

FANTASIES OF FRAGMENTATION IN CONRAD, KAFKA AND PESSOA: LITERARY STRATEGIES TO EXPRESS STRANGENESS IN A HETERO-SOCIAL CONTEXT

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ABSTRACT

Many authors, such as Chamisso, Conrad, Rilke, Kafka, Pessoa, Goll, Nabokov, Celan and Beckett grew up bi- or multilingual, or lived in linguistically and culturally hybrid regions. Recurring to examples of texts by Joseph Conrad, Franz Kafka and Fernando Pessoa, this paper focuses on their common tendency of developing new concepts of the self, by exploring the frontiers of alterity. In a social context, which is often experienced as threatening, the strangeness of being of their literary characters, often expresses itself in a double- or hetero-social consciousness, articulated in the same narrative. In this creative process, fantasies of fragmentation take the shape of doppelgängers, heteronyms, animals and even insects. The following article is a revised version of the paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (AERA), Denver, Col., 3 May 2010.

KEYWORDS

Fragmentation, hybridism, Conrad, Kafka, Pessoa, double self.

FANTASÍAS DE LA FRAGMENTACIÓN EN CONRAD, KAFKA Y PESSOA: ESTRATEGIAS LITERARIAS PARA EXPRESAR EXTRAÑEZA EN UN CONTEXTO HETEROSOCIAL

RESUMEN

Numerosos autores, como Chamisso, Conrad, Rilke, Kafka, Pessoa, Goll, Nabokov, Celan y Beckett, crecieron en ambientes bi- o multilingües, o vivieron en regiones lingüística y culturalmente híbridas. Recurriendo a ejemplos extraídos de Joseph Conrad, Franz Kafka y Fernando Pessoa, este artículo se centra en su común tendencia de desarrollar nuevos conceptos del yo, mediante la exploración de las fronteras de la alteridad. En un contexto social, a menudo sentido como amenazador, la extrañeza de ser sus personajes literarios a menudo se expresa como conciencia doble o heterosocial, articulada en la misma narrativa. En este proceso creativo, las fantasías de la fragmentación adquieren la forma de *doppelgängers*, heterónimos, animales e incluso insectos. El presente artículo es una versión revisada de la comunicación presentada al Congreso Anual de la Asociación Americana de Investigación Educativa (AERA), Denver, Col., 3 de mayo de 2010.

PALABRAS CLAVE

Fragmentación, hibridismo, Conrad, Kafka, Pessoa, doble.

1. INTRODUCTION

This intercultural study in comparative literature is based on the results of several previous studies and attempts to describe, how multiple identities (e.g., based on family, ethnicity, race and nationality) are expressed by fantasies of fragmentation and become productive in the process of writing.

In the context of migration literature and trans-cultural hybridism, these forms of verbalizing feelings of strangeness or otherness are hardly uncommon. As Eva Hausbacher (2008) puts it, the “category of doubling” plays an important role in the “poetics of migration” in terms of time, space and figures or characters.¹

However, fantasies of fragmentation and doubling of the self are also often detectable in other literary domains, for instance in autobiographical writing, when authors are re-examining their own past - a process sometimes resembling an introspective inquisition.

The concept of hybrid cultures arose in the context of the Anglo-American multicultural debate, in which cultures are considered de-territorialized spaces of transition and encounter. Within these assumptions, the interplay of certain psychic states of ambivalence, of fragmentation and doubling of the self, caused by the narrating figure’s separation from home and family, have become common themes.

As writing-strategies, they make part of the concept of performative culture (cf.: “Culture is how to do what”, Gadi Algazi, 2000: 113), in which the creation, acceptance and bearing of multiple identities in competition of sometimes contradictory forms of representation is a system of productive options.

With recourse to texts of Conrad, Kafka and Pessoa that were published in the beginning of the 20th century, I assume that the application of the literary motif of the doppelgänger and other forms of fragmentation, expressing the strangeness of being, can be part of a character’s development (be it fictional or the author’s). During this learning process the ‘other self’ is revealed, not so much as the threatening double invoked by Gothic or Romantic literature, but as helpful complements of a personality. Usually, the outcome of the encounter with the doppelgänger² in the stories of Mary Shelley, E.T.A. Hoffmann, E.A. Poe, R.L. Stevenson, etc. is devastating for the self, reminding us of an unaccomplished

¹ “Die Kategorie der Doppelung spielt eine ganz wesentliche Rolle in einer Poetik der Migration. Diese kann in Bezug auf die Kategorien Zeit, Raum und Figuren stattfinden. Verschiedene Orte werden miteinander verschränkt, sodass sich so genannte „Mischorte“ bilden, es wird analeptisch erzählt, um die unentrinnbare Verknüpfung von Gegenwart mit Vergangenheit aufzuzeigen, die unheimliche Rückkehr der Vergangenheit in die Gegenwart. Aber auch doppelte oder multiple Persönlichkeiten und Doppelgängerfiguren, wie sie auch das Freudsche Unheimliche kennt, sind paradigmatisch in transkultureller Literatur.” (Hausbacher, 2008: 70)

² In his novel *Blumen-, Frucht – und Dornenstücke oder Ehestand, Tod und Hochzeit des Armenadvokaten F. St. Siebenkäs* (1796) Jean Paul [Richter] defined the expression ‘Doppelgänger’ (coined by himself) as “people, who see themselves”. For Jean Paul seeing oneself - “Sich-selber-sehen” – turned into a conscious, introspective writing technique, of which he gives a detailed description in § 34 (on humorous subjectivity) of his *Vorschule der Ästhetik* (1804).

Bildungsroman. Nevertheless, new concepts of the self come to life, discovered through the exploration of the frontiers of alterity. Consequently, the verbalization of this experience may provide a possible approach for creative writing.

Theoretical frameworks for this analysis are provided by Webber (1996) and Bär (2005). Although this study does not always present historical literature of emigration (cf. Kafka's case), and the authors in question do not oscillate between cultures as in modern migration literature (cf. Hall and Bhabha), it still examines phenomena of displacement which all have in common. Conrad's, Kafka's and Pessoa's writing strategies are attempts at turning their subversive 'borderline' perspectives (geographically / psychologically) into productive and creative interventions against traditional and possibly hegemonic ways of representation in their environment.

Using the figure of the double or doppelgänger can give shape to the unconscious and the *unheimlich* in a Freudian sense, to reveal the suppressed, the unseen of culture.³

Not only in literature, but also in film and internet the motif of the double has recently had an enormous impact (cf.: Cameron's blockbuster *Avatar* (2009) and Second Life in internet). From the early age of cinema Otto Rank's article "Der Doppelgänger" in *Imago* 1914 had connected the motif with literature, psycho-analysis and film. As I have already mentioned elsewhere⁴, the doppelgänger in the sense of 'self-seer' has great relevance for actors. In a speech held at Columbia University in 1928, Max Reinhardt emphasized the educational and enlightening function of human desire to assume playfully different shapes, feelings, personalities and destinies. Actors experience "all delights of transformation, all ecstasies of passion, all of the unfathomable life in a dream". However, the great director reminds us that the art of acting's objective is not disguise, but revelation.⁵

³ "The double has always provided a clue to the limits of the culture, by foregrounding problems of categorizing the 'real' and of the situation of the self in relation to the dominant notion of "reality" and "human identity." As Frederic Jameson argues in his article "Magical narratives: romance as genre", it is the identification, the naming of otherness, which is a telling index of a society's deepest beliefs. Any social structure tends to exclude as "evil" anything radically different from itself or which threatens it with destruction, and this naming of difference as evil, is a significant ideological gesture. It is a concept "at one with the category of otherness itself: evil characterizes whatever is radically different from me, whatever by virtue of precisely that difference seems to constitute a very real and urgent threat to my existence." A stranger, a foreigner, an outsider, a social deviant, anyone whose origins are unknown or who has extraordinary powers, tends to be set apart as evil. The double is defined as evil precisely because of its difference and a possible disturbance to the familiar and the known." (Milica Živković, 2000, *THE DOUBLE AS THE "UNSEEN" OF CULTURE: TOWARD A DEFINITION OF DOPPELGÄNGER*: <http://facta.junis.ni.ac.rs/lal/lal2000/lal2000-05.pdf>)

⁴ Cf.: "Perceptions of the Self as the Other: Double-Visions in Literature and Film", in: SCHÖNFELD, Christiane with RASCHE, Hermann, (eds.), *Processes of Transposition: German Literature and Film*, Amsterdam, New Jersey: Rodopi, 2006, pp. 89-117.

⁵ "Der Mensch, in ein kurzes Dasein gesetzt, in eine dicht gedrängte Fülle verschiedenartigster Menschen, die ihm so nahe und doch so unfassbar fern sind, hat eine unwiderstehliche Lust, sich im Spiel seiner Phantasie von einer Gestalt in die andere, von einem Schicksal ins andere, von einem Affekt in den anderen zu stürzen. Die ihm eingeborenen, aber vom Leben nicht befruchteten Möglichkeiten entfalten dabei ihre dunklen Schwingen und tragen ihn weit über sein Wissen hinaus in den Mittelpunkt wildfremder Geschehnisse. Er erlebt alle Entzückungen der Verwandlung, alle Ekstasen der Leidenschaft, das ganze unbegreifliche Leben im Traum. [...] Die Schauspielkunst ist

Chaplin's double role in the *Great Dictator* (1940) also fulfils a didactic function. This makes us suggest that the motif can be also usefully employed in various areas, including creative writing, as I will try to illustrate with the following examples.

In a different way than "William Wilson" (Poe, 1939), where the double represents the normative power seen from the transgressor's perspective, these examples may help to differentiate the concept of the literary double, reduced by Živković to a manifestation of the repressed of what society considers 'evil'.⁶ Consequently, we could ask ourselves, whether the double in the following cases may not rather be linked to 'the unseen of assimilation'.

For Conrad, Kafka and Pessoa the double became a tool for thinking in narratives that sometimes seem to defy their definition: "a means for making sense of experience – a resource for structuring and comprehending the world".⁷ However, the attempt at expressing strangeness requires strange means: from the locating and defining of a fictional character's self in a strange environment to the strategic splitting of the author-figure in order to overcome fears and give shape to things in the real world.

2.1. Joseph Conrad (1857 – 1924)

Joseph Conrad, author of Polish origin who wrote in English, was educated in Poland which was then partially occupied by Austria and by Russia. His father, a translator (of French, English and German) and playwright, encouraged his reading in Polish and French, but he also acquired some knowledge in German and Russian. In 1878 Conrad came to England for the first time and began to learn the language at the age of 21. Having been refused the citizenship of the Austrian-Hungarian Empire, he became British in 1884. Only in 1894, aged 36, did Conrad abandon his seafaring life in order to dedicate more time to his writing: "Both at sea and on land my point of view is English, from which the conclusion should not be drawn that I have become an Englishman. That is not the case. Homo duplex has in my case more than one meaning."⁸

aber zugleich die Befreiung von der konventionellen Schauspielerei des Lebens, denn: nicht Verstellung ist die Aufgabe des Schauspielers, sondern Enthüllung. Wir können heute über den Ozean fliegen, hören und sehen." (Max Reinhardt, 1928)

⁶ "... the double in modern literature expresses itself as a violent transgression of human limitations and of social taboos which prohibit the realization of desire. As a manifestation of a forbidden desire, of everything that is lost, hidden, or denied it points to the basis upon which cultural order rests, for it focuses on the possibility of disorder, that which lies outside the law, that which is outside the dominant value system. It is in this way that the double traces the unsaid and unseen of culture: that which has been silenced, made invisible, made "absent". It threatens to dissolve dominant structures, it points to or suggests the basis upon which the cultural order rests - the unified individual." (Živković 2000, 126)

⁷ David Herman, "Narrative Ways of Worldmaking", in: Sandra Heinen and Roy Sommer (eds.), *Narratology in the Age of Cross-Disciplinary Narrative Research*. (= *Narratologia*, vol. 20), Berlin, New York: de Gruyter, 2009, 71-88, 85). Cf. also: "we organize our experience and our memory of human happenings mainly in the form of narrative – stories, excuses, myths, reasons for doing and not doing, and so on." (Jerome Bruner, "The Narrative Construction of Reality", in: *Critical Enquiry* 18.1 (1991), 1-21, 4).

⁸ Excerpt of Conrad's letter written in 1903 to an expat from Poland, in: Watt, 1981: 24.

After the publication of his first novel *Almayer's Folly* (1895), he confessed to Hugh Walpole: "When I wrote the first words of *Almayer's Folly*, I had been already for years and years *thinking* in English." (Watt, 1981: 22)

Conrad, who considered himself neurasthenic (cf. Watt, 1981: 25), affirmed that it was "too mysterious to explain" how he was rather possessed by the idiom of his literary expression than having chosen or dominated it: ... it was I who was adopted by the genius of the language, which directly I came out of the stammering stage made me its own so completely that its very idioms I truly believe had direct actions on my temperament." (Watt, 1981: 22)

The constellation of the characters Marlow / Kurtz in his novel *Heart of Darkness* (1899) already reveals aspects of the doppelganger. Kurtz represents to Marlow the 'dark' side of him, repressed by civilization. In the wilderness this unknown part of the self threatens to emerge, but in the confrontation with Kurtz and by the ultimate slaying of his 'doppelganger' Marlow does not eradicate himself, as other famous fictional predecessors did (cf. Poe's William Wilson, Stevenson's Dr Jekyll). He can save his personality at the cost of a haunting glimpse of self-knowledge.

In "The Secret Sharer" (1910)⁹ Conrad tells the story of a young captain of a ship who secretly offers refuge to a fugitive whose description reveals characteristics of his "double" (Conrad, 1966: 337, 338):

The shadowy, dark head, like mine, seemed to nod imperceptibly above the ghastly grey of my sleeping suit. It was, in the night, as though I had been faced by my own reflection in the depths of a sombre and immense mirror. (Conrad, 1966: 338)

This uncanny scenario (cf. Freud, *The Uncanny*, 1917) usually introduces a typical plot of a doppelganger representing the hidden negative aspects of the protagonist's personality.¹⁰

However, in the course of the story, an intimacy between the narrator and his double develops to the point of mutual¹¹ identification: "I was so identified with my secret double that I did not even mention the fact in those scanty, fearful whispers we exchanged." (Conrad, 1966: 356) In fact, the young captain feels the weight of his responsibility for the ship and the fear of not being able to fulfil the expectations of his crew drives him into isolation: "I was a total stranger to the ship. I did not know her." (Conrad, 1966: 367). The doppelganger hidden in his cabin, now experienced as "my second self" (Conrad, 1966: 358,

⁹ 'The Secret Sharer' was written in December of 1909 and first published in *Harper's Magazine* (1910).

¹⁰ Cf.: Narratives of Hoffmann, Poe, Dostoevsky, Stevenson, Wilde.

¹¹ "As long as I know that you understand," he whispered. "But of course you do. It's a great satisfaction to have got somebody to understand. You seem to have been there on purpose." And in the same whisper, as if we two whenever we talked had to say things to each other which were not fit for the world to hear, he added, "It's very wonderful." (Conrad, 1966: 360)

363), is the personification of this sentiment of alienation, the origin of which, as the narrator admits, may be a mere fantasy of fragmentation.¹²

Nevertheless, this “second self” has the function of reassuring the captain by helping him to save the ship in a most dangerous situation. The “secret sharer’s” secret support in a personality crisis and his subsequent peaceful disappearance provide one of the few occasions in literature and film where the doppelgänger is not an antagonist, but a liberator.

Coming back to Joseph Conrad as a writer with migrational background, his biographer and occasional co-author Ford Madox Ford characterizes him as follows:

His voice was then usually low, slowly but later on he spoke very fast. His accent was precisely, rather dusky, the accent of dark rather than fair races. He impressed the writer at first as a pure Marseilles Frenchman: he spoke English with great fluency and distinction, with correctitude in his syntax, his words absolutely exact as to meaning but his accentuation so faulty that he was at times difficult to understand and his use of adverbs as often as not eccentric. He used ‘shall’ and ‘will’ very arbitrarily. He gesticulated with his hands and shoulders when he wished to be emphatic, but when he forgot himself in the excitement of talking he gesticulated with his whole body, throwing himself about in his chair, moving his chair nearer to yours. Finally he would spring up, go to a distance, and walk backwards and forwards across the end of the room. (Ford 1924: 34-35)

Even after his first three publications in English, Conrad proposed to several authors to write a novel together, alluding to his lack of linguistic skills.¹³ Before embarking on this project, which resulted in three co-authored works,¹⁴ Ford Madox Ford confessed to have had an urgent visit by H.G. Wells who tried to talk him out of it:

Mr. Wells came to persuade the writer not to collaborate with Conrad. With extreme earnestness he pleaded with the writer not to spoil Conrad’s style: “The wonderful Oriental

¹² “... an irresistible doubt of his bodily existence flitted through my mind. Can it be, I asked myself, that he is not visible to other eyes than mine? It was like being haunted.” (Conrad, 1966:359)

¹³ “He said he had put before them his difficulties with the language, the slowness with which he wrote and the increased fluency that he might acquire in the process of going minutely into words with an acknowledged master of English.” (Ford, 1924: 36)

¹⁴ “Almost without exception, Conrad scholars find Ford an oaf and a liar, capering on the margins of their hero’s career, telling tales out of school about the Master’s views of this or that, and taking credit for far too much of the writing of far too many Conrad novels to be credible. Similarly, Ford scholars find Conrad a cold-hearted, mean-spirited manipulator, taking Ford’s hospitality, his money, his connections and in many cases his hands, heart and mind, while simultaneously belittling Ford and Ford’s work to others. Neither camp finds the collective works up to the standards of their respective hero, and all conclude, explicitly or implicitly, that nothing very interesting in the way of literature came out of the nearly seven years that Ford and Conrad spent working together. Ford was indeed a liar, though a largely benign one, and Conrad was a heartless, fickle user of people (though he seems not to have noticed, for the most part, just how heartless he was). Both men were neurotic in the extreme, about their work and about their lives. Both recast - Ford several times in fact - the substance and the import of their collaboration, as the career of each waxed and (in Ford’s case at least) waned. The three works the two co-authored - *The Inheritors* (1901), *Romance* (1903) and *The Nature of a Crime* (1909) - are indeed nowhere near as good as either novelist’s mature solo work.” (<http://www.noumenal.com/marc/jcfmf/index2.html>) 11/11/2008.

style ... It's as delicate as clockwork and you'll only ruin it by sticking your fingers in it."
(Ford, 1924: 51)

In fact, Conrad's third language in which he chose to publish had been inevitably influenced by the first two: Polish and French. He also used English in the diary written during a voyage to Congo in 1890, but preferred French for literary and intellectual analysis, for its rhetoric elegance and its cosmopolitan delicacy¹⁵ (cf: Watt, 1981: 22). Polish was the language of his childhood memories and of the unconscious when he, for instance, talked in a delirium caused by fever.

Although Conrad's spoken and written Polish remained perfectly fluent, his writing was apparently somewhat formal and not impeccable as regards orthography [...] Conrad had learned English much later in life, and his pronunciation retained a marked foreign accent, especially with "th" sounds, and what should be mute final "e"s; throughout the forty-six years of his life with the English, Conrad's speech immediately identified him as a foreigner.
(Watt, 1981: 21)

Nevertheless, these linguistic and cultural interferences contributed to make his English unusual and remarkable in terms of vocabulary, syntax and also stylistically, what some contemporaneous critics considered his 'exotic style'.¹⁶ Presumably the tendency to employ (triple) parallelisms, notably in Conrad's first works, is the legacy of the French and Polish prose ("... all that mysterious life of the wilderness that stirs in the forest, in the jungles, in the hearts of wild men"). Furthermore, his certain inclination for rhetoric abstraction ("It was the stillness of an implacable force brooding over an inscrutable intention.")¹⁷ may have been due to the influence of these interiorized linguistic and literary models. In a linguistic approach, Mary Morzinski investigates the process of transfer and the interferences of Polish and French in the author's syntactic constructions, explaining how the mother tongue can determine perspective and cognitive development.¹⁸

¹⁵ "As to French, Conrad spoke idiomatically; his written French, however, though easy and effective, was somewhat stiff, and with a good many incidental errors of idiom and spelling." (Watt, 1981: 21) Watt's affirmation is based on a study by René Rapin, "Le Français de Joseph Conrad", prefixed to his *Lettres de Joseph Conrad à Marguerite Poradowska*, Genève, 1966)

¹⁶ One of Conrad's friends, T.E. Lawrence, describes his style as follows: "He's absolutely the most haunting thing in prose that ever was: I wish I knew how every paragraph he writes (... they are all paragraphs: he seldom writes a single sentence ...) goes on sounding in waves, like the note of a tenor bell, after it stops. It's not built in the rhythm of ordinary prose, but on something existing only in his head, and as he can never say what it is he wants to say, all his things end in a kind of hunger, a suggestion of something he can't say or do or think. So his books always look bigger than they are. He's as much a giant of the subjective as Kipling is of the objective. Do they hate one another?" (in: Jeffrey Meyers, *Joseph Conrad: a Biography*, New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1991, p. 343)

¹⁷ Cf.: Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, Page By Page Books (31/01/2009):
http://www.pagebypagebooks.com/Joseph_Conrad/Heart_of_Darkness/Chapter_I_p2.html e
http://www.pagebypagebooks.com/Joseph_Conrad/Heart_of_Darkness/Chapter_II_p2.html

¹⁸ Mary Morzinski, *Linguistic Influence of Polish on Joseph Conrad's Style*, 1994, Boulder: East European Monographs / New York: Distributed by Columbia University Press.

Already in 1930, Gustav Morf had published *The Polish Heritage of Joseph Conrad*, the arguments of which are backed up by his study *Shades and Ghosts of Joseph Conrad* (1976). Based on Conrad's linguistic particularities and on echoes of other Polish authors (most of all Mickiewicz) in his work, Morf suggests that many themes of double personalities therein derive from Polish origin. Douglas Hewitt in his review of Jeremy Hawthorn's book *Conrad: Language and Fictional Self-Consciousness* (1979) also maintains the assumption: "Conrad, perhaps because he himself is using a foreign language, writes unusually often about the language which his characters are using; [...] the most marked sign of the contemptible is the display of eloquence."¹⁹ Several other critics analyzed not only stylistic influences but also philosophic and cultural traits of Polish sources that enriched Conrad's work.²⁰

2.2. Franz Kafka (1883 - 1924)

In terms of socialization in a linguistically and culturally hybrid environment, Conrad's experience is comparable to that of Kafka, who was the offspring of a middle-class Jewish family in Prague. At the time the capital of the Czech Republic belonged to the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Young Kafka grew up under the influence of three cultures: Jewish, Czech and German (according to Wagenbach, 1964: 16, only 34.000 of 450.000 inhabitants of the Bohemian capital spoke German in 1900). Although Kafka learned German as his first language and attended German schools, his written and spoken Czech was almost error-free. In 1901, Kafka began to study Germanistics and Law at Prague's German university, where he obtained his doctorate (Law) in 1906.

Kafka's tendency to introspection, apparent in his diaries and letters, transmits the image of a loner whose affective life is marked by anxiety and frustrations. In his biography *Kafka*, Wagenbach (1964: 49) alerts to the influence of this loneliness (more felt than lived) and of Prague's particular atmosphere on Kafka's style and choice of subject. Another determining factor for this feeling of strangeness may have been the seclusion of the German minority, which, as the biographer points out, did not surpass 7% of the city's population.²¹ Using a terminology branded by the existentialist approach of his time ("Entfremdung" / alienation), Wagenbach describes a phenomenon which in the era of globalization, with its inherent growing mobility, tends to become less alien: the integration of ethnic minorities makes part of the political agenda in any country of the European Union and in the USA. However, the German minority in Prague imposed itself as the ruling

¹⁹ Douglas Hewitt, [review without title], *The Review of English Studies*, New Series, Vol. 32, N° 127 (Aug. 1981), p. 355.

²⁰ Cf.: Zdzisław Najder, *Joseph Conrad: a Chronicle*, New Brunswick and Cambridge 1983; Michael A. Lucas, *Aspects of Conrad's Literary Language*, Boulder: Social Science Monographs 2000.

²¹ "Die ungewöhnliche Thematik und die kühle, klar konstruierte, wortarme Sprache, ihr charakteristischer Purismus, sind ohne Prag nicht denkbar. Für die Thematik war die inselhafte Abgeschlossenheit der Deutschen in Prag – eine Vorform moderner Entfremdung, wenn man will – grundlegend: Die Deutschen hatten zwar alle gesellschaftlich wichtigen Positionen inne, waren aber schon damals eine verschwindende Minorität von sieben Prozent." (Wagenbach, 1964: 49)

force, exerting control and influence not only culturally, but also at a socio-political, economic and administrative level. It was to this group that Kafka's father, of Czech and Jewish origin, tried hard to be integrated. His wife belonged to a relatively wealthy bourgeois family of German Jews, but her son never denied the influences from the 'other side'.

Analysing Kafka's process of writing, Hillmann studies the relationship between various alternative concepts of the self (fictional characters and author) and the borders of alterity²². In this case the ego ("das Ich") does not adopt strangeness as a mask, it is rather a reciprocal process – the strangeness becomes significant for the self ("das Eigene" and vice-versa. Following Hillmann, this applies to Kafka's fictional characters as well as for the author. He maintains that fantastic plots emerge from everyday fantasies and have the same function as these. (cf. Hillmann, 1979: 27-28) However, he does not distinguish between different types of fantasy.

Indeed, in several of Kafka's works, fantasies of fragmentation have been detected by literary critics, for example in "Description of a Struggle" ("Beschreibung eines Kampfes", [writ. 1904] publ. 1936), *In the Penal Colony* (*In der Strafkolonie*, [1914] 1919), "Blumfeld, an Elderly Bachelor" (Blumfeld, ein älterer Junggeselle, [1915] 1935)²³, *The Metamorphosis* (*Die Verwandlung*, 1915), *The Country Doctor* (*Ein Landarzt*, 1919) and in "Investigations of a Dog" ("Forschungen eines Hundes" ([1922], 1931).

Kafka's extreme inclination for introspection often leads to a dissociation of the narrator's figure into an observing part and into one that is being observed. In his interpretation of "Description of a Struggle", Sokel argues that successive egos ("sukzessive Ichs") of the narrator figure continue his characteristic discourse under different labels and that the characters of this fragment are the narrator's masks, projections, antagonistic aspects and duplications.²⁴ He distinguishes four fragmentations of the self: the bachelor or hermit self ("Junggesellen- oder Einsiedler-Ich"), the narcissist-magic self ("das narzistisch-magische Ich"), the praying or petitioning self ("Beter- oder Bittsteller-Ich") and the fugitive, self-castrating self ("das fliehende, sich selbst »kastrierende« Ich").

Apart from fear, feelings of inferiority and disgust, solitude is also one of the important ingredients of the surreal scenario in *The Metamorphosis* which make Gregor Samsa

²² "Was als wechselseitige Bedeutungsgebung, Kompletierung und Komplexanreicherung von Erlebtem, Gehörtem, Gelesenem in Inkubation wie Niederschrift gezeigt wurde, läßt sich nicht einseitig auflösen als Maskierung oder Kostümierung des Ichs in Situationen durch Fremdes. Das Fremde wird bedeutsam für das Eigene und umgekehrt, der kleine Kreis der Liebe für die großen gesellschaftlichen Gebilde und umgekehrt. Kafkas Ernstnehmen der Metaphern ist radikaler und kontrollierter Analogieschluß. Das Subjekt in seinem Prozeß mit der Welt ist Metapher für andere und umgekehrt." (Hillmann, 1979: 27)

²³ H. Platzer Collins, "Kafka's "Double-Figure" as a Literary Device", in: *Monatshefte* 55/1 (Jan. 1963), pp. 7-12.

²⁴ "Varianten des Icherzählers, die als Stimmen [...] in der ersten Person erzählen, also als sukzessive Ichs, die Aktivität des Icherzählers mit anderer Etikettierung fortsetzen." (Kurz, 1984: 134)

transform into a gigantic insect. This process does not seem so much like a duplication of the narrator-figure, but rather like a permanent self-reduction²⁵ of Gregor.

Anticipating the “Investigations of a Dog”, Kafka’s “A Report to an Academy” (“Ein Bericht für die Akademie”, [1917] 1919) about an ape who explains his experience of being domesticated to the level of a cultured European, is really an account of a failed effort of assimilation. The ape’s mimetic approximation to man makes human behaviour the object of scornful mockery. Seen through this perspective, any act of imitation in the process of assimilation, reveals human weakness, thus ridiculing man’s pride in cultural and civilizational progress. Franklin J. Schaffner’s film *The Planet of the Apes* (1967) uses similar techniques of social criticism. However, Kafka’s Darwinist point of view, that mankind would never be able to leave its evolutionary stages behind, becomes evident in one of his conversations with Janouch. According to Kafka, this fact contributes to the complexity of the self, as man finds himself only in the “dark mirror of tragedy”. However, the ape lives on in mankind and the self is nothing but a cage for the past, surrounded by permanent dreams of the future.²⁶

Civilized man’s fear of falling back into atavisms and looking in the mirror in vain for his well-known self, are fantasies of fragmentation already expressed in Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* (1897).²⁷

Even more complex than in the previously discussed ‘Report’ the narrator’s perspective in “Investigations of a Dog” serves to illustrate the concept of “double-consciousness”²⁸ used by Siemerling in the context of cultural difference (alterity). Its positive potential in cognitive terms has been largely neglected:

As the title suggests, Investigations of a Dog points not only to the dog’s attempts to describe Kafka’s world, but, at the same time, to Kafka’s attempts to describe dogdom. And the result, as I interpret it, is not a double impasse. It is a model of cross-cultural criticism. Its terms

²⁵ Kafka explains this concept in a conversation with Gustav Janouch: “Jeder lebt hinter einem Gitter, das er mit sich herumträgt. [...] Das menschliche Leben ist zu beschwerlich, darum will man es wenigstens in der Fantasie abschütteln. [...] Man kehrt zum Tier zurück. Das ist viel einfacher als das menschliche Dasein. [...] Man fürchtet sich vor der Freiheit und Verantwortung. Darum erstickt man lieber hinter den selbst zusammengebastelten Gittern” (Janouch, 1981: 37)

²⁶“Die zivilisierte Welt beruht größtenteils auf einer Folge gelungener Dressurakte. Das ist der Sinn der Kultur. Im Lichte des Darwinismus erscheint die Menschwerdung als Sündenfall der Affen. Ein Wesen kann jedoch von etwas, das seine Existenzgrundlage bildet, nie ganz und gar abfallen. [...] Man kann seinem Ich nur sehr schwer beikommen. Die Sehnsucht nach einer scharfen Abgrenzung gegenüber dem zu überwindenden Stadium führt ständig zu Begriffsüberspitzungen und damit immer wieder zu neuen Täuschungen. Doch das ist gerade der auffälligste Ausdruck des Wahrheitshungers. Man findet sich nur im dunklen Spiegel der Tragik. [...] Der Affe lebt jedoch im ganzen Menschengeschlecht weiter. Das Ich ist ja nichts anderes als ein Käfig der Vergangenheit, umrankt von zeitbeständigen Zukunftsträumen.” (Janouch, 1981: 72-73)

²⁷ Cf.: the chapter on atavisms in the psyche of urban citizens: “Atavismen in der Psyche des Großstadtmenschen”, in: Bär, 2005, 316-322.

²⁸ Siemerling, 2005: 6-13. Cf.: Sacvan Bercovitch, *The Rites of Assent: Transformations in the Symbolic Construction of America*, New York: Routledge, 1993.

are reciprocity, as against dichotomy: not canine or human, but the contingencies of both, as revealed (in degree) through the re-cognition of limitation. We might call this the hermeneutics of non-transcendence. (Siemerling: 23 / apud Bercovitch, 1993: 5)

However, it may be asked in how far this concept of ‘double-consciousness’ applies to the narrators who frequently employ fantasies of fragmentation in the sense of ‘self-seeing’. Certainly, the doubling in Conrad’s text was a strategy to strengthen the protagonist’s personality in an environment he considered hostile (comparable, for example, with the situation in Stefan Zweig’s *Chess Story* (*Schachnovelle*, 1942)). But the cognitive value, obtained by doubling oneself, remains doubtful. In Kafka’s stories, the consequences are usually disastrous for his figures. Could it be that verbalizing these fantasies may have had a therapeutic effect on the author, comparable to Goethe’s experience while writing *Werther*? Certainly not, if we agree with Adorno’s verdict of Kafka being a “solipsist without ipse” (“Kafka: der Solipsist ohne ipse”)²⁹. But did Adorno distinguish between the author’s personality and the personalities of his narrator figures?

Kafka leaves no doubt about his own capacity to distinguish between an author’s personality and his writing strategies. In a remark about E.A. Poe, who also used the motive of the double in his writings, Kafka claims to know perfectly well his way of escaping: “the vision”.³⁰

In his letters to Milena, Kafka confesses that fear, being one of his driving forces for writing, is his essence and probably the best part of his existence.³¹ He also reveals that although he considers German his mother-tongue, he reserves Czech for sentimental matters.³² That is the reason why he asks Milena to write to him in Czech (cf. Kafka, 1952: 15).

Literary critics, such as Gertrude Durusoy (1981) and others³³, confirmed the influence of Czech language, literature³⁴ and culture in Kafka’s work.³⁵ She even suggests that Czech,

²⁹ Theodor W. Adorno, *Minima Moralia*, Frankfurt / M.: Bibliothek Suhrkamp, 1983, p. 299.

³⁰ “Poe war krank. Er war ein armer Mensch, welcher der Welt wehrlos gegenüberstand. Darum floh er in den Rausch. Die Phantasie war für ihn nur eine Krücke. Er schrieb unheimliche Geschichten, um in der Welt heimisch zu werden. Das ist ganz natürlich. In der Phantasie gibt es nicht so viele Wolfsgruben wie in der Wirklichkeit. [...] ich kenne seinen Fluchtweg, das Traumgesicht. Es ist immer dasselbe.” (Janouch, 1981: 57)

³¹ “... ja, ich bestehe aus ihr und sie ist vielleicht mein Bestes.” (Kafka, 1952: 148).

³² “... ich habe niemals unter deutschem Volk gelebt, Deutsch ist meine Muttersprache und deshalb mir natürlich, aber das Tschechische ist mir viel herzlicher ...” (Kafka, 1952: 22).

³³ Cf.: Paul Reimann, et al. (ed.) *Franz Kafka aus Prager Sicht*, Prag, Akademia Verlag der Tschechoslowakischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1966.

³⁴ “Pour qui connaît la littérature tchèque, il est impossible de mettre en doute les connaissances littéraires tchèques de Kafka: Jean Hus, J.A. Komenský, K.H. Mácha, Bžena Němcová, Otokar Březina, Jaroslav Hašek e Richard Weiner pour ne citer que les plus marquants dont l’influence sur Kafka est perceptible.” (Durusoy, 1981: 97)

³⁵ “Possédant à fond les deux langues, il peut justement porter en lui des formes de pensée qu’il exprime plus ou moins consciemment dans une langue sans s’apercevoir de leur appartenance à l’autre. Dans les quatre premiers livres de nouvelles publiés par Kafka, l’incidence de la langue tchèque se fait surtout remarquer dans le choix des mots (on pourrait presque préciser: choix des verbes), les constructions de phrase, l’emploi d’expressions idiomatiques,

more than the German language, is more appropriate to convey Kafka's imaginary universe with a less strange sentiment attached to it.

However, it is precisely this sentiment of strangeness and ambiguity that was widely appreciated in Kafka's work. On the other hand, Durusoy convincingly shows the effects of Czech language and thought in his way of expression, in his choice of metaphors, and even in the gestures of some figures that appear in his narratives.

The strangeness of articulation and of being that these literary characters transmit may be explained by the hetero-social conscience of the author who with his introspective inclination develops the fantasies of fragmentation previously described in a creative and sometimes painful process. Certainly, there were exterior factors other than conflicting cultures that may have stimulated Kafka. For example, literature, theatre and also cinema which began its artistic ascend as Max Brod and Alfred Döblin observed in 1909³⁶ and which, in its silent mode, seemed to hold a promise for a universal language. (Cf.: Balázs, 1924: 30-33)³⁷

2.3. Fernando Pessoa (1888 – 1935)

There are several characteristics that Fernando Pessoa has in common with Conrad and Kafka: a multicultural socialization, a bi- or multi-lingual education, his literary creativity and the tendency to develop new concepts of the self by exploring the frontiers of alterity. In 1896, at the age of seven and a half, Pessoa accompanied his family to South Africa, where he spent great part of his youth until 1906. Very soon, he acquired a noticeable linguistic competence in English (Queen Victoria Memorial Prize for English Composition / 1904) which influenced his thought and imagination. He studied, wrote and worked in this language, sharing the professional experience of being a translator with authors, such as Ezra Pound or Jorge Luis Borges.

Technically and aesthetically Fernando Pessoa is able to resolve the situation of his hetero-social consciences which articulate themselves in the same text through the fragmentation of the author figure. In this creative process, developed by a strategy writing and being, his fantasies of fragmentation assume the forms of heteronyms. Yvete Centeno compares Pessoa's "legible double" with the illegible of Paul Celan and his subsequently growing silent, claiming that bilingualism had been a first form of heteronomy. Pessoa treated

dans l'utilisation du grotesque et de l'ironie, dans l'aptitude à ridiculiser certaines situations, dans certains gestes propres à une époque particulière de Prague. En consultant certaines traductions tchèques comme celles du 'Chauffeur', du 'Procès' et de la 'Métamorphose', on pourrait presque dire que la langue tchèque se prête plus que l'allemand à rendre l'univers imaginaire de Kafka. Le mode d'expression provoque un moindre sentiment d'étrangeté dans cette langue." (Durusoy, 1981: 74)

³⁶ Cf.: Max Brod, "Kinematographentheater", in: *Die Neue Rundschau* 20 (1909), pp. 319-320; Alfred Döblin, "Das Theater der kleinen Leute", in: *Das Theater* I, H. 8 (Dezember 1909), pp. 191-192.

³⁷ Kafka was attracted by the cinema, as several entries in his diary and letters show (cf. Bär, 2005 and 2009).

language like a character he assumed, a mask which allowed him to see himself in a mirror.³⁸

In a draft of a letter to Adolfo Casais Monteiro, presumably of 1930, Pessoa confesses to have felt “since childhood, the necessity of enlarging the world with fictitious personalities” (Quadros, 1986: 181).

This process of multiplication and at the same time depersonalization is well documented and coincides with the literary productions of Conrad and Kafka already mentioned. It is not surprising that Pessoa’s first pre-formations of heteronyms appear in foreign shapes: the ‘Chevalier de Pas’ (1894), ‘Alexander Search’ (1899) and ‘C.[harles] R.[obert] Anon’ (1904 / satirical poem in *The Natal Mercury*, signed C. R. Anon. Poeta e prosador em ingles / poet and prose-writer in English).³⁹

The pseudonym or heteronym ‘Alexander Search’ which, just as the name ‘C.R. Anon’, suggests lost identity constitutes Pessoa’s most significant juvenile creation, with repercussions in his later Portuguese work (cf. Freire, 1999: 433). The coinciding date of supposed birth, at the same place (13 June of 1888, in Lisbon), makes Search the literary double of his creator.

In his book *35 Sonnets* published in 1918 (Lisbon, Monteiro & C.^a) Pessoa mentions the inexplicable fear that was also Kafka’s source of inspiration⁴⁰, mirrors⁴¹ and the countless masques that man uses.

The *Times Literary Supplement* of 19 September 1918 published a short review of the *35 Sonnets*:

Mr. Pessoa’s command of English is less remarkable than his knowledge of Elizabethan English. He appears to be steeped in Shakespeare; and, if he is not acquainted with Daniel, John Davies of Hereford, and other Tudor philosophical poets, this affinity with them is even more remarkable than it appears.

Although there is a slight undertone implying imitation or even plagiarism, this statement is still open to all sorts of interpretations⁴², but the reviewer of the *TLS* continues his ambiguous comment:

³⁸ “Para Pessoa o bilinguismo foi uma primeira forma de heteronomia. Tratou a língua como um personagem que assumiu, uma máscara por trás da qual se escondeu, embora ao mesmo tempo tentasse ver-se ao espelho.” (Centeno, 1988: 87).

³⁹ Silva (1985: 556) also refers to “two undeveloped pre-heteronyms who were, according to Pessoa’s outlines, to be translators: Charles James Search, elder brother of Alexander; and Thomas Crosse, not to be confused with A.A. Crosse, a *persona* used by Pessoa to enter crossword-puzzle contests in English newspapers, from which he derived some income that was sent to a mailbox in Lisbon retained by Pessoa in Cross’s name. (Last year, I also chanced upon a new name – David Merrick – in a list of poems which Pessoa claims to have written ...”.

⁴⁰ Pessoa, *Poemas Ingleses I*, 1993: 72 (XII): “As the lone, frightened user of a night-road / Suddenly turns round, nothing to detect, / Yet on his fear’s sense keepeth still the load / Of that brink-nothing he doth but suspect ...”

⁴¹ *Idem*, p. 79 (XXVI): “For but one side of things the mirror knows, / And knows it colded from its solidness. / A double lie its truth is; what it shows / By true show’s false and nowhere by true place ...”

⁴² Cf. Silva, 1985: 23; Simões, 1950: 117 and Sena (1982: II, 103, 127).

The sonnets, on the other hand, probing into mysteries of life and death, of reality and appearance, will interest many by reason of their ultra-Shakespearian Shakespearianisms, and their Tudor tricks of repetition, involution and antithesis, no less than by the worth of what they have to say.⁴³

Already in 1915 Pessoa had explained his strategy in a letter to Armando Côrtes Rodrigues, defining his objectives, distinguishing between serious literature, conceived in the other's person (“na *pessoa de outro*”) and unserious literature (“literatura insincera”)⁴⁴. In the same letter he recognizes his dangerous tendency to be too “multilateral”, adapting to everything, always a stranger to himself and without coherence within himself (cf.: Pessoa, 1945: 42).

Similar imagery of fragmentation and multiplication, but condensed to a more programmatic significance, is to be found in Pessoa's *Book of Disquiet (Livro do Desassossego)*, where the assumed author-self creates himself as echo and abyss, living of impressions that are not his own.⁴⁵

In these fragments the self's mistrust in itself assumes Kafkaesque dimensions, although with different conceptual consequences for its ego and for the author figure:

I created in me several personalities. I create personalities constantly. Each of my dreams, immediately after being dreamt, incarnates in a different person that may have dreamt it, and [it is] not myself. In order to create, I destroy myself. I externalize myself so much inside of me, that I do not exist except outside of me. I am the unique stage, where several authors perform, representing various plays.⁴⁶

Keeping in mind that this quotation is attributed to Bernardo Soares, one of the author's fictional characters or *alter egos*, we return to the draft of the letter to Adolfo Casais Monteiro already mentioned. Although Pessoa clearly explains his literary approach and method in these lines, he cannot resist toying with the idea of being considered a mad poet

⁴³ The review of the *35 Sonnets* in the *Glasgow Herald* is more explicit: “The sonnets are well done, and but for a certain crabbedness of speech, due to an imitation of a Shakespearian trick, would be excellent.” (Pessoa, *Poemas Ingleses I*, 1993: 23)

⁴⁴ Letter dated Lisbon, 19 Janeiro of 1915: “Mantenho, é claro, o meu propósito de lançar pseudònicamente a obra Caeiro-Reis-Campos. Isso é tòda uma literatura que eu criei e vivi, que é sincera, porque é sentida, e que constitui uma corrente com influência possível, benéfica incontestavelmente, nas almas dos outros. [...] Chamo insinceras às cousas feitas para fazer pasmar, e às cousas, também – *repare nisto, que é importante* – que não contêm uma fundamental idéia metafísica ...” (Pessoa, 1945: 42)

⁴⁵ Creei-me echo e abysmo, pensando. Multipliquei-me aprofundando-me [...] Em cada uma dessas sensações sou outro, renovo-me dolorosamente em cada impressão indefinida. Vivo de impressões que me não pertencem, perdulário de renuncias, outro no modo como sou eu. (Pessoa, 1982: I, 34-35)

⁴⁶ “Criei em mim várias personalidades. Crio personalidades constantemente. Cada sonho meu, imediatamente logo ao aparecer sonhado, encarna numa outra pessoa que possa sonhá-lo, e eu não. Para criar destruí-me. Tanto me exteriorizei dentro de mim, que dentro de mim não existo senão exteriormente. Sou a cena única onde passam vários autores representando várias peças.” (Pessoa, 1982: I, 34-35)

(“Não me custa admitir que eu seja louco”): “After all, it is just the dramatic temperament taken to the limit; writing dramas of souls, instead of dramas of action and in acts.”⁴⁷

Small wonder Jorge de Sena’s preface to the Ática-edition of Pessoa’s collected English poems (*Poemas Ingleses*, Lisbon, 1974) bears the revealing title “O heterónimo Fernando Pessoa e os poemas ingleses que publicou” (The heteronym Fernando Pessoa and the poems published under it). In this essay Sena places Pessoa in a tradition of authors who, since the beginning of the 20th century, have used similar fantasies of fragmentation. Among others he refers to André Gide, Paul Valéry, Rilke, Ezra Pound and T.S. Eliot.⁴⁸

Quoting Jennings, who compares Pessoa’s reception by British literary criticism with Joseph Conrad’s⁴⁹, Sena complains about the Anglo-Saxon “isolacionismo” and “arrogância” which never recognizes that a foreigner can possibly write in English.⁵⁰

Again referring to Conrad’s case, Sena claims that the seemingly incorrectness provoked by the interference of two linguistic systems in Pessoa’s work is really a matter of style. Analysing this creative act, he comes to the conclusion that phenomena of this order in bilingual authors, are not so much the effect of an unconscious projection of one language over the other, but rather a stylistic invention. As the writer does not find adequate ways to express exactly what he means in the other language, Pessoa applies particular linguistics means of the target language to ‘translate’ (idiosyncratic use of adjectives, substantivation of verbs, etc.).⁵¹

In his article “Between English and Portuguese: Fernando Pessoa, The *Estrangeirado*” (1985) Jaime H. da Silva does not explore these linguistics aspects, but focuses on the concept of identity. Based on studies of R. Langbaum, L. Forster e G. Steiner⁵², he includes

⁴⁷ “Trata-se, contudo, simplesmente do temperamento dramático elevado ao máximo; escrevendo, em vez de dramas em actos e acção, dramas em almas.” (Quadros, 1986: 181)

⁴⁸ “Poetas e romancistas poéticos (ou não) multiplicam as semi-heteronimias, atribuindo obras a personalidades cuja criação como tais, resulta da própria obra que lhes é atribuída ou que o autor descreve: Valle-Inclán, Baroja, António Machado, Pérez de Ayala, Valéry Larbaud, André Gide, Paul Valéry, Rilke, Ezra Pound, T.S. Eliot, etc., todos em maior ou menor grau recorrem a este tipo diverso de personagens que não são pseudónimos.” (Sena, 1982: II, 90)

⁴⁹ In his *The D[urban] H[igh] S[chool] Story, 1866-1966, faithfully recorded* (Durban, 1966) Hubert D. Jennings comments: “It is odd to read that this great Portuguese poet never fully mastered the syntax of his own language and the touch of humour in his writing is essentially the English type. One can guess that it had the odd attraction that the occasional un-English phrase in Conrad’s novels has, ...” (Sena, 1982: II, 103)

⁵⁰ “... nunca em verdade reconhecem que um «estrangeiro» possa escrever em inglês (ainda hoje a crítica insiste no estilo «artificial» do polaco Conrad, um dos maiores escritores da língua inglesa, e por certo muito menos «artificial» que o de muitos ingleses ilustres do seu tempo), ou sequer *viver* em literatura da língua (o que não é bem a mesma coisa que o mito romântico da vivência de uma língua e de uma cultura «nacionais».” (Sena, 1982: II, 103)

⁵¹ “Fenómenos desta ordem, em autores bilingues, não serão tanto efeito de projecção inconsciente de uma língua sobre a outra, mas de a invenção estilística resultar de o escritor não encontrar, na outra língua, modos de dizer para expressões que lhe parecem mais rigorosas e adequadas se consideradas na outra – e é o que Pessoa fez com as suas adjectivações sintagmáticas, a sua substantivação dos verbos, os seus desdobramentos, em português, do «caso possessivo» britânico, etc.” (Sena, 1982: II, 103-104)

⁵² Robert Langbaum, *The Mysteries of Identity: A Theme in Modern Literature*, New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1977; Leonard Forster, *The Poet’s Tongues: Multilingualism in Literature*, Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1970;

Pessoa in the line of thought of English Modernism: “Unable to reconcile empathy, individualism, and sincerity, post-Romantics from Arnold to Eliot to Pessoa begin to turn away from self to impersonality, or as Pessoa will call it, *despersonalização*.” Silva compares the use of masks in Pessoa’s Sonnet VIII with Prufrock’s obsession with social masks (cf. T.S. Eliot, “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock”, 1917), concluding that “Pessoa’s reconciliation of self, unlike that of Yeats [...] is paradoxical godhead of heteronyms and semi-heteronyms unified in the depersonalizing oronym Fernando Pessoa, «ele-mesmo». It is not impersonality, rather *despersonalização*, a willed escape into multi-personality.” (Silva, 1985: 551)

Reminding us of Forster and Steiner who claims that extraterritoriality is a common characteristic of many modernist writers, Silva alerts to Eliot’s French poems, Joyce’s Italian poems and to the polyglot structure of vanguard works, such as *Finnegan’s Wake* (1936): “Language and, especially, foreign languages became a mask for the Modernist.” (Silva, 1985: 553)

Apart from Portuguese and English, Pessoa had also studied French (cf.: the ‘Chevalier de Pas’), but even during his first years after his definite return to Lisbon - until 1908, English continued to be his “natural language: he thought in English, he wrote in English”. (Cf.: Simões, 1950: 108)

Although Fernando Pessoa abandoned his first experience of multi-personality and poetic masks in 1908 and initiated his literary career in Portuguese, he continued writing poetry and prose in English until his death in 1935. Contrary to Gaspar Simões, Silva does not attempt to explain this change with the “nacionalização” (cf.: Simões, 1950: 123) of Pessoa as a poet. In his opinion, Pessoa never nationalized himself, despite his frequently quoted affirmation that his realm was the Portuguese language (“A sua pátria, disse ele, era a *língua portuguesa*, ...” / Sena, 1982: I, 93):

... it was Pessoa’s early intention to become an English bard, following in the tradition of his literary idols, Shakespeare and Keats. There is one very elucidating manuscript among his papers in which Pessoa, after setting down a satirical elegy - «On The Marriage Of My Dear Friend Mr. Jinks, But Which May With Equal Madness Be Applied To The Marriage Of Many Other Gentlemen» -, signs «C.R. Anon / id est Alexander Search». The problem with the early try at heteronyms was, as I conclude that document shows, that the two poets were not sufficiently differentiated in style, in Worldviews, or in influences. During this period there was also a Fernando Pessoa, «ele-mesmo», who, too, wrote verses and prose in English. This pre-oronym lacked a persona fully delineated from the poorly differentiated A. Search and C.R. Anon. One of the characteristics of these poets which Pessoa did later transfer to the Portuguese heteronyms was their abusive attacks upon each other. (Silva, 1985: 556)

George Steiner, 'Extraterritorial', *Extraterritorial: Papers on Literature and the Language Revolution*, New York: Atheneum, 1976 e *After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation* (1975), New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1977.

In fact, the later created heteronyms, such as Ricardo Reis, Alberto Caeiro or Álvaro de Campos (considered by Simões a twin brother of Alexander Search) are also fragmentations, representing figurations of Pessoa's different states of mind. Thus, they allow the poet to see and analyse himself as the other.⁵³

However, Silva does not overlook Pessoa's problems "to articulate his linguistic alienation" (Silva, 1985: 564). Quoting Steiner ("There were times when Kafka felt the multiplicity of language to gag in his throat"), he turns the literary strategies to express strangeness from a national(istic) issue into a modernist feature:

Thus the Modernist is that «extraterritorial» writer who is – to quote Steiner anew - «linguistically 'unhoused' ... not thoroughly at home in the language of his production, but displaced or hesitant at the frontier». Pessoa and his heteronyms are estrangeirados not just in a Portuguese context, but, like Arnold's Empedocles, «strangers of the world». (Silva, 1985: 566)

3. CONCLUSION AND POSSIBLE APPLICATION

In critical reception, the influence of various cultures and languages in the works of the three selected authors is usually described as an element of strangeness. The diminishing tendencies of 'nationalizing' those authors by the respective national literatures opened new space for studies (cf.: Morzinski, 1994; Durusoy, 1981), according to which certain linguistic and cultural interferences can become stimulating and productive factors in the narrative's and poem's process of conception. The success of the authors' texts in terms of public acclaim and sales proves that these factors may also be attractive for the reader. The frequent fantasies of fragmentation, duplication or even multiplication detected in those works can be the result of the authors' cultural and linguistic constellations. In this line of thought their literary expression is the figurative exteriorization of the narrator's / poet's interior state(s).

In 'The Secret Sharer' Joseph Conrad uses the motif of the double still in the tradition of authors, such as Poe, Hawthorne, Melville, Stevenson, etc. The young captain shares and compensates the strangeness he experiences on the ship with a "second self". For this protagonist with autobiographical traits, the experience with his double is enriching and ultimately leads to the reaffirmation of his personality. Nevertheless, it is not surprising that Watt hesitates in placing Conrad's work (with the exception of *Heart of Darkness*) in the symbolist tradition together with "Proust, Kafka, Joyce, Mann, and Faulkner" (Watt, 1981: 189).

⁵³ Cf.: "... uma série de sonhos de mim de alguém de fora de mim?" ("Lisbon Revisited", 1926) and: "... a mim não me revejo! Partiu-se o espelho mágico, em que me revia idêntico, / E em cada fragmento fatídico vejo só um bocado de mim -". (Pessoa, 1969: 360)

In a clear and beautiful style⁵⁴, Franz Kafka's literary fantasies of fragmentation seem to be a response to the strangeness of (his) human condition: a refusal of an existence ("das menschliche Dasein") behind bars that are often self-imposed. Kafka, as well as Fernando Pessoa use fantasies of fragmentation and duplication as a literary device in a post-modern context. Through his writing technique and strategy, Pessoa, possibly more than anyone, develops a literary system to direct these fantasies cognitively, but just as Kafka, he seems unable to integrate the fragmented parts (heteronyms) as complementary elements into his personality. However, both writers find within themselves a world of terrible beauty (at least from the reader's point of view).

However, the question remains how far the cognitive use of doubles in a writing process can be helpful on an educational level. In online education avatars substitute the human interaction teachers and students are used to in classrooms and in the traditional learning environment. They can provide happy faces to everybody involved in the learning process and are useful for teachers when it comes to designing digital stories or delivering content. Avatars can represent tour guides explaining travels, real life characters, or authors, such as Joseph Conrad, giving a lecture on how he conceived *Heart of Darkness*.⁵⁵

Compared to these technical possibilities, the double consciously created in thought and word may have a greater potential in terms of "self-seeing", or gaining self-knowledge than, for instance a character in *Second Life*, acting out unfulfilled wishes. As observed in the cases of Conrad, Kafka and Pessoa, there are countless shapes for the 'other' in oneself, whether desirable or undesirable. Facing and naming these uncanny aspects (*unheimlich* in the Freudian sense) is the first step to deal with them. The ability to express these ambiguities, bringing them to life, playfully and artistically through creating the 'other' may shed more light on the strangeness experienced in a hetero-social context. This could be done in courses of creative writing, but also in the area of performative arts (theatre, film).

⁵⁴ "Er schreibt die klarste und schönste Prosa, die zur Zeit in deutscher Sprache geschaffen wird." (Kurt Tucholsky, *apud* Wagenbach, 1964: 143)

⁵⁵ Cf.: "Talking Avatars in Education - The Virtual Teacher comes of age!", at: <http://www.articlesbase.com/education-articles/talking-avatars-in-education-the-virtual-teacher-comes-of-age-996023.html> (6/3/2010).: "Virtual Teachers, educational presenters and tutor can have a new face, available 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year, with the same happy disposition, virtual, animated, automated lip-syncing and compelling content combined with contextual delivery. We know that retention is improved, we know that "lean back" education can be effortlessly absorbed and we know that there is nothing more powerful when it comes to delivering complex ideas or facts than the spoken word. Virtual Teachers can be available in different forms, ages, sexes and even fantasy. The flexibility is endless. Education creators can concentrate on the subject matter and choose the ideal Virtual Tutor to assist in the process. Literature assignment can be delivered in context and even brain teasing science and math education can become more precise when you have the help of a virtual tutor that has the power of "voice". Un-attended education across the web or operated locally makes virtual education delivery highly effective and manageable."

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