

The problem of *authorship* in literary theory: deletions, resumptions and reviews

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I

IN LITERARY theory, the forms of rejection that have been continuously accumulated (and purged) around the notion of *authorship* characterize it concisely as a symbol of the humanism and universalism that the “new” critical discourses have sought to eliminate from aesthetic studies. Against the mainstream of a critique of the literary phenomenon that seeks in the psychology, biography and/or sociology of the individual determinants of the text, most of the critical currents that emerged in the twentieth century relegate to the author a merely contingent role in literary construction.

When systematically analyzed, these different ways of underrating the action assigned to premeditated intent enable following some of the decisive steps that advanced critical-theoretical thought in the twentieth century.

The limitation or even elimination of the *author* from critical literary studies occurs according to the formulation of anti-concepts that prove to be decisive as tools of analysis and as definers of critical horizons of action. Its moment of poetic crystallization dates back the late nineteenth century, mainly through Rimbaud and Mallarmé. Let us follow, however, its most systematic theoretical formulations.

In “The New Russian Poetry” (1919) Jakobson defines *literariness*, i.e., that which makes a text actually literary, as something inversely proportional to the author’s intention, since it demands exclusive attention to the discourse, to the detriment of the possible intention that may have guided it. Briefly, *literariness* is understood as one or more linguistic properties that confer distinctive features on the literary object. It is not, however, any content, an idea, an image, an emotion; therefore, there are no literary themes, according to Jakobson. The themes will be literary to the extent that they are literarily processed. From this perspective, the distinctive trait of poetry lies in the fact that, in it, a word is perceived as a word and not merely as an agent of the objects denoted or an outpouring of emotions; it lies in the fact that in it the words and their arrangement, their meaning, their external and internal forms acquire weight and value by themselves.

In this defense of the discourse, the notion of *authorship* is not an object of interest to the formalist critic. This deletion is all the more significant when we see that, at its expense, even the reader is contemplated by Chklovski (1971, p.41): “We shall call aesthetic object, in the proper sense of the word, objects created through particular procedures, whose goal is to ensure these objects an aesthetic perception.” According to this perspective (obviously Kantian), the aesthetic character is associated with our way of perceiving the object, since a text can be “created to be prosaic and be perceived as poetic, or created to be poetic and be perceived as prosaic” (ibid.). Thus, despite a possible authorial intent, the way of perceiving, guided by the discourse, is what determines the aesthetic effect.

In *Contre Sainte-Beuve*, Proust (1988) denounces, in an especially combative tone, the method of projecting biographical data on the authorial profile as a surface portrait that passes along the work. Proust’s complaint about the individual who was then considered the greatest Francophone critic of his time, systematizes a position that had already been defended by Valéry and Mallarmé, who were responsible for giving the word an almost mystical autonomy. Proust mocks the “undeniable guide of criticism in the nineteenth century,” worried about “surrounding oneself with all the possible facts about a writer, collating his correspondence, questioning the men who knew him, talking to them if they are still alive, reading what they may have written about him if they are dead”. According to Proust (1988, p.51- 2), “such a method fails to recognize what any more than merely superficial acquaintance with ourselves teaches us: a book is the product of a different self from the self we manifest in our habits, in our social life, in our vices.”

Especially evocative is the conception of *another self*, a non-biographical self which, in *Theory of Literature* Wellek and Warren define as the “fictitious self”, but without distinguishing it from the lyric self. Similar adherence to anti-biographism led Käte Hamburger (1986, p.196) to state that “there is no exact, logical, aesthetic, internal or external criterion that allows us to identify or not the lyric subject of the utterance with the poet.” That is to say that lyric utterance, although a form of experiential approach to the character of the enunciator does not work in a real connection; it is not, in short, information about someone or about non-literary reality.

In another serious challenge to Sainte-Beuve’s critical method, T. S. Eliot (1955) contrasts the investigation of the testimonies of the poet, systematically collected by the French critic even before having contact with the text, with a concept opposed to poetic construction: “What happens is a continual surrender of himself [the poet] as he is at the moment to something which is more valuable. The progress of an artist is a continual self-sacrifice, a continual extinction of personality” (ibid, p.26). For Eliot, *honest criticism and sensitive appreciation* is directed not upon the poet but upon the poetry. It is not personal emotions,

triggered by particular events in one's life that interest poetry. Its complexity is different, real emotions are not forms of expression, but natural manifestations of the self. In poetry, what counts is the intellectual work on these emotions, in order to make them say something when transposed to another plane and where they are transformed. Hence the achievement of what Eliot (1995, p.27) calls "aesthetic pleasure" whose nature, according to him, is different from that of pleasure in life: "The more perfect the artist, the more completely separate in him will be the man who suffers and the mind which creates; the more perfectly will the mind digest and transmute the passions which are its materials".

In summary, Eliot considers poetry not as a mere "outpouring of emotions", but as an escape from them. It is not the expression of personality, but the distance from it that makes the poet. For this reason, the unconscious and deliberate act of creation, in the view of the critic, turns poetry personal and, as a result of that, bad. According to this view, there is obviously a rejection of the biographer's *modus operandi*, which attributes to the text the role of mirror of its author.

From the point of view of the critical method, this procedure does not differ from what is suggested by Croce (1965) in *The Poetry*, when he affirms the specificity of the studies on gender requiring that any and all biographical data about the author be put aside. For Croce (1965, p.173), the poet is nothing but his poetry:

What should the critic and historian of poetry do when facing a pile of documents and news about the poet? He must do what he always does when he really knows his trade: put aside the documents and news that relate exclusively to the private life of the poet [...], those that refer exclusively to his public life [...], and also all that concerns his studies in botany, anatomy, philosophy or history [...]. The critic and historian should retain only those documents that refer to poetry.

This perspective upheld in the 1940s, which were marked in the United States by the notion of "intentional fallacy", the expression coined by Beardsley and Wimsatt to assert that explaining the text based on the author's intention would render literary criticism useless. From their point of view, finding the meaning of the text in the author's intention means reducing the job of the critic to an interview or to a mere collection of testimonies – to an investigation different from a more careful contact with the actual text. In *New Criticism* it is possible to foresee that the rise of the so-called "professional criticism" in England and in the United States occurs on a sound formalistic basis, which excludes from the investigative task the author's psychology, sociology and biography as methods understood as "extrinsic" to the text. This is what Wellek, an active member of the Prague Linguistic Circle, and Warren, *new critic* from the U.S. call it.

We certainly do not need to have a derogatory intention by asserting that biographical studies are different from poetic studies within literary specialization. There is, however, the risk of confusing biographical and poetic studies, as well as the danger of mistaking the biographical for the poetic. Lima, 2002, p.647).

In France, in the 1960s, there was a series of attacks against biographism (not as a genre, it should be clear, but as a critical method), the “danger” of which is avoided, especially, by three fundamental works responsible for shattering the traditional image of the author. In his study of Husserl “Voice and Phenomenon”, Derrida (1996) is the first to criticize the logocentrism of the meaning, i.e., the “meaning to say” linked to the figure of the author. Barthes then makes use of that which would be the most radical anti-humanist slogan of literary theory. In “The Death of the Author”, Barthes (1988) addresses biographism as a historical and ideological construction linked to bourgeoisie and individualism, that should be abandoned for the sake of the autonomy of the discourse. Following in his footsteps, in a longer text entitled *What is an Author?*, Foucault (2002) reflects on the notion he calls “author function”, at a time that clearly marks the transition from structuralism to post-structuralism, i.e., to a set of reflections of critical-theoretical character in which the author’s refusal is extended to the refusal of meaning, and, ultimately, of the text itself.

Once the Author is removed, the claim to decipher a text becomes quite futile. To give a text an Author is to impose a limit on that text, to furnish it with a final signified, to close the writing. Such a conception suits criticism very well, the latter then allotting itself the important task of discovering the Author (or its hypostases: society, history, psyche, liberty) beneath the work: when the Author has been found, the text is ‘explained’ – victory to the critic. Hence there is no surprise in the fact that, historically, the reign of the Author has also been that of the Critic, nor again in the fact that criticism (be it new) is today undermined along with the Author. (Barthes, 1988, p.69)

Barthes’ calls into question two reigns which to him are inseparable: the reign of the author and the reign of the critic. If finding the meaning is the same as unraveling the authorship, then we should reject the meaning.

Along this path that spans about six decades of the twentieth century, the discussion about *authorship* remains, with some variations, the same. The author is, *roughly*, considered a contingent figure of enunciation, like a typical need of humanist culture before the second half of the nineteenth century, which bequeathed to the *man of genius* the merit and meaning of his text.

If on the one hand explanation by intention, by reducing criticism to the search for a single answer to the text disallows interpretive freedom, on the other this same “old” criticism, which intends to “explain”, i.e., to solve, to

find the key to the text does not enable particularizing the theory of literature in relation to other forms of investigation that take the text as its object, such as Philology and History, for example.

For Derrida (in its early structuralist phase, in 1967), by protecting the field of *literary* theory from these other methods of speculation, treating them as prolegomena and therefore as expendable considerations about the adjacency of the text, theory should be concerned with preserving within its scope of interest and action, the history of the work itself:

By keeping to the legitimate intention of protecting the *internal* truth and meaning of the work from historicism, biographism or psychologism, one risks losing any attentiveness to the internal historicity of the work itself, in its relationship to a subjective origin that is not simply psychological or mental. (Derrida, 1995, p.28)

This brief consideration of the critic enables modalizing both the meaning of a text (from its reception history and no longer from its hypothetical premeditation) and its supposed intention. The discussion of these possibilities does not surmount, however, the deletion of the author. For Derrida, “writing is retreating.” Writing should be a procedure of emancipation of the language from oneself: “to be a poet is to know how to leave speech. To let it speak alone” (ibid, p.61).

Discussing the various objections to the prominent role assigned to the authorship of a text means, here, and in a first stage, therefore, to identify a significant inclination of critical-theoretical thought in the twentieth century.

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This discussion is deepened by the realization that the author who is rejected by these different schools of criticism is also, in a way, the psychological and biographical subject present in the causalist philology and positivism of the *explication de texte*. It is that authorial image that is found in Sainte-Beuve’s *Lundis*, in Taine’s deterministic deductions, and in those other universalizing deductions on the psychology of “human nature” that Freud radicalized in texts such as “Jensen’s Gradiva,” “Creative writers and Daydreaming” and “Dostoevsky and Parricide.” The author who seeks to delete himself from modern literary theory is not very different, after all, from that conceived in romanticism, who in the most different ways is seen as someone who confesses himself in the text.

For the criticism that arose along the modernist avant-gardes and immediately after them, critics like Walter Pater, Sainte-Beuve and Taine identify with each other by emphasizing the author’s personal view, which is considered as an agent of the meaning of the work. It is necessary, therefore, to reflect on the target and the reach of the anti-concepts formulated by critics in relation to *authorship*.

In many critics, the rejection of the biographical self as a principle of aesthetic creation does not extend to intentionality. When Proust challenges Sainte-Beuve, as mentioned earlier in this article, what is at stake is the replacement of the superficial intent confirmed by the author's life and testimonies by a more profound intention as being what the author meant to say through the enunciation of the text.

In turn, in his opposition to the causalist method, Eliot does not deny the influence of a particular view of the text, but states that it is the result of a "personal experience" stemming from the merger of feelings and sensations of a different and unquantifiable nature. Therefore, what an author tells us about what he intended to say in his poem is understood by Eliot as an afterthought, which probably encompasses ideas taken into account at the time of writing, but which were given special relevance only when the work had already been completed.

Similarly, Wimsatt and Beardsley do not deny, in their famous text, the presence of the intentional element in the structure of a poem; what they reject is the applicability of any genetic analysis of the concept of intentionality. Their argument is that the language, which is the raw material of the verbal structures of a poem, is a public and not a private code, i.e., a system governed by social conventions and not the consubstantiation of what happens to an individual.

In many ways the anti-intentionalist theses prior to Barthes (who is actually the one who confiscates the *authority* of the investigation of the meaning) did not affect the notion of *authorship*, but rather the explanatory methods of the text. After a relatively long period of apotheosis of the discourse, *authorship* is again claimed by contemporary critics, this time on grounds quite different from those that were rejected.

Among the paths trodden towards the author, perhaps the most orthodox and contested is that chosen by Harold Bloom. The American critic ignores the objections of Barthes and Foucault and seems committed to disallowing the "multiculturalist" readings roughly characterized by the identification of minority social groups (racial, gender, ethnic, religious, etc.) as generators of culture. Bloom (1994, p.43, 45) argues that the aesthetic experience is necessarily individual and the possible forms of action of the social superstructure on the text are infinitely less important than the individual *genius*:

William Shakespeare wrote thirty-eight plays, twenty-four of them masterpieces, but social energy has never written a single scene. The death of the author is a trope, and a rather pernicious one; the life of the author is a quantifiable entity.

[...]

The death of the author, proclaimed by Foucault, Barthes and many clones after them, is another anticanonical myth, similar to the battle cry of resentment that would dismiss "all of the dead, white European males".

Despite the deletions of this perspective, it is important to consider it as one of the protagonists of a major reversal of roles with respect to the contemporary notion of *author*. For Bloom, the author is first and foremost a creative reader or, if one prefers, a *misreader*. It is from this perspective that the role of tradition is seen as key to writing: the other authors become the raw material of those who come after them. This is not a new dimension to the notion of *authorship*. What Bloom does is radicalize Eliot's view (and before him, Vico's) of *tradition*, but in a psychologizing key. Thus, it is necessary to modalize Bloom without simply discarding him.

With regard to the place of the authority of a text, a writer is especially important in this inversion. In "Kafka and his Precursors", Borges (1989) shakes the notions of *debt* and influence by reversing the angle of the observations about tradition: for Borges, it is Kafka who incites a creative reading of his precursors and, more than that, it is Kafka who creates his precursors. This inversion of the authorial image is primarily a chronological inversion: Borges breaks with common sense with respect to the past and the future. In his short story "Pierre Menard Author of the Quixote" (Borges, 2007c), Menard would have rewritten chapters 9 and 38 of the of Cervantes' work, and by rewriting them the author would have done it identically to the original. Nevertheless, by comparing two perfectly equal fragments, the Borgean narrator considers them totally different. In this seemingly absurd comparison, everything begins to make sense: the fact that Cervantes reappears identical three centuries later, i.e., the temporal displacement of the texts, completely changes their meaning. Similarly, Silviano Santiago (1978) reads Eça de Queirós as the author of *Madame Bovary*.

We are facing another reading method based on the notorious *anachronism*: displacing a text from the moment of its production mobilizes its authorial image, thereby redefining its possible meanings.

The same resource used by Borges is seen in Vladimir Nabokov's *Pale Fire* (2004), and in Italo Calvino's *If on a Winter's Night a Traveler* (1982), which discuss the status of the novel as a genre in light of positions related to the modern aesthetics of reception. Nabokov and Calvino insert in the pattern of the detective novel a discussion of theoretical and critical nature about the fates of the author and of the fictional narrative. In a universe fraught with deconstructionists and constructivists, both transform the literary text into the victim of their plots, which not coincidentally are constructed as parodies of the most modern attitudes of criticism and reading.

It is to denounce this public "constructed" by modern novel, with the stereotypes and limitations typical of its own theories, that Calvino composes his narrative, turning ironically no longer against the possible passivity of the reader, but against his permanent and excessive state of alert, capable, under certain circumstances, to alienate him as much as the inattentive reading.

You've read about 30 pages and you are already beginning to fall in love with the story. Suddenly, you say: "But this sentence, I know it. I get the impression that I've already read this entire passage. "That's right: there are motifs that come back, the text is woven from these comings and goings designed to translate the uncertainties of time. You're a reader sensitive to this kind of subtleties, a reader ready to capture the author's intentions, nothing escapes you. [...] Wait a minute! Look at the page number. Damn! From page 32 you've gone back to page 17! What you thought was a stylistic subtlety on the author's part is simply a printers' mistake: they have inserted the same page twice. (Calvino, 1982, p.33)

From this perspective, the *Aesthetics of Reception* and the *Reader-Response* are not simply a diversion of attention from the authorship, but its reformulation, its shift to the other end of the literary system (author-work-public): the reader as a legitimizer of the meaning. The author is alive. The meaning is still under the custody of someone who now ceases to be the one who arranges words on paper to become the one whose eyes travel over them.

The reader becomes the author. Here is an interpretive hypothesis for the phenomenologies of the individual (R. Ingarden and W. Iser) and collective (H. R. Jauss and U. Eco) reader. Possibly one of its bases is Wayne Booth's objection to the already mentioned text by Bredsley and Wimsatt, and which was already a way to reject the future cliché of the *author's death*. According to Booth, the author never retreats completely from his work. He leaves in it a substitute that controls it in his absence: the *implicit author*. Booth used to say that the author builds his reader the same way he builds his second self (remember Proust's other self), and that the most successful reading is that on which the built "selves" (author and reader) can be in agreement. The implicit author addresses the implicit reader (or the narrator the narratee). When this happens, the author defines the conditions for the real reader's entry in the book: the implicit reader is a textual construction planned, therefore, by the author.

This approximation between author and reader is used especially by Umberto Eco. But the Italian semiologist does not seem to take a specific stand in the discussion, as he defends an apparent compromise between the *author's intention* and the *reader's intention*, a sophism that he terms *intentio operis*, and that does not solve the aporia left behind. His argument becomes a covert way of defending the supremacy of the author.

It is curious to observe Eco's rhetoric mechanism. In it, there is a constant recurrence to examples both personal and taken from *The Name of the Rose*. Noteworthy is the Italian author's *mea culpa*, in a tone of appeal, to his interlocutor: "I hope my listeners will agree that I have introduced the empirical author in this game only in order to stress his irrelevance and reassert the rights of the text" (Eco, 1993a, p. 100). Apparently, Eco tries to cover up, not without

ingenuity and appeal, a conservative approach: he says he agrees with the *new critics* who reject the author's pre-textual intention as an interpretative touchstone, but then states that the empirical author must at least have permission to reject certain interpretations. It is precisely the author of *The Open Work* who says: "I have the impression that, in course of the last few decades, the rights of the interpreters have been overstressed" (ibid, p.27).

The way Eco (1993b, p.104) concludes his last speech on "interpretation" or the role and place of the reader in the process of constructing the meaning of a text is a complaint about the presence of the *author*, referred to by word the *text*: "Between the mysterious history of a textual production and the uncontrollable drift of its future readings, the text *qua* text still represents a comfortable presence, the point to which we can stick."

The "text *qua* text" is a way of saying that the meaning is safe and was determined by the author.

These postulates are unfamiliar to anti-intentionalist criticism. The text, considered as an autonomous code in relation to the author, has long stopped being considered a safe haven for the reader. For many theorists of literature (the Barthes of S/Z, the poststructuralist Derrida, Iser, and, of course, Fish), the text is just the starting point, the initial stimulus, the score upon which the reading expectations of some interpretative communities will act. From this angle, the defense of determination of the meaning based on "textual" readings (Eco) sounds like theoretical refuse, as it is a return to the safe haven of *authorship* in the discussion about the freedom of the reader.

The return to the *author* is thus characterized by both heterodox and traditionalist positions. In the context of the reviews of *intentionality*, one of the strongest interpretations is a retrospective analysis conducted by Paul De Man back in the 1950s, about the *new criticism*. For de Man, American formalist critics seek to jointly defend poetry from deterministic instruments that simplify the complex relationship between theme and style. However, this defense would lack a more accurate reflection on the notion of "intentionality". This is the argumentative core of "Form and Intent in the American New Criticism."

In general, De Man is among the critics who are more determined to reflect on the range limitations of the formalist schools of analysis or, in other words, of the critical schools that relegate the author to an accessory function in the interpretation process. Instead, he advocates the conception of an "intentional structure of literary form":

A truly systematic study of the main formalist critics in the English language during the last thirty years would always reveal a more or less deliberate rejection of the principle of intentionality. The result would be a hardening of the text into a sheer surface that prevents the stylistic analysis from penetrating beyond the sensory appearances to perceive this "struggle with meaning" of which all criticism, including

the criticism of forms, should give an account. For surfaces also remain concealed when they are being artificially separated from the depth that supports them. The partial failure of American formalism, which has not produced works of major magnitude, is due to its lack of awareness of the intentional structure of literary form. (De Man, 1999 p.59)

Among his works that are relevant to this topic are, besides the mentioned study, the reflections on the notions of “literary self”, “impersonality” and “sublimation of the self” applied respectively to the criticism of Georges Poulet, Maurice Blanchot and Ludwig Binswanger, the analysis of structuralism and formalism and, finally, the critical review of *The Anxiety of Influence*, by H. Bloom (ibid.).

These readings result in a deeper relationship between the notions of *authorship* and *meaning*, which is exemplarily applied by the criticism of Antoine Compagnon (2003), for whom the presumption of intentionality remains in literary studies. The core argument of the French critic is to release oneself from having to decide between two extreme and opposite positions: the determinist subjectivism of the intentionalist thesis and the relativistic objectivism of the anti-intentionalist thesis. For Compagnon, the intention is the only conceivable criterion of validity of the interpretation, but it does not identify with clear and lucid premeditation. The critic argues that in a text one can seek what it says with reference to its own context of origin, as well as what it says with reference to the context contemporary to the reader. The alternatives, presented as such, cease to be exclusive and become complementary.

For Compagnon, understanding is recovering the intention, but there is no other greater evidence to accomplish this task than the work itself. The result of this line of thought is a deepening of this notion, as required by De Man in relation to Beardsley and Wimsatt. In this line of thought, *intention* differs from premeditation.

Compagnon makes use of a key concept for this discussion – that of *intention to act*. What underlies the distinctions between the text and its intention is old fallacious opposition between thought and language. Once this distinction is abolished, *intention* becomes what is meant by the text, and no longer before it. From this perspective it is no longer the project, but the meaning.

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As the *author* is more than simply the being of flesh and blood, who can be biographized, psychologized and sociologized and who the nineteenth-century positivism sought to feed, we need to rethink this system of rejections as a movement that does not invalidate its other dimension, possibly deeper and more significant. If for authors like Eco and Compagnon, terms like *intentio operis* and *intention in act* seem to solve the problem of intentionality through its adherence to the text, what is at stake here is a discussion broader than this, since intentionality is an aspect of *authorship*. In Compagnon, although the

path taken by the theoretical tradition on the topic is of great value to this work, this path does not lead to a truly new vision about the *author*. By relying on his obsession with getting rid of the dubiousness of critical thinking (*intentionalists vs. anti-intentionalists*), we fall back into a stalemate, a vague middle ground between author and text, which, strictly speaking, is far from solving the theoretical problem he presents.

In an attempt to further this discussion, I present here, very briefly, a line of investigation resulting from the development of the concluding chapter of my doctoral thesis entitled “*Depõe-se um rei: a paternidade do poema*”. This article proposes to advance that investigation in a different direction. If there, discussing *authorship* has contributed to reading a poem by Pessoa and consequently the heteronomy system as a whole, the aim here is to follow the opposite path: forward the discussion about heteronomy to the realm of *authorship*, which supersedes it and is enriched by it. This means, in other words, changing its discussion context: bring Pessoa’s poetry to the level of a broader theoretical debate.

Let us recall that, by writing poems in different styles and producing different sets of ideas, Fernando Pessoa chose to produce characters with biographies, i.e., with names, a certain look, a small number of habits, place and date of birth, and a genealogy. He cast the horoscope of these characters and defined some of their interpretations. He ascribed sets of poems to them and subsequently got these creative characters to interact with each other through an exchange of correspondence that could express doubts, beliefs and different ways of arguing, to the extent of informing us about different worldviews. Pessoa provided us, in short, with fictional contexts of production for his work through different *authorships*. The expedient resulted in a fictional pact: when we refer to Caeiro, Reis and Campos we imagine individuals with intellectual attributes rather than ownerless perspectives, or with a single owner. When we read that Reis is devoid of affection, immobilized in relation to the fate of things, what comes to mind is a human being, an author, and a set of ideas of which this author is convinced and informs us about. And so, if we want to refer to the “Odes”, we refer to Reis, to what “he” thought and felt and “expressed” in those texts. We do that even knowing that “he”, as an individual, has never existed.

It is true that inadvertent adherence to what was proposed by Pessoa has led to a type of psychologism developed in the 1950s (Simões, 1991), responsible for crystallizing an Oedipian image of the poet. Although resonances of this reading are still common today, a response to it was soon formulated. As noted briefly by Casais Monteiro (1958) and after him by Eduardo Lourenço (1981), Pessoa did not create characters that produced poems; Pessoa wrote poems that only then elicited characters. This assertion leads to a simple inversion in our way of speaking and that we will hardly adopt, but which implies, for example, that it is “*O Guardador de Rebanhos*” who is the author of “Caeiro” and not the

other way around. Just like the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are not only the genetic code of “Homer” but the matrices of the ancient Greek world as we know it.

Aware of that, criticism was given the opportunity to rethink part of its vocabulary. Eduardo Lourenço coined the phrase “Caeiro-poems” to devoid the name of personality and flood it with meaning and style. Caeiro is the style, the lyrical self resulting from those poems, without flesh or bone. But even after solving the game of ideas and words created by Pessoa, we continue to refer to Caeiro just as we refer to Camões or Bocage; and that because giving personality and therefore authorship to a writing is probably a usual way of designating his style.

Pessoa had skillfully given us the tools for that, not just for the metonymization of his texts (for us to refer to the work through the author: “read Caeiro”, for example), but so that we could imagine an individual who consubstantiated art itself. Thus, he did not introduce Campos to us as a shy intellectual; probably because the idea of a quiet man behind the organic fury of his initial verse do not translate into life; it does not help us, ultimately, to imagine, to worship his work as it is done with an idol.

The “modern” attitude of a critic in the presence of a text is to ignore the life that feeds it; a poet’s attitude is to depersonalize himself in the style constructed. These are lessons of time. Although we are not always interested in putting into practice this precept, we have learned that we must stop attempting to see in the author the qualities of the man and to explain the work by the characteristics of the individual. We then speak of writing, text, and avoid its hypothetical expressive character, because the strong nihilistic and anti-humanist burden that we have inherited from the critical thinking of the 1960s and 1970s prevents us from falling into the affirmative fallacy that a text expresses something external/prior to itself. A text can only express itself; this is the result.

In an attempt to replace the nonspecific and persistent look that treated the individual romantically as the target of an archeology of knowledge that could be described by an anthropological explanation, the glorification of an alleged omnipotence of language had undoubtedly a liberal connotation. Today, however, this same attitude represents new taboos in our critical practices.

Heteronomy, however, carries something older than that, and that at the same time surpasses it, because it materializes an illusion of life dictated by styles. Consequently, the quiet man who lived at Aunt Anica’s house and worked as a foreign correspondent in an office at Baixa can be left out, deleted, and the lyric selves, including the orthonymous (a mask disguised as “Pessoa”) come to replace him as authors.

Note that this decentralization of the subject of the writing requires a deeper notion of authorship. Once de-characterized as the mindset of its author, or set of choices of profiles, heteronomy can be understood not only as a way to prolong the act of creation, but especially as the form of existence of this

poetry. This is because if we understand it like that, heteronomy ceases to be an original appeal to the prestige of a hypothetical author, to become a state of poetic concretion.

From the critical standpoint, this gives rise to a massive reversal of perspective, because it implies thinking that Pessoa does not precede his poems, that he is not an author who feeds them on individual characteristics, but someone who becomes an author when coinciding with writing, in the act of enunciation, and never before or after it. Captured in language, it is not the voice that is expressed, but the *author* only when he present at the time of utterance. And utterance only lives and repeats itself in the act of reading. What we see, therefore, in the recurrence of a writing in different realms of that poetry is neither a single voice - because a "voice" is always someone's speech - of a hypothetical author, of whom we could provide a biography, etc., nor an anonymous space of utterance.

The heteronomic phenomenon lends authoring a new state of utterance legitimacy, in that it enables thinking of it as the production of a subject of the language, a subject who may even be imagined as an organic body and previous to the text, but that was built and then thrown back by a genetic material formed by traits of style.

The biography of a writer is lies the intricacies of his style.

It has become commonplace among critics to refer to authors such as Proust, Eliot, Borges and Calvino as writers-critics, i.e., sowers of crucial problems for the Theory of Literature. Given its speculative nature and the degree of depth at which the *literary* is discussed in Pessoa's work, it is somewhat surprising to realize how much the heteronomic phenomenon has been under-explored from a theoretical perspective unforeseen by its author. In Brazil, among possible explanations for that the dialogue is still shy, when not unilateral, between the areas of Portuguese Literature and Literary Theory. This means, in short, that the concerns Pessoa has raised among his critics are generally concerns circumscribed by Pessoa himself or by issues relating to the Portuguese tradition. The re-contextualization of the heteronomic problem in the field of debates about authorship, here understood as the core of modern Literary Theory, is capable of both providing an exclusive space for discussing some unique authors and requesting a step forward in the territory explored by the likes of Jakobson, Eliot, Wimsatt, Barthes, Foucault, Derrida and De Man.

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SIMÕES, J. G. *Vida e obra de Fernando Pessoa* – história duma geração. 6.ed. Lisboa: Publicações dom Quixote, 1991.

Abstract – The latest discussions about authorship are closely related to the searching for the meaning of the text. Because of that, the authorship is being understood as one of the most controversial subjects in literature theory. The first two parts of this paper comprehend a critic and systematic analysis of 1. the author refusal as source of the text meaning (Proust, Eliot, Croce, Wimsatt and Beardsley, Derrida, Barthes and Foucault), and 2. the defense and reviewing of this concept (Booth, Bloom, Eco e Compagnon). And in the last part, 3. it is proposed a particular hypothesis of analyses and interpretation of the authorship, through a change of contexts: the recurrence to the heteronomy concept, by Fernando Pessoa.

Keywords: Authorship, Heteronomy, Literature theory (20th century).

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