. But the subject of the Seminar is merely the content of this history, precisely its story, what is related in the account, the internal and narrated side of the narration. Not the narration itself. (Derrida 1975b: 48)

Derrida's criticism is that Lacan “rushes” to interpret ‘The Purloined Letter’ in the light of his brand of psychoanalysis, particularly by concentrating on the first theft of the letter, by the Minister from the Queen, and not the second, by Dupin from the Minister. For Derrida, it is the act of stealing that is paramount in Poe's story, and how it stands as a symbol for the constant deferral of meaning in language, the *différance*. These acts are, crucially, narrated by a voice that Lacan brushes aside in his rush to “illustrate” his understanding of Freud's repetition automatism. This, Derrida claims, is problematic, for

[Poe's story] is an example for the sake of “illustrating” through a dialectical process a law and truth which form the proper object of the Seminar. Literary writing occupies an illustrative position, which means making a general law legible through example, making clear the meaning of a law or a truth, manifesting them in a signal or exemplary way. (Derrida 1975b: 45)

The problem of using a literary text to justify or illustrate a psychological theory, in the case of Lacan psychoanalytical theory, will come to the fore when I return to Pessoa.

Derrida's arguments are also concerned with the role of gender in Lacan's reading, going much further than the perfunctory analysis of role-playing effected in the 'Seminar'. At the beginning of the 'Purveyor of Truth', Derrida writes of psychoanalysis as a means of "baring the truth", quoting from a series of dreams referenced by Freud in which the subject dreams of itself naked, dispossessed of his clothes as defining attributes. Tellingly, he goes on to argue, it is always men that are deprived of masculine traits: a soldier without his sword or a man without his tie (Derrida 1975b: 34-35). For Derrida, in psychoanalysis there is an element of castration implied in truth, which he takes as leading to "unveiled woman" as a metaphor for truth, in itself a metaphor: "a certain chain is announced: truth – unveiled woman – castration – modesty." (Derrida 1975b: 35). Derrida suggests that 'The Purloined Letter' is the story of this chain, a truth told in fiction though not as Lacan meant.

He does so via his reading of Lacan's interpretation, in which he finds that "The letter, therefore, has a proper meaning, a proper trajectory and a proper place." (Derrida 1975b: 60), developed by the successive triangles of theft and knowledge, and leaving us with Dupin as a final knower of the truth in the affair. But Derrida goes even further and qualifies that truth as the proper place of the letter:

This proper place [of the letter] (...) is the place of castration. It is, woman, a place unveiled as that of the lack of the penis, as the truth of the phallus, i.e. of castration. The truth of the purloined letter is the truth itself, its meaning is meaning, its law is law, the contract of truth with itself in the logos (...) what is veiled/unveiled in this case is a hole, a non-being; the truth of being, as non-being. Truth is "woman" as veiled/unveiled castration. (Derrida 1975b: 60-61)

In keeping with the project of deconstruction, Derrida finds that Lacan's proposed lack of intrinsic meaning for the letter is in fact yet another manifestation of hermeneutics, aligned with Freud's theories. As such, it is part of the logocentrism in western philosophy that his writings attack. Lacan would have, after all, a meaning for the letter, despite declaring otherwise: "This determination of the proper, of the law of the proper and of *economy* leads back, therefore to castration as truth, the figure of the woman as a figure of castration *and* of truth."⁷⁰ (Derrida 1975b: 62). Notice that Derrida's contention is not with Lacan's reading of the repeated theft of the letter as a symbol of "womanhood", but rather with the unproblematized handling of that same concept. Derrida reads Lacan's use of the term as following the Freudian view of woman and castrated man, something with which he takes issue. Indeed, phallogocentrism, the prioritizing of masculinity and meaning in Western thought, the compounded bugbear of Derrida's thought, is the main indictment laid against Lacan. The lack of meaning of the letter in the 'Seminar', by implying after all a meaning, is for Derrida the equivalent of considering a woman as a castrated man – the phallus, even when absent, is there.

Barbara Johnson's 'The Frame of reference: Poe, Lacan, Derrida' is a useful corollary to the debate I just briefly outlined. Her assessment of 'The Purveyor of Truth' suggests it stumbles on the same blocks as Lacan's text: "Derrida, by filling in what Lacan left blank, is repeating precisely the gesture of blank-filling for which he is criticizing Lacan" (Johnson: 464). This highlights the problems of deconstruction as a

⁷⁰ Italics in the original text.

method of literary criticism, chiefly the instability of its supposed open-endedness that can, as is the case, lead to a *mise-en-abîme* of critiques of critiques.

Though I do not propose to comment extensively on the Derrida-Lacan discussion or the writings it has elicited, I wish to stress the relevance of these competing - or perhaps complementary – readings for Pessoa’s detective stories, especially for ‘A Carta Mágica’. To summarize, Lacan chooses to concentrate on the psychoanalytical explanations for the character’s actions, attributing importance to their genders and calling the letter “the object of desire”, while framing their behaviour in terms that reflect his theory of the unconscious as structured in a pattern that mimics that of the Saussurean understanding of language. Derrida, on the other hand focuses on the narratological aspects of the text, considering how meaning is created in Poe’s story in a way that, he argues, parallels his own, decidedly non-Saussurean, conception of the creation of meaning in language itself. It is my contention that these approaches could be replicated in ‘A Carta Mágica’, with similar failings and limitations as in their original form, specifically in their critical use of the concepts of “gender” and “narrative”.

‘The Stolen Document’: the case for the relevance of Poe

Pessoa’s relationship with Poe goes deeper than what the first chapter of this thesis discussed. Whereas Poe’s influence in Pessoa’s readings of detective fiction certainly laid the foundations for the Quaresma stories, as an adaptation of a foreign genre to Portuguese culture and literary practice, the traits that are particular to Poe and more

specifically to the ‘The Purloined Letter’, and that have been examined by Lacan and Derrida, have a very close connection with ‘A Carta Mágica’.

The way into Quaresma’s story must then pass through ‘The Stolen Document’, the purported sequel to Poe’s ‘The Purloined Letter’. Freitas dates its inception to April 1906 on the basis of the following entry from Pessoa’s diary:

No diary kept. Nothing positive written. Read “Vanity Fair”. Jules Verne’s “Voyage to the Moon” and half of “Round the Moon”. Continued the “Door”. Some more arguments form my “Rational Metaphysics”. Thought out plan of “Stolen Document”, correction of Poe’s “Purloined Letter”, to be written as a presumed true account of the stolen letter affair. (Pessoa 2003: 34)

Pessoa states his intentions clearly in terms of creating a text in terms of “correction” which would be a “presumed true account” of the affair, implying then the falsehood of the original story. This establishes the inception of the narrative three years after the award of the Queen Victoria Prize to Pessoa, for which, as pointed out before, the author chose to receive, among other books, the *Complete Works of Poe*. Freitas also mentions that the passage is signed with the initials of C. R. Anon, Charles Robert Anon, one of Pessoa’s heteronyms in the English language. Anon was supposed to be an essayist and theorist, specifically of detective fiction considering his attributed authorship of the essay ‘Detective Story’ (Freitas, Pessoa 2012a: 59). He was paired with Horace James Faber who was planned by Pessoa to be a writer of short stories in English, including the Byng stories (Freitas, Pessoa 2012a: 5). This is confirmed by Richard Zenith and Fernando Cabral Martins in their in-depth study of Pessoaan heteronyms *Teoria da Heteronímia* (Zenith and Martins, Pessoa 2012b: 59-60).

The relevance of early heteronymy for the inception of ‘The Stolen Document’ and its connection with the later Quaresma Stories, specifically ‘A Carta Mágica’, can be better assessed by turning to the text itself. Its introduction starts by declaring:

Edgar Allan Poe, the greatest of all North-Americans, in reporting the detective work of the amateur, his friend C. Auguste Dupin, has accepted as true from this gentleman his relation of the letter stolen by a French Minister with the intention of harming a certain royal personage of that country.

As I am the grandson of a man who was intimately connected with the affair, and who left written certain notes upon it, I think it is due to us, that is to the posterity of D-, the Minister, and of C. Auguste Dupin, to write down truthfully the story of this affair (Pessoa 2012a: 210)

The narrator self-proclaims the project of challenging Poe’s version of the facts in the original story. He treats Poe’s story as a “report” rather than a work of fiction, supposedly formed upon Dupin’s “relation” of his exploits, effectively mixing the real-life Poe with his literary creation. This blending of fiction and reality is cemented by the narrator’s introduction as the relative of one of the characters. The relation of friendship between Poe and his literary creation, Dupin, could almost be understood as heteronymic, in the sense that it establishes a textual reality that is not entirely fictional, by problematizing the concept of authorship. This connection between real-life author and fictional character, written by a heteronym, foreshadows the one that is seen in Álvaro de Campos’ ‘Notas para a recordação de meu Mestre Caeiro’: “O meu mestre Caeiro não era um pagão: era o paganismo. O Ricardo Reis é um pagão, o António Mora é um pagão, eu sou um pagão; o próprio Fernando Pessoa seria um pagão, se não fosse um novelo embrulhado para dentro” (Pessoa 1980: 269). Campos discusses the works of other heteronyms, freely mixing them with Pessoa. Though treated at the same level of (fictional) reality, what Campos is discussing is Caeiro, Reis, and Pessoa’s philosophical

standpoints as evidenced from their writings, although in the same text Campos documents his meeting with Caeiro in Ribatejo and provides a physical description (Pessoa 1980: 267). The important point of comparison between the two texts is that, like the first paragraph of 'The Stolen Document', it is only our previous knowledge of Poe and Pessoa as physically existent human beings that marks both texts as playfully intermixing fiction and reality. The two authors are only considered as precisely that, authors of texts, something that can be deduced from Anon's and Campos' works alone. In this way, Pessoa fictionalizes his own real-life existence just as he does that of Poe, by levelling their names with those of their literary creations.

There is, in the short fragment that is 'The Stolen Document', a level of fictive reality constructed by a Pessoaan reading of Poe's 'The Purloined Letter' whereby the real-life author is turned into a literary character. This in turn destabilizes the purely literary existence of Dupin as a character by considering him a friend of Poe. What is interesting in this case is not only the direct reference to Poe and to a story whose central plot device is replicated in so much of Pessoa's crime fiction, but also the conflation between fiction and reality that is a characteristic of Quaresma as a character, arguably a representation of the author himself, as I will discuss when turning to 'A Carta Mágica'. This metafictional aspect of 'The Stolen Document' would not then sustain a reading that ignored its status as a literary text, as Derrida's accuses Lacan of doing regarding 'The Purloined Letter'.

This is the setting for the narrator's goal of "[writing] down truthfully the story of this affair" in 'The Stolen Document', but this objective is elaborated upon:

The purpose of this narration is to show that, if unscrupulous and full of ambition, the French Minister was a man of extreme cleverness. Not that Poe has not represented him as one, in his tale 'The Purloined Letter', but that he has made him somehow inferior to Dupin, whereas his intellect was equal or superior. (Pessoa 2012a: 210-211)

As in an essay, the narrator declares the purpose of the story at its onset, something that is ultimately never fully accomplished since the surviving text is unfinished, as is frequently the case with Pessoa's detective fiction. Considering the rest of the surviving text from that point onwards is a summary of the plot of Poe's source story, what little can be understood of the alterative version of the facts that supposedly would be presented is a retelling whereby the Minister D. is displayed as intellectually "equal or superior" to Dupin, unlike in the original where he is bested by his rival's wits. A short dialogue at the end of the text is interpreted by Freitas as a possible later addition that would see the early Pessoa detective Sargent Byng taking part in the investigation (Freitas 2012a: 379). 'The Stolen Document' reinforces the link between Poe and Pessoa: it provides the framework through which to read 'A Carta Mágica' in relation to 'The Purloined Letter', particularly in what concerns the fictional (or even heteronymic) status of Quaresma as a literary character, in light of the Lacan/Derrida debate. Though little is said in Pessoa's text about the letter itself, prominently featured in all the other works under discussion, the topics elicited by Anon's playful narrator prepares the reader for 'A Carta Mágica'.

‘A Carta Mágica’

In ‘A Carta Mágica’ engineer Francisco de Almeida e Sá approaches the police after an important letter, left to him by his deceased father and addressed to a former business associate in Angola, disappears from the closed room where it had been left. The associate, Amaro Simas, was supposed to arrive to Lisbon and meet Almeida e Sá in his house in Rua Barata Salgueiro to reclaim the letter, the contents of which remain unclear and unexplained. Shortly before the meeting, the engineer’s wife, Marta, convinces her husband to go for a quick walk and to leave the letter on top of a table waiting for Simas, in case he happens to arrive before they do. Upon their return, Simas is waiting in the room but the letter has disappeared.

In the second chapter, another character is introduced, Alvarenga, a supposed second business associate of Almeida e Sá’s father and a friend of Simas. The character is not mentioned at all in the first chapter, where the theft is reported to the police in the terms outlined above. This can safely be assumed to be an inconsistency of Pessoa’s and a problem of the Quaresma corpus, largely left unfinished.⁷¹ This creates difficulties for a close analysis of the text, particularly in the way it alters the plot, regarded by Pessoa himself as the central element of a detective story:

Simplicity of plot is, needless to say, requisite not only in a detective story, but in all kinds of novels and of stories. (...) The reasoning of the detective is the plot of the detective story;

⁷¹ It is a problem also seen in other stories, for instance in the sudden mention of Carlos Alvalade at the end of ‘O Pergaminho Roubado’ as the former owner of the stolen scroll.

not as many have conceived it, the crime that leads to the detective work. (Pessoa 2012a: 244)

While the plot of ‘A Carta Mágica’ presents several gaps, it does conform to the emphasis on the “reasoning of the detective”, as the investigations are carried forth. In a discussion between a prosecuting judge and Guedes, the police chief, the latter diverges suspicions from Alvarenga and Sá himself to Sá’s wife: “eu, de todos eles, suspeitaria da mulher do engenheiro”. He justifies his suspicions by saying

Pela cara dela. É uma cara curiosa, cara inteligente, com uns olhos esquisitos, uma testa que não é bem de mulher e uns modos especiais. (...) A mulher tem um ar muito inteligente, vivo de mais até, mas não tem ar nenhum de manha. Cara de mandar e de não ser dia feriado e santo ser marido dela. Isso e mais nada. Mas se uma criatura assim quisesse apanhar a carta, enrolava o marido – ela domina-o a olhos vistos – e apanhava-a. (Pessoa 2008: 229)

This is the first indication of suspicion on Marta, a lead that will eventually be pursued by Quaresma when he makes his entrance in the following chapter. At this juncture in the narrative, the contents of the letter are speculated upon as being business information, which would point to both of the supposedly interested parties, Alvarenga and Simas, as suspects. Suspicion also falls on the old servant at the couple’s house, but no motive is discerned there. Only Marta’s “eyes” and “attitude” get Guedes on her trail, despite the lack of a motive. No description of Marta is given. The reader only is given Guedes’ opinion of her. Similarly, Quaresma will only have Guedes’ memory and description to rely upon for his deductions.

At the beginning of the third chapter, Quaresma is visited in his home in Rua dos Fanqueiros by Guedes. Quaresma is ill but he asks Guedes to tell the “charade” he must have brought him. Guedes obliges, and the narrator qualifies Guedes’ own narrating ability thus:

Ou a inteligência natural, ou ela ou o hábito de fazer declarações em juízo com atenção aos advogados de defesa, habituaram, evidentemente, o Guedes a narrar com sequência e clareza. E assim foi com uma grande precisão e uma distribuição perfeita da matéria, que o chefe pormenorizou o caso da carta desaparecida (...) que minuciou quasi fotograficamente as conversas com o Simas e o Alvarenga, e por fim, num resumo mais incerto, porque se tratava de argumentos e não de factos,⁷² a discussão das possibilidades, que tivera com o juiz de investigação. (Pessoa 2008: 232)

Guedes then has an uncanny ability to recall every single detail of the affair, to process that information into a narrative: “narrar com sequência e clareza” is how his ability is described. The reader doesn’t see directly any of this, but what is more unsettling is that the story that Guedes is able to tell so proficiently is never actually written fully by Pessoa, as the gaps in the text so clearly demonstrate. It will be on Guedes’ elided narration that Quaresma will construct his theory, in two stages: firstly, an analysis of the practical aspect of how the crime could have been committed, and secondly, a psychological study of the criminal. As the detective describes it:

Este caso é fácil de resolver – o caso propriamente dito – por um raciocínio simples e não especializado. Há, porém, elementos do que se passou que caem sob a alçada do clínico – do psiquiatra – embora seja muito fácil explicá-los a qualquer leigo. (Pessoa 2008: 234-235)

The “raciocínio simples e não especializado” corresponds to the first stage, whereas the “elements (...) sob a alçada do clínico – do psiquiatra” correspond to the second. Quaresma goes on to suggest the method by which the letter could have been removed from the top of a table inside a locked room: with a little piece of string attached to it, piercing the envelope, through the gap under the door, into the hands of whoever put it there in the first place and locked the door. A fact is added to this scenario by Quaresma:

⁷² In ‘O Caso Vargas’ Pessoa subverts the saying “contra factos não há argumentos” by having Quaresma proclaim “contra argumentos não há factos” (Pessoa 2008: 76).

the tablecloth and the carpet in the house are the same colour. No reference is made to this detail up until that point in the story, so the reader is put in presence of an added element that was not part of the original narration of the crime. It was however mentioned that Marta had put the letter on the table herself (Pessoa 2008: 223) and it is this link that allows Quaresma to state that “sabemos como a carta foi tirada, e sabemos quem a tirou: foi a mulher do engenheiro” (Pessoa 2008: 225). The connection seems thin, the method far-fetched, but the detective goes on to substantiate it with a psychological analysis. By stipulating that the elaborate method of the theft points to “uma anormalidade mental” (Pessoa 2008: 244), Quaresma then painstakingly enumerates types of abnormality, considering that Marta is a victim of paranoia (Pessoa 2008: 245). He suggests furthermore that it was her paranoia which led Marta to perpetrate the act to affirm herself as superior to her husband and those around her. This would lead, according to the detective, to rather extreme outcomes in the future:

O mais grave é o êxito do roubo. (...) Porque vai intensificar a exagerada autofilia que é um dos fenómenos mentais onde a paranoia assenta. Essa mulher está hoje cheia de júbilo do que conseguiu fazer. Sente-se cada vez mais isoladamente superior a todos na família. A sua tendência para mandar e dominar vai agravar-se de hoje em diante. (...) Gradualmente a vida em familiar se irá tornando mais difícil (...) e a paranóia entrará na fase persecutória. (...) Em outras palavras, a loucura estará declarada. (Pessoa 2008: 250)

This seems a dramatic escalation based on the flimsy evidence of a stolen letter, the content of which remains unclear. Quaresma indicates that he knows what is written when he starts presenting his theory (Pessoa 2008: 234), but nothing is ever mentioned. What is more, that content is at this stage irrelevant, since the motive for Marta’s action is nothing but the whim of defeating other people’s purposes and deceiving those that

are close to her. While hypothesizing on her future actions, however, Quaresma goes even further:

Ela irá para o manicómio sim, mas só depois do exame clínico que naturalmente seguirá ao assassínio que ela praticar (...) A arma será o veneno (...) sendo mulher, tenderia, já por sexo, para as formas de crime características desse sexo, e o veneno, a droga, é arma que mais facilmente ocorre ao sexo astuto. (...) Deve envenenar o marido. (Pessoa 2008: 251-252)

The path from theft to murder is very swift for Marta. Quaresma considers that the husband will be the victim because:

É ao marido que ela está ligada, e é portanto no marido que ela verá a maior oposição quando começar a imaginar inimizades. É libertando-se do marido que ela se sentirá livre. É ao marido a quem ela mais domina, e em cuja resistência sentirá mais viva a inimizade suposta. (Pessoa 2008: 252)

To which Guedes replies:

Foi uma bonita descoberta do Criador!, disse asperamente o Guedes – e realmente é muito agradável a gente estar aqui a contemplar a frio o assassínio de um pobre diabo que não tem outra culpa senão ser parvo e ter casado com esse stupor. (Pessoa 2008: 252)

Given the fact that Marta is not once described directly or even allowed her own voice – we only hear about her through her husband and Guedes – Quaresma’s deduction seems more of a biased attack on her person, an act of character assassination, as it were. The fact that she is never represented in the story is perhaps the most clear and material evidence for this interpretation of Quaresma’s solution: the reader is denied any liberty to form an opinion of the character that does not conform to the one given by the characters that speak about her. Guedes’ irony – “bonita descoberta” – is perhaps even more aggressive for this reason, adding insult to injury.

But if we are to focus on Quaresma's analysis and to judge it on the terms in which it is presented, the theft of the letter then is a matter of power relations between a woman and her husband, dramatized by the disappearance of a written document that is solved by successive and repeated oral narrations of the fact. It is at this juncture that Derrida and Lacan's controversy concerning Poe's 'The Purloined Letter' comes to fore. The debate between a narratological and a psychoanalytical reading of Poe's story can be adapted to a 'A Carta Mágica', given its theme of gendered power relations that in turn are articulated in the terms of a struggle between narrative and essayistic prose, with the underlying, accessory dichotomy of oral versus written language.

Lacan and Derrida: on gender

In 'A Carta Mágica', the situation seems to be the reverse of 'The Purloined Letter': a communication from one man to another man, supposedly of business dealings, is stolen by a woman with apparently no other motive than the affirmation of the superiority of her intelligence over those around her. Lacan's argument could then be suitably reversed to fit this story: isn't Marta stealing symbolic masculinity, and hence assuming masculine traits? The world of business is traditionally reserved for men, so the letter could be a signifier for dominance and the male world. Furthermore, Quaresma's predictions of Marta's future are based on Guedes' shock at Marta's supposed domination over her husband, in a reversal of traditional gender roles. Marta becomes more masculine, and society has to punish her by eventually committing her to

a mental institution. In Poe's story, the honour of the Queen is restored, and the Minister will eventually meet his downfall when deciding to use the content of a letter he no longer possesses. In both events, playing with gender, assuming the qualities traditionally regarded as belonging to the opposite sex, is something that the text punishes.

This symbolic theft of masculinity, however, is more complex than this first approach might suggest if we consider each of the male participants in its intended circulation, before Marta intervenes. The letter was written by Francisco's dead father. It is given to him for safekeeping and to deliver to Amaro Simas, an old friend in colonial Angola. It is a letter that moves through a male circle but if we consider what characterizes each one of the elements that take part in it, Marta's actions become even more meaningful: a dead father, an obedient son, a colonizer who is a friend of the father. Phillip Rothwell's *A Canon of Empty Fathers* puts the case for what he calls, as per the title of the book, a "canon of empty fathers" in Portuguese literature, arguing that 'empty' father figures, in the sense that they either don't have children or that in some way they don't perform their paternal function, in the Lacanian sense, are recurrent in Portuguese fiction and history. Rothwell traces the inception of this myth to the childless King Sebastião and ties it with Sebastianismo in the centuries after the king's tragic disappearance and presumed death in the Battle of Alcácer-Kibir in Northern Africa in 1578. His readings of Almeida Garrett, António Ferro, José Régio and several other more recent canonical authors establish a link between the "empty fathers" of their works and Portuguese social and political History, with a particular emphasis on the

twentieth century and the events that led to and took place under the dictatorship of Salazar. Rothwell's work is important for a reassessment of the role of father figures, absent or not, in Pessoa's work. Gaspar Simões, the first critic and biographer of Pessoa, set the tone for a theme that would haunt subsequent critics when noting the importance of Pessoa's own father in his life and work:

de preciso nada lhe resta, do espírito, da figura, da bondade e da inteligência de seu pai. Dir-se-á todavia, que é a sua figura, a sua bondade e a sua inteligência que o poeta irá procurar pela vida além, de cada vez que a sua poesia se levanta como um súbito vento desconhecido, a recordação da infância (Simões: 40-41)

Simões' book is a literary biography attempting to find psychological interpretations of Pessoa's life and work, as criticized by Eduardo Lourenço (2000: 97). But Lourenço does value the importance of the absence of father figures in Pessoa's work, detached from simplistic readings of his own biographical incidents, incorrectly following Simões in declaring "a figura do pai nunca aparece na sua obra" (Lourenço 2000: 98). While that may hold true in the poetic works, the focus of Pessoaan scholarship to date, that is not the case in the detective stories, as 'A Carta Mágica' illustrates. Rather than risking overreading the lack of father figures in Pessoa's poetry, I propose to address its elusive presence in his crime fiction and the importance it may hold to his general corpus.

Although little is told about the dead father in 'A Carta Mágica', I would argue that the injunction given to his son to pass on a letter to his friend can be interpreted as a demonstration of paternal authority in action, an authority so strong that it remains in place even after the man's death. Francisco himself is a father to a five-year-old son (Pessoa 2008: 219), a child that is mentioned again to indicate that he stayed at home while his parents took the quick walk to Baixa, making him a potential suspect together

with the maidservant (Pessoa 2008: 223). Marta's actions interrupt the chain of paternal authority: she not only symbolically steals Francisco's masculinity, she steals his ability to carry out his father's orders, which, considering that Francisco himself is already a father, would also hamper his ability perform his paternal function, breaking him away from the transmission of patriarchal authority.⁷³ The fact that Marta does it reinforces the dramatic nature of her gesture: she claims masculinity for herself, but not the paternal authority, for, rather than fulfilling the dead man's wishes, Marta effectively interrupts it. This is a point of crucial importance to bear in mind when I examine in more detail Marta's character as Quaresma's object of analysis. Before that, it is necessary to examine how exactly his theories fit in the narrative of which they are a part.

Lacan and Derrida: on narration

The Lacan/Derrida debate concerning the importance of narration offers clues that can be adapted from 'The Purloined Letter' to 'A Carta Mágica'. As summarized before, Derrida attacks Lacan for not paying attention to the narration of Poe's story, and offers his own alternative reading of the role of narrator:

⁷³ Significantly, the child could have been responsible for this interruption, in what would amount to an Oedipal act. The servant, a social inferior, is also suspected, and had she been the culprit her actions could be termed as politically revolutionary in the political economy of the text.

The unique place of the narrator on two sides of the narration, the specific status of his discourse – which is not neutral or the effect of whose neutrality is not neutral – his interventions and his very psychoanalytical position will never be interrogated through the rest of the Seminar which will remain an analysis of “intersubjective triads” which are supposed to constitute the inside of the narrated history, what Lacan calls the “story” or the “drama”, the “real drama”. (Derrida 1975b: 49)

Derrida refers here to the first-person narrator of the story, whose name is never revealed and who constructs itself as a friend of Dupin’s. Derrida’s argument is strictly concerned with Lacan’s removal of the narrator from his structuralist reading, ignoring his role as an agent in the story insofar as his interest lies in knowing the facts *and* narrating them, rather than in the letter in itself and its possession. While Lacan does not consider this difference of what he calls “the general narrator”, he does give relevance to the act of narration:

At first reading, we may distinguish a drama, its narration, and the conditions of that narration. (...) that these components are necessary and that they could not have escaped the intentions of whoever composed them. The narration (...) doubles the drama with a commentary without which no *mise en scene* would be possible (...) nothing of the drama could be grasped, neither seen nor heard, without, dare we say, the twilighting which the narration, in each scene, casts on the point of view that one of the actors had while performing it. (Lacan 1972: 41)

As Lacan points out, the narrational frame of ‘The Purloined Letter’ elides substantially the direct telling of action, instead substituting it by successive retellings performed by each one of the characters taking part in the investigation. Whereas this fact and the role of the fourth narrator have important consequences for reading Poe’s story, what I wish to emphasize is the importance of the narrating act as performed by the characters in the story, something equally relevant in both Lacan’s and Derrida’s readings. Returning to ‘A Carta Mágica’, a third-person narrator with no participation in the narrated events sets the framework for the successive narrations of the crime, first by Sá to Guedes and

then by Guedes to Quaresma. Borrowing Lacan's phrase, the "general narrator" is not concerned with the story to the extent that he does not take part in it, unlike in 'The Purloined Letter'. The disappearance of the letter from Sá's living room is retold by the characters in the course of dialogues that form the investigation, as is the case in Poe's story. But the importance of these narrations is even greater in Pessoa's text because it is upon these successive retellings that Quaresma builds his interpretation and solves the problem. This is significant since a large section of the text is dedicated to the essayistic psychological explanation offered by Quaresma as his solution to the crime. What is more, this is not an exception in Pessoa's crime fiction but the rule: almost all of the short stories, particularly the longest and most complete ones, include a long speech by Quaresma on psychology and the art of "deciphering" crimes.

In 'O Caso Vargas', Quaresma's reason and essayistic speeches find the culprit by establishing his psychological makeup, but it is Guedes' actions and discoveries that lead to the confirmation of the killer's identity, Custódio Borges, and then to his arrest. These facts, however, are never written and described directly. The neighbour's and the guard's reports are not directly written, and what exactly is the incriminating document found in Borges' possession is never clear. In 'O Caso Vargas', Quaresma's reason and essayistic speeches find the culprit, but it is Guedes' actions and discoveries, part of a never explicitly written narrative element of the text, that bring him to justice. In 'A Carta Mágica', Guedes' association with narrative prose – or the lack thereof – works differently: rather than being a purely narrated character he also acts as narrator, a role

which is reinforced in terms of its relevance for the text and its goal of establishing culpability by the importance given to his oral account.

As I discussed in the first chapter, Todorov's dictum that "[the whodunit] contains not one but two stories, the story of the crime and of its investigation" (Todorov: 44) helps us understand the function of characters and their relationships with narrative and essayistic prose in Pessoa's crime fiction. Accepting the premise that those two parallel stories converge in the final discovery of 'whodunit', leading to the apprehension of the culprits, then we must face how in the Quaresma stories under analysis *unwritten narration* is a decisive element for that conclusion: in 'A Carta Mágica', oral narration, represented in writing, by Guedes, whereas in 'O Caso Vargas' the written narration is enacted by its third-person narrator.

It is in the first case that the conspicuous absence of the oral utterance contrasts so much with its importance for the resolution of the plot, in a way that, as Derrida would put it, conserves the pre-eminence of the oral over the written. This pre-eminence is found inside the text itself – the elements that compose the plot, rather than the relationship between that text and the absences and gaps that characterize it. In opposition to Guedes' account and Quaresma's speech there is the mysterious letter itself. The fact that not all was written – the truncated narrative sequences or the elided narrations by characters –, but that the surviving pieces of work allow the reader to see a thought-out plot, forces the reader to reassess the textuality of the Quaresma stories, where so many 'papers' seem to be missing.

This is an interpretive necessity of particular relevance considering Derrida's argument of truth versus fiction, or truth in fiction, in Poe and in Lacan's reading of 'The Purloined Letter'. Derrida claims that Lacan's use of a literary text as an example of a psychoanalytical mechanism crosses the traditional borders of truth ("philosophical truth" he calls it) and fiction (Derrida 1975b: 32), by seeking to find in a literary text an illustration of what the critic (Lacan) considers to be a form a truth, i.e. Freudian repetition automatism. I question at this stage whether the same can be said about the interplay between the essayistic and the narrative in 'A Carta Mágica', in the way Quaresma interprets the narration of facts with an analytical bent, finding an illustration of his own ideas in the case that he has by then solved. What is more, Quaresma's interpretation of the narrated stories, by resorting to the terminology of 19th and early 20th century sciences of the mind, is directly linked with Pessoa's engagement with the same topics, which has been well documented and critiqued in Kenneth Krabbenhoft's *Fernando Pessoa e as Doenças do Fim de Século* (2011). The relevance of this line of argument requires a closer examination of Quaresma's theories, so that the role they play in the story, with its narrative and essayistic elements, becomes clearer.

Quaresma: narrative, theory and gender

After providing the solution that Marta 'dunit', Quaresma embarks on a long discussion on the psychology of the criminal:

Há três tipos de mentalidade: a do homem que chamamos normal, a do homem a que chamamos anormal sem lhe chamar louco, e a do louco propriamente dito. Não há divisória

exacta entre estas mentalidades, duas a duas; isto é embora seja nítida a diferença entre a mentalidade do homem normal e a do louco, não há tal diferença entre a do homem normal e a do simplesmente anormal, e entre a deste, nos graus mais avançados, e a do louco propriamente dito. Em todo o caso, não é falsa a distinção dos três tipos mentais. Vou-lhe dizer porquê, e vou-lhe explicar onde está a distinção. (Pessoa 2008: 243-244)⁷⁴

After introducing his inquiry in this way, Quaresma goes on to explain his system of classification, noting that a “man” can cross between the different types, from normal to abnormal to insane, when an “elemento mental mórbido” first settles on the normal man, changing him to abnormal, though without general consequences for his behaviour. The abnormal man may then be classified as insane when that same morbid mental element “começa nitidamente a invadir a generalidade mental, ou seja a manifestar-se em actos que dependem, não de tal ou tal-outro elemento mental, mas do uso abstracto da razão” (Pessoa 2008: 234). In what concerns the connection between mental disease and criminality, Cesare Lombroso is highlighted by Krabbenhoft as the main source of Pessoa’s theory, based on his extensive notes on the French translation of *L’Uomo Delinquente* (1876) and annotations to Max Nordau’s *Entartung* (1892), again in French translation (Krabbenhoft: 55). Quaresma’s theories are showcased for the first time in ‘O Caso Vargas’, where the main reference is Lombroso, as discussed in greater depth in chapter 3. In ‘A Carta Mágica’ the connection is less clear, for the central Lombrosian (and Pessoaan) category of “genius” as a particular form of madness or abnormality is not considered.

⁷⁴ The text of ‘A Carta Mágica’ published in Pessoa 2008 includes two versions of the same theory present in succession with very minor variations, as was the case with chapters III and IV of the same story. Freitas has decided to include both sources for the sake of completion, but here I concentrated on the first of them because of its stronger linearity of exposition.

Krabbenhoft studies at length the importance of turn-of-the-century psychology and psychiatry in Pessoa's thought, particularly his self-diagnosis as a "histero-neurasthenic" (Krabbenhoft: 201) and how this self-image came to characterize the author's judgement of his own work and that of other writers. The fact that Quaresma's theories come very close to those of Pessoa will have an added significance as I look closer at the conclusions to which the detective arrives regarding the criminal act and the psychological makeup of Marta, specifically in the way the exploration of Marta's character resembles Pessoa's self-diagnosis. The fact that, uniquely in Quaresma's stories, the criminal in 'A Carta Mágica' is a woman is not alien to this adapted version of psychological criminology.⁷⁵

Gender becomes an issue with which the decipherer has to grapple when applying his theory.⁷⁶ When first considering the possible involvement of Marta in the affair, Quaresma signals her sudden decision to go to the Baixa as "a ideia histórica, ou fingidamente histórica de ir passear" (Pessoa 2008: 236). The element of hysteria becomes more and more prominent in Quaresma's attempt to explain Marta's behaviour in light of his theories:

⁷⁵ The link between disease or "abnormality" and women in Pessoa's work is also explored in Mendes, Victor K., Castro, Mariana Gray de (ed.), 2013, 'The Ecology of Writing: Maria José's Fernando Pessoa', *Fernando Pessoa's Modernity Without Frontiers*, 201-213, Woodbridge: Tamesis.

⁷⁶ The issue of gender and specifically the representation of women has been a fruitful field of Pessoa studies over recent years. The publication of the collective volume edited by Anna Klobucka and Mark Sabine on *Embodying Pessoa: Corporeality, Gender, Sexuality* (Klobucka and Sabine 2007) is a hallmark of this critical turn. More recently, José Barreto's 2011 *Misoginia e Anti-Feminismo em Fernando Pessoa*, Lisbon: Ática contributed to this effort in Portugal by emphasizing Pessoa's conservative politics, particularly his opposition to women's rights.

Há uma dose de manha – de manha segura e firme – que é estranha à histeria propriamente dita. A histeria tem muitas manhas, mas são manhas de simulação, não de execução – manha de actor, por assim dizer, ou até de desplante, mas não manhas de engenheiro, ou, se você quiser, de prestidigitador. (...)

- A uma pessoa de juízo ocorreriam mais expedientes, mas não um expediente desta ordem. A um simples histérico ocorreriam vários expedientes, mas todos eles no sentido de intrujar directamente o marido, e não de intrujar, por assim dizer, a humanidade em geral. (Pessoa 2008: 245)

Hysteria is qualified as possessing an element of “manha”, “guile” or “cunning”, a term already used by Guedes in his description of Marta (Pessoa 2008: 229), but Quaresma then emphasizes the type of guile that he considers Marta to have demonstrated as going one step above, or beyond, that of simple hysteria. Marta does not resort to an “expedient” that could be used by “um simples histérico” but something more than that. It seems, then, that Marta is something more than a hysteric, as Guedes had rushed to label her.

To contextualize Quaresma’s interpretation of Marta’s mental state leading up to, and after, the theft of the letter, I must bring to fore the famous diagnosis, made by Pessoa about himself, in the letter about the formation of the heteronyms to Adolfo Casais Monteiro, dated 13 January, 1935:

Começo pela parte psiquiátrica. A origem dos meus heterónimos é o fundo traço de histeria que existe em mim. Não sei se sou simplesmente histérico, se sou, mais propriamente, um histero-neurasténico. (...) Seja como for, a origem mental dos meus heterónimos está na minha tendência orgânica e constante para a despersonalização e para a simulação. (...) Se eu fosse mulher — na mulher os fenómenos histéricos rompem em ataques e coisas parecidas — cada poema de Álvaro de Campos (o mais histericamente histérico de mim) seria um alarme para a vizinhança. Mas sou homem — e nos homens a histeria assume principalmente aspectos mentais; assim tudo acaba em silêncio e poesia... (Pessoa 2007: 226)

Pessoa qualifies himself as a hysteric, or a hystero-neurasthenic, attributing to those abnormalities, as the vocabulary of the time would put it, the source of his “tendência

orgânica e constante para a despersonalização e para a simulação”, which in turn is the origin of the heteronyms. The term “simulação” is also used to qualify the guiles of hysteria, “manhas de simulação”, when discussing Marta in ‘A Carta Mágica’. Pessoa hesitates to qualify himself as simply hysteric, just as Quaresma does in relation to Marta. The parallels between the two excerpts become even closer given that, in the letter to Casais Monteiro, Pessoa hypothesizes about what and who he might have been had he been a woman, stating that in women hysterical phenomena break out in attacks. Marta’s actions, we have seen, are not exactly that, for she does not seek to deceive only her husband, as a simple hysteric would, but, astonishingly, “toda a humanidade”. Pessoa’s self-diagnosis, after briefly dealing with Álvaro de Campos as “o mais histericamente histérico de mim” – and presumably the most “womanly”, in Pessoa’s identification of hysteria as a feminine attribute – states that, because he is a man, hysteria takes mental aspects. As a result, everything ends in “silêncio e poesia”. Pessoa’s status as a man drives him to transform his presumed mental “abnormality” into poetry. Marta’s path, on the other hand, leads to crime, not only the theft of the letter but, as the text tells us, a pre-determined future of progressive criminality and a descent into madness, as already established by Quaresma’s inaugural division of “men” into normal, abnormal and insane.

The gendered vocabulary can be attributed to the conventions of the time of its writing, but in a narrative as heavily involved with gender roles as ‘A Carta Mágica’, Marta’s gender seems to be the chief difference between Quaresma’s diagnosis of her and the image that Pessoa seems to have of himself in his self-analytical text: the two,

Marta and Pessoa, are remarkably close, both sharing a “hysterical trait” that displays itself in a delight in simulation, and both deviating from the main characteristics of that trait in the way they bridge the gap from action to execution, from “manhas de actor” to “manhas de engenheiro” or “prestidigitador”. It is interesting how the word “engenheiro” gets slipped in at that stage of the narrative, for not only is Marta’s husband Francisco an engineer by profession, but so is Campos.

As I argued above, Marta’s theft of the letter can be read as an affirmation of her personality by stealing the symbol of masculinity that is the secret document sent by a dead father, via his son, to the male friend in Angola. Marta’s guile, here better read as cunning, and compared to that of an engineer, reinforces her pretensions of domination over her husband and how she seeks to substitute him as the representative of masculinity in the couple they form. The fact that Álvaro de Campos is also an engineer, a profession that is not accidental but rather substantial to his identity and poetics, and that he is the sole heteronym to merit a reference in the letter quoted above, reinforces the nexus I am trying to build between Marta as a character and Pessoa as a poet. Just as we can infer Marta’s characteristics drawing on Pessoa’s later self-image, considering how the story precedes the letter to Casais Monteiro in time, then the reverse can also be done and the terms of my reading can be extended to Pessoa’s self-analysis.⁷⁷ As Marta

⁷⁷ ‘A Carta Mágica’ was dated to 1923-26 (Freitas in Pessoa:2012a: 45), whereas the letter to Casais Monteiro is from 1935.

is drawn to crime, Pessoa is drawn to poetry, but if Marta escalated from abnormality to insanity, what then would Pessoa say about himself?

Genius, insanity, crime: analyzing the mind

The theme of insanity in Pessoa's writings is part of a pair, the other element of which is genius. This link has been reaffirmed recently by the publication of *Escritos sobre Génio e Loucura* (2006), edited by Jerónimo Pizarro. More recently Mariana Gray de Castro approaches the same topics with an eye for the consequences of Pessoa's theories on his relationship with Shakespeare, viewed by Pessoa as "genius", a category used in a very restricted sense, as I shall discuss.⁷⁸

For his part, Krabbenhoft dedicates the third part of his book, titled "O Preço do Génio", to Pessoa's critical references and their bearing on his own formulations on genius and insanity. "De todas as áreas da pesquisa psicológica (...) aquela que mais intrigou o jovem Pessoa durante o seu auto-imposto percurso de estudos foi a teoria do génio." (Krabbenhoft: 115). Again, the main sources identified by Krabbenhoft for Pessoa's thought are Lombroso and Nordau. But it is worth citing one of the statements

⁷⁸ Castro calls special attention to Pessoa's emphasis on Shakespeare's possible hysteria: "Pessoa's dual diagnosis, of himself and Shakespeare as fellow hystero-neurasthenics, is consistent with his attempt to forge firm sites of affinity between himself and the Bard" (Castro 2016: 114). A summary of her conclusions regarding this topic can be read in Castro, Mariana Gray de, Frier, David G. (ed.), 2012, "Pessoa, Shakespeare, Hamlet and the Heteronyms: Studies in Neurosis", *Pessoa in an Intertextual Web. Influence and Innovation*, 46-62, Legenda: London.

belonging to ‘O Caso Vargas’ used by Krabbenhoft, who draws on Pizarro’s earlier edition, to illustrate Pessoa’s engagement with these topics:

O génio, o louco e o criminoso são três casos de inadaptação. No génio a inadaptação é intelectual: é um homem que não pensa, nem pode pensar como os outros. No louco a inadaptação é emotiva: é um homem que não sente, nem pode sentir, como os outros. No criminoso a inadaptação é da vontade: é um homem que não quer, nem pode querer, como os outros. (Pessoa 2008: 101-102)⁷⁹

We saw before that Quaresma’s analysis of Marta had several parallels with Pessoa’s letter to Casais Monteiro, but here we are dealing with a theoretical text that is presented as part of a narrative, where the author expounds his ideas regarding the mental categories of the genius, the insane, and the criminal. It is quite telling that similar terms were employed in Pessoa’s single piece of criticism on detective fiction, the essay ‘Detective Story’, examined in the first chapter of this dissertation: “A customary analysis, which, like the system of the universe, may be false but which like it, has no better working substitute – has divided our psychic operations into the three sections of thought, feeling and will” (Pessoa 2012a: 237). The draft for a theory of fiction that ensues, dividing different types of fiction according to this analysis of psychic operations, attests to the bridge that Pessoa was trying to build between his interpretation of reality and writing literary fiction. As Pessoa analyzed the world, so too did he analyze literature, two activities subsumed in literary creation, a dynamic perhaps better summarized by his dictum “I was a poet animated by philosophy, not a philosopher with

⁷⁹ Although Krabbenhoft quotes from *Escritos sobre Génio e Loucura*, which gathers all of Pessoa’s texts that engage with the topic of genius and insanity, the fact that it belongs to ‘O Caso Vargas’ and, as such, is part of a fictional narrative, raises issues that will be covered over the next chapters.

poetic faculties.” (Pessoa 1966: 13). “Genius” is one of the categories used in this process, but to what extent was it used by Pessoa outside of the realm of psychology and literary theory?

This brings me directly to Pessoa’s articles published in 1912 in the *Águia* magazine, laying the foundations for his concept of the Supra-Camões and testifying to his desire to overcome that towering figure of Portuguese literature:

E isto leva a crer que deve estar para muito breve o inevitável aparecimento do poeta ou poetas supremos, desta corrente, e da nossa terra, porque fatalmente o Grande Poeta, que este movimento gerará, deslocará para segundo plano a figura, até agora primacial, de Camões. (...)

Pode objectar-se, além de muita coisa desdenhável num artigo que tem de não ser longo, que o actual momento político não parece de ordem a gerar génios poéticos supremos, de reles e mesquinho que é. Mas é *precisamente por isso* [sic] que mais conluível se nos afigura o próximo aparecer de um supra-Camões na nossa terra. (Pessoa 1980: 22)

It can be inferred that the poet that would dislodge Camões to a second place would be a “genius”, in keeping with what I have argued above. I do not wish to rehash an old discussion, for much has been written about Pessoa’s influences and his relationship towards them, particularly his claim to be the Supra-Camões. As Lourenço argued:

Esta profecia megalómana insere-se no sistema ou na estrutura que noutra ocasião chamei “imaginação ciumenta”. Toda a obra de Pessoa é uma disputa concreta com outra obra sobre que se apoia para a transcender ou lhe imprimir um desvio que inteiramente a desloca, na forma e na substância, do seu lugar matricial. (Lourenço 1983: 246)

Pessoa tried to claim for himself the centrality, the canonicity of the poets that preceded him, by transcending their heritage. While Lourenço uses the metaphor of the “lugar matricial”, the predominance of male authors in Pessoa’s list would suggest that part of his act was an attempt to interrupt patriarchal authority, the texts passed down from Camões to himself, by appropriating the canon’s legacy within the fragmentation of his

“hystero-neurasthenic” heteronymity. Pessoa, like Marta, “steals” the texts that were handed down from authority to authority, seeking to establish himself as a new type of authority that supersedes not only the individual elements of the chain before him but in fact substitutes that same chain with a new order – his own.

Pessoa and Marta appear then to be inextricably linked: one considers himself a genius while the other, having that route denied to her because of her gender, is put in the role of the criminal. This leads to a reassessment of my previous interpretation of Marta as symbolically stealing her husband’s masculinity and interrupting the course of paternal authority by stealing the letter, for if that is the case then Pessoa is also involved in the affair. *A Canon of Empty Fathers* does not engage directly with Fernando Pessoa, its focus being instead theatre, novels and political figures such as Sidónio Pais and Salazar. Rothwell’s interest is narrative, both fictional and historical. But if we consider Quaresma’s stories, and in particular ‘A Carta Mágica’, then we must also, as we have seen, consider Pessoa, the childless poet who put so much of himself into the character of Marta, the madwoman who makes a desperate bid to interrupt and steal patriarchal authority.

All of these actions and interchanges become clearer when read again in the light of ‘The Purloined Letter’, for both Poe’s and Pessoa’s narratives take place in the context of a story where the act of analyzing the mind of one of its characters proves to be the key to solving a mystery. As Rachmann points out, ‘The Purloined Letter’ presents the reader with “the problem of imagined reality as one about analyzing the minds of others” (2010: 25). Dupin himself explains this, after telling the story of the

schoolboy he knew, who always guessed correctly his opponent's action when playing a game of even-and-odd. This is the boy's explanation of his method:

'When I wish to find out how wise, or how stupid, or how good, or how wicked is any one, or what are his thoughts at the moment, I fashion the expression of my face, as accurately as possible, in accordance with the expression of his, and then wait to see what thoughts or sentiments arise in my mind or heart, as if to match or correspond with the expression.'
(Poe: 215-216)

Later in the text, Poe comes to call this method "analysis". Although the act of imitating another person's facial expression as a means to ascertain their thoughts seems not only far-fetched but even slightly preposterous, I wish to emphasize the necessity of understanding and explaining another person's – or in this case, character's – thought-processes as the key to Dupin's matching the Minister's wits. A similar method is employed by Quaresma in Chapter III of 'A Carta Mágica', as he briefly considers Alvarenga as a suspect:

(...) Quero que me dê mais pormenorizadamente uma coisa
- Que vem a ser, doutor?
- O riso do engenheiro de minas.
(...)
- Ora eu quero que você me explique o seguinte, e servindo-se da sua optima visualidade: o Alvarenga desatou a rir imediatamente? O Alvarenga sorriu com toda a cara e depois desatou a rir? O Alvarenga sorriu só com a boca e depois forçou o riso, ou o Alvarenga sorriu de repente só com os olhos, depois carregou com o sorriso para a boca, e depois forçou o riso? (Pessoa 2008: 233)

The solution to the crime presented in the later chapters in no way involves Alvarenga, suggesting that chapter III was the beginning of an alternate storyline, in which the interrogated character is an integral part of the plot. What the smile of the engineer

might have meant cannot be known, but I must draw attention to the similarities between Quaresma's technique and Dupin's: the investigators divine the truth via the face of their suspects, although in the case of Quaresma mediated by Guedes' narration.

The fact that the theories employed by Quaresma (and Pessoa) have long since been discredited in psychology or any of the mind sciences may lead us to compare him unfavourably to Dupin, whose disquisitions on his method rely less on pseudo-scientific theory and more on his own personal experience as an investigator and, crucially, as a reader of literary and historical texts. Lacan and Derrida both comment on Dupin's erudition by dedicating attention to the last lines of 'The Purloined Letter': "“Un dessein si funeste, S'il n'est digne d'Atrée, est digne de Thyeste.” They are to be found in Crébillon's 'Atrée.'" (Poe: 222). Dupin leaves the quotation in French inside the envelope which he substituted for the actual letter in the Minister's office. This substitution is performed so that the Minister would not notice the disappearance of the original, leading him on to attempt to use it, only to cause his fall from grace. Additionally, the quotation would serve the purpose of identifying the person responsible for defeating his purposes, presumably due to a past history between himself and Dupin. This supposed previous relationship would identify them as Atreus and Thyestes, two brothers of Greek mythology and characters of a play by Seneca and, in 1707, by Jolyet de Crébillon.⁸⁰

⁸⁰ The meaning of the quotation has been interpreted as a possible last minute revelation that Dupin and the Minister are in fact brothers (Derrida 1975b: 109).

Clearly, Dupin's and Quaresma's methods are not entirely the same, even if they present several parallels. But rather than compare their reasonings and how solid they may be by extra-textual standards, the fact remains that all the other characters that interact with them, particularly Agente Guedes, the police prefect and the anonymous narrator in Dupin's stories, manifest their admiration for the detectives' skill. As the judge in 'O Caso Vargas' puts it, upon listening to Quaresma's speech "proving" the guilt of Custódio Borges: "A demonstração do ponto de vista lógico, é absolutamente completa, sr dr. Quaresma" (Pessoa 2008: 125). Quaresma himself is not adverse to affirming his self-confidence, when he concludes 'O Pergaminho Roubado' by proclaiming arrogantly "Quod erat demonstrandum", the ultimate codified formula for self-evident proof (Pessoa 2008: 187). For the purposes of these narratives, the detectives have to be infallible, both in their analyses and in the eyes of their audience, the police and other characters taking part in the investigation. One way to establish this infallibility is by having other characters declare it. These problems arise too from my reading of 'A Carta Mágica', but, as I hope to have shown, they are a fundamental characteristic of several Quaresma texts.

Narration and analysis

I now return to the role of narration in framing action and analysis in 'A Carta Mágica'. As I have argued, the act of narrating is essential for the solution of the mystery: first Francisco's narration to the police, then Guedes' elided narration to

Quaresma. As in the other stories of the Quaresma corpus, though to a slightly smaller degree in this one, sections of lengthy theoretical exposition encroach upon the narrative. They challenge its literary status, leaving doubt whether the reader is facing a work of fiction upon which a system of psychology is built or if that same work of fiction is but an exemplum for the purposes of displaying that system. Derrida accused Lacan of taking ‘The Purloined Letter’ and purposefully ignoring that it was a literary text, underlining how it only served “to illustrate” Lacan’s psychoanalytic theories. But the consequences of Lacan’s “mistake” are simply an interpretation with which Derrida does not agree. In ‘A Carta Mágica’, the consequence of Quaresma’s analysis is the vilification of a woman’s character as an insane potential murderer.

Quaresma accesses the facts of the affair solely through the medium of successive narrations – much like Dupin, but with less intervention for he never even sees the setting or any of the characters at the heart of the case. Quaresma imposes his brand of theory to analyse a series of facts while trusting blindly his narrator, and his narrator’s source, respectively Guedes and Francisco. The Pessoaan detective, like Dupin, sets out to discover a truth, assuming that truth to be there, but in effect what they all do is create a truth based on their own interpretations: Dupin discovers the letter and restores it to its possessor while ignoring his part in the chain of possessors. While Quaresma points Marta out as the thief, resorting to shoddy psychological analysis that is tinted by his and Guedes’ misogyny. Derrida’s invective is that Lacan chooses to interpret ‘The Purloined Letter’ as an illustration of his own theory of the unconscious

and his understanding of Freudian repetition automatism, but its principle of interpretative blindness is more valid if laid against Quaresma than against Lacan.

In ‘A Carta Mágica’, the detective interprets actions and discourses; Lacan (and Derrida) interpret texts. The consequences of their actions are significantly different, as is the relationship between the exegesis and truth: the “truths” uncovered by Derrida and Lacan are textual interpretations belonging to two different approaches to texts, while Quaresma analyses facts and personalities enacted by and belonging to other literary characters at the same textual level in which he is represented. And his mistake is potentially a serious one indeed: with no other evidence than a second-hand report, Quaresma indicts Marta as a thief, a madwoman and likely a murderer. Dupin and Quaresma have plenty of blind spots: Dupin does not realize, as Lacan observed, that he is but an element in a chain of triangles; Quaresma ignores that his knowledge of the affair he is investigating derives from a sequence of narrations, the second of which is not even spelled out but only reported, choosing instead to impose on it his biased theory.

In this chapter I compared literary and critical works, as well as fictional characters and real-life critics, uniting them under their common theme of the representation or the performance of the act of analytical thought. This has brought together texts, characters and authors in a somewhat confusing equal level. I would like to recall that this is also a feature of Pessoa's detective writing and, as we have seen, of his larger work. My observations on the interplay between fiction and reality in ‘The Stolen Document’ are also relevant for ‘A Carta Mágica’, by way of the connections

between Marta and Pessoa but also between Quaresma and again, Pessoa. As can be seen *in nuce* in the letter to Casais Monteiro, Quaresma's theories are very much Pessoa's own, transposed to the realm of what, for lack of a better term, we could call fictional essay. Pessoa must be brought into the picture, as author of both the analytical and narrative elements of 'A Carta Mágica', even, or particularly, the elided ones. He is in the role of both Poe and Lacan, intra and extra textually, as writer of narrative fiction and, through Quaresma, fictional essay. A way to validate the claim is the ease with which Derrida's accusation that Lacan takes on Poe's story merely to illustrate his theories can be transferred against Quaresma/Pessoa, not only in 'A Carta Mágica' but in the other stories as well, further enmeshing author and character. As in 'The Stolen Document', where different levels of reality are mixed and recreated into the literary reality of the text, 'A Carta Mágica', if considered in its connection with the theory of heteronymy and the critical texts of Pessoa, offers a new gateway to Pessoa's writings.

*

I have tried in this chapter to read 'A Carta Mágica' as one of Pessoa's Quaresma stories most indebted to Poe. The themes in 'The Purloined Letter' highlighted by Lacan and Derrida, the analysis both made of the original text and, in the case of Derrida, of Lacan's, provided the framework through which I have studied Pessoa's story. Gender and the act of narration were the main strands I have pursued, though the problems raised by considering 'A Carta Mágica' in the context of Pessoa's larger work, specifically the other Quaresma stories, his writings on psychology and the theory of

heteronymy, provided a larger framework in which to understand those topics, one that already included the interplay between fiction and reality. One textual problem that rendered the discussion more open was the tension and negotiation between narrative and essayistic prose in the text, a feature of the Quaresma stories that is central to my interpretation of them. Chapter 6 will explore this in greater depth, drawing more extensively on the theory of heteronymy, the Crowley Affair, *Livro do Desassossego*, as well as other texts that bring this issue to the fore.

Although in this present chapter I have chosen ‘A Carta Mágica’ and ‘The Stolen Document’ to explore issues such as gender and the act of narration, in the next chapter my conclusions will be expanded to the other texts of the Quaresma corpus. Reading the Quaresma stories in terms of gender also acquires renewed importance when approaching ‘Tale X/A Morte de D. João’, a narrative whose political implications are far-reaching in the way they indict the militarism of World War I. The tale of an ex-soldier’s vengeance delivered upon the seducer of his sister contributes to an understanding of gender relations in Pessoa’s detective fiction, with wider implications that go beyond power struggle in a couple. ‘Cúmplices ou No Tribunal’ is yet another story where similar topics are developed, specifically the theme of the punished seducer. Male characters and their relationships with female characters that never make an appearance in the text, much like Marta, are at the heart of these texts, leading to the construction of problematic masculinities. This will be the main thrust of the next chapter.

Chapter 5

Male avengers: hiding in plain sight

The issues raised in the previous chapter find new configurations in other stories in the Quaresma corpus. Albeit only surviving in fragments, it is precisely their broken structure that highlights the repeated use of themes and techniques which do not conform with the tenets of detective fiction nor indeed with the traditional meaning of fiction. What is more, the dynamics at play in these stories point to Pessoa's wider work, especially his poetry, and to what I call his engagement in the creation of non-narrative fiction. In this chapter, I concentrate on two of the Quaresma stories, 'Tale X/A Morte de D. João' and 'Cúmplices ou Tribunal'.

In these stories themes and structures already discussed in 'A Carta Mágica' and 'O Caso Vargas' can be found. Gender issues are essential in the shaping of relationships between characters. Simultaneously, we will also observe other manifestations of the interplay between a narrative mode of prose, characterized by description, action and dialogue, and an essayistic mode, laden with philosophical or medical jargon and concerned with explaining theories either about the investigation procedure itself or the human psyche. Ultimately, I hope to show how this juxtaposition of discourses is not only a feature of the Quaresma stories but of Pessoa's wider work understood as a systematic project of non-narrative fiction.

Tale X/A Morte de D. João

Pessoa's third narrative in the collection *Quaresma, Decifrador* recasts the familiar story of "the rake punished": the seducer of a young woman meets his end at the hands of a male member of her family, in this case her brother. The alternative title "A Morte de D. João" is a clear reference to the model for this plot: the story of D. Juan or Don Giovanni, the libertine killed by the statue of the father of one of his lovers in Seville. Originally written as a play by Tirso de Molina in 1630 and then retold by, among others, Molière and Byron, it found its largest claim to fame in Mozart's opera *Don Giovanni* with Lorenzo da Ponte's libretto.⁸¹

Pessoa retells this myth in a Portuguese context and within the narrative structure of a detective story, which substantially changes the pathos and roles of the different characters. The story begins with the sentence "Soou, no silêncio da noute, o som súbito de um estilhaçar de vidros." (Pessoa 2008: 191). Notice the alliteration, elsewhere uncommon in the detective stories. The reader is taken dramatically to the centre of a violent action. 'Tale X/A Morte de D. João' is the only of Pessoa's detective stories to have such a dramatic beginning, which sets the tone for the remainder of the text.⁸² This

⁸¹Tristan, Frédérick, 2009, *Don Juan, le révolté: un mythe contemporain*, Paris: Écriture.

⁸²'O Caso Vargas' begins with "Na manhã de 12 de Fevereiro de 1907, muito cedo ainda, não para o dia, mas para os usos de Lisboa, apareceu na estrada de Benfica um indivíduo novo (...)" (Pessoa 2008: 41); in 'O Pergaminho Roubado' the scene is laid with the incipit "Poucos casos foram tão da ordem de mistificar a investigação policial como o curioso caso do roubo do pergaminho roubado de casa de Jacinto Correia" (Pessoa 2008: 143); 'A Carta Mágica' starts with the sentence "O Chefe Manuel Guedes, da Segunda Secção de Investigação Criminal, regressava tarde, nesse dia, do Governo Civil." (Pessoa 2008: 217).

contrasts with the principles laid by the author in the Essay ‘Detective Story’: “The ideal detective story is that where the facts are put before the reader and the detective solves the problem without anything but those facts, that is to say, without shifting from his chair” (Pessoa 2012a: 239). It is also at odds with the attitude displayed by Quaresma towards investigative procedures, which, as we have seen, closely mirrors Pessoa’s precepts for the writing of crime fiction.

The entire first chapter of the story is a succession of fast-paced dialogue that follows on from the sound of broken glass in the night. A telephone thrown through a window is found to be the cause of that sound, late night revellers passing by the deserted street find a policeman staring at the building from whence the phone flew, and the chapter ends with him breaking into the house and demonstrating his great physical strength: “Arre que é forte!” (Pessoa 2008: 193) comments one of the hangers-on that observe how the solid door of the house is brought down by the policeman’s shoulders. This is an important point in the narrative as the investigation later demonstrates. The narrator in that first chapter doesn’t directly describe what is found inside the house, it is only revealed by Chefe Tavares, a police investigator, as he goes over over the case with his colleagues in the second chapter, entitled “Discussão do Caso”. As with the other Quaresma stories, the fact that they are put together from manuscripts and were never finished or published prevents an extensive comment on this apparent omission. But it is nonetheless interesting to note how Pessoa concentrated on writing dialogue and exposition of thought over the more “sensationalist” elements of the story even in ‘Tale X/A Morte de D. João’ where, uncharacteristically, action is featured more prominently.

Chefe Tavares, then, refers for the first time to “murder” and to a victim, a man called Valle, telling how he was found with his head smashed. The entire chapter repeatedly insists on the strength of the murderer: “o assassino caiu em cima do Valle e estoirou-o (não há outro termo) contra o cofre”, “Tudo isto é perfeitamente lógico e perfeitamente compreensível, a não ser a formidável força do assassino” (Pessoa 2008: 194). At this stage, the reader necessarily suspects the policeman whose strength had already been remarked upon, and so does the police but, curiously for entirely different reasons. Chefe Tavares finds it suspicious that the phone should be thrown at the exact moment when a policeman and a large group of people happen to pass by the otherwise empty street, contradicting the theories of his underlings that it could have been thrown as a desperate act of self-defence by Valle. Chefe Tavares believes it could have been a sign of some sort between accomplices in the crime, and he immediately suspects the policeman, considering he was the first person on the scene. These suspicions however are put to rest by his preliminary inquest:

As informações sobre o guarda deram logo cabo da minha hipótese. O rapaz não só tem boas informações; tem-nas esplêndidas. Está na polícia há uns seis meses, esteve cinco na esquadra do Rato, e há um mês passou para a das Picoas, não por qualquer motivo disciplinar, mas porque um guarda das Picoas queria ir para o Rato e este rapaz não se importou de trocar. Tanto o chefe da esquadra, como o das Picoas, fazem os maiores elogios ao guarda. Sério, esperto, decidido, cumpridor rigoroso dos seus deveres - nada contra ele em sentido absolutamente nenhum. E a sua crónica anterior ainda é melhor. Serviu na guerra, entrou nuns poucos de combates, foi ferido três vezes, foi condecorado com a Cruz de Guerra. Os oficiais com quem serviu - cheguei ao ponto de falar a dois, que foram os que lhe conseguiram a entrada para a polícia, - dizem que é um dos mais completos exemplares do soldado que têm visto: valentíssimo, lealíssimo, inteligente e decidido, e dedicado ao máximo ao seu dever e incapaz de ceder no mais pequeno ponto ou por qualquer motivo a qualquer coisa que seja apartar-se do cumprimento desse dever. (Pessoa 2008: 195)

The passage is long and worthy of a close analysis, for it encapsulates the psychological solution of the mystery. Though at this juncture in the narrative little is known about how exactly and why the crime was committed, the litany of praises to the guard keeps him squarely in the centre of the narrative. In none of Pessoa's stories is the criminal discovered to be a new character introduced at the end, which is in keeping with his theories exposed in 'Detective Story': "a detective story loses much interest if the criminal, when discovered, turns out to be a person unknown (to the reader), that is, one who has not appeared in the tale." (Pessoa 2012a: 252)

Furthermore, all the elements discovered by Chefe Tavares only corroborate the policeman's supposedly honourable character; none of them are in any way concerned with his action on the night of the murder. Considering how he remains the only extraordinarily physically strong character in the narrative, and how much emphasis is put on the murderer's almost superhuman strength, the policeman's encomium, rather than exonerating him, only makes the mystery more perplexing. The epithets that characterize him only consider his activity as policeman and, before it, soldier: "sério, esperto, decidido, cumpridor rigoroso dos seus deveres (...) valentíssimo, lealíssimo, inteligente e decidido, e dedicado ao máximo ao seu dever e incapaz de ceder no mais pequeno ponto ou por qualquer motivo a qualquer coisa que seja apartar-se do cumprimento desse dever". As the narrative progresses, those same epithets can be used to describe his performance as a murderer.

All the elements resulting from Chefe Tavares' investigation of the policeman's background are relevant to understand the character's motivations and actions. The fact

that he took part in the war places the story in the post-1918 period, a decade after the events of ‘O Caso Vargas’ which takes place in 1907. Also, the references to Rato and Picoas, as in ‘O Caso Vargas’ the ones to Benfica and Campo de Ourique, inscribe the stories in the geography of Lisbon, evoking to the Portuguese and particularly Lisbon-born reader very precise locations in the city. This is of particular relevance considering how Pessoa set out to be the first writer of detective stories in Portugal, adapting an eminently Anglo-American genre to a Portuguese context. Necessarily, the target audience in the 1920s-30s would have been the cultured elite of Lisbon, who would be amazed, much as the modern Portuguese reader is, to see a tone and type of narrative perceived as essentially foreign transposed to very recognizable places and historical moments as argued in Chapter 2.

This helps us understand and flesh out the representation of Portuguese society that Quaresma’s stories depict. Mandel (1984)⁸³ argues for the social relevance of the crime story as evidence of the practices and fears of the particular social context in which it is written, emphasising its bourgeois ethos and pandering to the progressively stronger middle-class of the early 20th century. ‘Tale X/A Morte de D. João’ is particularly susceptible to this type of analysis, as the investigation of the policeman’s character testifies. Colleagues and hierarchical superiors either in the police force or in the army – all of them members of institutions that at the time admitted no women to their ranks – provide all the evidence of good character. This is a point of crucial

⁸³ Mandel, Ernest, 1984, *Delightful Murder: A Social History of the Crime Story*, London: Pluto Press

importance when Quaresma finally solves the murder in the fourth chapter, “Desenlace”. The policeman confesses to have killed Valle when Quaresma asks him “Quem é que ele seduziu – foi sua irmã, sua namorada, ou quem é que foi?”, to which the killer replies “Foi minha irmã” (Pessoa 2008: 207). In the dialogue that follows, the policeman explains how his sister, Emília, committed suicide after the murdered man, her lover, terminated their relationship. ‘Tale X’ is a revenge story.⁸⁴

This plot relies, in effect, in the structure of connections that support the policeman’s good credentials in the second chapter:

Achei que o maior disfarce que eu podia arranjar seria ser uma pessoa de quem ninguém desconfiasse – nem o homem que havia de matar, nem mais ninguém. Depois de revolver muitas ideias, cheguei à conclusão que o melhor era ver se conseguia ser polícia (...) fazer-me transferir para a área onde esse tipo morava, e depois organizar a execução. (Pessoa 2008: 209)

The killer then proceeds to explain how he used his connections in the army to get a job in the police, revealing the fact that he had been promoted to the rank of “alferes” and that, as such, he did not have to ask for recommendations from higher-ranking officers, which would have been the case had he been a simple soldier, but from comrades-in-arms who happened to outrank him. He justifies his decision to his fellow-officers by invoking “prazeres carnis”, which is an allusion to his having a sexual relationship, possibly illicit considering the religious vocabulary more often associated with sin employed by him. This made his friends “mais ou menos prestativos, mas

⁸⁴ This is an instance of the point made in Chapter 2 with regard to the socially conservative morals of the detective story.

compreensivos” (Pessoa 2008: 209). The soldier uses the ruse of having an illicit liaison with a woman as a means to take revenge on the former lover of his sister, a relationship that could only have flourished in a similarly illicit fashion. The duality of licit/illicit or law/crime is also present in the choice of the word “execução” to describe his actions, indicating that the character considers his crime to be an act of justice: an execution rather than murder. The text relies on these mirrored actions: the same people who provided Chefe Tavares with glowing character references for the policeman turn out to be those that allowed themselves to be cunningly manipulated by him into creating the perfect circumstance to commit the crime. In order for it to happen, the murderer fashions himself after his future victim: a seducer, who is sure to have the complicity of his male peers in all-male groups. The policeman capitalizes on the prejudices and honour codes of these groups in order to exact his revenge on a seducer like he pretends to be. He is therefore a pretender, like Marta, and, as argued in the previous chapter, like Pessoa. His skill in deception goes to the extent of calling his role as a police officer a “disfarce”, implying that his job is a cover for his true intentions, although the text refers to him either as “polícia” or as “guarda”, and only once as “assassino” (Pessoa 2008: 213). This element of deception is at the heart of Pessoa’s detective fiction, who integrates it in his literary project, as will be further developed in the next chapter.

The consequences of the policeman’s actions, however, shed a new light on events that take place before the beginning of the narrative, for there is another death to consider: that of Emília. Little is told about her and then only by her brother:

Ela era muito mais nova do que eu - e que o não fosse (e encolheu os ombros). Andei com ela ao colo. Para mim qualquer coisa feita contra ela é sempre um fazer mal a uma criança.

Talvez isto não seja ver bem, mas eu vejo assim, porque não posso ver de outra maneira. Ela suicidou-se, suicidou-se por causa dele. Daquele tipo que eu estrangulei...São coisas que V.^a Ex.^a não pode compreender – ninguém pode compreender... Era preciso o sr. Dr. tê-la trazido ao colo como eu a trouxe. Enfim... (Pessoa 2008: 212)

In the policeman's longest and fondest speech about his sister, it is significant how he both admits to the possible mistake in his point of view – the necessity of killing Valle – but blocks any sort of attempt that Quaresma, the decipherer, may make to understand his motivations. The policeman acted on emotional causes, even if resorting to patient and calculated planning to commit murder. He describes Emília as being like a child to him, stating that as the main reason for his vengeance.

This infantilization of his sister is part of a discourse that denies her any sexual independence, but it also introduces the theme of childhood, with importance consequences for considering the place of Pessoa's detective fiction in his wider work. The role of the childhood in Pessoa's work is more complex than the idea of a missing father figure, as argued in my previous chapter. Lourenço claims that “A nostalgia da infância é efectivamente o centro da pulsão poética de Fernando Pessoa, ou, melhor ainda, a forma mesma como concretamente preenche a intransponível distância que de si o separa.” (Lourenço: 96). More recently, Stevens makes an even bolder judgment, equating the motif of childhood play and games in Pessoa's work with the heteronymic system: “Like a child at play, the heteronyms do not so much create an oeuvre as they stage and restage the scene of creation itself. Their work is, literally, re-creation [sic], the continual invention and reinvention of themselves.” (Stevens: 39). Stevens' argument is that Pessoa's “fingimento” is akin to child-like play, where one pretends to be a different person for the durations and purposes of a make-believe game. Although

she concentrates on direct references to toys and actual games, specifically in *Livro do Desassossego*, Pessoa's letters and in Campos' prose (Stevens: 40, 44), her argument is strengthened if "fingimento" is interpreted as nostalgia for childhood games, following Lourenço. This is an element explored in greater depth in the last chapter of this dissertation, in reference to the theory of the role of childlike make-believe and the operation of fictionalizing in Kendall Walton's philosophical work and the bearing it may have in interpreting Pessoa's construction of a fictional world.

Here however the link between childhood and "fingimento" in Tale X is shaped differently due to detective plot. Childhood is referenced only in the most tragic of manners, when Emília's death is described as tantamount to violence done to a child. Her sexual initiation can also be understood in terms of loss of innocence, and so a first death of her childhood, leading to her eventual physical demise. The only "fingimento" occurring is that of her brother's "disguise" as a policeman. Quaresma emerges here as the unraveller of this relationship. He is an external element that cares little for Valle and his murder, instead focusing on solving the case and ascertaining the exact nature of the relationship between the murderer and the woman whom the detective conjectured to be at the heart of the affair. It is that relationship that is the real mystery of the story: to avenge his dead sister the soldier must pretend to be a policeman.

Retuning to his speech, although he concedes that he might be wrong in pursuing his vengeance, he denies Quaresma the ability to fully understand his reasons and hence to judge him morally. The mistake he admits to could arguably be his participation in the culture and system that caused his sister's death in the first place. The only female

character in the story is dead before its start, her death having been caused by a moral system that punishes women and their feelings towards men outside marriage. The elaborate parallelisms between the policeman and Valle, murderer and murdered, and the intricate description of a network of men in all-male groups that, bound by an honour system, unknowingly facilitate the death of one of their peers, lays bare a hypocrisy whereby Valle is but the necessary death to justify the survival of the group and the morals to which both he and the policeman belonged and subscribed.

It is necessary to consider what is Quaresma's role in the conclusion of the policeman's plot. The detective states that his one concern is solving the mystery, insisting that he only wants to know the particulars of the story to satisfy his curiosity. Crucially, however, Quaresma frames the satisfaction of his desire as part of a deal: the policeman will tell his story in exchange for Quaresma's silence. The detective's self-affirmed amorality and supposed single-minded concern for intellectual problems disguises his complicity not only with the murderer but with the social and moral system he represents. Far from being a detached observer, Quaresma's self-imposed silence is an endorsement of the policeman's actions and, hence, honour killing. Perhaps the best narrative example of this communality of feelings between the policeman and Quaresma is given when they finish their dialogue: "Em tudo isto não tinha havido nem pressa nem atraso na marcha. O assassino e o charadista concordaram lentamente no passo" (Pessoa 2008: 213). In referring to the two characters by their roles in the murder story, the text emphasises their relationship for the purposes of the story under consideration. The verb

“concordar” being used for their walking at the same speed also symbolizes their agreement on another level, that of culture and ideology.

The truncated narrative structure and socio-historical background of the story deserve however closer comments. When commenting upon the violence used in the murder, the policeman describes his feelings in detail. He states that he actually strangled Valle, then maimed the body to put the police on the track of somebody of almost super-human strength. This seems to contradict his own interests i.e. to actually put the police in the right track. The incomplete status of the text justifies this apparent contradiction: Pessoa wrote down the “clues” that pointed to the solution of the mystery, never getting around to develop the narrative that is supposed to hide them. The only suggestion of alternative suspects occurs in chapter 3, “A Investigação”, when two enemies of Valle, Jorge Esteves and Manuel Tavares, both known for their athletic prowess, are briefly considered and investigated, until it turns out that both have unassailable alibis.⁸⁵

The key marker of the policeman’s strength is the aforementioned passing exclamation by an observer (“Arre que é forte!”), but nothing besides that remark indicates that he is especially strong. To be precise, not even that comment in any way intimates the existence of extraordinary strength beyond that of an athletic, well-built man. The policeman, in keeping with his plan of trying to be someone no one would suspect of having killed another person, hides in plain sight and exaggerates the skills he

⁸⁵ Valle is referred to as Branco in that chapter, an inconsistency common in other Quaresma stories.

needed to accomplish the murder – enough strength to strangle a grown man – to throw the police off track.

He goes on to say that after banging the victim’s head against his safe a first time “fiquei escuro dentro de mim.” (Pessoa 2008: 210). He further elaborates:

A verdade é que esta coisa da guerra tira à gente grande parte da consideração pelo corpo humano. Esfregar-lhe a cabeça contra o puxador do cofre, mesmo depois de morto, não era isso que me causasse arrepios.

Matei alemães que nunca me fizeram mal, sr. Doutor e que talvez, se nos conhecêssemos, fôssemos amigos e então não havia de hesitar em matar o homem que tinha causado a morte da minha pequenina? (Pessoa 2008: 212)

The explicit description of the victim’s murder is directly tied to the character’s self-perception as possessing a diminished regard for the human body after his war experiences. Emília is qualified as “a minha pequenina”, reaffirming his vision of her as a child. Attention is paid to the consequences of warfare, particularly the brutal First World War, on the soldiers. This recalls a more famous text by Pessoa, denouncing the horrors of war, the poem ‘O Menino de Sua Mãe’. The poem was published in *Contemporânea* in 1926, a period likely to overlap with the writing of ‘Tale X’.⁸⁶

No plano abandonado
Que a morna brisa aquece,
De balas trespassado
— Duas, de lado a lado —,
Jaz morto e arrefece.

Raia-lhe a farda o sangue.
De braços estendidos,
Alvo, louro, exangue,
Fita com olhar langue
E cego os céus perdidos.

⁸⁶ Freitas offers no precise dating for the story, we can only safely place it in the post war period.

Tão jovem! que jovem era!
(Agora que idade tem?)
Filho único, a mãe lhe dera
Um nome e o mantivera:
«O menino da sua mãe».

Caiu-lhe da algibeira
A cigarreira breve.
Dera-lha a mãe. Está inteira
E boa a cigarreira.
Ele é que já não serve.

De outra algibeira, alada
Ponta a roçar o solo,
A brancura embainhada
De um lenço... Deu-lho a criada
Velha que o trouxe ao colo.

Lá longe, em casa, há a prece:
«Que volte cedo, e bem!»
(Malhas que o império tece!)
Jaz morto, e apodrece,
O menino da sua mãe. (Pessoa 1998b: 82-83)

The dead body of the soldier is described in a vivid manner: the verse in the first stanza describing his fatal wounds is precise about the number of bullets that killed him and their entry points. The body is described as cooling and, in the final one, rotting. The title of the poem and the description of the soldier as the beloved son of his mother emphasize his humanity over his military role, contrasting the loving familial bond with the violent manner of his death. The fact that he is called “menino”, together with the reference to the handkerchief given by the old maid that used to carry him on her lap, evoke a lost childhood, irredeemably lost in the moment when he becomes a corpse.

The connection between childhood and violence is essential to this poem as well as ‘Tale X’: the death of an adult described in terms that emphasize not only the fact that he was once a child, but that to a certain extent he still was up until his death, as the verses “a mãe lhe dera/Um nome e o mantivera:«O menino da sua mãe».” testify. The

dead soldier is here directly comparable to Emília, another dead adult-child. This strengthens the argument for the importance of childhood in Pessoa's work, as already explored by Casais Monteiro, Lourenço and Stevens.⁸⁷

In 'Tale X', the connection between childhood and "fingimento" argued by Stevens exists differently, i.e in the context of a detective story. Emília, the child-like character, does not engage in any sort of "pretending", it is her brother who "pretends" to be a policeman by actually taking it up as a profession in order to avenge her. She had to die for his "fingimento" to occur. I would argue that this loss of childhood is a precondition for adult "fingimento", or as I will phrase it in Chapter 6, for Pessoaan fiction to exist, patterned on childlike make-believe. Effectively, in 'Tale X' and 'A Carta Mágica', strong elements of Pessoa's techniques more often observed in his poetry, heteronymic or not, are present, although in the form of prose fiction.

One other aspect to be considered is the attention paid to the body in the short story, which can also be found in Campos' "Ode Marcial":

A máquina de costura da pobre viúva morta à baioneta...
Ela cosia à tarde indeterminadamente...
A mesa onde jogavam os velhos,

⁸⁷ This is a theme I return to in greater length in the next chapter. The fact that references to lost childhood traverse Pessoa's output is paramount to an interpretation that finds common ground between them. Bernardo Soares writes: "Ah, não há saudades mais dolorosas do que as das coisas que nunca foram! O que eu sinto quando penso no passado, que tive no tempo real, quando choro sobre o cadáver da vida da minha infância ida..." (Pessoa 1998a: 121); Álvaro de Campos in 'Lisbon Revisited', the 1926 poem: "Outra vez te revejo,/Cidade da minha infância pavorosamente perdida..." (Pessoa 1998b: 162); Campos again in 'Ode Triunfal': "Ó pinheirais sombrios ao crepúsculo,/Pinheirais onde a minha infância era outra coisa/Do que eu sou hoje..." (Pessoa 1998b: 120); famously, in the letter to Casais Monteiro on the genesis of the heteronyms: "Desde criança tive a tendência para criar em meu torno um mundo fictício, de me cercar de amigos e conhecidos que nunca existiram." (Pessoa 2007: 420).

Tudo misturado, tudo misturado com corpos, com sangues,
Tudo um só rio, uma só onda, um só arrastado horror.

(...)

Desenterrei o comboio de lata da criança calcado no meio da estrada,
E chorei como todas as mães do mundo sobre o horror da vida.

Os meus pés panteístas tropeçaram na máquina de costura da viúva que mataram à baioneta
E esse pobre instrumento de paz meteu uma lança no meu coração. (Pessoa 1986b: 1039)⁸⁸

The subject, a soldier, expresses the horror of his war experiences. The buried toy train he uncovers is another evocation of lost childhood. This loss, however, does not occur through the process of growth into adulthood but through the violence of war and murder. It resonates with the “cadáver” in Soares’ quote and the “pavorosamente” used to qualify that loss in ‘Lisbon Revisited’.

Emília’s death is a similar violent loss. The verse “chorei como todas mães do mundo sobre o horror da vida”, however, establishes a connection between the mother in ‘O Menino da sua Mãe’ and the policeman in ‘Tale X’: familial feeling is expressed through motherly love, expressed directly by a soldier in ‘Ode Marcial’ and by the policeman in ‘Tale X’, who, however channels that same feeling to undertake more violent action. This possession of emotional or mental attributes traditionally considered feminine by a male subject, leading to different outcomes, is the same seen regarding Marta/Pessoa. Both the policeman in ‘Tale X’ and the soldier in Ode Marcial express an

⁸⁸ Rita Lopes in her introduction to Pessoa (2002) states that in personal notes written at an unspecified point in time between 1923 and 1926 Pessoa planned to publish Campos’ odes (Lopes in Pessoa 2002: 27). She also states that “Ode Marcial” was written in fragments, some of which can be traced to as early as 1914 but most are of an unspecified date. The plans suggest that the poem was finished or close to completion by 1923-26. Its connection with World War I, however, is undeniable.

attachment to children, but in ‘Tale X’ that “child” is the character’s own dead sister, Emília. As I have argued, her brother pretends to be a seducer, like his intended victim Valle, in order to take his revenge. To an extent, the policeman identifies with his victim. However, before that Valle had been responsible for Emília’s death. Valle too had been a “murderer”, Emília his victim. In ‘Ode Marcial’, the relationship between attacker(s) takes a similar form:

Sim, fui eu o culpado de tudo, fui eu o soldado todos eles
Que matou, violou, queimou e quebrou.
Fui eu e a minha vergonha e o meu remorso com uma sombra disforme
(...)
Arranquei o pobre brinquedo das mãos da criança e bati-lhe.
Os seus olhos assustados do meu filho que talvez terei e que matarão também
Pediram-me sem saber como toda a piedade por todos. (Pessoa 1986b: 1039-1040)

The soldier, by taking part in war, identifies with the other soldiers who, like him, must perform the violent acts the results of which he has witnessed. The crucial phrase is “fui eu o soldado todos eles”, a phrasing that encapsulates the Pessoa project of creating a sustained fictionalizing or “fingimento”, constructed by the grammatical disparity of the sentence: the first person singular of “fui” having as a direct object a third person, “o soldado”, then heightened by the incongruence in number of “todos eles”.⁸⁹ Attackers and their victims are also linked:

Do quarto da velha arranquei o retrato do filho e rasguei-o.
Ela, cheia de medo, chorou e não fez nada...
Senti de repente que ela era minha mãe e pela espinha abaixo passou-me o sopro de Deus.

⁸⁹ The result is similar to the one obtained by Arthur Rimbaud’s famous dictum “Je est un autre”, written in a letter to Georges Izambard, 13 May 1871. Monteiro points to similarities between the two poets regarding precisely ‘O Menino de sua Mãe’ and ‘Le Dormeur du Val’ in Monteiro (2000).

Quebrei a máquina de costura da viúva pobre.
Ela chorava a um canto sem pensar na máquina de costura.
Haverá outro mundo onde eu tenha que ter uma filha que enviue e a quem aconteça isto?

Mandei, capitão, fuzilar os camponeses trémulos,
Deixei violar as filhas de todos os pais atados a árvores,
Agora vi que foi dentro de meu coração que tudo isso se passou,
E tudo escalda e sufoca e eu não me posso mexer sem que tudo seja o mesmo.
Deus tenha piedade de mim que a não tive de ninguém! (Pessoa 1986b: 1040)

The old woman who had the picture of her son taken off the wall is momentarily the soldier's own mother – again the mother/son pairing as in “O Menino de Sua Mãe”. The verse “Haverá outro mundo onde eu tenha que ter uma filha que enviue e a quem aconteça isto?” points to ‘Tale X’, for that is indeed the world where a soldier has had a female relative to whom violence that is endemic to a male-dominated society has been done unto. Pessoa's interest in the effect of war on individuals, especially soldiers, helps us understand how the policeman's character, complementing the hypothetical portrait of the murderer presented in the third chapter, “Investigação”. This chapter is more in keeping with Quaresma's other appearances elsewhere in the collection, for in it the detective outlines his deduction, as usual drawing on psychology to figure out who could have committed the crime:

- (1) homem forte
- (2) homem de expediente

- (1) um homem que não se importa de matar
- (2) força física – coragem física
- (3) inteligência, astúcia, sangue frio
- (...)
- (6) ferocidade e ódio
- (7) como nada foi roubado, o motivo foi pessoal
- (...) (Pessoa 2008: 205)

Characteristically for the Quaresma stories, the outline is presented in a list, contrasting with the structure of straight narrative that precedes it and is summed up in the final chapter. This contrasts with the character's development in the story, undertaken by his own actions and words rather than by Quaresma's distanced theorizing. When the policeman describes his feelings for his sister, the rationale for the crime and, fundamentally, the impact the war had on him, the result is a more well rounded personality than the psychological sketch upon which Quaresma grounds his reasonings. The conclusion of the story is also an element of this careful character building that contrasts so much with other detective stories by Pessoa, to the extent that, for once, the main character in the end is not Quaresma:

A meio do caminho para a avenida maior, o dr. Quaresma voltou-se para trás. A figura do polícia, lenta e hirta, destacava-se grande contra o fundo morno da noite ainda nítida. Nesse desvio de cabeça seguia imperturbável a rota da sua ronda no seu passo firme de soldado. (Pessoa 2008: 213)

As the story is brought to its conclusion, the policeman's step is portrayed as that of a soldier, asserting his core identity not as a law enforcer, which was merely a disguise, not as a brother, and not as murderer. Walking, and hence a physical action, is again used to describe the character, as it was when Quaresma and the policeman proved to be of one mind. His gait is that of a disciplined member of a male-only group, subject to rules and regulations that dictate his actions. This has, indeed, been the case.

As seen in the previous chapters, Pessoa's crime stories are shaped in a way to display Quaresma, his skills and personality. Because Quaresma lives mainly through his reasoning, those stories are written in a way that distances itself from fictional narrative and approaches essayistic prose, better suited for the exposition of ideas that

the detective (and Pessoa) indulges in. ‘Tale X/A Morte de D. João’ stands out as an example of a text where the story is a study of its main character through the depiction of his words and actions, told in a prevalent narrative mode. Quaresma isn’t the main character, and so the narrative mode is stronger, but the story is still about character development.

In my analyses of Quaresma stories up to now I have been privileging an interpretation that emphasizes the hybrid nature of Pessoa’s fiction, mixing elements of narrative and essay. Tale X stands in relative contrast to the line I have been pursuing, insofar as action and description constitute the main body of the text, in opposition to speeches articulating ideas. Nonetheless, in its difference, ‘Tale X’ still articulates themes and strategies that are present in other writings by Pessoa, especially his letters and poetry, specifically: a central preoccupation with childhood; a portrayal of female characters that hovers between the paternal and misogynistic; an ambiguous fascination/horror with violence. Developing some of the structures already observed in ‘O Caso Vargas’ and ‘A Carta Mágica’, ‘Tale X’ helps us understand the characteristics of Pessoa’s crime fiction and, hopefully, its place in his wider work.

‘Cúmplices ou Tribunal’

‘Cúmplices ou Tribunal’ is, like ‘Tale X’, an exception in the Quaresma corpus, although for different reasons. The first chapter consists of the closing arguments of a prosecutor, Marcos Alves, and two defence lawyers, Jorge Sampaio and Leite Borges, at

the end of a trial, followed by the judge's decision. The defendants are called Barros and Vieira. They are accused of murdering a man first described as a friend of Marcos Alves (Pessoa 2008: 394), and later as his cousin, José (Pessoa 2008: 401). As with other Quaresma stories, names change as the story progresses; also, the narrative is disjuncted, with gaps between chapters or even inside the chapters that complicate a clear understanding of the sequence of events. For these reasons, 'Cúmplices ou Tribunal' could be considered a minor Quaresma story, occupying only 22 pages in Freitas' collection (Pessoa 2008: 393-414).⁹⁰ Nonetheless, a few central elements of its structure can be ascertained and connections may be made with 'Tale X' that reinforce the reading made above.

The judge acquits the two defendants on the grounds that it had become clear that one of them must have been responsible for the crime, possibly both, but that there was no definitive proof of which of them or if they had acted together:

Nestes termos, e embora o Tribunal possa afirmar sem receio a culpabilidade de um dos réus, não se pode afirmar qual deles; e, assim, visto que tendo que ariscar-se a errar, mais vale errar no sentido de deixar sem castigo o culpado do que no sentido possível de condenar o inocente, o Tribunal Colectivo ——— absolve os réus Barros e Vieira. (Pessoa 2008: 400)

In the second chapter, Quaresma gets involved and reveals that the true murderer is none other than Marcos Alves himself, the prosecuting attorney, who readily confesses to this, caught by surprise by the detective. Alves had structured his accusation so that the guilt

⁹⁰ In her preface to the collection, Freitas comments on the lack of manuscripts for this story. She also claims responsibility for the division into chapters (Freitas, in Pessoa: 2008: 23).

of one of the defendants would be established but it would be impossible to prove which, thus diverting suspicion away from him and avoiding laying the blame on either of them. Again, depending on the section of the text, sometimes it is suggested that Alves had in fact succeeded in condemning the two defendants. Quaresma says at the beginning of the second chapter “Enfim, do ponto de vista social, os resultados estão certos, morreu um malandro e foram condenados a pena maior dois patifes...” (Pessoa 2008: 401). This confirms the lack of interest of Pessoa in portraying justice, a lack of interest avowed by Quaresma as we have seen in the previous chapters. This is confirmed by Quaresma in the final chapter of the story, as he shakes hands with Alves and departs amiably (Pessoa 2008: 414).

Before that, however, two important facts about Quaresma’s reasoning, and about the murder itself, can be gleaned from the second chapter. Quaresma states, when asked by Alves, to have also discovered the reason for the crime: “O adultério de sua mulher com seu primo José” (Pessoa 2008: 401). When quizzed again by Alves, “que dados teve V.^a Ex.^a para concluir tudo isso?”, Quaresma responds:

- Os que as testemunhas nos seus depoimentos, e V.^a Ex.^a no seu discurso...
- Eu no meu discurso!
- Sim, o que V.^a Ex.^a no seu discurso me descreveu. Como disse, tudo quando [*sic*] sei deste caso, soube-o aqui nesta sala. Os dados que as testemunhas deram, e repetidamente os que V.^a Ex.^a me deu no seu discurso, são bastantes para determinar quem é o criminoso, qual foi o motivo, e como o crime – chamemos-lhe assim – foi praticado. (Pessoa 2008: 406)

As we saw in ‘A Carta Mágica’ and ‘O Caso Vargas’, Quaresma relies on second hand information to solve his crimes, never engaging in direct methods of investigation. In ‘Cúmplices’ all the information he needs is supposedly provided by the speeches that had taken place in the courtroom, but like in ‘A Carta Mágica’, this information is never

directly provided. No reference to Alves' wife is made, and facts and names are contradictory. The only thing that can be established is that all the facts pertaining to the crime were supposed to be recounted in the courtroom chapter or chapters, and that Quaresma was supposed to decipher the mystery with this information only. Considering this nexus, the importance of oral narration performed by the characters is essential for Quaresma's deciphering and for the solution of the plot. As I argued in previous chapters, this is a representation of the act of storytelling, which asserts its importance in the context of a body of works of fiction.

The pre-eminence of storytelling in the plot of the Quaresma stories is rendered more complex due to the articulation between narrative and essayistic writing. Pessoa pursues a different strategy in 'Cúmplices' in what concerns this articulation. The bulk of Quaresma's intervention is structured as a list:

- 1.º O carácter da vítima, femeeiro constante e triunfante.
- 2.º O ser possível ser sua mulher.
- 3.º O seu carácter. (Pessoa 2008: 407)

These are bullet points, with no surrounding explanation and little background context to explain them. Absolutely no information has been given in the courtroom sections relating to the character of the victim, much less about points 2 and 3. The fact that the information is presented as a list may be attributed to the unfinished nature of the work. 'Cúmplices' is particularly broken, and the surviving documents may be read as notes towards the writing of the story. This status makes it especially obvious that Pessoa's detective stories should be read as notes of fragments of a story-to-be, rather than as an authoritative final version of a work of literary fiction. This is also evidenced by the

structure of the final section of the story, in which a dialogue between Quaresma and Alves takes place with each of their lines preceded by their names, as if it were a script for a play or a film.⁹¹ To bear in mind this textual instability in the Quaresma stories is a precondition to understand how, to an extent, they are miniature versions of Pessoa's project of non-narrative fiction accomplished by the orchestration of a variety of texts – poetry, prose fiction, epistolary documents, personal notes.

A final point to be drawn from 'Cúmplices' is its vicious attack on the character of Alves' wife and women in general. Quaresma strikes a deal with the lawyer:

Quaresma – Agora outra coisa... Eu ponho um preço à minha descoberta do seu crime...
Marcos Alves – Um preço? Que preço?
Quaresma – A vida de sua mulher... (Pessoa 2008: 411)

This suggests that Quaresma fears for the life of the unnamed woman and is trying to bargain for it with Alves: I won't tell anybody if you spare your wife's life. As in 'Tale X', the seduced woman is referred to as "criança" (Pessoa 2008: 411) when Alves and Quaresma discuss where to lay the blame for the incident, minimizing her agency or responsibility in the chain of events. Quaresma's attitude towards the roles of all parties

⁹¹ Also in 'Cúmplices', particularly in the first chapter, character's actions are frequently qualified with short descriptive passages that resemble stage directions:

Ao fechar o terceiro acto, Marcos Alves avança sorrindo para Sampaio, que está nervoso ainda à bancada, e fala-lhe baixo... (Os outros vão saindo)
(Exactamente uma hora e trinta e cinco minutos)

- Um de vocês dois assassinou. Deixo à sua consciência e àquela justiça superior que todos esperamos exista neste mundo e depois deste mundo. (Pessoa 2008: 398)

This would constitute a fleeting example of Pessoa's possible engagement with a traditional understanding of drama, despite Lopes' arguments outlined in the Introduction. Pessoa's interest in film has only recently been the subject of editorial attention with the 2011 publication of scripts he had written in *Argumentos para Filmes*, Lisbon: Ática.

is complex. The detective blames Alves, or more specifically his psychological make-up, for what happened, justifying his claim thus:

Os homens como V.^a Ex.^a são sempre traídos pelas mulheres. Os fortes absolutamente fortes são sempre traídos pelas mulheres. (...) Porque V.^a Ex.^a é um forte, e a mulher perdoa tudo menos a força...O espalhafato da força, vá, a força interrompida pelas fraquezas, vá; a força impulsiva e incoordenada, vá. Mas a força autêntica, a força, serena e fria, a força forte – essa não pode ser suportada pela fraqueza íntima da mulher. (Pessoa 2008: 412)

As with Quaresma's assessment of Marta in 'A Carta Mágica', marital relationships are conceived of in terms of strength and weakness. Whereas Marta's betrayal could be read metaphorically as containing sexual undertones, Alves' unnamed wife betrays him quite straightforwardly in a sexual manner. Responsibility for her actions is minimized due to her status as a woman, which supposedly has an "intimate weakness". But Quaresma goes further in his classification of men and women:

O homem inteiramente forte é o homem que não está na dependência de ninguém (...) em toda a mulher (...) há sempre aquele elemento maternal que exige que o seu homem precise dela, que dependa dela de qualquer modo (...) O homem inteiramente forte ofende todos os instintos femininos. (Pessoa 2008: 412)

The essentialist discourse regarding women, and the negative portrayal of relationships is, as seen, a recurrent motif of the Quaresma stories. Generalizations are a common method of Quaresma's reasoning, despite its vaunted power and correctness. The attack on women, as a group, becomes particularly vicious when Alves considers the other women that the now dead seducer may have had relations with:⁹² "Mas ela, que para mim era única, era para ele a centésima, a milésima, sei lá que número entre aquele

⁹² The D. Juan motif finds another echo in this story, following on from 'Tale X'.

enxame de atrizes, de costureiras, de lixo feminino que abre as pernas ao mundo” (Pessoa 2008: 412). The expression “lixo feminino” is particularly virulent and dehumanizing. Alves then confesses that his wife had been the only woman he had ever had sex with, “nunca tive outra”, to which Quaresma replies “Isso é que é mau...ou várias ou então nenhuma.” (Pessoa 2008: 413).

A number of contradictions take place here. First, Alves’ largest issue with his wife’s betrayal seems to be the fact that she would lower herself to the level of other women who would have sex with his cousin/friend José. The words “lixo feminino” are strongly misogynistic in how they refer to women who practice their sexuality in a fashion that runs against the wishes of their male relatives and husbands. His wife, unlike Alves, chose to have more than one sexual partner. He punishes first her “seducer”, in an outburst of wounded pride, and only Quaresma prevents him from pursuing revenge to the extent of harming his wife. In this context, Quaresma’s quip seems to condone the actions of the dead man and to censor Alves self-righteousness. However, as we have seen in the preface to ‘O Caso Vargas’, Quaresma’s own sexuality is completely subsumed in the act of thinking and deciphering. Not once is any romantic interest of his mentioned anywhere in the corpus. He is in the position of not having any woman, one of the two possibilities that are better than Alves’ single love. In that brief interchange Quaresma is once again asserting his superiority, emphasizing the magnanimity of letting Alves’ off the hook in exchange for his wife’s life.

One last point to add to the analysis of this story is how its main characters are lawyers, and hence figures of authority that are part of the legal system. In the other

Quaresma stories this overtly patriarchal system is also frequently present: the policeman in ‘Tale X’, the judges and prosecutors in ‘O Caso Vargas’, and of course Guedes’ recurrence throughout. The heavy emphasis on the procedural aspect of administering the law, present in ‘O Caso Vargas’ and ‘Cúmplices’ in particular, fleshes out a system of morals and laws that serves as backdrop to the characters’ actions. The fact that often those characters are at odds with the law they are supposed to uphold reinforces the independence of their personal morals, in relation to the social institutions they serve.⁹³ In both ‘Tale X’ and ‘Cúmplices’ Quaresma implicitly condones two murders by not turning in the murderer. The title ‘Cúmplices’ is never really explained, suggesting the possibility that two of the characters were acting together. The real accomplices, however, are Alves and Quaresma: the murderer and the detective who rarely punishes.

*

I have argued in this and the previous chapters that Quaresma is a character that is constructed largely by essayistic prose that articulates structures of thought or ideas, rather than “actions” or “sentiments”. The latter two are what Pessoa describes in ‘detective story’ as the proper sphere of fiction. In what way is Quaresma then a *literary*

⁹³ In ‘O Caso Vargas’ this is emphasized by the prosecutor’s reluctance to press any charges since Quaresma’s arguments wouldn’t hold in court. See Chapter 1.

character? This is a question that can only be answered by turning to his relationship with Pessoa's other fictions: heteronymity, in poems and in the prose texts describing the system; other short stories, such as 'O Banqueiro Anarquista'; his self-mythologization in personal letters, self-analytical texts and in the *Livro do Desassossego*; or plain hoax, as evidenced in the Crowley affair. These will be studied in the next chapter. To understand the Quaresma stories, and indeed Pessoa's work, the authoritativeness of his published texts must be relativized, bearing in mind the role of editors and previous criticism in shaping it. This interpretation is only possible, however, by approaching Pessoa with a holistic attitude in which his texts, however superficially different in form or genre, are considered to be interrelated as part of an ultimately unified literary project. This does not imply that Pessoa was completely aware of the nature of this project. It is, in fact, irrelevant whether this was the case. As we will see in the next chapter, a problem with much Pessoaan criticism is the willingness to take Pessoa's declarations in his self-analytical essays and correspondence at face value. As the study of 'Tale X' evidenced, the concept of "fingimento" should warn the reader to be on guard.

Chapter 6

Pessoa's fictions

Quaresma's status as a fictional character and the hybrid aspect of narrative and essayistic prose in the stories where he features must now be considered in relation to other specific instances of Pessoa's prose fiction. This will in turn lead to a reassessment of the role of Pessoa's prose in his wider work, particularly the place of heteronymy in a total output of what I will argue to be primarily a non-narrative form of fiction relying heavily on epitexts, terms which I will define shortly. This can be best seen in *Quaresma, Decifrador*, but is supported by readings of 'O Banqueiro Anarquista', a interview given by Álvaro de Campos, the writings and events concerning the Crowley Affair, and *Livro do Desassossego*. The continuity of a project of fictionality between Pessoa's works exists not only at the levels of form and content, but also on a meta-literary level if we consider Pessoa's use of the projected title *Ficções do Interlúdio* to group different strands of his literary output. This provisional title was used to assemble lists and editorial projects that included texts by Caeiro, Reis, Campos, as well as 'O Banqueiro Anarquista' (Pessoa 1990: 351). More importantly, it is the same term used in an important passage discussing the concept of "outrar-se" in his works that I discuss in the final section of this chapter with regard to *Livro do Desassossego*. This is a significant argument for a governing notion of fiction at play in Pessoa's organization of his work.

Paramount to this interpretation is the process of character-building in each of these fictions. The concept of fiction that I will be working with is derived from Kendall Walton's theory, as presented in *Mimesis as Make Believe*. The central aspect of this work is its use of the child-play metaphor to explain the workings of fictionalization and belief. This positions Walton as particularly apt to analyze Pessoa. In the previous chapter I drew attention to the importance of the theme of childhood in Pessoa's work: as we saw, and as pointed out by Gaspar Simões, Lourenço, Stevens and others, childhood is a structural myth in Pessoa's account of the origin of the heteronyms. Its recurrence in his poetry and prose confirm its importance, particularly when articulated with the poetics of 'fingimento'. Walton allows me to relate this aspect of Pessoaan literature to the experience of the reader, who is, I argue, required to participate actively in the construction of a fictional world spanning the author's entire output.

The study of the relationship between narrative, or the lack thereof, and fiction in Pessoa's prose writing will require a theoretical framework, primarily the *histoire/récit* opposition as outlined by Genette in *Discours du récit*. Genette's work on the paratext provides a structure to understand what is at play in Pessoa's prose fiction, which in turn leads to a new interpretation of the relationship between his poetry and his wider work, especially his letters and essays, in terms of a totalizing project of fiction. The choice of Genette stems from the impact his work has had on the study of traditional modes of narrative prose, i.e. the novel and the short story, although, as I hope to show, the inadequacy of transposing terms such as "plot", "character", "epitext" and "paratext" to Pessoa's work is part of understanding the apparently contradictory quality of his work.

Genette, *Histoire/Récit* and the epitext

The division between *histoire* and *récit* is one of the major contributions of Genette to the study of literature, specifically of the novel as a genre. Genette's original definition is as follows: "Je propose (...) de nommer *histoire* le signifié ou contenu narratif (même si ce contenu se trouve être, en l'occurrence, d'une faible intensité dramatique ou teneur événementielle), *récit* proprement dit le signifiant, énoncé, discours ou texte narratif lui-même." (Genette 1972: 72) The debt of Genette's classification to Russian Formalism is well established, specifically to Vladimir Propp's terms *Fabula* and *Sujet* in *Morphology of The Folktale* (1928).⁹⁴ While the *histoire* would be the raw materials of a novel, the events that make up what is narrated, the *récit* is the way in which such events are narrated, the text and all its narrative strategies to organize and present the information that makes up the *histoire*.

As I have tried to argue in the previous chapters, Pessoa's detective stories oscillate between narrative and essayistic modes of writing. At first glance, it would appear that the sections where Quaresma lays out his systems of thought would be an instance of "faible intensité dramatique ou teneur événementielle": indeed, when

⁹⁴ Cf. Culler, Jonathan, 1980, 'Fabula and Sjužet in the Analysis of Narrative: Some American Discussions', *Poetics Today*, 1,3, 27-37. Sohet, Phillipe, 2007, *Images du Récit*, Presses de L'Université du Québec: Québec. The fact that the work of Russian Formalists and their interest in analyzing the structure of narrative is contemporary to Pessoa's project is perhaps contrary to the notion of peripheral modernisms in such projects as the *Cambridge Companion to European Modernism*, ed Pericles Lewis, 2011, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Quaresma explains the psychology of Marta and what might have led to her to steal the letter in ‘A Carta Mágica’, there are no references to events, just a series of theories that explain what has already come to pass. This would suggest that, by applying Genette’s terms, the entirety of the text is a *histoire*, albeit with a section where the only events narrated have already been narrated before. The *récit*, by definition totalizing in the way it stands for the entire text as a significant of the signified story, would also seem a category that refutes the division I have been trying to establish. However, even allowing for a very broad interpretation of “teneur événementielle” in the essayistic sections, two elements have to be considered. The first is that those sections are, first and foremost, presented as speeches, narrated orally by a character in the story. As I argued in chapter 4, this is their strongest link with the rest of the narrative, possibly the defining characteristic that allows us to consider the long exposition of theories as part of a work of narrative fiction. The important event there, rather than the iterative narration of actions already narrated, is the act of narration itself.

The second element, however, is the fact that the editions of *Quaresma*, *Decifrador* and *Histórias de um Raciocinador*, like those of most of Pessoa’s texts, are the product of editors, as noted by Pizarro 2012. Freitas is straightforward about this in her prefaces and painstaking notes on the text in both collections, clarifying that different sections of each tale are sometimes drawn from different envelopes in Pessoa’s famous trunk (Freitas 2008: 16). As argued in the previous chapters, Pessoa often left clear indications of what was to be considered part of each story, and Freitas tried to follow his lead as closely as possible. Nonetheless, the finished product, each individual

story featuring Quaresma that a reader may try to approach, is the result of a preceding work of edition and interpretation that impedes the use of *récit* as a valid category.

Instead, Genette's concepts of paratext and epitext prove more useful to understand Pessoa's fiction. The paratext is defined by Genette as:

A literary work consists, entirely or essentially, of a text, defined (very minimally) as a more or less long sequence of verbal statements that are more or less endowed with significance (...) such as an author's name, a title, a preface, illustrations. (...) These accompanying productions, which vary in extent and appearance, constitute what I have called elsewhere the work's *paratext*. (Genette 1997: 1)

The paratext is then divided by Genette in two categories, the peritext, which is strictly any text printed and included in the book that is not part of the main text, and the epitext, which is defined as "any paratextual element not materially appended to the text within the same volume but circulating, as it were, freely, in a virtually limitless physical and social space." (Genette 1997: 334). The epitext would then include correspondence, conversations or anecdotes. This last category is of paramount importance to understand problems of interpretation in Pessoa's crime fiction and his wider work.

I propose that in Pessoa's crime fiction, the paratext, specifically the epitext, becomes an integral part of the *récit* via the work of the editor. This is only possible due to the fragmentary nature of the extant manuscripts, but also to the surviving prescriptions left by Pessoa in the form of lists, notes and letters as to what the final form of the texts should be. Freitas' observance of these descriptions is certainly commendable philological work, but in the case of dealing with Pessoa's manuscripts it is also an action that conforms to the longstanding practice of Pessoaan interpreters and scholars of resorting to his letters and unpublished self-analytical pieces as a means of

interpreting and framing his work, especially his poetry. The paratext/epitext, in the case of Pessoa's unpublished works, is kept by critics at a separate level, respecting Genette's clear division. I argue that in Pessoa they function at the same textual level as complementary textual devices in the creation of a work of fiction.

A possible problem with this approach, however, is that to justify this claims I must quote from Pessoa's texts. When quoting from a text presented as a "real life" letter to justify how I interpret another text, which is presented as literary, it may seem that I am perpetuating the actions of previous critics. I wish to reiterate that I am considering those texts to be at the same textual level – a fictional one. The following section will characterize what this fiction may be.

Walton: Fiction as Make-Believe

Another strand that I have been developing is the importance of the relationship of characters in Pessoaan prose fiction, in relation to heteronymity and to the image of himself constructed in his personal letters. In this respect, the work of Kendall Walton may provide an alternative to criticism derived from Pessoa's own terms. Walton works squarely in the tradition of analytical philosophy, and indeed part of his work deals with Austin and Searle's theory of speech acts and illocutionary acts in relation to fiction. The breadth of his book encompasses much more than can be summarized in the current chapter, but nonetheless elements of it may be useful to characterize the epitextual, non-narrative fiction I have been arguing for in order to understand Pessoa's total output.

Pessoan criticism has often taken a biographical turn, privileging the author's life story as a means of assessing his work, or otherwise taking what is written in his correspondence and essays as the primary source to analyse his poetry.⁹⁵ This is a problematic approach, for it unwittingly ascribes to those epitexts a truth-value based on the fact that they were written by the author, often taking them at face value.

This is unproductive for the study of both his prose fiction and the relationship between text and epitext – his supposedly literary work and his correspondence. Walton deals away with any opposition between fiction and truth by working with the notion of “fictional truth”: “In general, whatever is the case in a “fictional world” – in the world of a game of make-believe or dream or daydream or representational work of art – is fictional. (...) To call a proposition fictional amounts to saying only that it is “true in some fictional world or other”” (Walton: 35). He then encapsulates his theory in a formula: “a fictional truth consists in there being a prescription or mandate in some context to imagine something.” (Walton: 39). The prescriptions, he argues, are conveyed by representations – paintings, novels, sculptures – which perform the function of “props” in the way they prescribe or mandate the reader/observer to imagine a fictional

⁹⁵ I refer to the first critics who have shaped much of what has been written about Pessoa until recently: Gaspar Simões, Prado Coelho, Rita Lopes, Lourenço, as outlined in the Introduction. Recent works that set themselves against this approach are Pizarro's *Pessoa Existe?* (2012) or Paulo de Medeiros' *O Silêncio das sereias (Ensaio sobre o Livro do Desassossego)*, the first by emphasizing the transformative role of editing in the publication of Pessoa's works, the second by using theory to analyse Soares. António Feijó's *Uma Admiração Pastoril pelo Diabo (Pessoa e Pascoaes)*. Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional, 2015 also brings a healthy mistrust of Pessoa's self-analytical texts to the debate, albeit going in a separate direction than Pizarro and Medeiros.

world. The term “prop” helps sustain the analogy between fiction and games of make-believe such as children play.

Walton divides representations between verbal or non-verbal, depending on the type of fiction one is considering. Verbal representations include novels, theatre, and other forms of narrative. It lies far outside the scope of my thesis to critique in depth Walton’s theory, but the core idea of individual elements interacting in the creation of fiction is what I find most relevant in it to explain Pessoa’s prose fiction, and his diffuse, non-narrative fiction in the form by letters, poems and other pieces of writing.

In this sense, the essayistic and narrative modes of writing in the Quaresma stories are two sets of props that interact under the overriding mandate to imagine a fictional world. This is a different way of looking at the key conclusion that Quaresma is the narrator of the essayistic sections of the stories, which in turn shape his existence as a fictional character. The consequences of this conclusion, however are more far-reaching if we turn to the relationship between Pessoa’s letters and his literary texts, while abolishing the epitext/text divide I outlined above. Both sets of texts are props for the injunction to imagine a fictional world of characters and heteronyms. The Pessoaan epitext relies on the reader’s trust and expectation of the truth- value or reality-value of those epitexts, in order to validate texts which would normally be considered literature, either poetry or prose.

An important point to consider with regard to Walton’s theory is his concession, in the introduction to his work, that to understand fiction in terms of make-believe is not a new concept. He mentions Ernst Gombrich’s essay ‘Meditations on a Hobby-Horse’ as

an example of how the topic had been covered before (Walton: 4). Walton's contribution is instead to problematize the term and to develop it as summarized above. Similarly, the application of notions of child's play and make-believe to Pessoa's work is not entirely new either. I have discussed the importance of childhood in the author's work in chapter 5, when analyzing the relationship between the policeman and his deceased sister in 'Tale X/A Morte de D. João'. The points made there are to be borne in mind when considering the relevance of Walton's theory for the present purposes, specifically the link between childhood games and "fingimento" as argued by Stevens: "to pretend, to create a space for the emergence of figures (as the child does in play) is not merely the task of the artist; it is the purpose of life." (Stevens: 43). Stevens goes one step too far in extending Pessoa's practice to a moral or metaphysical dimension, but she is fundamentally right in establishing a link between real life play and literary play in Pessoa's fiction, if we take it in Watson's sense.

It is this equation that grounds my appropriation of Walton's notion of props to discuss Pessoa's texts in terms of fiction. The fictional truth that is mandated, as I will argue in greater length regarding the Crowley affair and *Livro do Desassossego*, is that of imagining being other beings. Walton's theory, however, focuses heavily on reception: make-believe is the process through which the recipient of a representation imagines the fictional truths that are conveyed to them (Walton: 69). It is important to stress that in Pessoa's work, particularly if understood in the holistic terms I have been suggesting, this characteristic of fiction is presented metafictionally: a putative reader is

to imagine a man, who happened to have a real-world existence and whose ideas are accessed through his letters, imagining being other people.

‘O Banqueiro Anarquista’

In 1922 Pessoa published a version of ‘O Banqueiro Anarquista’ in the first issue of the magazine *Contemporânea*, directed by José Pacheco and illustrated by Almada-Negreiros. It is a rare example of Pessoa’s prose fiction published during his lifetime, and its status in that limited body of work must be considered in relation to the Quaresma stories, particularly since they overlap in terms of composition. The plot is straightforward: after dinner, two friends engage in a conversation regarding the political and philosophical positions of one of them. The act of conversing and the dynamics of dialogue are central to the piece, as the narrator affirms:

Tínhamos acabado de jantar. Defronte de mim o meu amigo, o banqueiro, grande comerciante e açambarcador notável, fumava como quem não pensa. A conversa, que fora amortecendo, jazia morta entre nós. Procurei reanimá-la, ao acaso, servindo-me de uma ideia que me passou pela meditação. Voltei-me para ele, sorrindo. (Pessoa 1997: 5)

The fear or embarrassment of “dead conversation” spurs the narrator to reinitiate it, underlining then from the beginning the importance of interaction between the two characters in the text. The social aspect of language emphasized by this introductory paragraph sets the stage for both the dialogical structure to the narrative but also for the topic of that same dialogue. The narrator mentions having heard that the banker used to be an anarchist, which his friend does not deny, rather enthusiastically confirms “Fui, não: fui e sou. Não mudei a esse respeito. Sou anarquista.” (Pessoa 1997: 5). The banker

character then embarks on a long exposition of his claim which can be summed up as follows: having been born in a working class family, the banker first started his life as a factory worker, slowly educating himself and realizing that his poor living conditions reflected deep social injustices. He formed a political conscience, espousing anarchism and defining it as “uma revolta contra todas as fórmulas e convenções sociais, e o desejo e esforço para a sua abolição” (Pessoa 1997: 11). He defines marriage, class, and nationality as “ficções sociais”, constructs that, to his philosophy, are negative and opposed to the “realidade natural” of being born men and women. Setting himself to “demolish” said fictions, the young anarchist realized that they cannot be destroyed other than by a slow process of change which can only be jumpstarted by a revolution. He also observed how any work towards such a revolution could only be undertaken through the organization of political groups like the ones in which he takes part. These structures, however, breed a sort of “tyranny” in which certain individual members shape the direction of public debate and impose their wills on the others, which, the now wisened-up banker, identifies as yet another “social fiction” that restricts individual liberty. Accordingly, he explains, he set out to become a radical individualist anarchist no longer by trying to destroy social institutions – an objective he recognized as impossible – but by liberating himself only from such restrictions. Acknowledging money as the preeminent social fiction of the period, he realized that the only way to free himself of the constrictions imposed by money was by amassing it, hence his career as a banker and his apology for anarchism.

‘O Banqueiro Anarquista’ has had a degree of attention from the critics, but not as much as it deserves, a fact to be deplored particularly considered the relevance of its topic and arguments in the contemporary world.⁹⁶ K. David Jackson acknowledged this relevance by establishing a link between the anarchist banker’s exposition and Neo-Liberal economic thought.⁹⁷ More importantly for my purposes, Jackson also draws a parallel between the text and the Quaresma stories: “As a story, the work partakes of detective stories, mysteries, and revelation shocking to readers and society, as illustrated by the deductive action of Sherlock Holmes or by Pessoa’s own detective, Abílio Fernandes Quaresma” (Jackson 2006: 210). Jackson refers to the element of logic and reasoning that guides the text, a point highlighted also by Sapega 1989 and López 2014, and which, as argued before is a defining attribute of Quaresma’s character (Pessoa 2008: 34, 37), elsewhere described as “a reasoning machine” (Pessoa 2008: 125). The nameless banker and Quaresma are two characters who engage in logical exposition of

⁹⁶ A brief list of critical work includes Satoru, Yabunaka, 1988, “A ideologia política de Fernando Pessoa: Notas elementares”, *Um Século de Pessoa: Encontro Internacional do Centenário de Fernando Pessoa*, Lisbon: Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian; Sapega, Ellen, 1989, “On Logical Contradictions and Contradictory Logic: Fernando Pessoa's ‘O Banqueiro Anarquista’”, *Luso-Brazilian Review*, no 26, vol 1, Summer, pp 111-17; Moisés, Massaud, 1991, “O Banqueiro Anarquista: Banquete Sofístico?”, *Canticum Ibericum neuere spanische, portugiesische und lateinamerikanische Literatur im Spiegel von Interpretation und Übersetzung*, eds. Lind, Georg Rudolf, Pfeifferand, Erna, Kubarth, Hugo, Frankfurt am Main: Vervuert, pp. 153-63; Macedo, Suzette, 1991, 'Fernando Pessoa's ‘O Banqueiro Anarquista’ and ‘The Soul of Man under Socialism’’, *Portuguese Studies*, no 7, pp. 106-32; Baltrusch, Burghard, 2010, "O Banqueiro Anarquista e a construção heteronímica de Fernando Pessoa: uma proposta de reavaliação", *Lusorama*, No. 81-82, May, Frankfurt am Main: DEE, pp. 39-65; López, Nicolás Barbosa, 2014 “A Man Without a Name: O Banqueiro Anarquista and the Impossibility of Language”, *Pessoa Plural*, No. 5, Spring.

⁹⁷ Jackson, K. David, 2006, ‘The Adventure of the Anarchist Banker: *Reductio ad absurdum* of a Neo-Liberal’, *Portuguese Studies*, vol 22, no 2, pp. 209-218. For the economical and philosophical consequences of Pessoa’s story see also Bragues, Georges, 2014, “Is Achieving Freedom about Making a Lot of Money? An Interpretation of Fernando Pessoa’s The Anarchist Banker”, *Pessoa Plural*, No. 5, Spring.

systems of thought: whereas the banker explains his adoption of anarchism as a political and personal philosophy, Quaresma explains methods of investigations and psychological theories.

From a narratological point of view, the connection between the texts is reinforced by the fact that the two “protagonists” are constructed by their essayistic expositions more than by description or narration of actions. The banker’s physical appearance is never described. In the pauses between his interventions the narrator, who is also an interlocutor, describes only his movements, chiefly concerned with lighting, keeping lit, or otherwise putting out the cigars that he smokes (Pessoa 1997: 18, 23, 28). That is not the case with Quaresma, whose physical appearance is described at length, but the decisive element for a comparison between the texts is how character-building occurs through that character’s exposition of ideas.

However, some differences do emerge: the banker explains why he is an anarchist by retelling his life, or rather the parts of it that are relevant to the narrative of how he came to be both an anarchist and a banker. Quaresma, by contrast, tells very little of his life. In the stories that feature him, the narrative element is stronger in the other characters, particularly Guedes, to whom often falls the responsibility of telling the events that led to the investigation. Quaresma then applies his reason to Guedes’ narration, or in ‘O Caso Vargas’ to the newspaper articles that followed the case. The banker seems to perform both roles in the text, storyteller and theorist. Furthermore, the structure of ‘O Banqueiro Anarquista’ is that of a philosophical dialogue. Walton raises the the issue of philosophical dialogues as fiction when considering Berkeley’s

Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous: “Berkeley’s *Dialogues* constitute a serious attempt to illuminate the reader about the real world” (Walton: 72). This attempt, however, is accomplished by the use of fictional characters having a discussion. Walton considers this to be the overriding characteristic of the work or indeed any “hybrid” piece of writing that could be considered simultaneously as fiction or nonfiction: “Any work with the function of serving as a prop in games of make-believe, however minor or peripheral or instrumental this function might be, qualifies as “fiction”; only what lacks this function entirely will be called nonfiction”. (Walton: 72) This is a very broad definition that could be debatable. Both in ‘O Banqueiro Anarquista’ and in the Quaresma stories, characters explain their theories and are constructed and fleshed out by their exposition. The mandate to imagine a fictional character overrides any other elements in the text. This is something that we can also see in the following text under consideration, an interview given by Álvaro de Campos.

Campos’ Interview

Teresa Rita Lopes mentions in *Fernando Pessoa et le Drame Symboliste* (1979) a response to a questionnaire published in the newspaper *A Informação* in 17 September 17, 1926. She misattributes the quotation to Pessoa, when in fact it was signed by Álvaro de Campos:

Não escrevi história nem histórias, e, por isso, não uso protagonistas a não ser a variedade de pessoas que tenho sido. Nenhuma delas tem existência real, porque nada tem, cientificamente falando, existência «real». As coisas são sensações nossas, sem objectividade determinável, e eu, sensação também para mim mesmo, não posso crer que

tenha mais realidade que as outras coisas. Sou, como toda a gente, uma ficção do *intermezzo* falso como as horas que passam e as obras que ficam, ao rodopio subatômico deste inconcebível universo. (Pessoa 2014: 549)⁹⁸

This is a reply to question 5 of the set, which reads as a questionnaire on the literary practices of its recipient:

(1) Qual é, dos seus livros, aquele que mais estima? / (2) Qual deles lhe trouxe mais admiradores? / (3) Deve às suas obras alguma aventura amorosa? / (4) Qual foi a maior compensação moral que lhe deu a literatura? / (5) Algum dos protagonistas dos seus livros teve existência real? / (6) Qual é a sua maior preocupação intelectual ao escrever? (Pessoa 2014: 547)

Campos makes references to other works signed by him when answering the first question, indicating ‘Ode Triunfal’ and ‘Ode Marítima’, respectively published in the first and second number of *Orpheu*, and affirming the first to be his personal favourite. This gives an added weight to the fact that it is really Campos the author of the text, a fact that gives to his reply to the fifth question a very specific meaning. Lopes misreads the response as a reinstatement of the theory of heteronymy: “a variedade de pessoas” would correspond to the plurality of heteronyms. But considering that this is Campos replying, then that plurality cannot be that of heteronymy but rather that of Campos himself, as expressed in ‘Ode Marítima’:

Ah, ser tudo nos crimes! ser todos os elementos componentes
Dos assaltos aos barcos e das chacinas e das violações!
Ser quanto foi no lugar dos saques!
Ser quanto viveu ou jazeu no local das tragédias de sangue!

⁹⁸ Lopes quotes the text only partially and in French. Zenith and Cabral Martins comment this text at greater length in their preface to *Poemas Escolhidos de Álvaro de Campos*, Lisbon: Assírio e Alvim, 2014. Campos’ response took the form of a letter to the newspaper’s editor, Ferreira Gomes – Pessoa’s partner in perpetrating the Crowley hoax.

Ser o pirata-resumo de toda a pirataria no seu auge,
E a vítima-síntese, mas de carne e osso, de todos os piratas do mundo!
(Pessoa 1998b: 140)

Campos' wish to be others, driven by the primacy of sensation, is the heart of his claim to use no protagonists other than the "persons he has been". This would be a way of emphasizing the sensations he has presumably felt as individual, separate, as if a different person had experienced each one of them. While this is certainly analogous to the effective separation operated textually by the constitution of heteronyms, in the response to the questionnaire – and his poetry – it is also an individual characteristic of Campos. More important, however, is the opposition established between, firstly, "histórias" and "real", and secondly, "ficção" and "real" in his answers. This opposition is established exclusively at the textual level. Campos denies ever writing stories, but this claim, however, is only the gateway to classify the "persons" he has been as not real, and himself as a fiction. This fiction is in turn qualified as a lack of reality, an absolute fiction that is "este inconcebível universo". Fiction here is used as more than "non reality", rather as a complete lack of it: "nada tem, cientificamente falando, existência «real»". An underlying irony, however, considering how the entire reflection was triggered by a denial of ever having written stories, is that its premise is invalidated by one single example, present in the same article. Answering question 3, "Deve às suas obras alguma aventura amorosa?", Campos writes:

Não costumo pôr à arte a canga da sexualidade. Confesso, contudo, que devo a uma obra minha, mas de maneira indirecta, uma aventura amorosa. Foi em Barrow-in-Furness, que é um porto na costa ocidental da Inglaterra. Ali, certo dia, depois de um trabalho de arqueação, estava eu sentado sobre uma barrica num cais abandonado. Acabava de escrever um soneto – elo de uma cadeia de vários – em que o facto de estar sentado nessa barrica era um elemento de construção.

Aproximou-se de mim uma rapariga, por assim dizer – aluna segundo depois soube do liceu (High School) local –, e entrou em conversa comigo. Viu que eu estava a escrever versos e perguntou-me, como nestas ocasiões se costuma perguntar, se eu escrevia versos. Respondi como nestes casos se responde, que não. A tarde, segundo a sua obrigação tradicional, caía lenta e suave. Deixei-a cair. (Pessoa 2014: 548)

This is clearly a fabrication, to the extent that it is a story that never happened in reality. Campos never went to Barrow-in-Furness for the simple reason that he didn't exist. This is, despite his claims, a small story, with two characters and verbal interaction between the two. The only physical action that occurs is that of writing a poem. When asked by the girl if this is what he is doing, Campos denies it – a patent lie. This is a clear instance of what I consider to be the crux of Pessoa's literary project: an experiment with varied forms of fiction, largely non-narrative although admitting at times, as is the case here, a limited form of plot and even more limited form of action. The short interlude of an amorous micro-narrative is the narrative element in an otherwise non-narrative fiction, as in the Quaresma stories. And although Campos is speaking for himself, his claims could be extended to Pessoa's total output.

Returning to Lopes' argument covered in the Introduction regarding the lack of action in heteronymity as a form of static drama, the structure that she proposes is a second layer over the underlying problem of fiction and make-believe at the heart of Pessoa's writing, as found in Campos' response in *Informação*. What is problematic is how Lopes' interpretation, as much of Pessoa's criticism, revolves in the circle of Pessoa's own terminology and obsession with structure and schemes – indeed the same that can be found in the detective stories in Quaresma's repetitive dependence on abstract theories. While Pessoa's self-analytical texts certainly provide a useful and

necessary basis for interpretation, critics run the risk of being engulfed by the author's own categories.⁹⁹

More recently, and still with regard to the dramatic aspect of Pessoa's poetry, Mariana Gray de Castro works in a similar vein by tracing the influence of Shakespeare on Pessoa. Castro privileges the categories of "dramatic poetry" and "dramatic poet" in Pessoa's assessment of Shakespeare, claiming that the Portuguese author saw them in Shakespeare (and himself) as paths to the erasure of one's own personality (Castro 2016: 31-73, 185-224). She substantiates her analysis thoroughly by quoting extensively from Pessoa's essays, annotations, letters and reflection that engage with Shakespeare. Pessoa's theory is that such impersonalization is a precondition for the creation of dramatic characters: "the great impersonality Pessoa ascribes to Shakespeare and himself is what allows both men, he claims, to create dramatic characters who are just as real, and possibly more real, than their flesh-and-blood-authors" (Castro 2016: 70). These characters would then be Hamlet, Macbeth, Campos or Caeiro: "if Pessoa is, as he asserts, a quasi-divine impersonal dramatic poet in the style of Shakespeare, it logically follows that the heteronyms are akin to characters in a play" (Castro 2016: 72-73). Castro diverges from Lopes in her interest and application of the category of drama: it is not the interaction between heteronyms or their mythical contemporaneous creation that interest her, but rather Pessoa's theory of how each of them comes to be. Nonetheless,

⁹⁹ The misattribution of the Campos quotation is symptomatic of Pessoaan criticism's tendency to become engrossed in the author's self-analysis.

the underlying problem in both Lopes and Castro is the treatment of Pessoa's critical and self-analytical writings as having a special status as interpretive tools to approach his literary work: Pessoa seems to be taken at his word of being "quasi-divine" in the way he created the heteronyms. Instances of Pessoa's mythmaking such as the Campos interview allow us to deflate his grandiose claims. Yet again, Walton's theory of make-believe is here an alternative – or complement - that allows the reader to break with Pessoa's own terms: Campos does not exist and tells a fabrication about his own life. The reader is confronted with a text that serves as a prop in sustaining a fiction, leading the play of the heteronyms to be more ludic rather than theatrical.

The problem remains of how to account for the relationship between individual heteronyms in terms that do not overemphasize their creation, individually or in group, but rather the relationship between the texts that feature them or are attributed to them: how to fill the gaps – or the intervals, as we will shortly see – between the fragments. In the following sections I will try to answer this. I will draw from Pessoa's classification of his own works to support my argument, but by taking a step away from the structural notion of "drama em gente", and privileging instead the idea of a project of non-narrative fiction running across Pessoa's works – an expression never used by him. I am proposing a reading that escapes the loop. Looking at it in a different light could allow us to emphasize the central problem of pretence and being-another as the underlying tension towards an attempt at the creation of non-narrative fiction. The relationship between different types of text that together create a fiction can perhaps be best seen in

an famous incident in Pessoa's life: his meeting with Aleister Crowley and the writings that resulted from it.

The Crowley affair

The hoax perpetrated by Fernando Pessoa and Aleister Crowley in 1930 has recently attracted critical attention, particularly since the publication of *Encontro Magick* (2001), a collection of all the correspondence, manuscripts and newspaper articles connected with the affair.^{100 101} The meeting between Crowley and Pessoa was described by Steffen Dix as “a prank engineered by two people with a very mischievous sense of humour.” (Dix: 180).

One aspect of the affair, which has not yet been studied in depth, is Pessoa's abortive detective story that emerged from it. As part of the convoluted plot hatched by

¹⁰⁰ See Bibliography for full details. Helpful as the volume in question is, Pasi lamented its “amateurish” (Pasi 2012a: 254), a point with which I must agree considering the lack of analysis with which the texts are presented. For a better treatment of the source documents, particularly regarding Crowley's part in the hoax, see Pasi, Marco, “September 1930, Lisbon: Aleister Crowley's lost diary of his Portuguese trip”, *Pessoa Plural*, Vol-Spr., 2012, pp. 253-283, and Pasi, Marco, Ferrari, Patrício, “Fernando Pessoa and Aleister Crowley: New discoveries and a new analysis of the documents in the Gerald Yorke Collection”, *Pessoa Plural*, Vol-Spr., 2012, pp. 284-312. Neither fully addresses the detective story “The Mouth of Hell”.

¹⁰¹ Yvette Centeno's *Fernando Pessoa: Tempo, Solidão, Hermetismo*, Lisbon: Moraes, 1978 and *Fernando Pessoa: O Amor, A Morte, A Iniciação*, Lisbon: Regra do Jogo, 1985 were the first two major works that have engaged with that aspect of Pessoa's work. More recently, Marco Pasi's ‘The Influence of Aleister Crowley on Fernando Pessoa's Esoteric Writings’ *Ésotérisme, Gnosés & Imaginaire Symbolique: Mélanges offerts à Antoine Faivre*, eds. Richard Caron, Joscelyn Godwin, Wouter J. Hanegraff, Jean-louis Vieillard-Baron, Leuven: Peeters, 2001 has contributed to this field, tracing the influence of Crowley's writings in Pessoa's, while Steffen Dix's article ‘An Implausible Encounter and a Theatrical Suicide - its Prologue and Aftermath: Fernando Pessoa and Aleister Crowley’ *Fernando Pessoa's Modernity without Frontiers*, ed. Mariana Gray de Castro, Woodbridge: Tamesis, 2013 argues against the relevance of the meeting in Lisbon specifically for Pessoa's esoteric writings.

the two authors, Pessoa wrote fragments of a narrative titled 'The Mouth of Hell', where an unnamed narrator posing as a real life detective would report on his investigations presenting a solution to the case.¹⁰²

Crowley and his girlfriend at the time, Hanni Jaeger, arrived in Portugal on the 2nd of September 1930, after prolonged correspondence with Pessoa (Roza in Pessoa and Crowley 2001: 103). It was the Portuguese poet who initiated the exchange, ordering two volumes of Crowley's autobiography from The Mandrake Press, a short-lived British publishing house on the 18 November, 1929 (Roza: 58). This eventually led to direct letters between the two writers, mostly pertaining to their common interests in literature, astrology and the occult. The arrival of Crowley and Jaeger to Portugal came as a surprise to Pessoa, since he had had no news from Crowley for months before the succinct telegram dated 28 August 1930 that announced their arrival to Lisbon.

In the weeks that followed Jaeger and Crowley carried their tempestuous relationship between Lisbon, Cascais and Estoril, as documented by the letters and diary excerpts published by Roza. In early September, Jaeger left Crowley, unexpectedly taking a ship to Germany. It is in the follow-up to this dramatic event that, for reasons not yet fully understood, Pessoa and Crowley decided to simulate the latter's suicide in the Boca do Inferno, a cliff on the outskirts of Cascais, overlooking the Atlantic. The plan was executed with the help of journalist and poet Augusto Ferreira Gomes, who

¹⁰² This is one of three literary outputs of the encounter, the other two being Pessoa's poem 'O Último Sortilégio' and his translation of Crowley's poem 'Hymn to Pan' (Dix: 178).

claimed to have found a mysterious note signed by Crowley, held by a cigarette case on the rocks above the Boca do Inferno, on 25 September, 1930. In fact, Crowley left Portugal on the 24 for Berlin, rejoining Jaeger and following the unfolding of events from his new location.¹⁰³

Following those events, Ferreira Gomes published two short articles in the newspaper *Diário de Notícias* (27 and 28 September) and a longer one in the magazine *Notícias Ilustrado* (5 October). In all these pieces, Ferreira Gomes presented his finding as evidence of either a suicide or murder. Pessoa was interviewed for *Notícias Ilustrado* as Crowley's only contact in Portugal. A few months later, on 16 December 1930, Pessoa published a third article in another magazine, *Girassol*. The piece is structured as an interview of himself made by an unnamed reporter. Pessoa briefly references the possibility of a hoax, which he denies: "Também me custa, não sei porquê, a acreditar numa blague." (Roza: 367). More importantly, he claims to know for a fact that two agents of the British police were investigating the case, going as far as stating that he had met one of them:

Logo no dia 29 de Setembro me apareceu aqui, neste escritório, um deles; veio com um disfarce verbal transparente, tanto que não só eu, mas um amigo inglês que por acaso aqui estava, imediatamente desconfiámos do "professor de línguas" que nos havia aparecido. Mais tarde soube, de óptima fonte, que este não era um polícia oficial, mas um investigador particular. (Pessoa and Crowley 2001: 368)

¹⁰³ Crowley's and Jaeger's rows, which forced them to change hotel during their stay in Estoril, were apparently resolved with their reunion. Jaeger's letters to Pessoa indicate her collaboration in the ruse (Pessoa and Crowley 2001: 321/333).

These declarations effectively laid the ground for the projected novella, in which the detective supposedly met by Pessoa is the narrator.

The missing man's celebrity was expected to give the case international amplification, but his reputation for hoaxes, practical jokes and general obfuscation may explain why very few articles appeared in the foreign press (Roza in Pessoa and Crowley 2001: 324-325).¹⁰⁴ During those months, while Ferreira Gomes and Pessoa did their best to conjure up a media storm, part of the plan was for Pessoa to write and publish a detective story purporting to be an investigation into the whole affair.

The novella 'The Mouth of Hell'

Pessoa's intention on writing the story 'The Mouth of Hell' is from the outset to frame it in the style of Freeman Wills Crofts (1879-1957), an Irish author of detective fiction who reached the height of his popularity in the 1920s and 30s. In a letter to Israel Regaride, secretary of Mandrake Press, a publishing house set up by Crowley, dated 30 October 1930, Pessoa writes: "In point of the investigation itself, the book will resemble

¹⁰⁴ According to Roza only a brief note in the *Oxford Mail* and a piece in the French magazine *Déetective*. Pessoa himself, on the interview he gave to *Girassol*, mentions the note on the *Oxford Mail* as coming out on 15 October, declaring that it states that a médium in London had discovered during a spiritual séance that Crowley had been murdered by "an agent of the Roman Catholic Church" (Pasi 2012b: 108). That is an outright lie: the note in question was in fact published on 14 October and it only mentions a séance that would occur in London to try to reach Crowley, if dead. The source for the information in the newspaper is given as Crowley's secretary, but no name is offered. While the date could be explained as an imprecision, the rest of Pessoa's declaration is patently false, confirming his penchant for elaborate hoaxes.

Freeman Wills Crofts' detective novels, which have such a wide public in the English-speaking countries." (Pessoa and Crowley 2010: 367-368).

In the essay 'Detective Story' Pessoa referred to Wills Crofts, comparing him to Austin Freeman and holding the pair as an example of what is best in detective fiction: "Investigation must either be natural and patient, as in Mr. Wills Crofts' novels, or superior and scientific, as in Dr. Austin Freeman's" (Pessoa 2012a: 238). The narrator of the novella restates the importance of this influence, writing in its preface: "My book and investigation will prove to be rather more like Mr. Wills Crofts' detective novels than like any other detective fiction." (Pessoa and Crowley 2010: 503). Maria de Lurdes Samapiao has described how Pessoa draws on the model of Wills Crofts in 'The Mouth of Hell':

This literary model and Pessoa's project of publishing this story in France may explain some of its distinctive features when compared to [Quaresma's stories]: the insistence throughout the whole novella upon the factual nature of the events, reinforced by the idea of a report being written; the predominantly empiricist nature of the investigation; and the selection of a private English investigator (an expert leading his investigation in Portugal) (Sampaio 2008: 153)

The "factual nature of the events" is established by the newspaper articles that were published before the act of writing or reading the novella itself. The narrative becomes a hybrid type of fiction, claiming the status of a report of real life actions and characters. In this story, an unnamed British private detective tries to solve Crowley's mysterious disappearance, at one stage interviewing Pessoa himself who makes an appearance as a character. He is introduced by a description written by the investigator:

Fernando Pessoa had, it appears, uncaféed himself several years ago. He was less directly known among the talking fauna. Opinion about him was unanimous in considering him as extremely clever, but opinions ranged from granting him extreme cleverness to considering

him a great genius. Everybody knew he had been educated in England (he was really educated in South Africa) and that he spoke English as he did Portuguese. (Pessoa and Crowley 2010: 525)

Pessoa becomes a character in his own story, mimicking the interview in *Girassol*. In fact, in both texts his role is to answer the questions asked by either a journalist or a private investigator. The structure of the relationship between journalist-Pessoa and detective-Pessoa, however, while functioning on the assumption that an interviewer asks questions to an interviewee who provides the answers, must be faced from a different angle when we consider that Pessoa crafted the questions and is both interviewer and interviewee. It is a piece of fiction presented as factual reporting, the purpose of which is to deceive its readers, similar in method to what Pessoa is accomplishing with the creation of heteronymity, mixing textual accounts of what is supposed to be fact with fiction. Mariana Gray de Castro touched on this aspect of Pessoa's work, tracing the influence of Oscar Wilde, and encapsulates it thus:

If we delve into the material details of Pessoa's life, going on the few facts that are available to the literary historian, we find that, far from being diametrically opposed to the self-promoting Wilde, Pessoa also works tirelessly to craft fictions of himself and create enduring myths about his life. The very idea of real life replaced by writing life is a fiction promoted by Pessoa himself. He fosters the myth of his own inexistence. (Castro 2006: 227)

She goes on to reference the poem 'Autopsicografia' as the clearest statement of this self-mythologizing attitude, particularly the famous first verse: 'O poeta é um fingidor' (Pessoa 1969: 164-165). Pessoaan "fingimento", as we have seen in the Quaresma stories, can take many forms: poetry is one of them, but so are the texts in the Crowley affair. In all of these, characters are produced by a variety of methods, as the following section will explore.

Non-narrative fiction and Pessoa's characters: Quaresma, Pessoa, Marta, the Heteronyms

The significance of this element of deception or “fingimento” for Pessoa's detective fiction becomes more apparent insofar as Pessoa is one of the characters in ‘The Mouth of Hell’. His description, which is actually a self-description, strengthens the case for a Pessoa/Quaresma comparison and the case of the latter's problematic status as a literary character. The narrator of the detective story develops on the portrait quoted above:

«He [Pessoa], apart from being aloof, is a shy and retiring person, living, according to some authority my direct informer cited, practically like a hermit. As this did not seem to me quite compatible with a hoaxing spirit, I tried to get things clearer. It appears that by hoaxing spirit they meant the writing of incomprehensible – which probably means only strange – poems.» (Pessoa and Crowley 2010: 526)

Two important points to keep in mind in this passage are Pessoa's status as a “hermit” as well as the suspicion of having “a hoaxing spirit”. The two terms can be related to characters in the Quaresma stories, the first of which is Quaresma himself whereas the second, as argued in Chapter 4, is Marta in ‘A Carta Mágica’.

Quaresma is described in one of the fragments supposedly integrating the preface to the series as “tipo indeciso de asceta da Baixa” (Pessoa 2008: 28) and as “médico sem clínica e decifrador de charadas, como com simplicidade se descrevia”. (Pessoa 2008: 33) Perhaps more important is the description of his abode and his relationship with it: “Aquele quarto no 3º andar da Rua dos Fanqueiros, ao que ele era tão fiel como à sua

renúncia à vida.” (Pessoa 2008: 33). That double faithfulness to a room and to renunciation of life is an encapsulation of the hermit’s mode of life.

Pessoa as a character bears significant similarities to Quaresma, but the possible incompatibility between a life removed from society and possessing “a hoaxing spirit” may be clarified by recalling Marta’s description in ‘A Carta Mágica’: “A um simples histérico ocorreriam vários expedientes, mas todos eles no sentido de intrujar directamente o marido, e não de intrujar, por assim dizer, a humanidade em geral” (Pessoa 2008: 245). As I discussed, Marta is not a simple hysteric since she seeks to “deceive the whole world”, and neither is Pessoa in his own account in the letter to Adolfo Casais Monteiro explaining the genesis of the heteronyms. In ‘The Mouth of Hell’, his description conforms to this deceiving persona. The general suspicion of Crowley’s disappearance being a hoax was patently expressed in the *Notícias Ilustrado* and *Girassol* articles. That this suspicion was to be addressed in ‘The Mouth of Hell’, where Pessoa was to be a character, would confront the issue directly: by perpetuating the sustained fiction of Crowley’s disappearance, itself yet another deception or hoax.

Pessoa’s construction of characters, however, is more complex than the impulse to mystification. As argued in previous chapters, Quaresma is largely fleshed out by his speeches, where his ideas are laid out and explained to the reader, punctuated by dialogue and interaction with other characters and the occasional description of a character’s physiognomy. This is a process that replicates the ascription of individual discourse to each of his heteronyms as well as the complementary descriptions provided

by Pessoa writing under his name or by Campos. Pedro Sepúlveda's *Os Livros de Fernando Pessoa* (2013) frames this issue in terms of Pessoa's editorial plans:

Os nomes de autor de Fernando Pessoa funcionavam como categorias editoriais, definidoras e delimitadoras das obras e dos livros projectados. Estes nomes não só referem directamente a própria obra como se confundem metonimicamente com a mesma. Alberto Caeiro é num certo sentido metonimicamente a obra de Alberto Caeiro (...) Enquanto figura de um enredo, a sua espessura decorre dos textos que lhe são atribuídos, assim como de referências em textos assinados com outros nomes. (Sepúlveda: 331)

To cut across Pessoa's own terminology for his system of fictional authors, Sepúlveda refers collectively to them as "nomes de autor", emphasizing the fact that these are first and foremost authors, rather than characters. The point about Caeiro's name standing metonymically for his work is certainly not a characteristic of Pessoa's heteronymity but it reinforces the mimetic aspect of his fiction: as in critical discourse about real life authors, Pessoa refers to the works of his constructs by their names, reinforcing their status as individual entities. Sepúlveda's argument that the attribution of texts to Caeiro strengthens his status as a "figure in a plot" is, to my view, a process organized by the same structure used to build Quaresma: as Caeiro is characterized largely by his poetry, so is Quaresma by his speeches. Significantly, Sepúlveda also takes into consideration the references to Caeiro in the writings of other authors sharing his ontological status – i.e. other heteronyms. This is a reference to texts such as 'Notas para a recordação do

meu mestre Caeiro’, by Álvaro de Campos, where details and descriptions of Caeiro’s physical appearance and attitude are outlined:¹⁰⁵

Primeiro, os olhos azuis de criança que não têm medo; depois, os malares já um pouco salientes, a cor um pouco pálida, e o estranho ar grego, que vinha de dentro e era uma calma, e não de fora, porque não era expressão nem feições. O cabelo, quase abundante, era louro, mas, se faltava luz, acastanhava-se. A estatura era média, tendendo para mais alta, mas curvada, sem ombros altos. (Pessoa 1980: 267)

Compare this to the description of Quaresma provided in the preface to ‘O Caso Vargas’: “A sua estatura era menos do que a média, o seu □ magro, ossudo com olhos pequenos, descaído de ombros, frouxo de pernas, dando a impressão imediata e geral de um fraco reenfraquecido por qualquer vício.” (Pessoa 2008: 36). Also, the one given by the character and main narrator of ‘O Pergaminho Roubado’, Carlos Domiciano Santos after an initial description of Quaresma that closely resembles the one in the preface:

Num golpe de vista apanhei-lhe este aspeto geral. Depois fixei-me na fisionomia dele. Era curiosa, muito curiosa mesmo, mas não à primeira vista. A cara, chupada e de má pele, era entre morena e clara, pálida de seu hábito; o nariz, ligeiramente adunco, era estreito e um pouco torto; a boca, de tamanho médio, punha uma nota de força na fisionomia deprimida e fraca, porque era fechada e de lábios delgados. (Pessoa 2008: 159)

The attention to minute details of the characters’ physical traits – mouth, hair, nose – is similar in these descriptions. Both with regard to Caeiro and Quaresma, their physical appearances are a manifestation of their mental and psychological traits, elsewhere only displayed in, respectively, Caeiro’s poetry, as Sepúlveda argues, and in Quaresma’s

¹⁰⁵ ‘Notas para a recordação do meu mestre Caeiro’ was first published in *Presença*, n. 30, Coimbra, January 1931.

speeches.¹⁰⁶ This contiguity between mind and body makes for crude characterizations, but is perhaps symptomatic of Pessoa's relative lack of engagement with narrative fiction in his maturity.

Turning to the issue of dialogue, Campos' text also includes an exchange between him and his master:

Referia-me ele, aliás desenvolvendo o que diz num dos poemas de «*O Guardador de Rebanhos*», que não sei quem lhe tinha chamado em tempos «poeta materialista». Sem achar a frase justa, porque o meu mestre Caeiro não é definível com qualquer frase justa, disse, contudo, que não era absurda de todo a atribuição. E expliquei-lhe, mais ou menos bem, o que é o materialismo clássico. Caeiro ouviu-me com uma atenção de cara dolorosa, e depois disse-me bruscamente:

«Mas isso o que é é muito estúpido. Isso é uma coisa de padres sem religião, e portanto sem desculpa nenhuma».

Fiquei atônito, e apontei-lhe várias semelhanças entre o materialismo e a doutrina dele, salva a poesia desta última. Caeiro protestou.

«Mas isso a que V. chama poesia é que é tudo. Nem é poesia: é ver. Essa gente materialista é cega. V. diz que eles dizem que o espaço é infinito. Onde é que eles viram isso no espaço?» (Pessoa 1980: 270)

The excerpt exemplifies the general tone and topics covered in the conversation. Campos relates a dialogue where only ideas, pertaining specifically to philosophy and poetry, are discussed. It does not go in depth in the articulation of said ideas – “expliquei-lhe, mais ou menos bem, o que é o materialismo clássico” -, leaving it to the reader to imagine what this articulation could have been. This lack of problematization

¹⁰⁶ Lindeza Diogo writes about the Caeiro/Quaresma parallel although in a different direction: “Estranha proximidade do poeta e do detective. Ambos obedecem, afinal, à obsessão do real desejado, ou do desejo do real, de par com a obsessão da nominalização, e com a “mania” de apontar para as coisas, como fazem as crianças.” (Lindeza Diogo 1995: 10) It should be noted that the critic is quoting from the fragments available at the time of his writing. I disagree with his comparison: Quaresma's intellectualization and reason is in fact antipodean to Caeiro's approach to the material world. Their relationship, if any, is rather one of opposites. Nonetheless, I underline the fact that Diogo's essay is the first serious attempt to establish links between Quaresma and the heteronyms. Furthermore, the fact that childhood is evoked to establish this connection is in line with my argument, although the use and interpretation made of it by the critic is, in my opinion, misguided.

of critical concepts, relying instead in key expressions, labels almost, to encapsulate an entire system, evokes Quaresma's frequently shoddy ratiocinations which rely on accepting the validity of their premises at face value, as in 'A Carta Mágica': "Consideremos o caso desta mulher, vendo-o à luz destas considerações que não lhe demonstrei, porque as considero, por assim dizer, evidentes em si mesmas, ou axiomáticas" (Pessoa 2008: 244). The "considerations" are the usual divisions into mental types, in this case between normality, abnormality and insanity. Quaresma, like Campos, relies on set phrases without challenging them in constructing his dialogues. In both cases, as in 'O Banqueiro Anarquista', the superficial discussion and use of philosophical concepts is the main thrust of dialogue.

Shaping these interactions and their content there is also a correspondence of matching power structures between the characters taking part in the conversation: one of them is the master, explaining ideas to a would-be pupil: Quaresma to Guedes, Santos, the judge in 'O Caso Vargas' and whoever happens to be his interlocutor; the banker to his dinner guest. The Caeiro/Campos dialogue is more complex, for in it there is a shift in the power balance between the two. Although repeatedly calling Caeiro his master, Campos sets out to explain "classical materialism" to Caeiro but the engineer ends up being schooled by the shepherd. Notably, the conversation begins with a disagreement on the meaning of and influences on Caeiro's poetry. Campos believes that it is correct to think of *O Guardador de Rebanhos* in terms of philosophical materialism. Caeiro argues against it, and what we can read there is nothing short of a staged disagreement between the two heteronyms. Campos' caveat that his master is not "definível com

qualquer frase justa” suggests a reluctance to resort to easy definitions and concepts, but he tries to apply them nonetheless. The fact that the exchange takes place in a text and that, ultimately, the two speakers are fictional creations of an author, is a problem noted by Sepúlveda:

Ao contrário dos outros nomes de autor, [Pessoa] constitui o ponto de contacto inevitável entre a ficcionalidade da obra e a realidade. Seja enquanto designação de um autor ou editor das obras que transcende a ficção ou, no plano jurídico, como referência ao cidadão Fernando Pessoa, este nome remete para uma realidade difícil de contemplar no âmbito da obra e da sua definição sistémica. (Sepúlveda: 334)

Pessoa willingly puts himself on the same level of textual reality as the heteronyms, as when in “Notas” Campos refers to him as he lists the relationship of different heteronyms’ to paganism (“O meu mestre Caeiro não era um pagão: era o paganismo. O Ricardo Reis é um pagão, o António Mora é um pagão, eu sou um pagão; o próprio Fernando Pessoa seria um pagão, se não fosse um novelo embrulhado para o lado de dentro” (Pessoa 1980: 269). Sepúlveda labours at length on the importance of the “Tábua Bibliográfica” published in *Presença* (Sepúlveda: 206-244) where Pessoa discusses the use of his name to qualify only a part of his work as “ortónimo”, while other parts would be his “obras heterónimas”. The critic argues that this is another instance of the enmeshing of fiction and reality in the author’s work, a point with which I agree and to which I add the texts pertaining to the Crowley affair, where Pessoa becomes effectively a fictional character.

This is a process of fictionalization, one which is comparable to the mechanics of make-believe as outlined by Walton: a fictionalized version of the author is reported as having engaged in activities which did not take place. In this instance, however, the

reader is supposed to believe that all that happened was factually true. This contradiction is what allows us to call the whole sequence of events and texts a hoax. This makes the Crowley affair a case different from other instances that we have seen of fiction-making in Pessoa. Another reason for this is how Pessoa has other people write texts that are part of the entire structure. I am referring to Ferreira Gomes' articles in *Diário de Notícias* and *Notícias Ilustrado* and the articles in the *Oxford Mail* and in *Déetective*. Pessoa relies on other people's texts to sustain the fiction he has concocted with Crowley. Nonetheless, the claim to truth that such documents have - newspaper articles - is in relation to the planned novella as Pessoa's letters are to his poetry. In both cases, a series of texts having a claim to truth are used to validate and substantiate a fiction. In both cases, all the texts are part of a binary structure operating, albeit in different ways, at the same textual level.

Sepúlveda argues that "Pessoa pensou o livro no plural e concebeu a ideia de uma colecção ou série de livros capaz de integrar as mais diversas facetas da realidade e os mais variados campos do saber" (Sepúlveda: 335), concluding that

O ponto de partida [da crítica] deverá ser (...) sempre a obra e o seu sistema, onde o próprio nome de Fernando Pessoa surge não só como autor mas também como personagem de um mesmo enredo. Pessoa não só criou heterónimos (...) como várias personagens, incluindo a de si próprio, com o propósito de tudo integrar nessa grande obra por concluir. (Sepúlveda: 339)

I agree with the main thrust of this argument, but whereas Sepúlveda justifies the idea of a holistic aspect of Pessoa's literary output via the planning and purpose of ultimate publication, my interpretation remains exclusively textual in that the creation of the project of a fictional work is to me what constitutes the link between the different genres

in which he worked. Simply put, the problem is to consider Pessoa, when he writes about himself and his writings, as author rather than, in Sepúlveda's term, a character too. The tension towards publication is certainly important and has shaped their creation, but my suggestion is that such publication is more the one that editors have been making since Pessoa's death than any actual possible publication he may have had in mind.

The series of documents concerning the Crowley affair is perhaps the best possible illustration of the point I have been trying to make concerning the problems inherent to using Pessoa's own analytical terms to discuss his work – to consider his letters and annotations as epitext when they are part of a single textual reality, a fictional world, that encompasses the entirety of his writings. The use of newspaper articles, the projected novella, the telegrams, and to an extent even the conversations between those who took part in creating the hoax certainly have different textual characteristics and perform different roles in terms of their use of language. Nonetheless, it is the interaction between each of them that produced the fiction of Crowley's death. Similarly, it is the interaction between Pessoa's letters and his poetry that creates the fiction of the heteronyms. And it is the interaction between narrative and essay that creates the character of Abílio Quaresma.

In the case of the Quaresma stories, the essayistic sections are not epitext, since they are an integral part of the narrative despite the clear difference in tone and content between them and the sections that include description, action and dialogue – the sections where the narrative mode is more pronounced, and the “*teneur événementielle*”, in Genette's terms, is stronger. Nonetheless, those sections are detailed expositions of a

system or theory, be it about the methods of an investigation or the nature of the human psyche. They claim for themselves a validity that is grounded on their supposed truth outside of the fictional world in which they are proffered. In this way, they interact with the more patently narrative section of the text so as to confer to the characters and actions that are narrated there the status of being correct as representations of truths that supposedly exist outside the text. Once again, Pessoa is enmeshing different genres, different modes of writing, with different claims to different truths, all enlisted at the service of the creation of fiction.

Strange fictions: Livro do Desassossego

In one of his self-analytical fragments Pessoa writes:

Nestes desdobramentos de personalidade ou, antes, invenções de personalidades diferentes, há dois graus ou tipos (...). No primeiro grau, a personalidade distingue-se por ideias e sentimentos próprios, distintos dos meus, assim como, em mais baixo nível desse grau, se distingue por ideias, postas em raciocínio ou argumento, que não são minhas, ou, se o são, o não conheço. O *Banqueiro Anarquista* é um exemplo deste grau inferior; o *Livro do Desassossego* e a personagem Bernardo Soares são o grau superior. (Pessoa 1966: 105)

The reference to the *Livro do Desassossego* highlights Pessoa's conscious efforts of achieving a "totalizing" dimension in his work, by including it as part of a project of "desdobramento da personalidade". The different personalities that emerge from his writings, be it the heteronyms writing poetry, the semi-heteronym Bernardo Soares or the characters in prose works, all seem to be part of a consistent, unified project. Pessoa goes on, qualifying it:

Há-de o leitor reparar que, embora eu publique (publica-se) o *Livro do Desassossego* como sendo de um tal Bernardo Soares, ajudante de guarda-livros na cidade de Lisboa, o não inclui todavia nestas *Ficções do Interlúdio*. É que Bernardo Soares, distinguindo-se de mim por suas ideias, seus sentimentos, seus modos de ver e de compreender, não se distingue de mim pelo estilo de expor. (Pessoa 1966: 105)

The problematic status of Bernardo Soares in Pessoa's work has been the subject of much critical attention since the publication of the first Portuguese edition in 1982, edited by Jacinto do Prado Coelho, Marie Aliete Galhoz and Teresa Sobral Cunha.¹⁰⁷ Other editions in Portuguese edited single-handedly by Teresa Sobral Cunha followed in 1990 and 1997.¹⁰⁸ Richard Zenith edited and translated the first edition in English in 1991. Zenith is also responsible for the most recent Portuguese editions in 1998 and 2014.¹⁰⁹ Finally, Jerónimo Pizarro published in 2010 the first critical edition of the book, a philological work that was published under one of the original spellings suggested by Pessoa, *Livro do Desassocego*.¹¹⁰ These editions reflect different standards and approaches to the text, themselves a consequence of the fragmentary status of the work and of problems emerging from Pessoa's self-analytical texts. Pessoa's judgement in the quotation above that Soares style does not differ from his own highlights the problem in attributing to Soares texts that could have belonged elsewhere.

The apparent opposition between *Ficções do Interlúdio* and *Livro do Desassossego* recalls the one in Pessoa's letter to Adolfo Casais Monteiro where the

¹⁰⁷ *Livro do Desassossego*, Lisbon: Ática.

¹⁰⁸ *Livro do Desassossego*, Lisbon: Editorial Presença; *Livro do Desassossego*, Lisbon: Relógio de Água.

¹⁰⁹ *Livro do Desassossego*, Lisbon: Assírio e Alvim, both editions. The second is no mere reprint, presenting new texts and changes in the order in which they are presented.

¹¹⁰ *Livro do Desassocego*, Lisbon: INCM.

former writes, regarding his plans to publish: “Hesitava entre se deveria começar por um livro de versos grande (...), englobando as várias subpersonalidades de Fernando Pessoa ele mesmo, ou se deveria abrir com uma novela policiária, que ainda não consegui completar.” (Pessoa 2007: 418). As commented in my first chapter, this proves the regard Pessoa had for his crime fiction. More than that, however, the projected “livro de versos grande” seems to be a version of *Ficções do Interlúdio* from which prose works would have been expunged. That would naturally leave out the Quaresma stories, as he states, but also *Livro do Desassossego*.¹¹¹ More importantly, however, is the fragmentary aspect of the two sets of works. A comparison between the Quaresma stories as attempts at prose fiction and *Livro do Desassossego* requires a two-pronged approach that takes into consideration firstly issues of fragmentation and narrativity; and secondly the problematic intra-literary status of Soares and Quaresma as main characters.

Fragments and intervals

Recently, Pedro Eiras’ *Esquecer Fausto* (2005) has devoted new attention to *Livro do Desassossego* and to Pessoa’s version of Faust from the standpoint of the philosophical category of the self. He argues that these works contribute to a fragmentation of traditional notions through the use of irony, contradiction and a variety of other techniques. His use of the category of the fragment follows on Mariana Irene

¹¹¹ The absence of ‘O Banqueiro Anarquista’ may be justified by the fact that it had already been published and did not preoccupy Pessoa in terms of a reedition.

Ramalho Santos's in *Atlantic Poets* (2003), where she first elaborates a poetics of the Pessoaan fragment, tracing it to Romanticism, specifically Schlegel's own practice of the fragment as a genre (Santos 2003: 17).¹¹² Besides an analysis of philosophical categories such as those of "self" and "other", Eiras pays attention to the problematic structure of Soares' work:

[No] *Livro do Desassossego* o fragmento tem dupla função: *fenómeno* de diferença e incompletude que ameaça o projecto de totalidade e, por outro lado, *objecto* descrito por Soares na/para a exploração do *spleen*. O fragmento é *impossibilidade* de escrita do Livro e matéria sobre a qual é *possível* escrever um livro; *o fragmento impede um Livro mas propicia um livro*. (Eiras 2005: 278, italics in original)

Eiras sums up the problem of the fragment in Soares' work as both an inherent, material conditionality of the texts and as a theme of Soares musings. The distinction between "Livro" and "livro" highlights the difference between a totalizing project of a completed, total Book, and the open-ended, mutable structure of Soares' book. *Livro do Desassossego* has been called a "não-livro" (Zenith in Pessoa 1998a: 13), an "anti-livro" (Medeiros 2015: 78), an "anti-novel" (Ceia 2006: 2), or an "unwritten novel" (Cousineau 2013), expressions that emphasize the "marginalization of plot" (Cousineau 2013: 77) in the text.¹¹³

¹¹² Medeiros highlights that Santos has the merit of being the first critic to offer Schlegel's Fragment 206, where he compares a fragment to a hedgehog, as a way to understand Pessoa's practice of the fragment as a genre (Medeiros 2015: 79).

¹¹³ Zenith and Medeiros use the term "livro" whereas Ceia and Cousineau opt for "novel". While the former pair are certainly more precise in their choice of term, considering its relative neutrality, the latter's choice to emphasize the element of fiction in Soares' work, defining it negatively in relation to the "novel". This emphasis on its fictional aspect and implied characterization of it by its lack of plot is more in line with my argument.

The fragmentary status of the Quaresma stories presents issues that mirror those of the *Livro do Desassossego*. First and foremost, with regard to editing: the fact that the essay-like passages where Quaresma expounds his theories resemble texts written by Pessoa with no indication of belonging to any narrative render the surviving texts problematic if we are to consider them as short stories. Certain passages have been clearly identified by the author as belonging to the individual story in which Freitas has included them (Freitas in Pessoa 2008: 9-28), but this still leaves the problem of the lack of narration or other writing strategies that may unify each set of fragments in an individual whole – much like *Livro do Desassossego*. This duality is akin to the double function espoused by Eiras.

Directly more relevant to my argument is the the relation between fragments in Soares, rather than their individual status, which Paulo de Medeiros develops building on Eiras and Santos, conceptualizing the gaps between fragments in terms of “intervalo”:

o *Livro do Desassossego* incessantemente chama a atenção para o intervalo quer como dispositivo textual quer como espaço de suspensão, do texto, do pensamento, do sentir e do ser (...) Do ponto de vista de uma poética geral de Pessoa, na qual o *Livro do Desassossego* seria o expoente máximo na sua combinação de teoria e praxis, o fragmento não pode ser concebido sem o intervalo. (Medeiros 2015: 82)

Medeiros’ proposal puts the finger on the problem of establishing a relationship between the individual fragments in *Livro do Desassossego* and how the gaps between each individual text are part of the creation of meaning. The same “interval”, I would argue, is present between the fragments that constitute the Quaresma stories as well as between the poems of the heteronyms and the letters and essays that are part of their creation: it is

the interaction between several sets of texts, as props in Walton's theory, that creates the fiction of Pessoa's writing. Medeiros' use of the term "interval" leads me to subvert what he wrote in 2013 in connection with the relationship between Soares and the heteronyms: "focusing on the question of the heteronyms is not the most productive way to read the *Book of Disquiet*¹¹⁴ (...) it threatens to remove its specificity" (Medeiros 2013: 13-14). He even goes as far as recommending that the book should be read as "an absence of heteronymy" (Medeiros 2013: 14). This is very much what Medeiros sets out to do not only in *Geometry of the Abyss* but also in *O Silêncio das Sereias*. I would counter that *Livro do Desassossego* is rather a privileged locus to find at play the dynamic of the semantically productive intervals that are also present not only in heteronymy but also in the Quaresma stories. This can be done by removing the text/epitext distinction in poems and prose texts that are part of the heteronymic structure, as I described above. The gap between a Campos' poem and his letter to *A Informação* could be understood in terms of interval, precisely one of the specificities of *Livro do Desassossego*. Rather than the "absence of heteronymy" Soares' work becomes: "an outburst that best voices the vertiginous poetic adventure of Fernando Pessoa's entire oeuvre." (Santos 2003: 259).

In what concerns the status of Soares' book and the Quaresma stories as pieces of fiction, Jackson's theory of adverse genres, outlined in the Introduction, can also play a role: "When is the "Book" a book? If one were to organize the numbered fragments

¹¹⁴ In English in the original source.

thematically (...) the “Book” could be read as a novel” (Jackson 2013: 169). The remainder of his chapter takes this form: a reading of Soares’ fragments organized thematically. Jackson’s proposition reads as a reaction to Zenith’s suggestion in his preface to the 1998 edition of *Livro do Desassossego*:

Uma edição de páginas soltas é pouco praticável, mas consegue-se uma certa aproximação a este ideal pelo facto de sucessivas edições terem organizado os trechos de formas radicalmente diversas. Oferece-se, agora, mais uma arrumação possível, sem desassossego pelo que tem de arbitrário e com a esperança que o leitor invente a própria. (...) Ler sempre e fora de ordem: eis a ordem correcta para ler esta coisa parecida com um livro. (Zenith in Pessoa 1998a: 34)

Zenith’s claim is that the open-ended structure of a book only surviving in fragments demands an active participation of the reader in creating a thread that unites them. Jackson’s response is to read *Livro do Desassossego* as an anti-book, in line with the use of negative epithets applied to describe it seen above. Unlike the other readings in *Adverse Genres*, the “adversity” Jackson sees at play in Soares’ work regards the narrator’s paradoxical quest for writing what cannot be written:

Sou os arredores de uma vila que não há, o comentário prolixo a um livro que se não escreveu. Não sou ninguém, ninguém. Não sei sentir, não sei pensar, não sei querer. Sou uma figura de romance por escrever, passando aérea, e desfeita sem ter sido, entre os sonhos de quem me não soube completar. (Pessoa 1998a: 258)

Jackson’s argument only makes sense once we accept his premise of regarding the *Livro do Desassossego* as a novel, or an “anti-novel” as Ceia suggested. The readings of Quaresma stories I have offered in previous chapters would at first sight seem to be labouring under the same necessary premise – that only by accepting that the stories are fiction, arbitrarily, can they be read as such. However, unlike Soares’ work, these are works that can be easily classifiable as a very precise and highly codified genre: that of

detective fiction. Not only Pessoa's own classification regards them squarely as such, but so do the standards of Sayers, Wrong and other critics who codified the genre at the time Pessoa was writing and whom he had read attentively. In the Quaresma stories, the rule of a genre from which Pessoa's writing deviates – by the elaborate construction and inclusion of essayistic writing – is stronger than in *Livro do Desassossego*, a fact that emphasizes the singularity and violence of his writing.

One final point to be made regarding the problem of the fragment is to put it in relation to the argument I have been trying to make about text and epitext in Pessoa's work. If we accept the notion that the presiding characteristic of his writings is the creation of a totalizing work of fiction without the clear thread of narrative or plot, then it becomes possible to imagine each of his texts as individual pieces of writing that may stand to be judged on their own and yet take part in a larger project. In this way, *Livro do Desassossego* is a summary or encapsulation of what Pessoa is trying to achieve in his other writings: a piece of the puzzle that reproduces the entire puzzle, as it were.

Outrar-se

It is well established that Soares was not considered by Pessoa as a heteronym, not in the same sense as Caeiro, Campos, or Reis. Pessoa calls him a “semi-heteronym” in the 13 January 1935 letter to Casais Monteiro, in terms that consider the standing of his work in relation to the *Ficções do Interlúdio* project:

É um semi-heterónimo porque, não sendo a personalidade a minha, é, não diferente da minha, mas uma simples mutilação dela. Sou eu menos o raciocínio e a afectividade. A prosa, salvo o que o raciocínio dá de ténue à minha, é igual a esta, e o português

perfeitamente igual. (...) O difícil para mim é escrever a prosa de Reis — ainda inédita — ou de Campos. A simulação é mais fácil, até porque é mais espontânea, em verso” (Pessoa 2007: 424)

This statement appears in the context of a comparison between Soares and the heteronyms. Pessoa reaffirms the similarity between himself and Soares, not only in terms of personal characteristics but also, importantly, in style of writing prose. Soares seems not to be as removed from reality as the heteronyms. Pessoa also writes of “simulação”, affirming that it is easier to achieve in verse. In another fragment he elaborates on this point:

Nos autores das *Ficções do Interlúdio* não são só as ideias e os sentimentos que se distinguem dos meus: a mesma técnica da composição, o mesmo estilo, é diferente do meu. Aí cada personagem é criada integralmente diferente, e não apenas diferentemente pensada. Por isso nas *Ficções do Interlúdio* predomina o verso. Em prosa é mais difícil de se outrar. (Pessoa 1966: 105)

The difficulty declared by Pessoa in his letter in achieving the project of “outrar-se” in *Livro do Desassossego* is the same as in the Quaresma stories. The fact that Quaresma’s appearance and character mirror Pessoa’s, and that his opinions on psychology and the mind are the same as his creator’s, point to the problem of creating self-sustaining fictions. In both cases, the main character is only a small remove away from the creator. In Pessoa’s own terms, these would be unsuccessful attempts at a complete “simulation” and “othering”, due to the problems that he considers to be inherent to their medium: prose.

The “othering” of “outrar-se” is the key phrase to understand the Pessoaan contribution to Modernism and World Literature: the underlying driving force of all of his writings is the sustained creation of a work of fiction. This fiction is at first glance

the paradox of being another being, and here critics have often pursued an ontological track, especially José Gil when analyzing the structure of heteronymity:¹¹⁵

Num apontamento bem conhecido dos “graus de despersonalização”, Fernando Pessoa estabelece uma “gradação continua” entre a poesia lírica e a poesia dramática, mostrando como esta última resulta de uma série de transformações da primeira. (...) O movimento geral da despersonalização pode resumir-se assim: a progressiva abstração sofrida pelo estado de alma (...) é acompanhada por uma fragilização correspondente dos factores que asseguram a personalidade (...) (Gil 2013: 70-71)¹¹⁶

Gil resorts to Pessoa’s analytical texts to interpret the texts themselves, separating the epitext from the text following the tradition that I have disputed in the beginning of this chapter. The “apontamento” he mentions is the same extensively analyzed by Castro in her study on the influence of Shakespeare on Pessoa (Castro 2016: 52-53). Gil then proceeds to explain the process of depersonalization outlined by Pessoa in terms of “devir”, or becoming – one being becoming another - offering a philosophical interpretation with an emphasis on ontology and metaphysics. I believe this to be an extension of the problem of treating Pessoa’s letters as a separate epitext to his literary work, poetry or prose rather than existing at the same textual level.

My contention with Gil is with his apparently stark division between texts that interact in creating a fictional world. Here, I too draw from philosophical vocabulary, that of Walton, outlined at the beginning of this chapter: “outrar-se” is a manifestation of the process of make-believe. By choosing terms such as “outrar-se” or

¹¹⁵ *Fernando Pessoa ou a Metafísica das Sensações* (1987), and, more importantly, *Diferença e Negação na Poesia de Fernando Pessoa* (1999) and *O Devir-Eu de Fernando Pessoa* (2006).

¹¹⁶ The “apontamento” mentioned by Gil can be found in *Páginas de Estética e de Teoria Literárias* (1966)

“despersonalização” Pessoa effectively enacts in his letters and essays a fiction of fiction. The make-believe of becoming other people occurs not only in the literary texts themselves, be they prose or poetry, as he spells out in the quotations referenced above, but also in those quotations themselves, which supposedly are to be read as self-analytical texts. They are not an epitext to the texts of *Livro do Desassossego* or the poetry of the heteronyms: they are themselves text, mandating to imagine fictional entities, actions and relationships.

*

Pessoan criticism has long laboured in the tradition of treating his letters and essays, particularly those where he analyzes his own poetry, as complementary to the study and appreciation of that poetry. I suggest that they should be approached at the same textual level as the poems: They do not, in any way, “reveal” a system or truth about heteronymy. They create it, as a series of fictional propositions that have hitherto been interpreted as epitext that serves the function of assisting the reader to interpret other texts. Rather, they *are* text too.

The letters to Casais Monteiro or ‘Notas para a recordação de meu mestre Caetano’ work as epitexts and paratexts in the Genettian sense, to the works of Caetano, Campos and Reis. They create expectations in the reader, conditioning the way the poetry will be interpreted. Conversely, it is only the existence of the poems that makes the fiction created in the letters, stories and essays anything remarkable and different

from a rough draft of an imaginary group of poets who could have their existence plotted out in the form of novel or drama. Indeed, their relationship is symbiotic – the poems depend on the letters and viceversa, two parts of a whole.

The fragmentary nature of this fiction, not relying on a traditional unfolding of plot or narrative is related to Campos' essay 'Apontamentos para uma Estética Não-Aristotélica'.¹¹⁷ The apparent paradoxes, contradictions or adversities pointed out by Jackson and Lopes find a form in this essay where an aesthetic model based “não na ideia da beleza mas de força” (Pessoa 1980: 252) is essentially an echo of the project of Futurism. Campos focuses exclusively on poetry:

De resto, até hoje, data em que aparece pela primeira vez uma autêntica doutrina não aristotélica da arte, só houve três verdadeiras manifestações de arte não-aristotélica. A primeira está nos assombrosos poemas de Walt Whitman; a segunda está nos poemas mais que assombrosos do meu mestre Caeiro; a terceira está nas duas odes — a *Ode Triunfal* e a *Ode Marítima* — que publiquei no «*Orpheu*». (Pessoa 1980: 260)

The precedence given here to poetry is consistent with Pessoa's self-fashioning as a poet as observed in his correspondence. Despite the interest in prose evidenced by the detective stories and by the works studied in this chapter, his letters and essays positioned the heteronyms as his greatest creation. As I have been arguing, critics followed this injunction. By repositioning the relationship between letters/essays and literary texts as texts operating at the same level, rather than as epitext and text, we can see how the construction of this fiction is the underlying project uniting separate texts. Concomitantly, Pessoa's interest in the possibility of non-aristotelian aesthetics is more

¹¹⁷ First published in the magazine *Athena*, n. 3 and 4, Lisbon, December 1924 and January 1925.

interesting if we bypass the beauty/strength debate and focus instead on the question of unity of plot in the *Poetics*. The lack of a traditional narrative or plot, a *mythos*, in Pessoa's fiction(s) does not impede the existence of imagined characters and stories. Pessoa's interest in theatre, as explored by Lopes, would suggest this possible reading, in which non-aristotelian aesthetics understood in terms of a lack of plot would seem to be at play in Pessoa's fiction.

The famous reference to the "Dia Triunfal" in the January 13 1935 letter to Casais Monteiro is another example of an individual text working with others in the creation of Pessoaan fiction:

Num dia em que finalmente desistira — foi em 8 de Março de 1914 — acerquei-me de uma cómoda alta, e, tomando um papel, comecei a escrever, de pé, como escrevo sempre que posso. E escrevi trinta e tantos poemas a fio, numa espécie de êxtase cuja natureza não conseguirei definir. Foi o dia triunfal da minha vida, e nunca poderei ter outro assim. Abri com um título, *O Guardador de Rebanhos*. E o que se seguiu foi o aparecimento de alguém em mim, a quem dei desde logo o nome de Alberto Caeiro. (Pessoa 2007: 422)

This account has been demonstrated to be false by Ivo Castro.¹¹⁸ He traced several versions and stages of the poems included in *O Guardador de Rebanhos* – included, that is, by Pessoa himself in lists written by him, and reinforced by the publication of editions of Caeiro's work over the years. Castro points out the inconsistencies in this foundational myth of a corpus of poems written entirely during the night in question. Any claim to factual truth that the letters may have as supposedly non-fictional texts is thus undermined: they too become props that mandate the imagining of the fiction of

¹¹⁸ Castro, Ivo, [1982](2013), "O corpus de *O Guardador de Rebanhos* depositado na Biblioteca Nacional", *Editar Pessoa*, Imprensa Nacional Casa da Moeda: Lisbon, 23-41.

heteronymy. Feijó has recently argued for the necessity of the invention of a “Dia Triunfal” in the scheme of heteronymy, how the preeminence of Caeiro and Pessoa’s claim to greatness depend on that myth, even seeing Caeiro as Pessoa’s “muse” (Feijó 2015: 11-31). I agree with this judgement, going perhaps one step further: Pessoa’s “Dia Triunfal” is an example of Walton’s notion of fictional truth, masquerading as factual truth. As with the story of Campos’ encounter with a girl in Barrow-in-Furness, a myth posing as truth is necessary so that the overarching fiction may be sustained.

In this scheme, Quaresma’s pseudo-scientific theories – in fact Pessoa’s – are the textual element of a claim to factual truth that interacts with a plainly literary, fictional element in the form of direct narration and Guedes’ investigations. The narrative and the essayistic modes in the Quaresma stories, disjuncted as they may seem, are in fact manifestations of larger dynamics that traverse the entirety of Pessoa’s literary project: to create a form of non-narrative fiction, the Portuguese modernist anti-novel.

Conclusion

This thesis was an introduction to a hitherto little studied aspect of Pessoa's work. It contributed to mapping the Anglo-American models used by Pessoa beyond poetry, with a focus on popular culture at the time of his writing, as well as a new look on Poe's influence. The picture of Pessoa that emerged from this analysis is that of an author well-aware of the history and major developments of crime fiction since the publication of 'The Murders in the Rue Morgue', particularly during the 1920s, considering his reading of Sayer's and Wrong's anthologies and prefaces, referenced by future critics of the genre as hallmarks of the genre.

The case of the Quaresma stories is particularly illustrative of Pessoa's engagement with foreign authors, since detective fiction as a genre was closely associated culturally with Great Britain and the United States in the 1920s and 30s. The fact that these stories were written in Portuguese, set in Lisbon, and that they had as a main character a Portuguese detective forced us to consider how Pessoa adapted those foreign models to a Portuguese social context. As we saw, Pessoa kept the fundamental traits of the "cozy", the subgenre practiced by Wills Crofts, Richard Freeman, and Agatha Christie among others. This meant that he highlighted the faculty of reason as the defining characteristic of his detective: Quaresma solves crimes as if they were intellectual puzzles, applying his mind to them. In this he followed the Dupin-Holmes paradigm set in the 19th century, but he added to it the genteel veneer of setting most of his plots among the upper middle classes of Lisbon.

Social and cultural setting helped me understand the context in which the stories take place, but Pessoa is not primarily concerned with depicting Portuguese society in his crime fiction. The main character, Abilio Quaresma, is the most important creation of these texts. His construction as a fictional character, however, is only partially accomplished by narrative processes that may include description, dialogue and action. The most substantial characterization of Quaresma occurs in long essayistic passages in which he explains his methods of criminal investigation, which take the form of applying psychological theories as a means to narrow down suspects and eventually catch the culprit. These theories are largely derived from 19th and early 20th century authors such as Lombroso and Nordau, and frequently coincide with Pessoa's own views expressed in letters and other essays signed by himself. What is more, his physical description and outlook on life are very similar to Pessoa's. Quaresma is a fictional character that is constructed by both narrative and essayistic prose, displaying strong similarities with his creator. However, he isn't a heteronym, or even a semi-heteronym like Bernardo Soares. He doesn't write, he speaks, and Pessoa writes his speeches.

When we see the decipherer in action in stories such as 'A Carta Mágica', 'Tale X' or 'Cúmplices', other facets of his personality emerge, particularly if we read them in terms of gender relations. One of the most salient is his constant mysoginy: even when female characters are at the centre of the narrative, they never have a voice or even appear. Marta is found to be guilty of stealing a letter in 'A Carta Mágica', Emília commits suicide in 'Tale X', and the unnamed wife of the lawyer in 'Cúmplices' is the prime mover for the jealousy that led him to commit murder. Marta is found to be a

criminal due to her hysteria, the archetypal feminine mental illness of late 19th and early 20th century, echoing similar claims linking mental illness and crime made by Lombroso. The case of Marta is of especial interest since many of the terms used to describe her by Quaresma are strikingly similar to expressions used by Pessoa to describe himself. It would seem that the only thing that leads Marta to crime is her being a woman.

We have also seen how the essayistic element in Pessoa's detective fiction has an emphasis on philosophical and scientific terms and topics. Similar themes are explored in other instances of Pessoa's fiction, specifically in 'O Banqueiro Anarquista'. The fragmented aspect of the Quaresma stories, on the other hand, is comparable to the texts belonging to *Livro do Desassossego*, demanding an interaction between individual fragments that is accomplished by editing the works and reading them as comprehensive fictions. The consequences of this approach reach further when we apply it to the texts that take part in creating the heteronyms: on the one hand, their poetry; on the other, the letters, essays, newspaper articles and similar prose texts that fashion out the creation of Campos, Reis, Caeiro. This is a procedure that can be found on a more limited scale in the formation of Quaresma as a literary character through the relationship between essayistic and narrative prose.

Pessoa, then, can be read as the creator of fictional characters and stories that lack the narrative structure of traditional literary fiction genres. The texts pertaining to the Crowley affair are a demonstration of this technique: the story of Crowley's suicide is told via a series of newspaper articles, a projected novella, and interviews.

Furthermore, they also highlight a defining aspect of Pessoa's fiction: its dependence on texts and media that claim a degree of reality above the fictional status of the stories they tell: Crowley's fake suicide reported as an actual event; Campos giving interviews to newspapers with no indication of his fictionality; Quaresma, who closely resembles Pessoa, resorting to the discourse of psychology to solve crimes.

To read Pessoa's work in this light we must abolish a distinction between what can be considered literary and non-literary in his written work, a division that constricts much of traditional Pessoaan criticism. The use of literary theory to study Pessoaan texts may provide an escape the deadlock in which often critics find themselves. Hopefully one of the main contributions of my work will be to help move Pessoa studies towards a new attitude towards their sources. Historically, critics have been held in thrall of the author's own interpretation of his works, laid out in the letters to Casal Monteiro. Often, a significant change in the field signals the reassessment of previously unknown or ignored texts: António Feijó's *Uma Admiração Pastoril pelo Diabo* (2015) is one such cases, tracing the exact dating of several poems to periods different than the ones previously established, thus leading to a new analysis of Pessoa's statements regarding his poetry. Jeronimo Pizarro's *Pessoa Existe?* (2012) points to part of this problem, highlighting how generations of editors and critics "created" Fernando Pessoa as a unified author through the publication in book form of texts that are originally fragmented and dispersed in his manuscripts. His provocative title is a way of critiquing this practice, suggesting that the author identified with the name "Pessoa" is an abstract reconstruction of the texts written by a person indeed called Pessoa. I partially agree

with Pizarro's assessment, but I diverge in that, like Feijó and critics before him, I find unity in the diversity, to paraphrase Jacinto do Prado Coelho's epochal book. I differ however from this unity school, which treats Pessoa's correspondence and essays as separate epitext to his literary work. As I hope to have shown, they are better read as the two halves of a fictional project operating at the same textual level.

Appendix

a) Books and Magazines on the subject of Detective Fiction in Pessoa's personal library in the Casa Fernando Pessoa. Digitized versions of all documents are available online at <http://casafernandopessoa.cm-lisboa.pt/bdigital/>.

The numbers indicate the reference in the library's catalog.

8-19 – Atkey Bertram, 1912 *The Amazing Mr Bunn*, London: George Newnes, ltd.

8-38 – Bentley, E C, n.d., *Trent's Last Case*, London, Benn.

8-40 – Berkeley, Anthony, n.d., *The Vane Mystery*, London Collins and co.

8-108 – Chesterton, G.K., 1926, *The Incredulity of Father Brown Stories*, Leipzig: Bernhard Tauchnitz.

8-119 – Connington, JJ, (Pseud. Alfred Walter Stewart), 1927, *Murder in the maze*, London Ernest Benn.

8-152 – SS Van Dine, 1926, *The Benson Murder Case*, London: Ernest Benn.

8-153 – SS Van Dine, 1932, *The Bishop Murder Case*, Hamburg: The Albatross.

8-154 – SS Van Dine, 1927, *The Canary Murder Case*, London: Ernest Benn.

8-160 – Doyle, Arthur Conan, 1907, *Through the Magic Door*, Leipzig: Bernhard Tauchnitz.

8-161 – Doyle, Arthur Conan, n.d., *His Last Bow, some Reminiscences of Sherlock Holmes*, London: George Newnes.

8-186 – Ferguson, William Blair Morton, 1927, *The Clue in the Glass*, London, Herbert Jenkins Limited

8-189 – Fielding A. (Archibald E.), 1928, *The Net Around Joan Ingilby*, London: Collins

8-197 – Freeman, R. Austin, 1923, *The Cat's Eye*, London: Hodder and Stoughton.

8-198 – Freeman, R. Austin, 1911, *The Eye of Osiris: A Detective Romance*, London: Hodder and Stoughton.

8-199 – Freeman, R. Austin, 1922, *Helen Vardon's Confession*, London: Hodder and Stoughton.

8-200 – Freeman, R. Austin, 1927, *The Magic Casket*, London: Hodder and Stoughton.

8-201 – Freeman, R. Austin, n.d., [*The Mystery of 31 New Inn*](#), London: Hodder and Stoughton.

8-202 – Freeman, R. Austin, 1925, *The Shadow of the Wolf*, London: Hodder and Stoughton.

- 8-203 – Freeman, R. Austin, 1927, *The Surprising Experiences of Mr. Shuttlebury Cobb*, London: Hodder and Stoughton.
- 8-234 – Sayers, Dorothy (ed.), 1928, *Great Short Stories of Detection, Mystery and Horror*, London: Gollancz.
- 8-264 – Hornung, Ernest William, n.d., *Raffles the Amateur Cracksman*, London, Benn.
- 8-362 – *Mystery and Detection*, 1913, n°1, London: The World's Work.
- 8-380 – Morrison, Arthur, n.d., *Chronicles of Martin Hewitt*, London and New York: Ward Lock and Co. Ltd.
- 8-398 – Baroness Orczy, 1909, *The Case of Miss Eliot*, London: Greening and Co.
- 8-399 – Baroness Orczy, 1918, *The Legion of Honour*, London: Hutchinson and Co.
- 8-400 – Baroness Orczy, 1908, *The Old Man in the Corner*, London: Hodder and Stoughton.
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