Theatricalizing Fernando Pessoa and His Heteronyms: Research, Writing, Rehearsal, and Performance of The Last Seven Words of Fernando Pessoa

by
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Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Fine Arts

in the
School for the Contemporary Arts
Faculty of Communication, Art and Technology

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SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
Spring 2012

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Abstract

This document focuses on the playmaking process of The Last Seven Words of Fernando Pessoa, a theatre piece that examines identity through an imagined encounter of Portuguese poet Fernando Pessoa and his literary concept of heteronyms. The process includes two years of research, workshops, various collaborations, several drafts, and seven weeks of rehearsal. This ensemble piece weaves text, movement, and music together to present Pessoa’s life of multiplicity. The creative process employed a mixed method (hybrid) of traditional script creation, devising, and a de-hierarchization of performance modes. The play questions traditional staging in order to engage an audience.

Keywords: Theatre; directing; playwriting; devising; multiplicity; heteronym
This is dedicated to Adam and my family.
Acknowledgements

Thank you to everyone who collaborated and contributed to the projects I worked on during my time at SFU.

• To Gina Readman, Elliot Vaughan, Ryan Swanson, and Keith Gagnon for your work on *Autopsicografia – Part 1*.

• To Sean Marshall Jr., Manuela Sosa, Linda Pitt, Sadie Henschel, Gina Readman, composer Elliot Vaughan, costume designer Flo Barrett, and lighting designer Carolynne Hulbert for your work on *Fnu Lnu*.

• To participants of the workshop of May/August 2011 for my Pessoa project: Adam Cowart, Pedro Chamale, Gina Readman, Elliot Vaughan, Natalie Schneck, Manuela Sosa, Chelsea Macdonald, Derek Chan, Aryo Khakpour, Victoria Lyons, Conor Wylie, Daniel Borzillo, and Anne-Sophie Woolnough.

• To the dedicated ensemble of *The Last Seven Words of Fernando Pessoa*: Aryo Khakpour, Conor Wylie, Daniel Borzillo, Elyse Cheadle, Kaylin Metchie, Manuela Sosa, Minah Lee, and Sean Marshall Jr. To the entire creative team including dramaturg Pedro Chamale, choreographer Iris Lau, composer/performer Elliot Vaughan, visual dramaturg Karilynn Ming Ho, lighting designer Jonathan Kim, costume designer Andre Tse, set designer Carolynne Hulbert, projection designer Michael Zhao, and the entire production team. To Sr. Melo for allowing our production to use his 100-year-old Portuguese guitar. I thank you all.

• Thank you to the Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal in Lisbon, Portugal for granting me access to Pessoa’s oeuvre. To the Casa Fernando Pessoa for welcoming me and reserving a spot on their shelf for my thesis.

• Thank you to my committee. To Stephen Heatley for agreeing to be the external examiner and taking an interest in my work. To supervisor DD Kugler for his unwavering commitment to the work. To Senior Supervisor Steven Hill for leading me through this process.
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1. Introduction

*The Last Seven Words of Fernando Pessoa*, the culmination of two years’ worth of research, is an imagined encounter of Pessoa’s life. This framework allows me, as writer and director, to investigate Pessoa’s literary concept of heteronyms, and elements of the Portuguese identity. The interest in Pessoa’s work and life accelerated at the beginning of my MFA when I performed a solo piece based on his poetry. After directing a devised piece in collaboration with four performers based on his writing and poetry, I began intensive research when I visited the National Library of Portugal in 2010, and again in 2011. After two development workshops of the script, I entered a seven week rehearsal process with the ensemble. The creative process employed a mixed method (hybrid) of traditional script creation, devising, and a de-hierarchization of performance modes.

The play allowed me to explore character, identity, and performance modes (i.e. lights, sound, costumes, set). I would suggest that character is a loop of interpretation fed through multiple people as it is the synthesis of the writer, director, actor, and the audience. It is an ongoing process that is only complete when the audience experiences the play. The play when presented is not a finished product; it needs the audience’s creativity, imagination, and contemplation to make the play complete. Identity, an aspect of the self, is also in constant evolution. I view each of the different performance modes as an independent means of expression; each mode carries with it information to assist the audience in experiencing the play. Ideally the modes may be combined so that one mode does not outweigh the others in terms of importance.

During the research and creative process, I had questions such as: in what ways would I be able to find action in this biographical work? Do Pessoa’s heteronyms redefine or challenge, in any way, character or the self? In what ways could multiplicity manifest itself on the stage? How much room would there be to devise since there was already a developed script? I was also interested in developing a company of actors,
working architecturally in the space, working with the performativity of the lights, and working with the potential of the body with the choreographer.

The following examines the methodologies involved with creating this piece of theatre. It also examines early studies, concepts, and the evolution of the creative process that culminated in the final project.
2. Research

2.1. Part I

My initial interest with Pessoa’s work was born out of reading The Book of Disquiet nine years ago. The earliest work I did in relation to my interest was a first year studio project in September 2009. I created and performed a solo piece based on Pessoa’s poetry, and writing from his three major heteronyms: Alberto Caeiro, Álvaro de Campos, and Ricardo Reis. Pessoa, in a letter to Casais Adolfo Monteiro dated, January 13th, 1935,¹ says that the origin of his heteronyms is rooted in his hysteria and his tendency toward depersonalization and simulation. He goes on to say that, in men, hysteria mainly affects the mind, which is why for him it ends in silence and poetry. So Pessoa dealt with his hysteria by writing through his heteronyms, creating a multiplicity of voices.

Heteronyms are similar to pseudonyms, except Pessoa takes it to another level by writing his heteronyms’ biographies and giving each one a distinctive voice and writing style. These unique styles allowed me, as actor, to embody the different characters distinctly – one body performing different voices. Prior to the performance I also typed different poems in Portuguese, put them in a sealed envelope, and left them in my classmates’ mailboxes a week before the performance. I did this in order to give them a sense of being written to by lettermail, and to establish the importance of writing. As the audience arrived for the performance, they found another sealed envelope, this one containing the English translation of the poem they received a week prior. I performed a distinct body for each voice, and I chose Pessoa as the neutral body. My

classmates enjoyed the mystery of the letter and the performance, although the transitions from character to character did not work for them because the performed hysteria (in the transitions) distracted them from the more subtle performance. In the next Pessoa performance, they suggested I should experiment with having the piece performed by several people which would clarify both voice and body for each character.

2.2. Part II

The second phase of research was Autopsicografia – Part I, my first year show performed in May 2010 – a devised piece of theatre based on the poetry and writings of Fernando Pessoa. The performers (Gina Readman, Elliot Vaughan, Ryan Swanson, and Keith Gagnon) began this project without a script. As the director, I started by having conversations with the performers about their interest in theatre and elements within their favourite piece of theatre. I then introduced text – a mixture of Pessoa’s poetry, his heteronyms’ poetry, and the narrator story that surfaces at the beginning of The Book of Disquiet. I asked what heteronym, or type of writing, each performer was drawn to. Readman was drawn to the narration in The Book of Disquiet, Vaughan to the punctuation and the dates found at the bottom of each poem, Swanson to the poetry of Pessoa and Álvaro de Campos, and Gagnon to the odes of Ricardo Reis. I began creating a structure based on these disparate stories/writings by using cards that contained a poem or line(s) they had chosen in rehearsal. I placed these cards on a long sheet of paper creating a linear structure. I worked with the actors, familiarizing them with this newly formed narrative, and began rehearsal based on this frame. Vaughan also composed two songs that were based on the writing.

After creating the structure of the piece, I designed the set in collaboration with the performers. It was important to all of us that the set was comprised of elements that were in Pessoa’s life, such as café related items. We gathered spoons, cloths, tea cups, a square table, and chairs (hung on the wall) to create the set. The tea cups were lined up on the piano; during the show Readman took a sip from each cup to reveal a lipstick mark on the other side; the last one revealed a Pessoa inspired moustache.
Since the research we had done tended to highlight timelines of Pessoa’s life, time was an element prevalent in our piece. A few days before the show, I found a giant red clock (4 ft. in diameter) at a yard sale – a perfect symbol to insert into the set design to represent Pessoa’s biographical timeline. It also added an absurd element that over-represented time, and echoed the numerous dates that are found in his poetry. In addition, that design element provided the audience with a large central focal point to ground themselves visually. Another important element was the cigarettes. Swanson used the action of rolling cigarettes to indicate Pessoa creating his heteronyms; each roll was as if a new voice was created. The pen and ink that Pessoa used were an important physical element that functioned as a means of creation for all of Pessoa’s writings. At one point during the show Swanson splashed black ink on Gagnon, as he stood against a white wall, to create a metaphoric death to his character. We used the key objects in Pessoa’s life in as many ways as possible. Paper was written on, read, and ripped up. Cups were used to drink from, as mini sculptures, and as monocles. All of these physical objects were sourced from photographs, notes about his heteronyms, or biographical descriptions in various books about Pessoa.

This project taught me that I was capable of devised work, and more importantly, a piece on Pessoa has plenty of depth to take on as a subject.

I then directed a one-act play, Fnu Lnu by New Yorker Mac Wellman, for the directing projects in December 2010. Wellman’s writing style is experimental and invites play. I chose his work, and particularly that play, because it had a narrative that was linear but also complex. I also wanted to experiment with character, character transitions (roles are doubled, tripled), and staging. I felt as though my experience directing this piece could inform the Pessoa project in terms of narrative, character, and staging. The play also had songs, another element I wanted for the Pessoa project.

After casting the ensemble, rehearsal focused on character, but also the transitions from one character to the next. This was important because I was unsure if, during the next phase of the Pessoa project, we would have only one Pessoa who played many parts, or if there would be many characters. While three women (Linda Pitt, Manuela Sosa, and Sadie Henschel) rehearsed with Elliot Vaughan (composer) for an hour on music, I worked with the main character (Sean Marshall Jr.) on each of his
various characters who predominantly had monologues. We then would gather, with dramaturg (Gina Readman), and rehearse scenes from the play. I learned how to schedule time for rehearsing songs, and that playing two or more characters is a challenging but an interesting choice.

The different performance modes were essential in creating the unique world of *Fnu Lnu*. Sound assisted in telling the story of each character and created shifts in location. I wanted to experiment with microphones, as did Vaughan, and *Fnu Lnu* gave us the opportunity to work with them. At one point Marshall Jr. played an evil character and spoke incredibly close to the microphone which made a loud menacing sound; this sound quality was intimate yet large and would not have been possible without the microphone. We used the microphones to amplify sound made by objects in order to add to the songs and the atmosphere. We played with hearing the breath of the actor on microphone. Essentially, Vaughan and I were looking at the different qualities sound made and possibilities derived from use of a microphone. Carolynne Hulbert’s lighting design created different playing spaces on stage by constricting space, and they created a different mood for each locale by changing colour. The sharp lighting transitions assisted in shaping the various character and location changes. This *Fnu Lnu* experience taught me that, for the Pessoa project, I was interested in playing with sound, microphones, and lights because of their potential in telling a story. It also confirmed that creating a great ensemble was critical when tackling a complex and experimental script.

### 2.3. Part III

*After Autopsicografia – Part I*, it was evident I had a passion for Pessoa’s poetry and his life, but I felt as though books could capture only a portion of Pessoa’s writing. I wanted to see for myself just how massive his over 25,000 documents were. His entire oeuvre is located in Lisbon, Portugal. I needed to go there to get a better understanding of his published and unpublished work. I did not know what to expect, but I knew the experience would help me as a writer.

In August 2010, I went to the National Library of Portugal in Lisbon during very hot weather. I arrived at the library with security greeting me at the door; all backpacks,
camera, larger items must be stored in their day lockers. I went to the help desk, got my library card, and went upstairs to the reserve level. I asked for help and the librarian showed me to the one computer that stored all of Pessoa’s files digitally. The librarian also showed me the hard copy index that contains the topographical listing of what was found in Pessoa’s trunk. I sat down at the computer, clicked on the Pessoa folder, and looked at the hundreds of folders that each contained hundreds of slides. I knew then that it would be impossible to go over this material in the limited time I had. Every time I clicked on a folder it lead to more writing. I re-strategized and looked through the headings searching topics that were of interest to me. I spent days taking notes and recording which slides I was interested in. I decided to order a few thousand slides so that I could take the time and go through once I returned home.

This same trip I visited the Casa of Fernando Pessoa, a museum located in the apartment where Pessoa spent the last fifteen years of his life. There is a library consisting of books about Pessoa, but also books found in Pessoa’s own collection. I was able to view the original typewriter Pessoa used. A room upstairs is decorated as if it was inhabited by one of Pessoa’s heteronyms; every year they rotate to whom the room is dedicated. The year that I visited, the room was dressed as if it belonged to Ricardo Reis.

I visited two other sites that were influential to my writing: Mosteiro dos Jerónimos and the Fado house.

The Mosteiro dos Jerónimos is a monastery in Lisbon that houses Portuguese icons like Luis de Camões and Vasco de Gama: that is where Pessoa’s tomb is currently situated. The tomb is encased in marble and is square but tall; on three sides there are quotes from Pessoa’s heteronyms.

The Fado House was influential to my process because I wanted to include a fado song in the Pessoa project, but I had never been to a traditional Fado House. Distinct to the Portuguese culture, Fado is a genre of music that has soulful and sometimes sad lyrics accompanied by the Portuguese guitar. I attended the Clube de Fado in Lisbon and took note of the structure of the event. People eat dinner, lights are lowered to a red colour, the fadista singer and guitar players lean on the wall and sing a
few songs, and then the lights come back up and people continue eating. Fado has the
ability to express what it is to be Portuguese, so this intimate experience was something
I was hoping to achieve in my thesis project, even if only for a moment.

When the slides arrived a few months later, I began to go through the files to see
if there was poetry that would be interesting to source for the Pessoa project. I
discovered that Pessoa's hand writing was visually very interesting because his
penmanship varied depending on the heteronym he was writing through. He even
practiced different heteronym signatures. The paper he used came in all shapes and
sizes; some were old envelopes, lined notes, and some were business letterheads.
Some of the material was handwritten, some was typed. The physical act of writing and
typing also became of interest to me after viewing the slides.

In April 2011, I returned to Lisbon to focus more on Pessoa's biography. I wanted
to get a sense of his daily life and I wanted to feel the effect the city had on me. I began
with a shorter visit to the National Library, I spent a few days searching in the microfilm
area through daily newspapers during Pessoa's time. I found his obituary.

At the Casa Fernando Pessoa there was a display of objects belonging to
Pessoa – small notepads, pens, and glasses. This time the heteronym room was
dressed as if it belonged to Bernando Soares.

I also visited 'A Brasileira', the coffee shop Pessoa frequented and (significantly)
where he had mail delivered to. The coffee shop is narrow with a wood entrance,
mirrors, and a giant clock.
This trip I noticed the architecture of the city. I noticed the steepness of the streets and the effect that had on my body as I went up and down the slippery cobble stones (see Figure 1).

Apartments were tightly stacked next to each other with windows that had clotheslines in front of them; because of the close proximity of the apartments it allowed neighbours to speak to each other as they leaned out through the windows. The Tagus River was shining and, as I stood by it, I noted the blustery weather by the shoreline. Two white pillars graced the edge of the river where water swished around them. The train underground, the trams, and the boats all reminded me that this city is a port, with things constantly coming and going; a metaphor for the ebb and flow of life.

I stumbled upon a statue of Pessoa outside of the apartment where he was born. His head is a book (Figure 2). An unusual but inspiring statue.
The sights and sounds of Lisbon this time around left a mark, and because I had written in my journal every day, I was excited to see where my writing would lead after experiencing two very different trips.

Figure 2. Pessoa statue. Lisbon, Portugal
3. Writing

In the early stage of the project I felt as though I was constantly researching, and searching for, a ‘real’ Pessoa. What I finally realized was that the self, as Mikhail Bakhtin describes, is “unfinalizable.” This gave me creative freedom to write without the pressure of portraying the real Pessoa.

Finding the precise moment I started to write the play, and when I subsequently finished, is difficult. If one considers writing for the theatre as a kind of composing, then I was still writing, as the director – shaping bodies in space, generating material with the ensemble, and writing the visual landscape of the stage. The play went through three official drafts, but I began writing toward the text in April, while in Portugal. After every Pessoa-inspired trip (museum, library, statue, etc.), I would sit at a café and write for at least an hour. This time allowed me to reflect upon what I had just experienced and allowed the present moment at the café to inspire writing.

During this trip I was notified that my show would now take place at the end of October rather than at the beginning of December. Receiving this news was a shock as this meant I had one and a half months less to write the play. I began re-scheduling the draft deadlines and workshops. My rehearsal draft had to be finished by September 10th (first rehearsal), which is when I planned to have the first cold read.

I wrote for a couple hours each day. Some days were better than others, but content was being generated. Anytime I felt resistant to this daily routine, I would recall Anne Bogart who wrote,

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Every act generates resistance to that act. To sit down to write almost always requires a personal struggle against the resistance to write. Entropy and inertia are the norm. To meet and overcome resistance is a heroic act that requires courage and a connection to reason for action. (137)

I sent the first draft to the dramaturg (Pedro Chamale) and we both agreed that the action in the play was hard to find because of excessive exposition. We discussed threads we saw throughout, themes that were problematic, a narrative that was worth strengthening, and clarified the purpose of certain characters and scenes.

I also met with supervisor DD Kugler, who went through the script with me, asked questions to locate my interest in the piece, and to identify both flaws and strengths of the script. He asked if I was, as the writer, interested in the quantity of heteronyms or just a few (at this point there were many characters). I said that focusing on a few was better. He agreed and mentioned that understanding multiplicity (the multitude of heteronyms) was important, but that we did not need to introduce every heteronym. He found the conversation between Pessoa and his three main heteronyms a better investment. I agreed. We both felt this was a good area to focus the writing. He also said that the current draft was a good sourcebook.

Both meetings gave me confidence to keep working away at the script to create both an interesting narrative and rich material for performers. In shifting my focus from the prose written by Pessoa, which was powerful to me, to a focus on the heteronyms, Pessoa became a biographical lens. It also set up an inherent tension because the different characters (heteronyms) had to interact with Pessoa on the stage. I wrote, rearranged, edited that early draft through seven different versions.

I met with Senior supervisor Steven Hill, who read through the script and mentioned the lack of action in the play. I knew this was something that needed work, but with deadlines approaching I was concerned I could not solve this. I worked on the script to find a throughline. As I was writing a biographical work about a writer, finding action became problematic. I was trying to stage and externalize an internal action. I decided to focus on exposing Pessoa’s internal world to show how it influenced his external reality. I completed draft two in time for the second workshop.
4. Workshop I

I held two workshops, prior to entering rehearsal, which allowed me to develop the script with a group of artists. Because the first workshop was early in the process, it was designed so that I could experiment with ideas, text, music, and physicality. The first workshop was held over three days, in May 2011. At this point I had only written fragments of the play. I wanted to see how these fragments would hold up when working with actors.

I asked each actor to devise a scene that included a physical score based on a few lines of dialogue and an object used by Pessoa. After they had shown their work, I asked them to pair with another actor, to teach each other their physical score and text. When viewing both the original and the copy, it created an interesting trace effect; I was watching the copy, but I also had the original work in mind.

Because paper was so prevalent in Pessoa’s work, I wanted to see what would happen if the act of writing was physicalized. I gave each actor a duration of time they had to keep writing (similar to the hysteria Pessoa felt when he had a burst of energy to write). This experiment was extremely interesting to watch. Viewing someone write almost to the point of exhaustion became a visceral experience. As I watched them writing standing up, sitting down, lying down, I knew that this physicality had to end up in the show, if only for a moment.

It also felt as though books were an important element for the piece, especially after viewing that statue where Pessoa’s head was a book. We experimented with the possibility of having a book being born. Although the birth element did not make the show, the book became an important physical barrier between Pessoa and Ofelia Queiroz during their duet. Another composition assignment for the actors, was to create a song in a limited time with a physically repeatable score. The song that the group created ended up in the show.
After this workshop finished, I took note of where my interest was, which included the letters Pessoa wrote, and text I had written, that was existential or poetic, such as in the following lines:

My head is a book. My book is a head.
A head is a head is a head is not my mouth.

I am or not I am, that is the (question) problem.
For to be I am is not and for to be not is I am.

Later on in the process, the second line was the starting point for writing the Woman in White/Pessoa scene. I discarded text that included historical facts describing Lisbon, dialogue between Pessoa as a child and both his parents, and Pessoa monologues confessing he was dying. Finding the areas of interest focused the next phase of my writing so that I could finish draft one by the end of June.
5. **Workshop II**

A few weeks before rehearsal, I scheduled a dramaturgical read of the script so that I, as writer, could know if there were major problems. The second workshop was held on August 20th, 2011. We read through draft two and it was the first time I had heard the words. I felt both anxious and excited. Once finished, we allowed for the workshop participants to spend a few minutes writing down their thoughts. I had spent time with the dramaturg (Chamale) going over questions to shape feedback. During the dramaturg-led session, questions were mainly around structure and theme.

During the read there were places where rhythm was problematic, but I was not sure if this was something that was a script issue that I would work on as writer, or if it was something that as director I would have to work on with the actors. The narrative felt a bit scattered. During the talkback, one of the participants was interested to see how the Portuguese text would appear in the production. The duality of languages in the script is something that I wanted to see, but I had not yet included the Portuguese that accompanied some of the English text. Another suggested that the script seemed music heavy in the second half. I was not conscious of this when writing, but most of the songs were located near the end when Pessoa is dying. This was a component I thought could potentially be worked on later in rehearsal by the director. We only had time to do one set of compositions, and one improvised game.

After the workshop, I took the feedback and re-worked the script, spending two weeks getting the script ready for rehearsal. I had another draft ready by the first week of September and was looking forward to hearing the script read out loud once again, this time by the cast.
6. From Writer to Director

The transition between writer and director did not fully occur at any finite point during the process.

The first week of rehearsal was focused on devising material based on the script. This allowed the ensemble to work together as a group. It also allowed me, as writer, to take note of what material was working, what needed more work, and what needed to be edited out of the script. During this first week, textual changes ended up being mostly edits.

I gave draft three to the ensemble confident that they would execute the material, and that the material was worthy. There were a couple moments that could potentially use more text, but I wanted to see how the new draft landed with the ensemble before adding anything. Things were working quite nicely with the new changes. At this point I felt comfortable to ‘exit’ as the writer so that the director could take control.

As the director, I was confident that whatever material the writer created would work because of the strong creative team. There was a section of dialogue between the Blue Devil and Ofelia that was rewritten, as well as a small addition to the end of the seven stories, but other than that there were no major rewrites during the rehearsal period.

There was another point, about four weeks in, where I, as director, felt a need for the writer to come back to write more text for the bar scene where the men are playing cards; but, by this point, a few weeks into rehearsal, I needed to spend my time as director, not writer. That was the only internal conflict I had during this process between writer and director.
7. Translation, Identity, & Heteronyms

Translating a culture on the stage is a difficult task. One has to rely on language to bridge the gap of knowledge between the audience and all the things I experienced in Lisbon, combined with my own Portuguese identity. This piece was focused on Pessoa’s identity more than the Portuguese culture. On the other hand, I managed to convert some cultural elements into English, such as ‘saudade’ and ‘fado’.

Saudade is one of the hardest words to translate. It is part of my own Portuguese identity, and I was compelled to add this challenge to the process. Saudade is a type of nostalgia, where one is hoping and longing for something or someone who may or may not return, but knowing that the past will always be better than any present or future moment. The book duet between Pessoa and Queiroz touched upon that feeling, but the moment it was most pronounced was when Pessoa was being interviewed by the Woman in White. I wrote that scene so that there could be a nostalgia, or saudade, for one’s own self in the past – a nostalgic existential moment.

The fado song was also meant to contain this sentiment. Fado (fate) is a melancholic music that usually expresses sadness, longing, and loss of love; it is normally accompanied by the Portuguese and classical guitar. The origin of the genre is rooted in lamenting. There are varying accounts of how this music originated, but regardless, fado itself is about expressing an emotion and the Portuguese soul. One can typically hear this music sung while walking past the taverns and restaurants in the Alfama district, the oldest district in Lisbon. In the play, Ofelia sang the fado song after Pessoa refused to marry her. The song was placed there to capture both the sadness that Ofelia felt as well as the pain Pessoa experienced because of his struggle to commit to love (his external reality).

The multicultural cast was faced with the fact that the characters in the play were Portuguese. How, for example, does one play Fernando Pessoa? Playing a character attached to an identity (that of a Portuguese man in a specific era) is
problematic because of the variables that construct that identity. Instead of viewing identity as an essential (“one clear, authentic set of characteristics”) representation of that identity, I preferred to view identity as non-essential (“focus[ed] on differences,...common or shared characteristics”) which allows the subjectivity of the playwright, actor, and audience to co-construct an identity to permeate the character (Woodward 11).

One thing that was captured in the piece was the multiplicity, derived from hysteria, that Pessoa experienced in his own life. The myriad of personalities inside him was akin to (on a small scale) my own dual identity, being both Canadian and Portuguese. I began the search for Pessoa in part because I did not want to let my culture disappear. Suzan-Lori Parks writes,

> Since history is a recorded or remembered event, theatre for me, is the perfect place to “make” history-that is because so much of African-American history has been unrecorded, disremembered, washed out, one of my tasks as a playwright is to--through literature and the special strange relationship between theatre and real-life--locate the ancestral burial ground, dig for bones, find bones, hear the bones sing, write it down. (150)

I too wanted to create history so that Pessoa’s story and the Portuguese culture may be kept alive.

I was also experimenting with Pessoa’s literary concept of heteronyms, attempting to stage a literary concept. It is extremely difficult to portray heteronyms (characters) as derivative from yet different than, the main character. The only way to do this is to contextualize with words (either in the script or in the program) in order for heteronyms to be successfully understood. At worse, the multiple selves appear to the audience as merely different characters. The heteronymic experiments that were most

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successful in illustrating Pessoa's hysteria/multiplicity were movement-based: the “numbers dance” where the cast swirled around Pessoa; when the cast were in a line and copied Pessoa’s movement creating a ripple effect.

In the attempt to create heteronymic multiplicity, the heteronymic characters (Reis, Caeiro, and de Campos) each had a journey worth exploring. Reis delivered a monologue about time and space, conveying the heartache that is attached to the passing of time when recalling past loved ones. He also had many questions about identity and death. Caeiro challenged Pessoa’s concept of being. De Campos was an instigator; he questioned Pessoa’s relationship with Ofelia, hoping that Pessoa would choose his heteronyms over her.
8. Director

My goal as the director was to create a strong ensemble, and, so, at auditions I carefully selected actors I felt would work well with text, devising, music, and dance. When I called the cast with the news, I was delighted they were all interested in becoming a part of the ensemble. The ensemble consisted of: Daniel Borzillo, Elysse Cheadle, Aryo Khakpour, Minah Lee, Sean Marshall Jr., Kaylin Metchie, Manuela Sosa, Conor Wylie, and composer/performer Elliot Vaughan. The creative team consisted of Dramaturg Pedro Chamale, Choreographer Iris Lau, Visual Dramaturg Karilynn Ming Ho, Lighting Designer Jonathan Kim, Set Designer Carolynne Hulbert, Costume Designer Andre Tse, and Projection Designer Michael Zhao. After auditions finished I had one day to prepare for the first rehearsal on September 10th, 2011. I was excited to work with such an excellent group.

During the first rehearsal, we began with introductions, expectations, and the trajectory of the piece. Iris Lau (choreographer) led the cast through a dance/viewpoints warm-up. I assigned roles and we did a first read of the script. As I was not planning on casting the show until later, this allowed me to observe the actors. The actors enjoyed playing different parts and enjoyed viewing their colleagues in different roles. This switching of roles throughout the first week allowed for new material to be built, and created a sense of sharing among the actors.

Throughout the process, I strategically spent a considerable amount of time developing the sense of ensemble amongst this group of artists. Creating a tight knit company was important in order to create a shared vocabulary amongst the actors as I planned on devising with them. Doing any kind of devising requires actors who bring their own creativity to the work. In devising, there are chance moments when actors improvise, or when actors use found objects (props) in the room, to create new material; it was my job as the director to create a group that was confident in their abilities in order to create those improvisational moments.
This was the first time that I, as director, began rehearsal with a script still in development. Being part of a new play development process was exciting, but also nerve-wracking. At times I felt as though directing decisions were solidified and could not be changed, as if there was no way out of a decision. On my way to the studio to announce the final role assignments, I had a chance encounter in the hallway with DD Kugler. He advised me to commit to the casting, but to let the actors know the casting may change. I was not looking to change it, but it may change. Hearing this relieved a lot of pressure from the writer/director of the project. I gave the actors their parts, prefaced by what Kugler had advised, and we continued rehearsal.

I was working with both music and dance. I had worked with Vaughan (composer/performer) before, and knew that we were capable of working together. I knew roughly what to expect, and I had scheduled time for music. Working with a choreographer, though, was new to me. There was risk for me in inviting Lau into the process, but I was relieved to find that our working relationship worked extremely well. I scheduled time for Lau so that she could rehearse the movement she choreographed for the ensemble.

As a director, I worked architecturally with the physical space. During the first week of rehearsal, I went into the Fei & Milton Wong Experimental theatre and took photos and video of the space. I took note of the materials (finished wood, cement blocks, concrete, red bricks, aluminum metal) so that I could bring that information to the set designer, and she could incorporate those materials into the design. Frames were important, as they were mentioned frequently in the stage directions of the script; that shape was an abstraction from doorways in Lisbon. Alleyways were another shape that was derived from Lisbon’s narrow streets; this influenced the shape of the light on the stage as well as the movement patterns. During that week, I gave the ensemble parameters for compositions that had to do with the architecture of the building. Scenes happened in the stairwell, the doorway of the studio, and in the bathroom. These improvisations allowed the ensemble to bond, but also allowed me to make the connection between the studio space and the actual performance space and to see if, architecturally speaking, any of the ensemble compositions were viable material.
Pessoa viewed heteronyms as different personalities (different writing styles), so, during the second week, I decided to experiment with the actor’s behaviour through parameters. I created durational parameters for the entire rehearsal. I chose something about each actor’s character that was either similar or different to the idiosyncrasies of the actor, and asked them to work with this parameter in duration. So instead of limiting the parameter to a single composition exercise, I extended it for the entire day of rehearsal. I asked one actor to accumulate (much like the extreme accumulation of paper Pessoa had in his trunk) black and white objects by the end of rehearsal. This created an interesting sculpture of chairs, microphone wires, and backpacks. The parameter for another actor was to NOT ask any questions; I chose this for him because his character was Pessoa’s master and had all the answers. I asked the actor playing Pessoa to write down everything anyone said on a piece of paper. He walked around rehearsal carrying a scroll of paper and by the end he was exhausted from writing. Lau is bilingual and more comfortable speaking Cantonese than English, so I asked her to speak exclusively Cantonese. We were able to communicate even as she choreographed a piece. She later told me that, although she felt limited by the language choice, the parameter allowed her to freely express herself through body language and the tone of her voice. These durational parameters allowed the actors to become more comfortable in the room, and allowed them to bring their discovered idiosyncrasies to their performance.

In the following weeks, the ensemble rehearsed compositions and scenes that were previously created. I created units of material for them to run. We then created more compositions or rehearsed different scenes until we could pastiche all the parts together in the order of the script.

We rehearsed the songs and dances every day, and we began introducing design elements so that the ensemble would get used to the space with the various elements at play.

In his section on ‘Parataxis/non-hierarchy’, Hans-Thies Lehmann states:

The de-hierarchization of theatrical means is a universal principle of post-dramatic theatre...we can repeatedly note a non-hierarchical use of signs that aims at a synaesthetic perception and contradicts the established
hierarchy, at the top of which we find language, diction and gesture and in which visual qualities such as the experience of an architectonic space — if they come into play at all — figure as subordinated aspects. (86)

I believe the theatre that I create practices this de-hierarchization and can be categorized as postdramatic theatre. As a director, I spend time with my actors, but I also spend countless hours (in-person, by email) with the designers because I feel that this de-hierarchy is key to the kind of theatre that I create. In addition to the time spent with actors and designers, I worked with the choreographer and composer to make sure the content we generated is working both for them and for the piece. I also spend time with the dramaturg and the visual dramaturg to consider all production elements. I consider each performance mode an integral part of the work because it assists in shaping character, location, and action. My aim, as director, is to spend an appropriate amount of creative energy on the various performance modes to create a de-hierarchization.

For acting, I used my own learned experience (of Stanislavski, Meisner, Linklater, and viewpoints) to direct the ensemble.

Sound is one performance mode that this piece was highly invested in. Microphones were used in conjunction with the natural sound of the performers’ voice to add intimacy to certain scenes. The use of the Portuguese guitar during the fado song added a unique sound, and allowed the audience to briefly experience the atmosphere of the fado houses in Portugal. I spent two years looking for someone who would lend their Portuguese guitar to Vaughan in order to capture this unique sound. Finally through a family connection, approximately five months before the show, Sr. José Melo was kind enough to give lessons to Vaughan, who picked it up quickly. After several rehearsals in the home of Sr. Melo, he allowed Vaughan to borrow his 100-year-old Portuguese guitar (that his father made) so that he could practice and get ready for the show. Once Vaughan knew the guitar was available, he composed the fado song (with lyrics from Pessoa) for Ofelia.

The minimalist set was designed to be functional. The larger frame created an entranceway for the actors. The smaller frames and table were designed to be movable
to create fluid scene transitions. The smaller frames had mesh columns, which provided a space for the actors to accumulate paper.

The lights purposely shaped distinct areas on the stage to contain space. The lights also were allowed to play with the actors, such as when the actors interacted with the spotlight, allowing it to frame their body parts.

All of this was a work toward performance.
9. Performance as Conclusion

How does one recall and retrace an event once it is gone? As Peggy Phelan writes,

Performance occurs over a time which will not be repeated. It can be performed again, but this repetition itself marks it as “different.” The document of a performance then is only a spur to memory, an encouragement of memory to become present. (146)

I was not able to attend the performances, so, in writing this document, I began a journey of gathering material and reviewing documented footage in order to create a sort of memory. I re-read the script, talked to the actors, reviewed rehearsal footage, and went through my notebooks. Through watching the documented performance footage, I was able to absorb the shape of the story as the audience experienced it, the characters’ journeys, and how the performance modes interacted with each other. I also retraced my steps back to the origin of this project, in order to understand how certain choices were made/created for the performance/event itself. My effort to recall the event allowed it to be present for me.

Returning to my earliest questions, I see that: I was able to find action in this biographical work by externalizing an internal action. Pessoa’s heteronyms challenged the definition of character by suggesting a multiplicity of self. Multiplicity was manifested on stage through movement. There was also a surprising amount of room to devise material with the ensemble even though we were working with a developed script that contained text that I wrote as well as selected writing from Pessoa.

Performance is the conclusion to the research and creative process and is the moment where all the elements come together; it is where the audience experiences the final edit of the piece, as well as the theories, methods, explorations, and concepts undertaken by the artistic team. I see performance as a unique living exchange between performer and audience that cannot be repeated. Theatre is living and breathing, and
thus, it changes from day to day. In order for the piece to remain alive, the performers must allow the audiences’ energies to alter the performance. Although there is a certain repeatability built throughout rehearsal, it is in the live moment when the piece creates the final loop between audience and performer.

In recalling what was most memorable to me, it would be the creativity and energy of each unique performer that I witnessed working every day at rehearsal. Their dedication to the work was incomparable to any ensemble I have worked with; I now know how valuable and enriching the process can be with a strong ensemble. Knowing that the possibilities created within this process depended on the people in the room, gives me the confidence to create a dynamic team in the future.

I understand that every process is different and new. I look forward to starting from scratch, so to speak, every time I commit to a new work. I will continue working with a devised process, and I now have a deeper understanding of the possibilities inherent in the various performance modes. Through this process, I learned the challenges of writing a new play, and the pleasure of directing an ensemble capable of performing such material. In addition, I was also able to find, at school, collaborators who will inevitably be a part of future projects.
References


Appendices
Appendix A.

Character: A Non-Fixed Identity

No one is more interesting to anybody than is that mysterious character we all call me, which is why self-liberation, self-actualization, self-transcendence, etc., are the most exciting games in town. - Robert Wilson

What is a character in the theatre? A character is a representation of a person. The etymology of the word character is to engrave, a figure stamped, a representation. Traditionally character can be framed, contemplated, and interpreted through various elements such as: given circumstances (past/present/future) of the character, costumes (how the character looks), the morals/beliefs of the character (“my character would never do that”), gesture (the physical manifestation of lived experience) and what the character represents in the story (the character stands for something, means something). These elements are predetermined by the writer in the written script, and if they are not explicitly stated in the text, the actors and director refer back to the script in order to justify any choices about intention/gestures/costumes/speech. That is the traditional way of examining character in the theatre. This paper will argue though that character is a non-fixed identity and a co-construct with many meanings possible within one character’s story. It is not only up to the writer to predetermine character as it is fed through a type of hermeneutic loop where the writer feeds the actor, the actor feeds into the character, and the audience completes the feed within the loop (the last station) which allows for the co-construct notion to manifest itself. In addition, character can be a multiplicity of self, much like Fernando Pessoa’s heteronyms (discussed in detail in later paragraphs) where there are many stories within one person/one body since self is always in relation to the other.

In light of the above, what does character mean and how do the performers with the director ‘create’ a character? Traditionally in the theatre, a character is a ‘person’ in the play written by the playwright, which is then later represented by an actor during the run of the show. In Elizabethan times actors were commonly given the script the day of the performance, with no time for interpretation, and would then have to perform in front of an audience that same evening. In order to help the performers with their lines and
their cues to enter/exit onstage/offstage, their scripts would also be posted on the sides of the wings of the theatre. This is where the term ‘sides’ (meaning an actor’s script) originates. In essence the actors in those times were viewed more as a vessel and container for the words rather than a human being who was undertaking a comprehensive and emotive interpretation of a character. Since the early 1900s the role of the director emerged, and since then the director’s job has been to shape the world of the play, analyze the script’s list of characters, and then cast actors who can then embody and perform those characters. This last step of the director’s casting process is important – the director must somehow see a reflection of their vision/perception of the character in the physical body and emotional landscape and tone of the individual who wishes to become the actor of the character. They must see inherent elements of the character in the real human, and build upon these elements during the rehearsal process. The actors then begin to analyze the script and the character they are going to play. They look for clues in the script to tell them who their character is, what other characters say about them, and most importantly in traditional theatre, the actor attempts to ‘understand’ who this character is in order to be in service of the playwright’s intention of meaning.

However, if one looks to Fernando Pessoa’s heteronyms to frame character, the traditional approach to character becomes altered so that character is a co-construct versus a stable identity. Tim Etchells of Forced Entertainment says that, “Play [is] a state in which meaning is flux, in which possibility thrives, in which versions multiply in which the confines of what is real are blurred, buckled, broken. Play as endless transformation, transformation without end and never stillness”. (Etchells 53) I believe this to be true about a play, as well as the self, and thus character. But before delving into co-construct of self, I will first frame Fernando Pessoa’s heteronyms and then how it is relevant to the theatre and character.

Fernando Pessoa was born in Lisbon, Portugal in 1888 and died in Lisbon in 1935. From the ages of five to seventeen he lived in Durban, South Africa (his stepfather was a Portuguese consulate there) and received schooling in English. It is no surprise then that the majority of his diaries and a good percentage of his oeuvre too are written in English. He published very little of his work in his lifetime and it was not until his death, that a trunk containing over 25,000 documents were discovered. I was
fortunate enough this year to go the Portuguese National Library to view his complete oeuvre. Each single piece of paper has been digitalized. To be precise his oeuvre translates into 27,543 written documents. They are topographically indexed in order to respect the order the Library found the documents inside the trunk in. The Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal calls it a “floresta de enganos” translated literally as a ‘forest of mistakes’. After I spent one week in the library going over the material, piece by piece, I found this to be true in the sense that it is a type of disorientation both as a reader and as a human being contemplating the writing. I also was only able to view and read approximately 1,000 of the documents in person and have ordered over a thousand microfilm slides in order to continue digging into this forest of mistakes. Upon further reflection, I would prefer to translate the above-mentioned phrase as a forest of confusion rather than a forest of mistakes.

The topographical index has a vast range of topics/ideas/titles such as: Philosophy and Metaphysics and Psychology, Epitaphs for the future, Autobiographical Fragments, Projects on the crisis of Modernity, Portuguese Poems, English Poems, French Poems, Occultism, Poems of Alberto Caeiro, Alvaro de Campos, and Ricardo Reis. These are just some of them. Pessoa’s uniqueness, besides this enormous ‘forest of mistakes’ is that he created fictitious writers who he credits having written his work; he calls these heteronyms. What exactly is a heteronym? Heteronyms are “each of two or more words which are spelled identically but have different sounds and meanings” (Oxford Online). However, Pessoa transforms this meaning into a literary meaning, as he is the first writer to build on the pseudonym by creating the heteronym (“other name”) - a completely independent person or ‘character’ outside of the writer, who has their own attributes, look, physical stature, way of speaking, way of writing, and own philosophy on life. The heteronyms began with the creation of Alberto Caeiro who Pessoa calls his master. Then more heteronyms begin to emerge. His four most well known heteronyms are Alberto Caeiro, Ricardo Reis, Álvaro de Campos, and Bernando Soares. Ricardo Reis is a ‘medico’ (doctor) born in 1887 – one year before Pessoa was born – in Porto, Portugal and Pessoa describes him as having a nasal quality sounding voice, is short & stumpier then Álvaro de Campos, has a Brazilian accent, and avoids emotional extremes due to the fact he accepts fate with tranquility. Álvaro de Campos is aligned with the Futurist movement, has an affinity to Walt Whitman, and was described by
Pessoa as being blonde with hair parted to side, has a monocle, feels everything, and is impassioned while asking everything of life. Alberto Caeiro is a ‘ouro’ (blonde) with ‘olhos azuis’ (blue eyes) and asks nothing of life. Bernardo Soares who is actually a semi-heteronym is described as being tall, skinny, and is exaggeratedly curved when sitting. The heteronyms exist not only in their own right but begin to write about each other, even to the point of critiquing each other’s writing and judgments on life. They also describe their relationship to each other. Other heteronyms include: Alexander Search, Antonio Mora, Thomas Cross, Charles Robert Anon, The Baron of Teive, Raphael Baldaya the astrologer, Uncle Pork, and Maria José to name a few. There are over 70 heteronyms in total. Now, why this fragmentation of the self? Or perhaps this is not a fragmentation of the self. Perhaps it is the possibilities of the self. A multiplicity of identities. The question becomes does Pessoa’s way of creating personalities have a direct relationship to the idea of character in contemporary theatre?

Traditionally the importance of character is placed on focusing on the writer’s version of meaning and the writer’s text as the thing one needs to achieve in representation. Perhaps then one of the keys to bridging the idea of the heteronyms with the notion of character in the theatre is the embodiment of the physical act of writing. That within writing these stories, the writer is not writing an ‘idea’ of character, he is physically embodying a character in the writing and that is what manifests onto the page. This notion conjures a few questions. Does the character first emerge from the writer’s mind? Or does it originate from physical bodies the writer sees in his daily life, and then through his own appropriation of that other person’s self, co-constructs a character through his own agency channeled by his writing. Is he appropriating the ‘selves’ and constructing them in his own vision? This is performative. Or does the hermeneutic ‘loop’ first begin with the emergence of character from the writer’s mind? Could one argue then within the process of writing that there are 3 stages of character for the writer within the hermeneutic loop: the emergence of the character from the writer’s mind, the embodiment of the character, and then the transfer of that character on to the actor?

Pessoa is the writer upon which I am basing my graduating project which will involve me writing a play based on his heteronyms and the microfilm slides; I will then direct that play. Pessoa’s heteronyms also leave one to reconsider the notion of self. What makes a person? A personality? A character? Is self, pure consciousness? If so
there can be many selves within one self. In terms of consciousness, Antonio Damasio who is a neuroscientist says, “I began seeing consciousness in terms of two players, the organism and the object, and in terms of the relationships those players hold. All of a sudden, consciousness consisted of constructing knowledge about two facts: that the organism is involved in relating to some object, and that the object in the relation is causing a change in the organism” (pg. 133). What does that mean for Pessoa’s heteronyms? Consciousness can only be fulfilled in relation to the other. Damasio continues on to say on that, “The question of what might give the brain a natural means to generate the singular and stable reference we call the self has remain unanswered.” (134) So this question of the stable self is still unanswered. In theatre, how will the presumably stable minds of the audience respond to the unstable self of Pessoa’s works, his characters, and his worlds? But if one is to follow Merleau-Ponty’s idea on consciousness, that it is from within the body, then self is tied to consciousness which lies within one body in relationship to another body.

For now, what I am analyzing is how the traditional notions of character in the theatre are reshaped given the implications of Pessoa’s heteronyms. How will his characters react in this new world? How will they react when faced for the first time with each other? Are they able to exist in the same space with each other? Are there dominant and subordinate personalities? Will some, like humans and their relationship with God, deny the existence of Pessoa? Would Pessoa, if present, deny his own existence?

Character is a representation of the self and if one views the self as a construct then one can view Pessoa’s heteronyms as a co-construct. He is influenced by the voices that are channeled through him but he still has agency in creating the personas, which then means that the heteronyms are a co-construct of self. He is constructing other selves, appropriating behaviours and physical gestures from other people and then using that to create another self. The Pessoa documents have hundreds of signatures practiced by hand. Sometimes there are pieces written that are signed off by Ricardo Reis, then that name is scratched off and is then replaced by an unscratched signature of Álvaro de Campos. It is almost as if he is figuring out which voice can get away with what. Is character, then, defined by voice? The characters, perhaps, did not so much form in Pessoa’s mind as they emerged in an incubated, half-formed state, and only
through the interaction and testing of the world around them, by coming into conflict with the construct of Pessoa’s actual self, were they able to form fully as a co-construct. One can apply this notion to the creation of character, and its traditional development as an interactive process between actor and director and the text of the writer. Pessoa’s process could be considered a mirror image of the theatre process. Pessoa, the writer, creates embodiments in the heteronyms who then become the actors, who then create the world and the characterization of the players on ‘stage’ or, in this case, in the new world created by Pessoa’s actors.

In addition to that, Pessoa embodied the heteronyms, and described their physicality. Presumably he assumed those physical bodies while writing through each voice. A transformation of sorts occurred. If that is the case, then words on a page in a script are not only words on a page, they are an embodied action. Pessoa created these heteronyms, wrote them down, detached himself from them through the embodied gesture of writing and through that physical act manifested an altered physical object ie. a piece of paper with the poetry of Ricardo Reis’ poetry. Can this not be considered a form of consciousness or extending the self since Pessoa presumably had a change in the organism (himself) as he reacted to the page once it left his own body and began to be in the organism/object relationship? Also, a strange coincidence is that Pessoa’s name literally translates into the English word ‘person’. To go back to etymologies, the etymology of person is character in a drama or mask. Considering all of the above mentioned, it is now time for me to work in the studio with the words, with the ideas of self, with actors in order to put all of these ideas into practice. I must further investigate Pessoa, his heteronyms and character or the ‘self’ in the context of the studio so that can I fully determine whether Fernando Pessoa’s heteronyms reshape the notion of character in the theatre.

One can then address if and how heteronyms can be in conversation with the contemporary theatre (specifically ‘postdramatic’ theatre) in order to understand the profundity of how the heteronyms change the traditional notion of character. In contemporary theatre, theatremakers such as The Wooster Group from New York, have not been as interested in serving the playwright’s intent of meaning, but rather interpreting the text as just one sign amongst the many signs possible in order to create an event for the audience to then experience and grapple with meaning as a ‘meaning
remains in principle postponed’ (Lehmann 87). In other words, the play when presented is not a finished product with one intended meaning; it has many meanings and needs the audience’s creativity, imagination, and contemplation to make the play complete. This stage of contemplation takes place after the event, hence the postponed nature of meaning. Character, then, is something that cannot be made explicit on stage for an audience; rather, the audience must internalize the character. Theatremakers like The Wooster Group, Tim Etchells’ Forced Entertainment, and Robert Wilson work in a process which can be described as postdramatic theatre. Lehman describes Drama being imitation, action/plot, and that dramatic theatre is subordinated to the primacy of the text. And so postdramatic would be the reversal of that, or at least not hold those as the pinnacles of entry points into the work. Postdramatic theatre does not hold the written text as the supreme hierarchical being amongst the various aspects of performance present on stage; it is merely one entry point into the work and one meaning amongst the many meanings (sound, lights, costumes) present on stage. Elizabeth LeCompte of The Wooster Group says of interpreting texts, “I don’t think of deconstructing them. I am trying to make them live...I sit down to try and make the text read, to try to make it live”. So it is about reinventing the text and giving it new life, which is why this also fits into the notion of the loop.

Beyond the written character that is then fed into the actor, one must view the actor body as another type of ‘text’. Character is not only read in one body but in relation to the other bodies in the space (audience and actors). Perhaps character is a collaboration between the lived body (the performer themselves) and the words on the page. It is not meant that character be in servitude to the text, but rather, how does the text (and lights and costumes) allow for the performer to collaborate on their own self. This is why postdramatic theatre is an excellent fit for analyzing Pessoa’s heteronyms in relation to character as that theory allows the character to free him/herself from the text. It is a form of liberation and emancipation from the text, and also from the writer.

5 Coined by Herbert Blau.
When Robert Wilson was interviewed about creating his version of Hamlet (a deconstructed one-man show called ‘Dying Hamlet with 15 Reveries’) he said:

I think that, for me, doing this role is something very personal, and it’s not the way anyone else would do it. I find it, something that’s like a diary or a journal...Something autobiographical, in my approach to it, the way I identify with it...in the movement, in the colour of the voice, in the speaking of the text, in the associations of the text. It’s something very personal.

Then if this is true, one can presume the audience then takes that construct with their own lived experience, and creates another self of the character. Therefore, character is an ongoing process, never finished, never pre-determined. Character is then a synthesis of the writer, director, actor, and the audience. If Wilson’s autobiographical and personal interpretations can be extended to Pessoa’s heteronyms, then each of his stories, each of his poems and reflections, have been filtered, reinterpreted, and altered by his heteronyms. His works have been ‘pre-interpreted’ even before it reaches an audience. LeCompte, in her interview, also says that “For me, whoever [sees] the piece first, that’s really where I see what it is, in the first performance in front of an audience. I don’t know what [the play] is until then.”

Character, then can never really be defined because the components and elements of the character are determined by the individual audience’s mind as much as anything else. So it is a loop of interpretation, a hermeneutic loop. It is also not a singular feed, it is multiple loops fed through an open system of interpretation via multiple people (writer, actor, designers, audience). One needs to go beyond the written word in order to define what a character is, and what it means. Character is an interpretation of the self (of the many selves) that lies within our own body and the bodies of others. Character is first derived from the writer who physically manifests a persona onto the page. The written word then affects the human being playing the part, who then reinterprets those words through the performer’s own phenomenological life experience. The performer then performs that consciousness for an audience who interprets that character in relation to their own lived experience. This is why Pessoa’s work is essential in examining character, because his project on heteronyms is as much a project on character as it is on consciousness (the self). Since character is a representation of a person (the self/pure consciousness) one must then always view character in the same
way as consciousness. It is a consciousness loop as much as it is a character loop. Therefore, character is a non-fixed identity that is reinvented every time it is in relationship to new stimulus.
Bibliography


Appendix B.

Script: The Last Seven Words of Fernando Pessoa

biographical accounts of incomplete stories of the self
by Angela Ferreira
**Breakdown**

Pessoa
Alberto Caeiro
Ricardo Reis
Álvaro de Campos
Woman in White
Blue devil
Ofelia Queiroz
...
Boy
Boy's father
Tia/Aunt Maria (Álvaro de Campos’ aunt)
Waitress
Chévalier de Pas
Maria José
Narrator

**Cast of 8**
Scene 1. Heteronyms – Legs. in a frame

Voiceover of heteronym list 1-42. As the reveal of different sets of legs occurs, numbers are read out in the order below. The fully formed heteronyms (capitalized) are squeezed out of the frame. Slow legs cross. Medium speed legs cross. Legs jump in the frame. Legs legs legs as the names are read out extremely fast. The audience sees these sets of legs walking/running/tiptoeing/jumping in and out of the frame. Sometimes there are multiple legs. Sometimes it is just a foot. Sometimes a toe. When we reach the capitalized names (first ALBERTO CAEIRO then later ÁLVARO DE CAMPOS, CHEVALIER DE PÁS, etc. until FERNANDO PESSOA) they are squeezed out from the frame. Pop. They take in the audience, say hi in their own way, and exit. The numbers are written in rhythmical order.

Narrator: 1 um, 2 dois, 3 três, 456 7 sete: ALBERTO CAEIRO. 8 9 10 dez: ÁLVARO DE CAMPOS. 11 12 13 14 15 161718192021 22 23 24 25262728 vinte e oito: CHEVALIER DE PÁS. 29 30 31 32 33 trinta e três: DIABO AZUL. 34 35 36 37 3839 4041 42 43 44 quarenta e quatro: FERNANDO PESSOA

Scene 2. Pessoa’s work

Darkness.

Sound of typing. Lights begin to fade up. Fernando Pessoa is sitting at his work desk, fully clothed, surrounded by papers. He’s in the middle of a work day. The wall clock reads as 2:20pm. He is smoking and working. There is a knock at the office door. No one else is there to get it. Pessoa is annoyed. He tries to open the door from his desk, first with a stick (fails), then with his tie (fails), and finally he gets up, quickly opens the door, goes back to his desk, doesn’t even look up. He doesn’t notice a beautiful woman, Ofelia Queiroz, standing in the doorway. She is dressed like a wannabe secretary, hair braided framing her face, white blouse, pencil skirt, Mary Janes. She stands there unsure of what to do. She has a resumé in her hand inside a clipboard. Pessoa is

smoking, and putting things away in his briefcase. Ofelia takes one step forward into the doorway frame. Pessoa still busy with his work.

Ofelia: Olá. ...Isto é o escritório Félix, Valadas e Freitas? Hi. (waits for response, none). Is this the Felix, Valadas and Freitas office?

Pessoa: Sim
Yes.

Ofelia: Eu tenho uma entrevista para a posição secretário as duas e meia.
I have an interview for the secretary’s position at 230.

Pessoa: Está tambem...o meu chefe está a almoçar mas vem breve.
Yeah...My boss is on lunch but should return shortly.

Pessoa is sealing a letter, writes something on it.

Ofelia: Você já trabalhou aqui por muito tempo –
Have you worked here long?

Pessoa: Eu preciso de fazer umas coisas antes de o meu chefe vir.
Obrigado.
I need to finish a few things before my boss gets here. Thanks.

Ofelia: Desculpa senhor.
Sorry sir.

Pessoa: Não é preciso chamar-me senhor, não sou um velho, pelo menos ainda não.
finally taking a good look at her. There’s no need to call me Sir, I’m not that old, at least not yet. Licks envelope.

Ofelia: Não foi isso que eu queria dizer...És muito, atrativo, por um homem da sua idade.
That’s not what I meant...You’re attractive, for a man of your age.

Ofelia is embarrassed.
Pessoa: silence.
Havias de pensar o que tu vais dizer ao meu patrão, ele é uma filha da puta.
I’d recommend that you start thinking of what you’re going to say in the interview, My boss is a son of a bitch.

Ofelia looks at Pessoa.

Pessoa: ...E ele é jovem, como tu gostas. Boa sorte.
And he’s young, just how you prefer...Good luck.

There is a spark between them. Pessoa grabs suitcase, leaves desk, and on way out door. Tips hat.

Ofelia: Obrigada.
Thank you.

On his way out, Pessoa drops something. Ofelia goes to flag him down, but he’s already gone. The card contains his phone number and address.

**Scene 3. Young Pessoa’s room**

This scene was cut.

*Lights slowly fade up on a framed part of the stage.*

*There is a boy, 5 years old, sitting in a darkened bedroom. He is sitting on the edge of his bed, placing 42 mini versions of himself (dolls) into a large chest. He is doing this slowly. Plucking of guitar. All these dolls are numbered. He looks at each one, examining/studying them. As he studies each one, there is a woman in white writing names on the upstage black wall. The writing appears on the wall, either projected, or by her writing in chalk on the wall. The colour of the writing is white, and it is a continual wash of numbers and names. Dolls 1-42 are listed. Once that is complete, the boy is done for the night, closes the trunk, grabs the key, is about to lock it, but has another 102 dolls to be stored, which are on the ground surrounding the trunk. He puts those dolls in a small suitcase. Grabs the suitcase, puts the key in his pocket, and turns off the light, exits.*

**Scene 4. Window frame**

This scene was cut.

*Late afternoon. Apartment façade. We see the window of an apartment, 2nd floor. There is a clothesline the length of the window on the exterior of the apartment with a few clean*
clothes hanging from it. There is a small plant and a small watering jug on the windowsill. The window is old, white, and has rickety wooden hinges. We can barely see inside, which is someone’s living room. There is a standing lamp with tassels, a wall clock pointed at 220, and a velvet couch which we can only see the top of. Another light turns on inside that same apartment, one that lights the whole room. We hear coughing. We hear the creaking of old wooden floor panels. More coughing. Slowly we see a teenager - Maria José, 19, in a wheelchair, but the window frame only allows us to see the top half of her. She wheels herself to the window. Looks at the time. Looks outside. Just at this moment a young man with a beautiful blonde woman struts by on the sidewalk; they laugh. He sweeps her long blonde hair off her face. They kiss. He puts his arm around her. Maria José stares. She waves to him, but she knows he’s not looking. They walk away. She grabs one of the cloths on the line. She goes to put it away.

Scene 5. Pessoa’s apartment

Pessoa’s apartment. He arrives home. Drops his suitcase by the door. Takes out a couple letters inside. Takes off his shoes, tie, jacket; he’s unwinding for the day. Turns on the radio. Nothing interesting, turns it off. He looks at the clock, it’s 7pm. He decides he’s going to bed. He grabs a glass of water that’s already by his bedstand. And looks out the balcony door. He’s thinking about his day. He goes to sit on his bed, but starts to feel feverish. Guitar begins. Feels his forehead for fever, nothing. He’s fine. Goes to bed, tries to fall asleep. Tosses and turns. The fever is back. Suddenly he feels really warm. Grabs a drink of water from his nightstand. Turns on the nightlight. Stares at his dresser which is a chest of drawers. Stares at it with intensity, he is getting warmer. Then all of a sudden he pops up, runs to the drawer, grabs a pen and a book, stands, and begins madly writing. He finishes, he has written 30 poems in a matter of seconds. Wipes the sweat off his face. Puts the poems in his drawer. Goes back to bed. While he is sleeping, we see the chest of drawers begin to move, it’s wriggling. The drawer opens, The poems are thrown to the ground by a hand. All of a sudden, a man pops out of the drawer; it is Alberto Caeiro. He is clean-shaven, has a fair/pale complexion and blue eyes. He rolls out of the drawer, dusts himself off, he’s been in there awhile. He coughs, due to his tuberculosis and the dust, tries not to wake Pessoa. Scrolled on the wall in white lettering is: 7. Alberto Caeiro.

Woman in White: This is Alberto Caeiro. Pessoa’s master.

Caeiro picks up some of the poems. Mutters to himself, ‘not bad’. Walks away. The sun rises, Pessoa wakes up, gets out of bed to start his day, and notices the papers scattered. He is confused, this is not how he left the papers last night. Gathers them, puts them back in the chest of drawers. Gets dressed, grabs briefcase, and off to work.

Scene 6. Young Pessoa’s room

This scene was cut.

The boy’s father is reading to his young son at his bedside. It’s nighttime. The young son is 5 years old. He is about to fall asleep. The father sweeps the son’s hair off his forehead. He reads from a children’s picture book titled, ‘The Keeper of Sheep’.
Once upon a time there lived a magical land where goats and sheep mated. There lived a little man with a big jacket, who liked to read lots and lots of books about hats, and glasses, and moustaches; Triangles and Circles. One day that man got really old and tired, and decided to die. The End. Flips the page. Once upon a time there was a translator who wanted to be a poet.

The son is falling asleep, the dad is content. Boy’s father is about to close the book when he grabs one of his son’s dolls and lays it next to the boy, puts his sleeping arm onto the doll. He then goes back to the book, flips to the end.

Once upon a time, I was I. Closes book.

Scene 7. Pessoa’s work

Pessoa heads to his office. Opens the door, and there is now Ofelia sitting at his desk, it is completely clean. There is a little tablet that says ‘Ofelia – receptionista’ on it. Pessoa almost drops the cigarette from his mouth onto the ground, closes his mouth before it happens.

Pessoa: O que é que se passa aqui?
What the hell is going on here?

Ofelia: Eu
I...

Pessoa: Aonde é que estão os meus papeis...
Where are my papers...

Ofelia: Isto é a minha mesa de escritório, você esta lá dentro.
This is my desk now, yours is now inside.

Silence. Pessoa places his briefcase on the clean desk.

Ofelia: O que é que você esta –
What are you doing-

Pessoa: Você? Você? Pare com as formalidades.
Starts taking out letters. Stop with the formalities please.

Ofelia: Desculpa. Ele disse que isto era o meu espaço para trabalhar.
Sorry but he said that this was now my workspace.
Pessoa: Tão, a entrevista foi bom. 
So, the interview went well.

*Pessoa starts messing up the desk again with all his papers.*

Ofelia: Por favor Senhor Pessoa. Pare! 
Please Mr. Pessoa, Stop!

Pessoa: Outra vez com o Senhor. 
Back to calling me Sir are we? *Places hat on coatrack.*

Ofelia: Por favor, eu limpei e organizei todos os seus papéis, eu deixei-os no seu escritório. 
Please, I cleaned and organized all your papers, and left them in your office.

Pessoa: Tão, como você o convenceu? 
So, how did you convince him?

Ofelia: *silence. Smiles.*

Pessoa: Ahhhh...

Ofelia: Estou a brincar. 
I’m kidding.

Pessoa: Olha, eu vou deixar você ficar aqui, mas você terá que vir tomar um café depois do trabalho. 
Look, I’ll let you stay here, but you’ll have to come for a coffee with me after work.

Ofelia: Está bem. 
Okay.

*Pessoa collects his papers, and heads to the back area. Ofelia wipes down the marks from Pessoa’s suitcase, and hands, etc.*

**Scene 8. Young Pessoa’s Room**

This scene was cut.
It is nighttime again, the young boy, is trying to fall asleep, is having trouble. Wants a bedtime story. He tosses and turns.

    Dad? Dad? Dad!

The night lamp turns on. It isn’t his mom, or dad. It is a young boy, around the same age, named Chévalier de Pas. Projected in white is the scribbling: 28. Chévalier de Pas.

Chévalier de Pas: Bonjour - Sorry, hello.

Boy: slightly afraid. Who are you?

Chévalier de Pas: Please, don’t worry, your dad sent me. He wants me to read you your bedtime story...He might not be back for awhile.

Boy is slightly relieved. Chévalier de Pas pulls out a book from his own knapsack entitled ‘The Keeper of Sheep’ (the same book from before). Boy sees this book and knows somehow things will be okay. Chévalier de Pas is about to read the story, but remembers one thing, grabs a doll (like the previous one) from his knapsack, and gives it to the boy. Boy accepts, and places it under his arms. Chévalier de Pas begins reading the story.

Chévalier de Pas: Once upon a time, I was you.


This scene, up until Álvaro de Campos first line, was cut.

In another frame on the stage, Alberto Caeiro interviews Álvaro de Campos’ great aunt at her home. She brings him tea. A candle on the table flickers.

Alberto Caeiro: What was Álvaro de Campos like as a child?

Tia/Aunt Maria: delays. Would you like some tea?

Alberto Caeiro: No. I’m okay.

Tia/Aunt Maria: Just a sip?

Alberto Caeiro: I shouldn’t. Pauses.
Tia/Aunt Maria: One sip won’t do you any harm.

Alberto Caeiro: Alright. But just a sip. – *She pours a giant cup of tea (she likes the company).*

Alberto Caeiro: Thank you...So what was –

Tia/Aunt Maria: Fairly energetic, always running around, talking to ghosts. *Laughs.* Not real ghosts. Just spirits he would think he would see. People used to make fun of him because people in town thought I was a bruxa/a witch. *Pause.* I wasn’t, I just allowed his imagination to go wild, free, run away as fast as the wind.

Alberto Caeiro: Why did he study engineering? *Blows on tea.* Candle light is almost blown out indirectly.

Tia/Aunt Maria: It was his way of putting the pieces together, figuring out the world. His parents died so young, he was always trying to understand the way the world worked.

Alberto Caeiro: Why Scotland? Didn’t he like being in Portugal?

Tia/Aunt Maria: I really should get back to cooking my dinner.

Alberto Caeiro: Oh.

Tia/Aunt Maria: *pause (hopeful).* He did, he loved it. But Scotland gave him the freedom to be who he wanted to be. Not tied down to cultural norms, societal pressures, religious...well...

*Alberto Caeiro blows on tea.*

Tia/Aunt Maria: When he came back from Scotland, he was like a different person, completely free, carefree, didn’t have a worry in the world. He would just say whatever was on his mind, sometimes he wouldn’t even make sense. It sounds strange, but it reminded me of when he was a kid just talking out loud to the ... spirits.

*Álvaro steps out from the shadows with his monocle. Smiling.*
Alberto Caeiro: When was the last time you saw him? Alberto Caeiro sips on tea loudly. Burns tongue, spits out tea, directly extinguishing the candle.

Tia/Aunt Maria: grabs a cloth to wipe down the tea. The last time I saw him was out in the countryside. I was tending to my sheep, and I saw him across the hill, through the olive tree, winking at me with his right eye. Grabs lighter, tries to light candle. His monocle almost fell out laughs and then he vanished. Fails to light the candle.

Alberto Caeiro: Vanished?

Tia/Aunt Maria: gives up on the task. I really should get back to my dinner.

Alberto Caeiro: Yes.

Tia/Aunt Maria leads Caeiro (with her lighter) out of the space.

Álvaro de Campos: Hey la la la la la la la la la la. I travelled the Orient, I travelled the sea, but who knows if anyone will ever find me. Smirks.
Woman in White:  

Gives de Campos’ biography written by Pessoa in a letter to Adolfo Casais Monteiro, January 13th 1935. De Campos adjusts and reacts to the ‘character’ descriptions. Álvaro de Campos was born in Tavira on Oct 15, 1890. He is a naval engineer (trained in Scotland), but now lives in Lisbon and is without work. He’s tall. He gets taller. He’s 1.75 metres in height (2 centimeters taller than Pessoa), skinny and has a slight tendency to hunch over. He hunches over. Clean-shaven. He’s vaguely of the Portuguese Jewish type. His hair is smooth he caresses it, slightly parted to the side parts his hair, and wears a monocle. Takes out of pocket. He had an ordinary high school education, was sent to go study in Scotland to study engineering, first mechanical then naval. During a holiday he voyaged to the Orient, from which resulted the poem ‘Opiary’. He was taught Latin by his uncle from Beira, who was a priest. Pessoa writes through him when he has a sudden impulse to write but does not know what.  

Álvaro de Campos: Speaking of Pessoa, where is that man? Fernando Fernando. I went everywhere looking for him. Tavira, Lisboa, the countryside, Scotland. I even studied mechanical and naval engineering to build myself a boat to find that man. I set sail, for days, months. And forget it, I give up. I much prefer not working and hanging around with the men....allllll those men. Yeah. Who knows where he is. Who knows. I don't know. I know somethings but I don't know that. I think it's because I can't feel where he is. I feel everything, the sun the moon the stars, his dick. Oh sorry, did I say that? I mean come on, hey la aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa. I love life, because I can feel. Although, I am nothing⁹, I know that now.

Scene 10. Pessoa’s apartment
Pessoa: Read me a bedtime story.
Ofelia: Excuse me?
Pessoa: Read me a bedtime story.
Ofelia: You kidding me?
Pessoa: No...
Ofelia: A bedtime story? What are you 5? Pause.
Pessoa: I’m serious.
Ofelia: Seriously?
Pessoa: Seriously.
Ofelia: What...story...do you want me...to read, to you –
Pessoa: Don’t read me anything.

Ofelia: So how can –

Pessoa: Make it up.

Ofelia: I’m not good with that kind of thing.

Pessoa: They don’t have to be good stories.

Ofelia: Of course you’d say that. Assuming that –

Pessoa: Relax. Just a story, or stories, make them up.

Ofelia: Fine. I’ll think of a story, give me a few minutes.

Pessoa: No, I’m tired. Now.


Pessoa: Seven.

Ofelia: Seven what.

Pessoa: Seven stories. Seven good stories, all made up.

Ofelia: takes deep breath in. Fine. Fine. Okay. Here we go. Once upon a time there was - Pessoa appears on stage. Pessoa is looking for something (his personalities). Meets the Blue Devil instead. She shows him her hand, which has a pill. He takes it, sees multiple versions of himself. He tries to grasp these versions with his hands, but it’s an illusion. In the haze, a woman in white appears, he falls in love with her. Blue devil snaps her fingers, and that whole world vanishes. She turns to him and says: You must choose. Shows him the pill, and conjures up woman in white. He thinks, but is entranced by the Blue Devil. He chooses the pill. Thousands of Pessoas everywhere. Sound of broken hearts. (Guitar throughout).

Once upon a time there was – Ofelia runs around the stage, she looks like a troubled woman. She begins to see Pessoa, goes to him, but more pop up everywhere. She goes to kiss them all but they vanish. She is angry, kicks, and stomps, and suddenly other men appear with multiple versions of themselves.
Once upon a time there was – Man with guitar pops up in apartment window. He plucks one string. Plucks two, then three, then 12 strings. Another guitar player pops up next to him. There are lots of strings. The guitars talk to each other through a cycle of furious/furioso, sad/triste, happy/contente, and then die suddenly, before their time. No more music.

Oh, I’m really bad at this...

Pessoa: Go on.
Ofelia: I was on six right?
Pessoa: You did three, four more.

Ofelia: Once upon a time a man named Pessoa was born. Pessoa walks on stage. Song: Everyone (lots of people appear on stage) dies around him (they are slightly annoyed at this brief stage time), falling away like stars. They do. He decides instead to duplicate himself. Pessoa squints really hard, and out pops someone else. Pessoa changes his mind, and decides to die. Pessoa has this thought. He is writing. He writes a goodbye letter. And writes his epitaph. 50 years later, the key is found, opened, the letters jump out and are read out loud by the other letter. Dies dies dies dies dies.

Pessoa: How romantic.
Ofelia: You didn’t say I had to be romantic.
Pessoa: No no, I actually think it’s roma-
Ofelia: She hits him with a pillow. Five. Once upon a time there was a delivery to the Pessoa apartment. There is a knocking at the door. Pessoa answers. There is a big brown bag, tied with a rope, sitting on his doorstep. He is confused, looks for the mailman; he cannot find him. He goes to untie the knot to see what’s inside. His heteronyms (Reis/de Campos/Caeiro) burst out of the bag, and trample him on their way out the door.
Ofelia: Six. Once upon a time there was a play, that opened with one narrator coming out, then another.

Two performers enter.

Ofelia: They each have their own storyline.

The two performers begin to speak the projected text, but the performers are silent. They mouth it, but don’t say it. Text is projected. The text is standard film script text. 12 point 10 pitch courier. White background, black text. One line at a time we see the text. This is the text.

Text: What’s this play about?
Well...it’s about...
(look)
It’s about a man... (look away)
Okay. (look)
A Portuguese poet –
So it’s about Portugal then?
No.
So it’s about a writer? His death?
Ssssort of...
Is there Portuguese in it?
Sometimes
Are you in it?
No.

The performer asking the questions asks another question. There is no text projected for this dialogue. The performer who is answering the questions, thinks about it, squints, purses lips, and nods yes.

Ofelia: It is about all of these things, but only about one.

The two performers disappear.

Ofelia: No I don’t like that one.

Pessoa: That story was fine.

Ofelia: No. That would be confusing. I don’t like it.
Pessoa: It was fine, I like confusing –

Ofelia: Okay, I got it. 7. The ocean spits out a man who has too many personalities. He lands on a beach. He makes glasses out of the twigs and shells. He makes a hat out of the rubber garbage. He walks the sand, passing women who cry out for their men who were lost at sea. He ignores them, devoid of personality. His personalities drag behind him in a fishing net. De Campos (screams ‘ouch’) Alberto (looks around) Ricardo (quietly disproves Pessoa’s action). Pessoa reaches the end of the beach, casts his net over the rocks, his personalities go flying, some into the air, some into the ocean never to speak again, some land on the land. And walk, they stride next to him, as he walks up the mountainous village called Lisboa. He reaches the beach and looks at his land. The buildings are people. His village are followers. He sees Alberto Caeiro, and Pessoa waves to the ocean as he swims to his master. Alberto Caeiro grabs his staff, and points to his people, points up to the sky, shakes his staff, lightning, and fado strike. They all dissolve back into water, some into sand, and some into earth. Pause. There, done!

Ofelia: What are you doing?

Pessoa: Nothing.

Ofelia: Are you stealing my ideas?

Pessoa: No. That’s just a story I’ve been working on.

Ofelia: Were you even listening to anything I just said?

Pessoa: Of course, the Blue Devil and the pill, the narrator, the fishing net...good stories.

Ofelia: But you didn’t write any of it down, you were to busy (looks at his notepad) – Go on, read it.

Pessoa: No.

Ofelia: Read it.
Pessoa: reads Pessoa’s “A Story of Saints and of Beards”.\(^\text{10}\) Two actors play out the story. The Portuguese National anthem plays subtly throughout.

“A Spaniard and a Portuguese, both men with great beards, were discussing the relative importances of their respective countries. After many exaggerations on both sides, the Spaniard happened to say that in Spain there were far more saints’-days (which were holidays) than in Portugal. The Portuguese contested this warmly. At last the discussion growing very hot, the Spaniard proposed that, since both had large and strong beards, there was an easy method of adding punishment to proof. Every time each of them pronounced the name of a saint's-day in his native land he would pull out a hair from the other's beard. The Portuguese assented. “St. Vincent’s day” said the Spaniard, pulling out a hair from the other’s face. “St. Anthony’s day” replied the Portuguese, doing the same to the other. “St. Peter’s day” cried the Spaniard, and out came another hair. “St. John’s day” retorted the Portuguese, and the Spaniard winced at another pull. This went on for a time, but as it happened both that the list of saints in either country was long, and that there was on both sides abundant will to remember them, both faces soon became extremely sore. The Portuguese, who had the tenderer skin, longed to get rid of the task without dishonour. And he soon found a way. “St. Philip’s day” said the Spaniard, pulling out another hair. The Portuguese laid both hands on his antagonist’s beard. “All-Saints' day,” said he, and pulled the whole of it out.”

Ofelia: Hm. I don't really get it.

Pessoa: Well, it's supposed to be funny.

\(^{10}\) Pessoa, Fernando. Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal. Espólio 3, Env. 95-18.
Ofelia: Oh. ... I like my stories better. I mean, no offence.

Pessoa: I like yours better too.

**Scene 11. Frame**

*In another framed area of the stage, we see the woman in white, sitting on ledge. Direct address to audience.*

Woman in White: I first went looking for Pessoa when he turned 5. I had heard about this boy who was more than one person. I thought, impossible! How could it be that someone be more than one? I kept looking and looking, I searched people who were alive, dead people’s gravestones, family albums, recounted stories, interviewed people. I searched through it all. And finally, I met him, years later in the foothills of Lisbon, in a tiny café. I met him...and Alberto, and de Campos, and Reis.

**Scene 12. split scene - café and exterior of Maria José apartment**

*This was cut from this scene: Maria José comes back, looks at clock, 220. Exterior of apartment: The man walks across the sidewalk again, with the same girl, same gestures are repeated. Maria José waves. They walk away. Maria José stares, really stares at the sidewalk. She grabs a cloth from the clothesline, is about to put it away, but she stops. Decides to do something different, she begins squirming. Maria José throws her hands onto the edge of the apartment building. Maria José tries to lift herself, but can't. Maria José does everything she can to throw herself out of the apartment window, but fails. Through these gestures, it becomes obvious she is disabled, severely hunchbacked. She slumps into her wheelchair. Maria José gives up.*

*Pessoa/Caeiro/de Campos/Reis sit down at the coffee shop*¹¹²¹³. They are playing cards, smoking, and drinking.


Pessoa: In the concept of being, there are no parts, nor varying levels; a thing is or isn’t.

Alberto Caeiro gives small nod.

Álvaro de Campos: I’m not sure it’s exactly quite like that. You have to analyze the concept of Being a bit better. It seems to me it is a metaphysical superstition, at least to a certain point.

Pessoa: But the concept of Being is not suited for analysis.

Álvaro de Campos: It’s concept isn’t, but it’s value can be.

Pessoa: But what is ‘the value’ of a concept independent of the concept itself? A concept, is an abstract idea which is nothing more or less, and so it’s not likely to have a value, because it will always be a question of more or less.

Alberto Caeiro: Interrupts, having paid close attention. Where there is something that can have neither more nor less there is nothing.

Pessoa: Why?

Alberto Caeiro: Because everything that is real can be more or less, and where there is something that is not real, it cannot exist.

Álvaro de Campos: Such as...

Alberto Caeiro: Rain. Rain is a thing that is real. Because it can rain more or less. If you say, ‘it cannot rain anymore and it cannot rain anyless’, I would respond, ‘well then that rain does not exist.’

Álvaro de Campos: Ok, fine.

Pessoa: (to Caeiro) Tell me one thing (pointing his cigarette). How do you perceive of a dream? Is it real or not?

Alberto Caeiro: I consider a dream like I consider shadows. A shadow is real but it is less real than a stone. A dream is real – or else it wouldn’t be a dream – but it is less real than a thing. To be real is to be like that.
Pessoa: That is a superb way of looking at it, very original! It never occurred to me that reality could be capable of constituting itself in degrees/or stages. Pause That means that ‘Being’, could be a numerical idea.

Alberto Caeiro: That’s a bit too confusing for me, but I think yes. Being real is to have other real things, because you cannot be real by yourself. Reality is a thing, like size or weight. You realize there are no two things that are the same just like there are no two things that are the exact same size and weight. There ought to always be a difference, even if extremely small. To be real is this.

Pessoa: You must think then that reality is an attribute to things, since you compare life with size and weight. Tell me one more thing: what is the thing that reality is an attribute to? Silence. What is behind reality?

Alberto Caeiro: (repeating Fernando’s question) What is behind reality? Behind reality there is nothing. Just like there is nothing behind size or weight.

Pessoa: But if a thing does not have reality it does not exist, yet it can exist without size or weight...

Alberto Caeiro: No. If it is a thing found in nature it always has size and weight. A stone cannot exist without size or weight. But a stone is not a size and a stone is not weight. Also a stone cannot exist without reality, but a stone is not a reality.

Pessoa: Fine. But when you say ‘a stone has reality’ you distinguish the stone from reality.

Alberto Caeiro: I distinguish: the stone is not reality, it has reality. A stone is only a stone.

Pessoa: And what does that mean?
Alberto Caeiro: I don’t know: it’s there. A stone is a stone and it has to have reality to be a stone. A stone is a stone and it has to have weight to be a stone. A man is not a face but it has to have a face to be a man. I don’t know why things are like this, nor do I know why anything is anything.

Pessoa: You know, Alberto, you are elaborating on a philosophy which sort of contradicts what you think and feel. You are creating some sort of Kantianism – creating a stone-noumenon, a stone in itself. I’ll explain, I’ll explain –

Alberto Caeiro: I don’t have theories. I don’t have philosophies. I see, but I know nothing. I call a stone a stone, to distinguish it from a flower or a tree...basically anything that is not a stone. BUT, every stone is different from another stone, but it is not because it is not a stone. pause. It is because it has another size, weight, form, and colour. Truthfully, we should call a stone by a different name, a proper name, like we do with men. Buuut, that is not done because it would be impossible to find that many words, but not because it was wrong...

Pessoa: Tell me one last thing, to clarify everything: so when you say this stone is bigger, you infer it has more size than that one. And if you say this stone has more weight then that one, would you then also say that this stone is more stone than that one? Or, in other terms, ‘this stone is more stony than that one?’

Alberto Caeiro: Yes, sir. I’m ready to say, ‘this stone is more stone than that one’.

Pessoa: And what do you call a stone that you see in a dream? He laughs.

Alberto Caeiro: I call it a dream. ... a dream of a stone.
Pessoa: I understand. You – (philosophically speaking) - do not distinguish substance from attributes. Each stone has a determined size, hardness, weight, and colour that distinguishes it from another stone, but they are both stones because they have the same attributes, although in different quantities. Now this equals negating the real existence of the stone: the stone passes as being simply a sum of things that are real...

Alberto Caeiro: But a sum is real! And the sum of real weight, size, colour and so on and so forth. And that is why a stone, besides its size, weight, etc. has reality too...It does not have reality as a stone: it has reality because it is a sum of attributes, just like how you call it, all real. Because each attribute has reality, a stone has it also.

Pessoa: Let’s return to the dream. To you, a stone you see in a dream is called a dream, or, when a lot of stones, a dream of stones. Why do you say ‘of a stone’? Why do you use the word ‘stone’?

Alberto Caeiro: For the same reason that you, when seeing my picture, say ‘this is Alberto Caeiro’; but it doesn’t mean that ‘it’ is the me that Is the flesh and blood.

*Sound of an espresso machine going full force.*

Pessoa: I understand and quit. *Laughs.*

Alberto Caeiro: Enough about me, Reis, I’d like to write you a birthday card, celebrating your life.

Ricardo Reis: I don’t have a birthday I don’t remember the month and day, but I have them somewhere.¹⁴

Alberto Caeiro: (to Álvaro de Campos): And what about for your birthday, what would you like?

Álvaro de Campos: No: I don’t want anything. I already said that I don’t want anything. Don’t come to me with conclusions. The only conclusion is dying.\(^{15}\)

*They all sip their coffees.*


*Woman in white steps out from her frame into their coffee shop.*

Woman in White: direct to audience. Gives biography of Reis written by Pessoa in the letter to Adolfo Casais Monteiro, January 13\(^{th}\) 1935.\(^{16,17}\) This is Ricardo Reis. Born in 1887, a year before Pessoa was actually born, in Oporto. A bit shorter, stronger, and leaner than Caeiro; he is also clean-shaven. He was educated in a Jesuit high school, was a doctor, and lived in Brazil since 1919 where he exiled himself because of being a monarchist. He had training as a Latinist and as a semi-Hellenist. Pessoa writes through him after an abstract deliberation, that quickly escalated to concretize into an ode. *The café table conversation surfaces again.*

*Woman in white exits, Reis is still on his time rant. Like it’s the only opening he’s had with the four of them, and is seizing the opportunity.*


Ricardo Reis: What if time stopped. Could we still walk? And talk? Would we be frozen (*Blue Devil appears – blue light in mouth and in dress, Ofelia appears*) forever unable to move forward or backwards into the pained existence we lead. What does it mean to be the last? What is the last? When is the actual end? If death is the end then there is no circle, unless it’s a triangle, but when we die, is that it, is it really all a dream? Do we really continue on. Time continues on, so should we. But how. Our warm bodies turn cold (*Blue Devil slides over*) and harsh and stiff and smelly and stinky. We become blue and purple (*Blue Devil smiles*) and get rotten, eaten by bugs. And no one, but no one can stop it from happening. Except for time. Time’s our only hope.

Woman in White: *to audience.* This is not the Ode.

*Ofelia moves in closer to Caeiro, grabs a table closest to him and orders a coffee, her back is turned away from Pessoa.*

Ricardo Reis: We need to stop time. Catch it, twist it, distort it. Time must not love anyone. It helps to heal wounds of heartache, but not death. That pain lasts forever. I wonder if time was betrayed by a lover. And wanted to punish the lover by not stopping time.

*Ticking of a clock. Ticking of a typewriter. Reis becomes foreground.*
Ricardo Reis: Maybe time and space used to date. And then the Blue Devil introduced matter. And then space cheated on time with matter, and had a baby called the Earth. Time got jealous and destroyed space’s happiness by moving forward all the time, never looking back. And because of that, space was never able to stay in one form for very long, constantly changing/renewing itself, life death life death life death life death. Until one day the sun appeared and told the Earth to keep chasing space, if it could just move in a circle, not a triangle, it might just find time again. Only problem is that time wanted nothing to do with space anymore, and decided to punish space forever, by never looking back. Always moving forward, and even playing tricks on space thinking that time could be sped up or slowed down, but really, it was time tricking space into thinking there was hope of time stopping. The sad part is time wanted to reunite with space so badly, but was too afraid of getting hurt. Space begged time to stand still in one place, at one time. But the Blue Devil wouldn’t let them. As a reminder of her power, she froze every little piece of time’s hand to be stuck at 220. The exact time that space broke time’s heart.

The café clock is stuck at 2:20pm. Reis takes a moment to recover from his wordfest.

Álvaro de Campos: Grabs a microphone, speaks into it. To audience. This is the Blue Devil. She is ice cold, like an ice queen, but hot like a she-devil. She is stunning, wears blue, feels icy, and wears extremely high heels, and walks with a cane. Pessoa began writing through her when Ofelia broke his heart.

Ofelia can only hear the line ‘Ofelia broke his heart’. Blue Devil joins de Campos on mic.
Blue Devil: Shut up will you. That is a terrible description. I am the Blue Devil, diabo azul, forever young, and beautiful. Yeaaaaah. No one gets in my way of inflicting a little pain in the world. I keep things interesting, move things along. Everyone thinks they want time to do what they want, move forward, move back, ‘oh if it was just 5 years later/5 years earlier it wouldn’t have turned out that way’. Eyes. Too bad I’m in control. Smiles. I like to see people squirm, they get this funny little squishy fishy face does it briefly then smiles. What else can I tell you about my fabulous self? Yeaaaaah. Well, I like to bake cookies -

Ofelia: Ofelia cannot hear the Blue Devil, speaks to de Campos. I did not break his heart, I have letters and letters and letters proving I loved him. He was the -

Blue Devil: This is Ofelia Queiroz, Pessoa’s pathetic girlfriend.

Woman in White: This is Ofelia Queiroz, who was a sweet, young woman that Pessoa fell in love with. They corresponded by letters.

Blue Devil whacks her stick, time is frozen, the others are frozen. She walks over to Pessoa.

Scene 13.

Blue Devil: emerging from the mics. Helloooowwwwwww there. Fancy seeing you here. Looks around, gestures with arm. In this joint. Pessoa looks at her, irritated, slumps to himself. She sips on ice cubes. I suppose you’re wondering whatever happened to that sweet little young girlfriend of yours, Ofelia Queiroz (she emphases the zsh sound). Mmmm, she was a hot piece of...(Bites lips. Whips cane against the wall). She was too young for you, 19, you should’ve known better then to have (traces her cane over Pessoa’s body) been seduced by her youthful...ahem...eyes. (bats eyelashes).

Pessoa: I am over her, I have separated myself from loving her, I don’t want to know her anymore.
Blue Devil: Oh, but that's the problem isn't it? You liked her too much, you had to shove her away, you wanted to control her. Yeah. And if there's anything about a women that I know it's that they don't like to be controlled by a man's...ahem...mind. by their words. They need their freedom, like a little bird, fragile, fluttering its wings for the first time in their cage/nest only to realize the ground is a lot harder when they fall then if they were to fly.

Pessoa: Do you mind? I'm trying to enjoy my cup of coffee here. That's all I want. Drink my coffee, read some books, go to sleep, and eventually die. Now go away.

Blue Devil: You really think it's that easy? To just get rid of me like that? No no no no no no no. Hell hath no fury like a woman...oh, what was that saying again? (Finger to mouth, innocently). Anyway, I'm here. For good, for always. I'm that little broken shard of glass in your heart that can't quite untwist itself from the winding little tubes in your heart. The little ventricles that pump pump pump and make your blood flow in and out. And slowly, I become a little bit more a part of you, one cell, one blood pump at a time. Until soon you become totally frozen, completely devoid of emotional... Mmmm just how I like a man. Stiff. Hard. Cold. Icecold. It's really the only way to live. Being warm and fuzzy only lets other people know they can step on you with their high-heeled stilettos and grind their heel into your soft squishy little sternum (traces finger on sternum). I am the way, the light. And if you think for one second you can get rid of me, I'll twist and turn inside your pathetic small heart. Make room for me, because your heart...well it just got smaller. Yeaaaah. And there's more of me coming. Oh yeah. The blue devil, well, she's alive. smile/pause And I ain't going nowhere.

Pessoa has been getting hotter and redder as she keeps talking. Finally he snaps, loses it, and becomes entranced, devoid of his personality, cold like ice, and he opens his eyes wide...takes a deep breath. Blue Devil whips her cane against the wall. He begins to write fast and furiously. Chorus joins in the speaking.
Pessoa: One page at a time, I am written. One day at a time, life is made.
One book at a time, the earth revolves. One story, many stories,
many pages, many books. Too many stories, too many books. No.
For now, I want only one page at a time, for every moment, every
thought, the page turns, and I listen (flapping/blowing of wind).
One can only know for oneself. One can only know for oneself.

_Blue Devil walks her stick, time unfrozen._

**Scene 14. Heteronyms – Hands & Fingers & Arms**

Narrator: ...45464748495051525354555657585960 6162 63 64 65
66 67 68 69 70 717273747576777879808182 oitenta e dois:
MARIA JOSÉ. 83 84 85...

**Scene 15. Bar**

Pessoa: _pause_ I love you.

Ofelia: Marry me. _Siiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiii

Ofelia: But I want kids. Am I destined to be an aunt forever? No!

Pessoa: Don’t make this harder than it has to –

Ofelia: You’re the one who is making it hard, not me.

Pessoa: I’m not forcing you to do anything.

Ofelia: But you’re not letting me have the life that I want.
Pessoa: Well, there’s a problem, we both can’t be what we want. Now can we.

Ofelia: Yes, you can be. It’s not going to change anything, we’ll be married, and it'll be just like we are now, happy, fighting, talking about our hopes and dreams.

Pessoa: I don’t have any hopes and dreams. You on the other hand –

Ofelia: Come on!

Pessoa: New rule: You don’t say ‘let’s get married’ again and we’ll be fine.

Ofelia: You’re an asshole.

Pessoa: ...who loves you. Ofelia leaves. i’m an asshole, who loves you...

The rest of this scene was cut.

*Ofelia goes to the bathroom.*

Blue Devil: Lights in here are terrible.

*Ofelia blows her nose/washes her face.*

Blue Devil: You got a smoke?

Ofelia: No, sorry, it’s my only one.

Blue Devil: Oh, just found one tucked away in my pocket.

*Ofelia still with head down, not paying too much attention.*

Blue Devil: A light?

*Ofelia lights her cigarette.*

Blue Devil: Thanks, didn’t mean to bother you.

Ofelia: Oh, not at all, this cigarette isn’t even mine, I don’t even smoke...I don’t carry spares with –

Blue Devil: I meant about the fight-

Ofelia: Fight?
Blue Devil: I was sitting in front of you at the bar...

Ofelia: Oh.

Blue Devil: Couldn't help but overhear your conversation.

Ofelia: I didn't think we were that loud. Sorry, that's embarrassing.

Blue Devil: That's okay Ofelia.

Ofelia: How'd you know my name? –Uh...

Blue Devil: I overhead your conversation, well most of it. Aaand I see you here almost every day.

Ofelia: Oh. Yeah, you look familiar. silence

Blue Devil: So who is that man?...Pessoa, I mean.

Ofelia: My boyfriend. Well not really boyfriend. It's complicated.

Blue Devil: It always is. Anyway, I just came into the bathroom to make sure you were okay.

Ofelia: Thanks. (beat). I've got a headache. I'm gonna grab an espresso down the street.

Blue Devil: Thanks for the cigarette/

Ofelia: Want to join me?

Blue Devil: Yeah, I would love to.

*They walk down the street together.*

**Scene 16. Pessoa's apartment**

*De Campos/Reis/Caeiro are sorting through mail.*
Álvaro de Campos: All love letters are ridiculous. They wouldn’t be love letters if they weren’t ridiculous. In my heyday, I also used to write love letters -  

Alberto Caeiro: *tries keep de Campos focused on task Mail.*

Ricardo Reis: Trying to find those letters from Ofelia, not as easy in Pessoa’s apartment, it’s such a mess. Letters everywhere.

Alberto Caeiro: All I can find are business letters, nothing to do with Ofelia. Translation, business, and more translation letters. What a boring dayjob, translating letters. Writing someone else’s words into another language to give to...No wonder he stopped talking to us during the day. Too busy working for other people...

Stack of mail, they alternate reading the huge pile of mail derived from the trunk. They go through the letters quickly.

Álvaro de Campos: *reads Letter 1.* ‘Dear Sir: I beg to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 17th. And am replying thereto...*(skips a bit).* Lease of the mine for 10 years at 100 contos per year-this representing a minimum of 10%’ - *(gets bored tosses letter, next).*

Alberto Caeiro: *reads Letter 2.* Rua Da Assunção, 42, 2° - Lisboa. Rua da Assunção. *(tosses letter.)*

Ricardo Reis: *reads Letter 3.* The Cambridge Literary Agency London. 27th March 1929. *(About to toss.)*

Alberto Caeiro: That’s it.

Ricardo Reis: *Looks at letter.* What’s it?

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19 Pessoa, Fernando. *Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal. Espólio 3, Env. 115-1 57.*
21 Pessoa, Fernando. *Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal. Espólio 3, Env. 115-1 34.*
Alberto Caeiro: That’s your birth date.

Ricardo Reis: My birthday?

Alberto Caeiro: Your birth date. March 27th.

Ricardo Reis: Oh, but not the same year.

Alberto Caeiro: True. I thought you didn’t know the year -

*De Campos grabs letter to stop the bickering. Looks at another letter, examines it.*

Álvaro de Campos: Well this is different. *Keeps reading...* shall be pleased to see some of your work. There is a good market in for translations in the language you name, and publishers are always pleased to consider seriously any translation that we recommend. Comparatively only a few authors are commissioned to translate.*

22 Pessoa, Fernando. Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal. Espólio 3, Env. 115-1 34.

Alberto Caeiro: Hm.

*De Campos folds letter, keeps in pocket.*

Ricardo Reis: Rua Passos Manuel 24-3°. Lisboa.23 Toss.


Ricardo Reis: reads Letter 6. Skips some of the letter. 'Dear Sir, We are much obliged by your letter...Important books in the leading European languages are frequently translated into English, and in some cases find a good market...the English publisher’s decision is governed more by his estimate of probable sales than by the quality of the translation'.


Alberto Caeiro: reads Letter 8. Deste lado e no verso a correspondência...


Ricardo Reis: reads Letter 12. ‘We should like to know whether you are in the Typewriter and Duplicator business’.

Álvaro de Campos: reads Letters 13. ‘Dear Mr. Pessoa, Yesterday I received your two books of poems. I read them at once. Through the sonnets in great part. I wish I could praise your work unreservedly. I feel in much you are near, very near really fine poetry. For a foreigner (repeats for a foreigner) you move, marvelously well in English, but though continually there are striking epithets, fine lines and really rich poetic thought, the form needs just that finish that constitutes crude forceful poetic matter.’

Folds paper, eats it. De Campos gives it one last try. Finds a letter, it’s Ofelia’s. Found it.

Ofelia voiceover: “Meu adorado Fernandinho, É meia-noite, vou-me deitar, mas creia quesempre pensando no meu amorzinho. E ele estará também pensando no seu bébe. Não calcula como estou triste, estou farta de chorar nem mais terei a minha alegria que tinha antigamente! Sinto-me tão infeliz! Se o Fernandinho soubesse o que se passa comigo!...Quantas vezes pareço alegre...mas sabe Deus o coração, é que junto de si não posso estar triste, não tenho tempo para pensar senão duma coisa e esqueço tudo o mais!...Tua dedicada”

Álvaro de Campos: *Reads simultaneously as voiceover happens.* My dearest Fernando, It’s midnight, I’m going to bed, but believe I’m always thinking of you my love. And that he is always thinking about his baby. You can’t imagine how sad I am, I’m sick of crying nor will I ever have the happiness that I used to have! I feel so unhappy! If you, Little Fernando, knew what is going on with me!...How many times do I seem happy...But God only knows what’s inside the heart, it’s just that when I’m with you it’s impossible to be sad, I don’t have time to think about anything but that one thing! Yours truly Disgusting.

*They exit the apartment.*

**Scene 17. this scene & 17 overlap**

This scene was cut.

*Woman in white comes running on stage.*


“*God’s Epitaph.* Here lies a tyrant whom some called a devil, Snake – like his folds around our life he curled; He’s dead now, and the world hath no more evil, Because there is no longer any world. Charles Robert Anon February, 1905.”*36* *She gets spooked, and Quickly puts tombstone back.* No definitely not him. Pessoooooooolllllllll, where are you? And by you I mean you. Not him, or him, or him. Or Ricardo, or Alberto, or de Campos. Hmph.

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Twirls. Sound of ocean. She listens. Let's out a big sigh. Fine, I'll find you one day. And by you I mean you, and not him or him or him. Or Ricardo or Alberto or de Campos or... She drifts offstage as she mutters different heteronymic names.

Church bells toll. Fado song.

Scene 18.
Pessoa: I dreamt last night I had died. There were three of me and this is what they said.

Life.
0
1
1
1
1
2 Chorus join in with precision (physically and verbally)
2
2
2
3
3
3
3
4
4
4
4
4
5
5
5
5
Tick tick tick of typewriter, of time, of dripping of water
I dreamt last night I had died. There were three of me, they were

A acabou.
Finished. Flatlinesound
I dreamt last night I had died. There were three of me, they were
in graves, not watchers, but nonetheless they were the same three women. Me. And Me. And Me. And this is what they said.

Scene 19.  Split scene on stage – steps of a church and the café

Ofelia is sitting on the steps of a church, with the Blue Devil. She is still mad at Pessoa. This split scene may happen simultaneously.

Ofelia: to Blue Devil. There are churches here, on every corner, of every street. Full of gold and sinners. It is for that reason I don’t enter them,

Blue Devil: I haven’t been to church since I was 5.

Ofelia: I am weary/suspect of aristocrats + bureaucracy, and even more suspect of those who pretend to be bad. For those are the ones you (must) have to watch out for. They are eyeing you, waiting for a false move, waiting for your descent so they can swoop down and pick at you with their beaks + claws, bone by bone, until you are nothing but pieces of flesh looking at yourself, through disparate/desperate eyes, hungry for food, and broken.

Church bells toll, 5 times indicating it’s 5pm. As the bell rings, Álvaro de Campos rounds the corner, overhears Ofelia.

Blue Devil: What time did he say he’d be here?

Ofelia: 2pm. It’s now 5.

Álvaro de Campos: stretches. I’m so bored. So much talking, with nothing to say. Darts Ofelia a look.

Ofelia: She darts him a dirty look. Where’s Pessoa? I’m sure you know where -

Álvaro de Campos: Aw, too bad, you’ve been waiting. I guess he doesn’t like you that much. Being stood up. It’s a nice feeling hey? Perhaps you should get the hint and leave him alone. You’re the reason we got into this mess. We were fine before you got here, it was just him and the boys.
Location change: At the café.

Maria José reads a letter\textsuperscript{37} she has written.

Maria José: “Dear Mr. Anthony: You Mr. Anthony should never see this letter, and neither should I see this letter a second time because I am dying of tuberculosis, but I still want to write to you (even if you will never know), because if I don’t write this letter I will drown and suffocate. I’m a hunchback since birth and people have always laughed at me. You’ve seen me in my window that you Mr. Anthony pass by on the way to your workshop and I look to you because I hope every day for your arrival, and I know what time you arrive. I know that you Mr. Anthony have a lover, that blonde woman tall and beautiful. I am not jealous of you because I do not have the right to anything, not even jealousy. But I have the right to like someone that doesn’t like me and I also have the right to cry, which should not be denied of anyone. I am sorry to have written you without knowing you but you sir will not read this and even if you did read it, it has nothing to do with you and in any case, you wouldn’t pay it any attention. I would like to die after talking to you a first time but I would never have the courage nor the ability to talk to you. Eu amo o senhor com toda a minha alma e toda a minha vida. Aí tem e estou toda a chorar.”

Pessoa walks into café.

Pessoa: Outro café por favor.

Another coffee please.

Waitress: Fernando, queres um dôce? Agua?
Fernando, would you like a pastry? Water?

Pessoa: Não, só o café. Sem açúcar.
No, just a coffee. Without sugar.

Waitress: Como é que está o trabalho, a escritura, fazer dinheiro é bom Fernando.
How is your day job going, translating......making money is good Fernando.

Pessoa: So se tu gostas o que tu estas a fazer.
Only if you like your dayjob.

Waitress: Estás a escrever, não gostas disso?
You’re still writing though. Don’t you like writing?

Pessoa: Claro que sim. Eu escreve todo dia.
Of course. I write everyday.

Waitress: Nunca estás feliz Fernando.
You are never happy Fernando.

Pessoa: Parece isso, mas nao é.
That is how it appears, but is not.

Waitress: Tão, um café, já trago.
Then, just a coffee. I’ll be back with it.

Pessoa: Obrigado.
Thank you.

Pessoa sorts through unopened letters addressed to Café Brasileira. Rejection letters from publishing companies. These are the same ones read from earlier.
Pessoa: reads “Dear Mr. Pessoa, Yesterday I received your two books of poems. I read them at once. Through the sonnets in great part. I wish I could praise your work unreservedly. I feel in much you are near, very near really fine poetry. For a foreigner - Stops here. Silence. Waitress brings him another coffee. you move, marvelously well in English”  

...Pessoa feels like a failure. He grabs another letter. This one is from Ofelia. Reads 'MAU, MIL VEZES MAU!! Estou zangada, estou zangada, estou zangada. E tenho muito razão. Escrevo-lhe só para lhe chamar mau 2.000 vezes, e ainda acho pouco. Deus queira que ao jantar em casa de seu amigo, a sopa estaja muito quente, e queime a lingual, para castigo.”  

You stood me up. I was waiting at the steps of the church for hours. And on top of being stood up, your pesky friend de Campos followed me there. You’re bad, a million times bad!! I’m mad, I’m mad, I’m mad. And I have plenty of reasons to be mad. I am writing to you only to call you bad times two thousand, and that is still too little times. God willing that at dinner at your friend’s house, the soup is really hot, and burns your tongue, to punish you. Finishes coffee. To waitress: Do you have the time?  

Waitress: Yes. She takes out a pocket watch, shows him, no one else can see the time.

Scene 20. Café

This scene was cut.

It’s hot and sunny. Álvaro de Campos is having an espresso at a table, reading the newspaper. Suddenly Caeiro joins him, with his espresso, gives de Campos a hello. Says hello back. They cheers their coffee. Caeiro peeks at what de Campos is reading, doesn’t interest him.

Alberto Caeiro: Everything is different from us; and for that reason alone is why everything exists.

Silence. De Campos stares at Caeiro.

Alberto Caeiro: There’s a young man here, his name is Ricardo Reis, you’ll enjoy getting to know him: He’s very different than you. De Campos slightly confused, but nods head anyway. Everything we see, we must see for the first time. And so each yellow flower is a new yellow flower, even if it is called the same as yesterday’s yellow flower. That specific yellow cannot be the same. It’s too bad people do not exactly have the eyes to notice that, because then we would be such happy people.

Álvaro de Campos: Are you a pagan?

Alberto Caeiro: No. But I am paganism.

Álvaro de Campos: I’m a pagan by revolt, that is, by temperament.

Alberto Caeiro: Yes. silence Do you want to play a game?

Álvaro de Campos: I like games.

Alberto Caeiro: What’s your favourite number?

Álvaro de Campos: Ooooo, that’s tough, either seven or five.

---

Alberto Caeiro: *Sips espresso.* Okay.

Álvaro de Campos: *Kindly reciprocating but still thoroughly confused.* Yours?

Alberto Caeiro: Infinity. *Laughs.*

Álvaro de Campos: *Laughs, but doesn’t get the joke.* Infinity.

Alberto Caeiro: No, actually, I hate infinity. It’s a stupid concept. Nothing is infinite.

Álvaro de Campos: Excuse me?

Alberto Caeiro: Unless of course you’re a materialist *suspiciously* Are you a materialist?

*Espresso machine hissing is heard.*

Álvaro de Campos: No, I don’t even know what that means-

Alberto Caeiro: Good. I can’t stand them.

Álvaro de Campos: Materialists?

Alberto Caeiro: Yes. Saying that space is infinite. Where do they see that in space?

Álvaro de Campos: But don’t you conceive space as infinite?

Alberto Caeiro: I don’t conceive of anything as infinite. How could I possibly know what thing is infinite?

Álvaro de Campos: *trying to be convincing* Suppose a space. Imagine a space. Beyond that space is more space, beyond that space more space, and then more, and more, and more... *wide eyed* It doesn’t end... *SILENCE.* De Campos *is trying so hard to telepathically convince Caeiro, thinks he has him.*

Alberto Caeiro: Why?

Álvaro de Campos: I can’t believe what I am hearing! **SUPPOSE IT DOES END,** WHAT’S AFTER THAT?

Alberto Caeiro: If it ends, there is nothing after.
Álvaro de Campos: You know, this kind of argument is cumulative, childish, feminine, irresponsible...you can’t be serious! ... But do you actually conceive of this?

Alberto Caeiro: Conceive of what? That a thing has limits? It could! But what does not have limits does not exist. Existing is to have something else, and so each thing has its own limit. Why is it so difficult to conceive that a thing is a thing, and it is not always trying to be something else immediately after it? Caeiro sips his espresso, gestures for another coffee to the waiter.

Álvaro de Campos: De Campos can’t argue anymore as Caeiro is beyond his intellectual/spiritual reach. It’s like I’m in an argument with another universe. Look...Consider numbers...Where do numbers end? Pause. They both take sips of their coffees. Let’s take, any number - 34, for example. After that, BEYOND that, we have 35, 36, 37, 38, and etc. without being able to stop. There is no existing number that does not have a number greater than it that comes right after!

Alberto Caeiro: But you are talking about numbers! silence What is 34, staring at de Campos with his big blue innocent eyes ... in reality? silence

Álvaro de Campos sips his coffee, so does Caeiro. His second cup arrives. They cheers.

Scene 21. Pessoa’s apartment

Ofelia: I don’t like Álvaro, he’s too harsh for my taste, too acidic. Burns my stomach.

Pessoa: He’s my friend.

Álvaro de Campos: That Ofelia, she’s too sweet, sticky, like a rotten nectarine sitting in the sun. With lil ants nipping at her nectar. Hey la a a a a a a a.

Pessoa: Do you mind?

Ofelia: I don’t feel safe when he’s around.
Álvaro de Campos: She makes me want to vomit, throw up. She treats you like you’re her lil puppy she can just order around. Men don’t get ordered around, they give orders, you’re not a dog –

Pessoa: I realize that.

Álvaro de Campos: and if there’s one bitch I won’t allow to dictate your life, it’s her spits on the ground, pleased with his gesture I can’t stand her, her perfume, her brown, fuzzy braided hair. She’s no good for you Fernando.

Pessoa: I like her fine. She listens to me, reads my writing.

Ofelia: He doesn’t respect you at all, he looks at your writing, and laughs, and throws it away, I found your poem ‘Autopsychography’ in the garbage last week. Tossed away, and I knew that was one that you were proud of, why do you let him take over your life like that?

Pessoa: I can’t help it...

Ofelia: YES YOU CAN/

Álvaro de Campos: YES YOU CAN


*De Campos and Ofelia turn to each other with disdain.*

Ofelia: (to de Campos) Filha da puta, you son of a bitch, Pessoa told me about you. He’s shoving me away from him because of you.

Álvaro de Campos: Well maybe if you weren’t such a little bitch he’d be able to withstand your putrid smell.

*She slaps him. He slaps her back. They stop, taking it in. They look at Pessoa. Blue Devil rolls in. With her cane. Dances around de Campos and Ofelia, they follow her stick, hypnotized/entranced. They go to Pessoa. Both dance around Pessoa, trying to distract him. Pessoa is tunnel-visioned, trying to write. Doesn’t want any distraction. He finally*
 submits, kisses both of them. The bell tolls. He wakes up out of it, they disappear/roll
away. Woman in white appears, she is statue like in her appearance, she moves in, to
Pessoa, she is pained, and empty. They waltz, he becomes like a statue. They dance.
She leaves him, as he hangs over a chair, exhausted. He breathes in. 1. 2. 3. And feels
normal again, like the nightmares he’s been having has been but a layered dream. The
clock ticks. He writes.

**Scene 22. Pessoa’s bedroom**

Pessoa looks sick. Woman in white and Ofelia are on their knees, praying. It’s mumbled
prayers. They have white handkerchiefs in their hands. Blue Devil is eating an apple
nonchalantly. The heteronyms are gathered by Pessoa’s bed. Ricardo Reis is examining
Pessoa for symptoms, with a stethoscope.

Ricardo Reis: The moment of exit. The moment of exiting. The moment of
exeunt. The moment of dying.

*Blue Devil crunches her apple.*

The moment of departure. The moment of sadness. The moment of aloneness. The moment of real pain. The moment of really
disappearing. The moment of the body not working. The moment of heartache, heartbreak, toothache.

*Blue Devil picks her teeth for crumbs.*

The moment only your ears and nose and feet grow longer and
then stop. The moment of the last breath. The moment of the last
holding on to his hand. The moment of goodbye. The moment of
closing your eyes.

*Blue Devil plucks one of her hairs, & uses it to floss her teeth.*

The moment of dying. The moment of dyings. The moments of
death. The moment of truth. The moment of a new beginning. And
entrance into another....

Pessoa: I hate the theatre, it reminds me of my birth.
Song: Autopsychography
The poet is a pretender
Pretends so completely,
That he begins to pretend it is pain
The pain that he truly feels.
And those that read what he writes
In the pain read feel fully
Not the two that he had
But only the one which they don’t have.
And like this, in the frame of the wheel
Spins, entertaining the reason,
That winding train
That is called the heart. 43

Scene 23.
Song: Pessoa was
Is
A man
A woman
Of
Identities
People
Pessoa’s name translates to Person.

Scene 24. Apartment (window and room)
This scene was cut.

Window scene

Ofélia: Fernando, vem aqui abrir a porta.
Come here, and open the door.

Fernando ignores her because he is passed out still from the fever.

Ofélia: Querido Fernandinho.
Sweetheart.

She madly rings the doorbell. Pessoa manages to wake up. Fernando goes to window, looks down sees her and says

I’ll be there in a second.

He puts down the book. Goes down to the 1st floor (2 floors down) and invites her in. It is night time. She goes with him, feeling his legs along the way up the staircase. He is not that interested; He is too busy thinking of the poetry of Álvaro de Campos (voiceover). He struggles to be present.

Álvaro de Campos: ‘The Future’ by de Campos
I know that something is waiting for me
But I don’t know what is that thing that
Waits for me.
Like a dark room
That I fear when I know nothing frightens
But I only fear it, by fear, fear in vain
The mystery of my death links me
To the brutal end of my poem.44

She kisses him on the neck. Takes off his glasses. Álvaro’s voice is louder. She brings him to his bed (just barely fits them). They lie down. She clammers onto him. He’s preoccupied. Ricardo Reis pops up. Fernando Pessoa looks. Ofélia begins a physical

sequence with Pessoa. He looks at his books as she kisses him. She begins kissing him and then all the heteronyms, Álvaro de Campos rejects her. She notices Pessoa’s focus on his books, grabs one, and begins to get very intimate with the book. She teases Pessoa. Pessoa begins to get mad/jealous. She stops. He takes the book away. He begins flipping through the pages as they lie down together in silence.


Reis: I may only be a doctor, but I have so many questions. He is doing his fever check on Pessoa while asking all these questions. Why not the many? What is an identity? What constitutes a memory? What is trace, of existence? What is personality? What is internal vs. external? What is self? Is there one self? Are there always more than one? What is emptiness? What is depersonalization? What defines the self? If in relation what constitutes the thing its in relation to? Does personality define personalities? Are we one personality trapped, in one body desperately trying to escape to be other personalities? Are those personalities already in existence in other people’s bodies? Are our other personalities living in parallel worlds? When we die do we die? What is we? What is I? Are our body vessels for personality eruptions? Are we responsible for our personalities? Is there a master in all of us? Does our body dictate personality? Location affects personality? Objects affect personalities? pauses These are some of the things I couldn’t possibly have time to think about. I don’t have time for thinking. A patient of mine once told me that. She said, “I’m crippled. Who has time to think when you’re stuck. Instead of thinking about philosophy or religion or intelligence I think everyday to myself, how can I possibly throw myself out of this window when I can’t move. Wishing to see my face squished against the ground, two become one. But how?” Now that is a conundrum.

This was cut from the scene: Window frame in another part of the stage – happens spliced throughout the above monologue. Maria José grabs another cloth. Puts it away, comes back, looks at the clock. Man comes walking onto the sidewalk. This time he is alone. There is a cat and dog fighting, making lots of noise so all the neighbours begin to
pop out of their windows. They look at the cat and dog which are near the man. The man is standing next to another man with a huge beard, who is having his coffee on the patio of the local coffee shop. Everyone begins laughing at the dog and cat, who are fighting. He looks up at Maria José. Laughs along with her. She laughs with him. He quickly looks back to the cat and dog, and the man with the beard, and walks towards the same way he entered. Maria José is in disbelief. She smiles for the first time. Quickly the smile fades away.

Scene 26.

Woman in White: I first went looking for Pessoa when he turned 5. I had heard about this boy who was more than one person. I thought, no, not possible. I looked for him. Searched...And finally,

snap to scene 27

Scene 27. Beach

Pessoa is sitting at the beach with the woman in white, he’s skipping stones in the water.

Woman in White: Your life in Lisbon was one of hiding + entrances + exits. Never too close or far from home, work, the river.

Pessoa: I need a pill, my heart is congested. hayfever of the heart.

Woman in White: shhhhh...I need to know Pessoa, who you are. Who you really are. I’m going to ask you some questions, and it’s very important you tell me the truth. What is your idea of misery/miséria?

Pessoa: Not to have know my father. I was 5, half my family was dead. I never wanted to be alone again.

wind

Woman in White: What happened when you were 5?

Pessoa: 5, every year ending in 5 has been important in my life. 1895, mother’s second marriage, left for Africa (mouths it)...Africa. 1905, return to Lisbon. 1915 I created the Orpheu. My mother died in 1925. 5 marked the beginnings of periods.

Woman in White: But what happened when you were 5?
Pessoa:  *Dips toe in water.* My father died, my brother died. It was just me.
And my mother. Nobody else. Until Chévalier de Pas.

Woman in White:  Who was Chévalier de Pas?

Pessoa:  My first heteronym. The more of me I create the more. Different
positions, sitting, standing, moving, kneeling, dancing...

Woman in White:  What is your main fault?

Pessoa:  I don't like people, I like persons.

Woman in White:  Who is your favourite poet?

Pessoa:  Myself. Every poet but me. And Wordsworth.

Woman in White:  Where would you like to live?

Pessoa:  The world inside me are many.

Woman in White:  What is your favourite hero in fiction?

Pessoa:  I am or not I am, that is the (question) problem. For to be I am is
not and for to be not is I am.

Woman in White:  I see. If not yourself, who would you be?

Pessoa:  Alberto Caeiro.

Woman in White:  What is your favourite name?

Pessoa:  Ofelia.

Woman in White:  How do you wish to die?

Pessoa:  The horoscope I did for myself told me I would die later than I did,
I should’ve known that I I I I I I I I I I I I would’ve died in 1935. I
could’ve loved her for two more years. What is the point of loving
when you know you’re going to be dead.

*He collects a few more rocks.*

Woman in White:  Pessoa, I asked how, not when.

Pessoa:  With my friends, surrounding me. And words everywhere.
Puts stones in pocket, relaxes onto a log on the beach.

Woman in white: to audience He was lying there...sitting on the edge of his own existence. His own territorial map of consciousness. He fell into a deep sleep. And this is what happened:

The bell tolls. Guitar.

Scene 28.

Song: Without my selves I am nothing, I am but one. I need the many, ever changing, never fixed, always sliding, identities. That is my love. To be many. Be great. Be whole. Don't exaggerate. I am everywhere and nowhere. How can it be I ask. Does the river ask where the water comes from? Does a mountain ask where the earth it’s built upon come from? Does the finger ask where the hand is from? Does the head ask where its heart belongs? I am one, I am many. Don’t ask me why or how or what or who or how many. Next time you stand in front of your self or another human being, ask yourself, where do I begin, and where does he end? Where do I end and he begin? What is all of this if one day we vanish? These are just questions, and my head is a mere book, ready to be turned (flipped) to any page at any time. Only one day the book will be lost, in an eternal time glitter of a bang, and freeze, into a space that is neither here nor there or everywhere or anywhere. It is sad to me, I would shed a tear if I was a river, but I am only human, I only cry flowers and tulips and (penmarks and blood); for the me that I want to be and will never have been.

Scene 29. Pessoa’s apartment

Ricardo Reis: You don’t look too good today Fernando. A really high fever. 127. Were you writing again?

Pessoa: Yes.

Ricardo Reis: It must be that. pause. You need to stop writing...for awhile.
Pessoa: refusing
Ricardo Reis: Just for a bit, then –
Pessoa: You need me. You can’t exist without me.
Ricardo Reis: I know.

Scene 30.
Pessoa stares at the audience for a very long time; enough that it gets really boring and feels like it won’t end. Clock ticks, ticks faster, & faster.

Song: The river shapes me, it’s winding mouth feeds itself into the city, winds winds winds The circularity of Lisbon is not the circle one would expect for a circular circle to be. Instead it winds and dines into the late hours of The night. And hiccups in squares much like the ones of circles. Existing is a non-existing place.

Scene. 31 Heteronyms – heads
Narrator: 868788990919293949596979899100 101 102 103 104 105 cento e cinco: RICARDO REIS. 106 107 108 109 110111112113114115116117118119120 121 122 123 124 125 cento e vinte e cinco: WOMAN IN WHITE. 126 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, etc. to infinity Δ

Scene 32.
Álvaro de Campos: Do you ever play dead?
Ricardo Reis: Pardon me?
Álvaro de Campos: You know, play dead. Demonstrates. Lies down with toes up in the air, hands crossed, like a corpse. Opens one eye, the monocle eye. You know, dead. Laughs.
Ricardo Reis: No. I see enough patients who die.
Álvaro de Campos: Come on, try it.

De Campos lies down, starts wiggling his toes waving to Reis.
Ricardo Reis: What did your parents do to you as a child....seriously.

Álvaro de Campos: Enough psychoanalysis, come on.

They lie down. Alberto Caeiro joins them. They all begin waving their toes, saying hi to each other. Pessoa walks in. Joins them. They all wave with their toes, and pretend to die. They lie there motionless.

Pessoa knows he is dying. He has rolled off his back, and is on his knees, like in prayer, dragging himself. His words are statements, not questions. Everyone is chorus.

Pessoa: I
Chorus: I I me myself one individual single

Pessoa: Know
Chorus: to know knowledge ontological phenomenological I get it I understand I see the light Light bulb went off Of course Oh I feel it I just know

Pessoa: Not
Chorus: the negation of life the absence before presence know through not knowing via negativa it’s not that

Pessoa: What
Chorus: what is what we are what matter is what things are what he is what love is what that is what everything is what.

Pessoa: Tomorrow
Chorus: time day after today future not now never will be now cannot know

Pessoa: Will
Chorus: what propels us forward how do we act action movement decisions choices uncertainty

Pessoa: Bring
Chorus: carry give someone something a present a gift something unknown take it I must receive it forward motion the surprise of being
Pessoa + Chorus: I know not what tomorrow will bring.45
I know now what tomorrow will bring
I know not now what tomorrow will bring
I know
I know
I
I know
I know not
I know not now
I know not now
I know not what
I know not what tomorrow yesterday today

Chorus: I know not what tomorrow will

Pessoa: I know not what tomorrow will bring.

Quick Flashback scenes. Moments of Pessoa’s life.
Flashback #1. At his apartment, Ofelia and him are lying in bed together.

Pessoa: My head is a book. My book is a head. A head is a head is a head
is not my mouth.

Flashback #2. At Pessoa’s work. Ofelia is sitting in her desk, Pessoa is standing. Has his hat in his hand, on his way out.

Ofelia: Must you wear that every day?
Pessoa: I can walk the streets anonymous, with my hat tipped forward, like a foreigner, estrangeiro, whose bliss, of not being recognized is unbeknownst to them. Winks at her, exits.

Flashback #3

Pessoa: My grandmother used to say if you point your finger at someone, *He points his finger at Ofelia, starts playfully jabbing at her ribs.* One finger points forward, *does this* three point back at you, *does this* and your thumb points up to the heavens. *She does this too.* *He playfully pinches her nose with his hand.* My problem is that all 78, or 87, or 127 heteronyms point back at me. I hope to one day not need my hand.

*Flashback #4*

Pessoa: I dreamt last night I had *(happily)* died. There were three of me and this is what they said.

*Flashback #5*

Pessoa: Last night, I was sitting on the edge of my own existence. My own territorial map of consciousness. I fell into a deep sleep. And this is what happened:

*Flashback #6*

Pessoa: Squeeze myself through the portal of time, propel myself into the future....one day at a time. You sit there, bald and fat, with a donut in one hand, and a newspaper in other, sitting on the toilet of your own misery, and you think, wow, how did I get here, how the fuck did I get here. How the fuck did I get here? How? Not why. But how. What were the precise -

Blue Devil: 1

Pessoa: steps

Blue Devil 2

Pessoa: that got me to this lowly place of patheticness, the patheticness lies not in my bald head, or fat belly, or that I have to really take a shit. It comes from being human.

Blue Devil: 5
Pessoa: Reading a newspaper with the same hand that wipes my ass. Smears of brown on the print tell me that you too are a loser. This is what gives me comfort. What gives me joy. What gives me the ability to keep on keeping on. From this day, to the next day onwards. Into the future. Careful, ...You don’t look a day over 127 heteronyms.

*Flashback #7*

Ofelia: Pessoa come back to me.

Álvaro de Campos: I’m confused. Anyone keeping track of this?

*Church bell tolls*

... 

Pessoa: *getting undressed for his own funeral, checking his tie, his cufflinks, shining his shoes, etc. throughout the duration of the piece he has been de-accumulating his clothes.* I wonder what will be written on my epitaph. To mark what once was a body. A living body. Do you ever look at your body, your left arm, your right arm, your legs, your hair...and think, this one day will be submerged under the ground. This thing I see in front of me that is so solid, is such proof of my existence, will one day, (just) be completely buried under a wooden box, under shovelfuls of dirt, under footsteps of people visiting other graves. That’s why I can’t wait to die, I will/can stop thinking about it, thinking about what it will be like, and instead be it.

*This was cut: Maria José stares at the ground. She drops the magazine she has been reading so that it hits the sidewalk two floors down. She wheels herself away, exits, and turns the light off. Man, now wearing a very nice light blue suit, walks through on the sidewalk, by himself, and sees a magazine on the ground. Stops. Picks it up. Thinks for*
a moment. Looks up thinking it might be from someone in the apartments, looks up at Maria José’s apartment, there is no one there. He assumes then someone accidentally dropped it on the street, and by now they are gone. He throws the magazine in the trash. Keeps walking, exits.

Epitaph songs

Woman in White: Opening the window is not sufficient
To see the fields and river.
It is not enough to not be blind
To see the trees and flowers.
20th of April 1919 – Alberto Caeiro

Ofelia: To be great, be whole: exclude nothing,
Exaggerate nothing that is you.
Be everything in all things. Put all that
You are into the smallest thing you do.
Just as in each lake the whole moon
Shines for she is living high.
14th of February, 1933 – Ricardo Reis

Blue Devil: NO. I don’t want anything.
I already said I don’t want anything
Don’t come to me with conclusions!
The only conclusion is death
1923 – Álvaro de Campos

46 The epitaph songs are based on the Portuguese poems engraved on Pessoa’s tomb at the Mosteiro dos Jerónimos.
Pessoa: When I die, my friends will bring my body to an unimportant plot at the Prazeres cemetery. My body will be lowered. They will not let me be forgotten. They will not let my body be lowered into a mass grave of forgottenness/esquecimento. Who we are is not what we are. Flesh is a perishable item. My coffin is dug up years later and brought to the Mosteiro de Jerónimos where other Portuguese (greats) heroes are encased in marble sculpture, Vasco de Gama...Luis Camões. I am not a hero. Perhaps I am the fallen hero of many. If only I knew I’d become a tourist destination, my body encased in past glory. I wouldn’t have died. And I didn’t. Even from the grave I create and duplicate. It never ends. Like two circles intertwined by a triangle. All I have is beginnings and ends. No dialogue. Just monologues. Of the self. How boring!

Pessoa’s friends begin a procession (of candles and paper), leading him to the cemetery. Church bells toll.

Alberto Caeiro: to the heteronyms Some one must begin. they all cheers Pessoa including Pessoa. To Pessoa, ‘who is, who was, and who is to come’.

Ofelia: See many, he said.
Be great.

Pessoa: I kept my lives in a trunk hoping that one day someone would find all the me’s I am. My time on earth is up. Clocks Tick tick tick. I know not what tomorrow will bring. Pessoa grabs a camera, places it facing downstage. Close-up. A letter to my future self.

A Godlike silence. Pessoa takes it in, smiles. Leaves hat, glasses, and cigarette (in mouth) etc. behind, and exits. Church bells toll seven times. The heteronyms are gathered at the edge of a square of light which frames a black block, centerstage. They grab his belongings and Exit. It is just the black box.

The following was cut:
Do we have any black boxes lying around?
By black boxes, do you mean, from the black box?
Yes?
The answer is yes, and no ... (Pause)
Hm
It's more a question of where they are.
Okay
Some are here, and some are up on the Hill. It's all a bit mysterious.
Yes.
We do have them ... 
Does anyone know where they are?
Not exactly. (beat) How many do you need?
(A Godlike silence)
All I need is one ■

END.
Appendix C.

DVD:
The Last Seven Words of Fernando Pessoa
Documented Performance

Written & Directed by Angela Ferreira
Featuring: Daniel Borzillo, Elysse Cheadle, Aryo Khakpour, Minah Lee, Sean Marshall Jr., Kaylin
Metchie, Manuela Sosa, Elliot Vaughan, and Conor Wylie.
Dramaturg: Pedro Chamale
Choreographer: Iris Lau
Composer: Elliot Vaughan
Visual Dramaturg: Karlynn Ming Ho
Lighting Designer: Jonathan Kim
Costume Designer: Andre Tse
Set Designer: Carolynne Hulbert
Projection Designer: Michael Zhao
Technical Director: Jordan Boivin
Stage Manager: Robyn Temple
Assistant Stage Managers: Jacob Holt, Rui Su
Video Edited by Corrie Neyrinck

This DVD is a video of the thesis project and stage play *The Last Seven Words of Fernando Pessoa* and runs 1:28:11.