


## “I feel as lonely as a wreck at sea”: Reviewing Fernando Pessoa’s Youth Literary Identity, Charles Robert Anon

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**ENG Abstract:** When initiating the journey to explore Fernando Pessoa’s (1888-1935) literary world, one rapidly becomes conscious of the vast literary output developed by the author. With means of understanding his whole literary universe, it must be acknowledged that Pessoa was bilingual, and that English and Portuguese language cohabited in his literary universe. One is struck by astonishment when discovering that there are in fact so many English-writing literary characters, so many texts, anthologies, fragments, and literary projects in English. This study revises Pessoa’s pre-heteronymic process and the creation of English literary characters who are introduced into a dialogical chain, which later becomes a more serious literary depersonalisation process in his adulthood. By revising Pessoa’s youth companion Charles Robert Anon, this study intends to outline the Portuguese authors literary process and the starting point and evolution of what later became his most exceptional concept: the heteronyms. Through his character and the texts he signed, Anon represents young Pessoa’s “intellectual anxieties and existential concerns of a young intellectual entering adulthood” (Zenith in Pessoa 2001: 7). This study sustains that the edition, publication, translation, and critical analysis of the totality of Anon’s literary production is an important element to shed light in the understanding of Pessoa’s drama-in-people and adult writings.

**Keywords:** Fernando Pessoa; English texts; English literary characters; youth writings; Charles Robert Anon.

## ES “Me siento tan solo como un naufragio en el mar”: Revisión de la identidad literaria juvenil de Fernando Pessoa, Charles Robert Anon

**ES Resumen:** Al iniciar el viaje con el fin de explorar el universo literario de Fernando Pessoa (1888-1935), rápidamente salta a la vista la inmensa producción literaria desarrollada por el autor. Para comprender la totalidad de su universo literario, hay que reconocer que Pessoa era bilingüe, y que el inglés y el portugués cohabitaban en su universo literario. Uno se sorprende al descubrir que, de hecho, hay tantos personajes literarios que escriben en inglés, tantos textos, antologías, fragmentos y proyectos literarios en inglés. Este estudio revisa el proceso pre-heterónimo de Pessoa y la creación de personajes literarios ingleses que se introducen en una cadena de diálogo, que más tarde se convierte en un proceso de despersonalización literaria más serio en su edad adulta. Al revisar al compañero juvenil de Pessoa, Charles Robert Anon, este estudio pretende esbozar el proceso literario del autor portugués y analizar el punto de partida y la evolución de lo que más tarde se convirtió en su concepto más excepcional: los heterónimos. Anon representa, “intellectual anxieties and existential concerns of a young intellectual entering adulthood” (Zenith in Pessoa 2001: 7). El presente estudio sostiene que la edición, publicación, traducción y análisis crítico de la totalidad de la producción literaria de Anon es un elemento importante para la comprensión del drama-en-gente de Pessoa y su obra de la edad adulta.

**Palabras clave:** Fernando Pessoa; textos ingleses; personajes literarios ingleses; escritos de juventud; Charles Robert Anon.

**Contents:** 1. Introduction; 2. Previous Comments on an English Pre-heteronymic Scheme; 2.1 Notes regarding *Ultimus Jocularum* (1904) and *The Transformation Book or Book of Tasks* (1908) 3. Charles Robert Anon. 3.1 Notes on Anon’s prose writings. 4. Final remarks

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[t]he amazing Portuguese poet, Fernando Pessoa [...] a fantastic invention surpasses any creation by Borges. Pessoa, [...] like Borges, grew up bilingual. Indeed, until he was twenty-one, he wrote poetry only in English. [p]owerful as many of Pessoa's lyrics are, they are only one part of his work; he also invented a series of alternative poets [...] Pessoa was neither mad nor a mere ironist; he is Whitman reborn, but a Whitman who gives separate names to "myself," "the real me" or "me myself," and "my soul," and writes wonderful books of poems for all three of them. (Bloom 1994: 485)

## 1. Introduction

Fernando Pessoa is one of the most interesting figures in the history of universal literature, "leer hoy a Pessoa es (sigue siendo) una necesidad y una aventura: un riesgo necesario" (Cuadrado 1996: 7). When initiating the journey to explore Fernando Pessoa's (1888-1935) literary world, one rapidly becomes conscious of the vast literary output developed by the author during his life, "Pessoa left behind a trunk stuffed with manuscripts [...] they discovered that it contained poetry, prose, literary criticism, philosophical remarks, mysticism, astrology, aesthetics, morals, psychology, lists of projected books, writings for a commerce periodical, a guide to Lisbon and much more" (Kotowicz 2008: 12). Unquestionably, Pessoa is globally considered a distinctive figure in the literary context of the twentieth century. Pessoa accomplished the task of being the interpreter of his generation's intellectual anxieties<sup>1</sup>, "One day perhaps they will understand that I accomplished, like no other, my duty of interpreter of a part of our century" (Soares 2014: 220). Through his works and imaginary universe, Pessoa is an emblem of Modernist literary aesthetics, "his invention of heteronyms, or alter egos, poets of his own creation who conducted a poetic drama in people, has found a response in the anxieties of the twentieth century [...]" (Howes in Pessoa 1985: 37). Pessoa the author, the orthonym, the heteronym, the translator, the editor, gave us – readers and critics– an everlasting corpus of texts to assemble and examine in attempts to comprehend the diverse and fragmented pieces of his literary imagery.

With means of understanding his whole literary universe, it must be acknowledged that Pessoa was bilingual, and that English and Portuguese language cohabited in his literary universe, "Pessoa's original literary ambition was [...] to become a great English writer. His schooling and education as a child in South Africa was in English, his extracurricular readings were mostly in English, and his first poems, stories, and essays were all in English" (Zenith in Pessoa 2001: xviii). When going through the digitalized copy of Pessoa's archive from *Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal* (BNP/E3); analysing his childhood notebooks or observing the marginalia on the books from his personal library, one is struck by astonishment when discovering that there are in fact so many English-writing literary characters, so many texts, anthologies, fragments, and literary projects in English. As argued by Terlinden "we are facing here a very singular case of bilingualism, where both languages and cultures seem to have lived side by side throughout Pessoa's life. [...] Fernando Pessoa is an exception among the majority of bilingual writers for not having let one language supersede the other [...]" (1990: 14).

Studies concerning the years of schooling which young Pessoa spent in Durban (South Africa) are scarce<sup>2</sup>, "Gaspar Simões sólo le dedica a este período veinte de las setecientas páginas de su libro. António Quadros, lo ventila en apenas dos. Lo que pasó en Durban no le interesa" (Bréchon 1999: 45). However, in the past decades, recent studies have emerged which start to acknowledge Fernando Pessoa's bilingualism, his literary production in English language, the books he read, the Anglo-American authors he admired, and his English literary characters<sup>3</sup>.

Pessoa's youth writings ensemble his first literary experimentations and already bring together many of the author's literary and artistic concerns. These early texts are thus not separate from the author's Portuguese production but represent the beginning of a literary aesthetic which will later be expanded, fully mastered and culminated in Pessoa's Portuguese and adult poetry. The fact that Pessoa uses different languages does not exemplify different thoughts or different aesthetics reliant of the language used. (Colom 2016: 134)

In 1895, a year before moving from Lisbon to Durban, Pessoa was already able to read and write in Portuguese, "sin otra maestra que su madre, sabía escribir a los cuatro años" (Bréchon 1999: 38). Pessoa may have already had a slight notion of English language before moving to Durban, but critics have sustained that Pessoa had had no contact with English until his arrival to the British Colony in 1896. Due to the results Pessoa obtained in the different exams he took at *Durban High School*, and the fact that Pessoa was awarded the *Queen Victoria Memorial Prize* for best written essay in the *Matriculation Examination* (1903), we can ascertain that he had a good control of the English language by 1901: "Jorge de Sena even asserts that Pessoa's Anglo-Saxon culture has enriched the Portuguese language and that he has given his Portuguese homeland masterpieces which were probably thought out in English" (Terlinden 1990: 16). It can therefore be stated that

<sup>1</sup> Note that Fernando Pessoa literary aesthetics know no frontiers, he is universally considered one of the most influential Modernist authors.

<sup>2</sup> Some of these studies are: *Incidências Inglesas na poesia de Fernando Pessoa* (Monteiro 1956); *Os dois exílios: Fernando Pessoa na África do Sul*, (Jennings 1984); *Fernando Pessoa na África do Sul: A Educação Inglesa de Fernando Pessoa* (Severino 1983); *Fernando Pessoa: The Bilingual Portuguese Poet* (Anna Terlinden 1990); and critical studies dedicated to Pessoa's English literary production by Jorge de Sena, George Monteiro, Georg Rudolf Lind and Teresa Rita Lopes.

<sup>3</sup> Some of these studies are: *Etrange étranger: une biographie de Fernando Pessoa* (Bréchon 1996); *Fernando Pessoa: Poesia Inglesa* (Freire 1999); *Fernando Pessoa. Entre vozes, entre línguas (Da Poesia Inglesa a Poesia Portuguesa)* (Freire 2004); *Poetas do Atlântico. Fernando Pessoa e o Modernismo Anglo-americano* (Ramalho Santos 2007); *A Biblioteca Particular de Fernando Pessoa* (Pizarro, Ferrari 2010); *Pessoa: A Biography* (Zenith 2021).

Pessoa was already bilingual by 1901: “Convieni añadir sin embargo que ambas lenguas le son igualmente consustanciales, hasta el punto de que a veces, escribiendo sus borradores en prosa, pasa de una a otra sin advertirlo” (Bréchon 1999: 34).

After returning to Lisbon in 1904, Pessoa tried for many years to get his English poetry published abroad<sup>4</sup>: “Sir, I am sending you with this letter copies of sixteen poems of mine . . . seeing that you have extensively published modern English poetry, I send these poems as a sort of inquiry whether you would be disposed to publish a book, the substance of which is precisely on the lines which these poems represent” (Pessoa 2006: 33). By analysing and reassessing Charles Robert Anon – which has perhaps not received as much critical and scholarly attention as other literary characters—, this study aims to recover one of Pessoa’s youth companions and reevaluate some of the author’s first literary experimentations using the English language. Anon signed a great number of texts from Pessoa’s youth, and, shedding light on these youth literary productions, will hopefully encourage scholars to consider that a further investigation, transcription, publication, and translation of the texts Pessoa wrote during his youth and adolescence is of importance when considering every piece of his literary universe regardless the language used or the time they were written in.

## 2. Previous Comments on an English Pre-heteronymic Scheme

Given the death of people he can get along with, what can a man of sensibility do but invent his own friends, or at least his intellectual companions? (Pessoa 2001: 3)

Pessoa was never lonely in literary terms: 106<sup>5</sup> different “intellectual companions” (*idem*) –fictional literary characters<sup>6</sup>– accompanied him during his life. *He* and his *friends* wrote about almost everything and used all literary genres: poetry, prose, short stories, drama, socio-political and philosophical essays, translations, and correspondence. Pessoa created fictional literary universes where these different writers coexisted with one another and with Pessoa himself, all of them participants of a drama-in-people, hence, becoming “an entire literature” and “contributing [...] to the enrichment of the universe”:

Perhaps other individuals with the same, genuine kind of reality will appear in the future, or perhaps not, but they will always be welcome to my inner life, where they live better with me than I’m able to live with outer reality. [...] If they write beautiful things, those things are beautiful, regardless of any and all metaphysical speculations about who “really” wrote them. [...] Having made myself into what I am – at worst a lunatic with grandiose dreams, at best not just a writer but an entire literature – I may be contributing not only to my own amusement (which would already be good enough for me) but to the enrichment of the universe [...]. (Pessoa, in *Selected Prose* 3-4)

From the 106 literary characters counted to the present day, this study has ascertained that around 50<sup>7</sup> are related with the usage of the English language, as they are loose signatures of English names on Pessoa’s documents, authors of texts written in English, bilingual characters, bilingual translators, invented names used to sign correspondence, or fictional participants in the author’s youth literary games: “It is in the creation of the figures who make those jokes that genius underlines wit; not what Falstaff says but what Falstaff is is great. The genius made the figure, the wit made it speak” (Pessoa 2000: 135). From the list of 106 literary characters with a least one attributed text which was provided in *Teoria da Heteronímia* (2012), this study finds that 45 names are in some manner related with Pessoa’s literary projects using or including the English language: Dr. Pancrácio –Pancratium when in English–; David Merrick; Lucas Merrick; Sidney Parkinson Stool; Karl P. Effield; W. W. Austin; Tagus; J. G. Henderson Carr; Charles Robert Anon; Dr. Gaudêncio Nabos; Horace James Faber; Gaveston or Martin Gaveston; William Jinks; Professor Trochee; Professor Jones; Alexander Search; Ginkel; Anthony Harris; Dr. Faustino Antunes; A. Moreira; Friar Maurice; W. Fasnacht; Charles James Search; Herr Prosit; Usquebaugh V. Bangem; Carlos Otto; Miguel Otto; Vicente Guedes; Navas; Frederick Wyatt; James Bodenham; Raphael Baldaya; Sher Henay; Thomas Crosse; I. I. Crosse; A. A. Crosse; James L. Mason; Henry More; Wardour; Voodooist; Henry Lovell; Marnoco e Sousa; George Henry Morse; Efbeedee Pasha and Dr. Abílio Quaresma.

The author’s bilingualism, the considerable number of texts written using both languages and the creation of fictional authors of both nationalities –some of whom were also bilingual– coexisting with one another by the act of producing essays, translation<sup>8</sup>, or correspondence, intensifies the uniqueness of his creation of a drama-in-people. One finds that both languages coexist in the author’s literary universe similarly to the heteronym’s coexistence. In Pessoa’s works one can find numerous examples of this coexistence. On the one

<sup>4</sup> In 1915 Pessoa sent sixteen poems belonging to *The Mad Fiddler* to the English publishing company John Lane; In 1917 Pessoa sent the complete version of *The Mad Fiddler* to Constable & Company Ltd. In 1918 the Portuguese author published *Antinous* and 35 *Sonnets* in the Portuguese typographer Monteiro & C.ª. *English Poems I-II* and *English Poems III* were published by Pessoa in his own publishing company, *Olisipo*, in 1921. Pessoa’s poem «Speel» was published in the Portuguese review *Contemporânea* in 1923. (in Zenith *Poesia Inglesa* 2007: 13-15).

<sup>5</sup> Number of literary characters listed in *Teoria da Heteronímia* (2012: 45).

<sup>6</sup> This study refers to Pessoa’s fictional collaborators as ‘literary characters’ and not ‘literary personalities’ following the information provided in *Teoria da Heteronímia* (2012).

<sup>7</sup> This study suggests that the number is approximate as some characters did not write nor were attributed any literary works, as they are loose signatures and names found on documents in Pessoa’s archive.

<sup>8</sup> Studies that explore Pessoa’s essays and translation work in English language would be important for a better understanding of Pessoa’s pre-heteronymic aesthetic and youth writing.

hand, the Portuguese heteronym Vicente Guedes was given the project of translating Alexander Search's *A Very Original Dinner*. On the other hand, Thomas Crosse – English translator – had plans of translating an anthology of Caeiro's poems *Complete Poems of Alberto Caeiro*. Furthermore, Faustino Antunes – a Portuguese psychiatrist – was used by Pessoa for correspondence with his Durban teacher, Mr Belcher, and classmate, Clifford Geerds. Interestingly, in the versions of some texts, Pessoa unconsciously switches from one language to the other, as in *A Casa dos Mortos* (BN/E3 11<sup>2</sup> CAS-1). Additionally, some heteronyms are participants in Pessoa's own *real* life. For example, Search lived in Rua da Bela Vista in Lisbon where Pessoa's grandmother Dona Dionísia lived, or the fact that C. R. Anon signs entries of Pessoa's personal diary in 1906, and Álvaro de Campos signed letters which Pessoa's sent to his girlfriend Ofélia Queiroz. Moreover, intertextuality is constant in these texts and the fictional authors coexist as if they are not aware of the fictional status. As for example, in Campos' *Notas para a Recordação do Meu Mestre Caeiro* (1931), or *Carta dirigida à Revista «Contemporânea»* (1922): “[E]sta carta leva-lhe a minha afeição pela sua revista; não lhe leva a minha amizade por si porque V. Já há muito tempo aí a tem. Diga ao Fernando Pessoa que não tenha razão. Um abraço do camarada amigo, Álvaro de Campos” (Pessoa 2007: 23). Fernando Pessoa as a participant of his own drama-in-people can be found in Campos' text *Notas para a Recordação do Meu Mestre Caeiro* (1931-1932): “Mais curioso é o caso de Fernando Pessoa, que não existe, propriamente falando. Este conheceu Caeiro um pouco antes de mim – em 8 de Março de 1914, segundo me disse” (Pessoa 1997: 21).

In the *Translator's Preface to the Poems of Alberto Caeiro* – written by Thomas Crosse around 1915 for his own translation of Caeiro's poems –, Caeiro, Campos, Reis, Cesário Verde, Walt Whitman and Thomas Crosse coexist in the same level of reality:

Thomas Crosse

Alberto Caeiro – Translator's Preface

[...]

Alberto Caeiro is reported to have regretted the name of “sensationism” which a disciple of his – a rather queer disciple, it is true – Mr Álvaro de Campos, gave his attitude, and to the attitude he created. [...] And besides, though he has at least two “disciples”, the fact is that he has had on them an influence equal to that which some poet – Cesário Verde, perhaps – had on him. [...] Thus Álvaro de Campos resembles Whitman most of the three. But he has nothing of Whitman's camaraderie: he is always apart from the crowd, and when feeling with them it is very clearly and confessedly to please himself and give himself brutal sensations. (Pessoa 2012: 302-305)

Caeiro, Campos and Whitman coexist in Campos' essay *Apontamentos para uma Estética Não-aristotélica* (1924):

De resto, até hoje, data em que aparece pela primeira vez uma autêntica doutrina não aristotélica da arte, só houve três verdadeiras manifestações de arte não-aristotélica. A primeira está nos assombrosos poemas de Walt Whitman; a segunda está nos poemas mais que assombrosos do meu mestre Caeiro; a terceira está nas duas odes – a Ode Triunfal e a Ode Marítima – que publiquei no «Orpheu». Não pergunto se isto é imodéstia. Afirmo que é verdade. (in «Athena», n.º3 e 4, Lisboa, Dezembro de 1924 e Janeiro de 1925)

One finds in these writings the coming together of languages, different literatures, different cultural contexts, real or invented persons, drama or even counterfeit: “[S]ou como um quarto com inúmeros espelhos fantásticos que torcem para reflexões falsas uma única central realidade que não está em nenhum e está em todos” (Pessoa 2012: 150). Pessoa wrote under various names and produced various works playing the role of a dramatist, becoming a whole literature: “[p]ublicarei, sob vários nomes, várias obras espécie, contradizendo-se umas às outras. Obedeço, assim, a uma necessidade de dramaturgo, e a um dever social. [...] (Serei eu próprio toda uma literatura)” (*idem*: 142). Literary depersonalisation or the “necessity of a dramatist” (*idem*: 142), was already present in Pessoa during his youth: “[L]embro, assim, o que me parece ter sido o meu primeiro heterónimo, ou, antes, o meu primeiro conhecido inexistente—um certo *Chevalier de Pas* dos meus seis anos, por quem escrevia cartas dele a mim mesmo” (Pessoa 2012: 273). Pessoa's first experiments of literary depersonalisation are expressed through English literary characters and texts “[a] presença do efeito-heterónimo, de resto, manifesta-se em Pessoa assim que ele começa a escrever. Um poema, o primeiro em inglês, que publica em Durban em 1903, é atribuído a Karl P. Effield, um autor que é, por sua vez, prefaciado por um viajante amador-editor chamado W. W. Austin” (Zenith, Martins in Pessoa 2012: 30-31).

To use a specific nomenclature as the only possible way in trying to define an *English-pre-heteronymic-scheme*, an *English-drama-in-people* or an *English literary depersonalisation* would be an ardent and unnecessary task. As Zenith and Martins analyze, one should try not to be “excessively purist in regard to the terminology used”:

É bom mantermos a distinção que Pessoa criou entre o célebre trio de heterónimos surgidos em 1914 e os restantes «conhecidos inexistentes». E é bom não sermos excessivamente puristas quanto à terminologia que usamos para falar desses três e dos muitos outros seres inventados em cujo nome Pessoa escreveu, ou pensou escrever. Segundo cremos, são os princípios que governam a heteronímia e as modalidades do seu funcionamento que convém entendermos para uma melhor apreciação da obra pessoana e até para a nossa própria edificação enquanto leitores ainda dispostos a refletir e aprender. (Pessoa 2012: 41)



While the English literary characters did not sign sufficient literary texts, did not have a clear artistic aesthetic, or were intended for projects which are found fragmented or were never concluded, they are consistent evidence that Pessoa initiated an artistic literary depersonalisation from a very young age, “Eu nunca fiz senão sonhar. Tem sido esse, e esse apenas, o sentido da minha vida. Nunca tive outra preocupação verdadeira senão a minha vida interior. A minha mania de criar um mundo falso acompanha-me ainda, e só na minha morte me abandonará” (Pessoa 2012: 153). Pessoa himself uses different terminology in this regard: in one text alone – his letter to Casais Monteiro (1935) –, one reads up to 11 different nomenclatures: “subpersonalidades”; “despersonalização dramática”; “heterónimos”; “despersonalização”; “simulação”; “Amigos”; “conhecidos inexistentes”; “figuras irreais”; “heterónimos literários”; “Cotérie inexistente” and “semi-heterónimo” (Pessoa 2012: 273-282).

## 2.1. Notes regarding *Ultimus Joculatorum* (1904) and *The Transformation Book or Book of Tasks* (1908)

Pessoa created and inserted himself in a fictional space with other literary characters, whilst still living in Durban around 1904. The text *Ultimus Joculatorum* (BN/E3 48C-12)<sup>9</sup> is a space where Pessoa’s first fictional characters come together and coexist. The text was divided into six different sections: *Incidents*, *Anecdotes*, *Jokes*, *Persons*, *Alexander Search’s Life-bond* and *The Book of Caesar Seek* and reveals how the English fictional characters interact in an imaginary universe, serving as proof of Pessoa’s first experimentations of a drama-in-people. As analyzed in *Teoria da Heteronímia* (2012: 353-354), the different fragments in Pessoa’s Archive belonging to *Ultimus Joculatorum* assert that the author had planned different titles for the text: *The Book of Friar Maurice*; *The Nothingness Club*; *The Zero Club* and *The Black Book of Caesar Seek*, “A diversidade de títulos parece refletir uma incerteza do autor quanto à forma que o seu drama abstratamente conceptualizado deveria ou poderia assumir – se a de uma obra em prosa sobre uma sociedade de personagens diversas, se a de uma obra dramática propriamente dita, ou a de um livro de reflexões soltas [...]” (*Idem*: 354).

Pessoa was sixteen years old when he planned *Ultimus Joculatorum*, and in this text the heteronymic game is already palpable. Interestingly, the English-pre-heteronyms coexist as if taking part in a drama play, and at the same time their personalities and the literary works they have been assigned by Pessoa to write are reviled. On the one hand, the literary character Sidney Parkinson Stool coexists with Dr. Nabos: “Sidney Parkinson Stool playing brass band outside window of Dr. Nabos” (Pessoa 2012: 356). On the other hand, Caesar Seek is portrayed as an alter ego of Alexander Search, “Persons: Caesar Seek (= Alexander Search) whose character is without laughter, running from deep thought and torturing to bitterness (bitterly joking sometimes???)” (*idem*: 358). Curiously, Pessoa also uses a fictional character named Ferdinand Sumwan to turn himself into a fictional character, “*Ferdinand Sumwan* (= Fernando Pessoa, since Sumwan = Someone = Person = Pessoa) A normal, useless, lazy, careless, weak, individual” (*idem*: 358). Other fictional persons with different individual characteristics are also included: Jacob Satan, Magdalen and Erasmus Dare. In this text, diverse situations are in action, Search signs a life-bond with Jacob Satan on October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1907, and there seems to exist a (fictional) personal relationship between different alter egos of Search –Caesar Seek and Friar Maurice–, “*The Black Book of Caesar Seek*. (True title of Friar Maurice, as of old I tried to call it.)” (*idem*: 360).

### Persons:

*Caesar Seek* (=Alexander Search) whose character is without laughter, running from deep thought and torturing to bitterness (bitterly joking sometimes???)

*Dr. Nabos*: Whose character goes from bitterness to open mirth

*Ferdinand Sumwan* (= Fernando Pessoa, since Sumwan = Someone = Person = Pessoa) A normal, useless, lazy, careless, weak, individual.

*Jacob Satan*: (A spirit of ill, the master and real conqueror there). (Bad part.)

*Magdalen*: (a woman, strain of tenderness, different from high philanthropy of.)

*Esasmus Dare* (Philanthropist) a *great friend* of Seek’s.

Place of meeting: Moment House. (Pessoa 2012: 358)

*Ultimus Joculatorum* – while fragmentary and incomplete – could be considered as the starting point of a later more coherent drama-in-people artistic aesthetic in Pessoa’s literary universe. In this sense, *The Transformation Book or Book of Tasks*<sup>10</sup> (1908) – written by Pessoa when he was already permanently living in Lisbon– is also revelling, as pointed out by Ribeiro and Souza:

*The Transformation Book* marks one of the fundamental stages in Pessoa’s elaboration of a new conception of literary space, one that he comes to express as a “drama in people”. With his creation of heteronyms and his labours in a plurality of literary genres and styles, Pessoa constructs a heterogeneous

<sup>9</sup> Numerous entries that make up the text (project) *Ultimus Joculatorum* have been found in loose documents of Pessoa’s personal Archive; these have been chronologically organized and transcribed in sections by Zenith and Martins in *Teoria da Heteronímia* (2012: 356-360).

<sup>10</sup> *The Transformation Book or Book of Tasks*, was first mentioned by João Dionísio in Pessoa, Fernando, *Poemas Ingleses – Poemas de Alexander Search, Tomo II, Vol. V.*, ed. João Dionísio (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional – Casa da Moeda, 1997). The full content of *The Transformation Book* was edited by Ribeiro and Souza in Pessoa, Fernando, *The Transformation Book*, First Contra Mundum Press, New York:2014.

image of literary space, dramatically inhabited by a plurality of figures. [...] The Transformation Book can then be seen as the genesis of Pessoa's elaborate "drama in people". Pessoa's pre-heteronyms are defined – much as in his later, heteronyms "drama in people" – in this book by progressive differentiations among lives, styles, and concerns. In this way The Transformation Book is a crucial text for understanding Pessoa's gradual creation of the heteronyms. (2014: xxii-xxv)

In *Ultimus Jocularum* only English fictional characters and texts are mentioned by Pessoa, however in *The Transformation Book* or *Book of Tasks*, one finds that both English and Portuguese languages coexist and that literary characters from both nationalities inhabit the same fictional universe. In this text there is also a French literary character, Jean Seul de Méluret. Hence, Alexander Search – British pre-heteronym of Pessoa's youth –; Charles James Search – one of Pessoa's bilingual translators –; Pantaleão – one of Pessoa's Portuguese pre-heteronyms –; and Jean Seul de Méluret – French pre-heteronym – are simultaneously used by the author in the same fictional literary space, bringing together three different languages in what can be considered a pre-heteronymic literary project. As Lopes points out, after Pessoa's definite return to Lisbon, his English literary characters will cohabit with the Portuguese literary characters and heteronyms:

No regresso a Durban, estas duas personalidades literárias, cidadãos da pátria língua portuguesa, Eduardo Lança e Dr. Pancrácio, vão coabitar com outras personalidades de língua inglesa: não só os mais conhecidos Alexander Search e Robert Anon, mas ainda com outro, esse por conhecer, que os reuniu num só caderno, David Merrick. (Lopes 1990: 96)

### 3. Charles Robert Anon

*My soul is like a painted boat,  
That like a sleeping swan doth float,  
Upon the silver waves of thy sweet singing.*

Charles Robert Anon<sup>11</sup>

From all the English-writing literary character, names, and loose signatures in Pessoa's archive, Charles Robert Anon and Alexander Search are no doubt the most prolific – as most of the projects they were assigned were fulfilled. It was under their name young Fernando Pessoa signed more serious poetic experimentations in English language. Anon became Pessoa's main youth heteronym between the years 1903 and 1906: "Em 1904, Charles Robert Anon torna-se o heterónimo predominante, sendo autor de muitos poemas e diversas prosas" (Zenith, Martins in Pessoa 2012: 56). By inserting both young British literary characters in Pessoa's overall literary dialogical chain, one can trace an outline of the Portuguese authors literary process and the starting point and evolution of what later became his most exceptional concept: the heteronyms: "Search and Anon incarnated the anxieties and existential concerns of a young intellectual entering adulthood" (Zenith in Pessoa 2001: 7). The texts signed by Anon and Search reveal the young poet's artistic and personal concerns between the years 1903-1910: "far more prolific and psychologically complex, Charles Robert Anon and Alexander Search may be considered the first veritable heteronyms" (*idem*: 6). In Anon's and Search's literary production one already finds some of the themes and concerns which will later fill Pessoa's adult works: a strong but sometimes artificial nostalgia concerning childhood, fear of death, inner-voyage, self-knowledge and self-awareness, the tragic result of a platonic love, the fear towards madness, the repetitive doubts, and contradictions of the modern artist and individual and the metaphysics of the unknown.

Charles Robert Anon appeared in 1903, when Pessoa was fifteen years old and was still living in Durban. Alexander Search – as recent investigations of Pessoa's Archive have proven –, was created in 1906 when Pessoa was already living in the Portuguese capital. In fact, both characters never coexisted, as Zenith points out in *Obra Essencial de Fernando Pessoa: Poesia Inglesa* (2007): by following previous studies undergone by João Dionísio, Anon was created before Search,

Na verdade, Search, que terá aparecido provavelmente em Lisboa, no ano 1906, ou talvez apenas em 1907, apropriou-se retroativamente de quase todo o património poético de C. R. Anon, se não da sua própria identidade. Com efeito, um dos manuscritos (redigido não se sabe quando) relativos a um poema inicialmente escrito em Abril de 1905 está assinado «C. R. Anon» e, a seguir, «id est Alexander Search». Parece que as duas personagens conviveram durante algum tempo em Lisboa, mas a primeira extinguiu-se antes de 1908, ano ainda bastante prolífico para Search, que começou a definir em 1909 e assinou o seu último poema (incompleto) em 26/8/1910. (Zenith in Pessoa 2007: 21)

Zenith and Martins also insist upon this fact in *Teoria da Heteronímia*:

Pensava-se que o mais prolífico heterónimo de língua inglesa tinha surgido em Durban, como contemporâneo de Charles Robert Anon, mas a investigação do espólio de Pessoa demonstra que Search começou a assinar poemas e prosas apenas em Lisboa, a partir do segundo semestre de 1906. Acontece que assinou, *a posteriori*, muitos poemas escritos entre 1903 e 1905. (in Pessoa 2012: 63)

<sup>11</sup> MS. from BNP/E3 13-20°. Undated and unpublished verse signed by Charles Robert Anon. My transcription.

Interestingly, Pessoa had written poems signed by Anon which were later attributed to Search – as documents in the archive help prove – as for example the poem «Elegy», where one can read the following announcement under Anon's signature: “*id est Alexander Search*”. Pessoa transferred many of Anon's poems to Search, but not the prose texts, as there are still a consistent number of prose texts in the archive – some remain unpublished – signed by Anon. Additionally, the biographical information Pessoa outlined for each literary character differs and, as this study sustains, Anon and Search should be considered and studied separately, taking into consideration that they are two different pre-heteronyms. Another important difference between both literary characters is that Anon only wrote texts in English language whereas Search was bilingual or even multilingual, as demonstrated by the literary projects and translations he was assigned by Pessoa:

Os dois alter-egos compartilham com o jovem Pessoa a impaciência face às convenções, um grande interesse pela filosofia e uma atitude ferozmente crítica em relação à Igreja Católica, mas as biografias divergem. Anon era mesmo inglês, nascido não sabemos quando, enquanto Search nasceu em Lisboa, no mesmo dia que Pessoa, e talvez tenha sido concebido como português, apesar de a sua língua materna ser o inglês. (Zenith, Martins in Pessoa 2012: 63)

The literary production and literary projects Anon embarked on between 1903 and 1906 are relevant and extensive, as well as the numerous signatures for Anon scribbled on loose documents or notebooks during those years: C. R. Anon, Ch. Robert Anon, Ch. R. Anon or C. Robert Anon (Pessoa 2012: 56). Signatures for Anon are found in many documents in Pessoa's archive, for example (BN/E3 27<sup>21</sup> 6<sup>4</sup>-8<sup>v</sup>). Pessoa's diary from March to June 1906 is stamped with Anon's signature on almost every page, perhaps revealing the importance given by Pessoa to this youth literary companion, as he crafted what looks like a home-made signature stamp for Anon. This signature stamp can be seen on documents (BN/E3 13-25; 13a-23; 48c-9; 29-99<sup>v</sup>) in the archive.

Even if, “Pessoa did not leave us any biographical information about C. R. Anon, whose last name perhaps indicates that this anonymity was deliberate” (Zenith in Pessoa 2021: 7), Anon was probably of British nationality, as a notebook dated from 1904 (notebook 104-38) and document (133M-39) found in Pessoa's Archive – mentioned in *Teoria da Heteronímia* (2012: 56) – reveal that Anon lived in Stratton Street, London. As other documents in the archive help prove, Pessoa also used Anon for correspondence. There is also a text signed by Anon which although it is not a bibliographical note, it contains information about Anon's character and personality, and demonstrates that Pessoa was already consciously working as an author, “to spare the reader further pains”:

I, Charles Robert Anon, *being*, animal, mammal, tetrapod, primate, placentar, ape, catarrhina, ..... man; eighteen years of age, not married (except at odd moments), megalomaniac, with touches of dipsomania, *dégénéré supérieur*, poet, with pretensions to written humor, citizen of the world, idealistic philosopher, etc. etc. (to spare the reader further pains) – [...] Reason, Truth, Virtue per C. R. A. (Pessoa 2021: 12)

Anon coexisted with other literary characters, playing an active role in Pessoa's pre-heteronymic game. For example, Anon coexisted with Horace James Faber, as he was named co-author of *The Case of the Science Master* (BN/E3 27<sup>9</sup>D<sup>2</sup> – 1 to 67a), and signatures of both literary characters are found in Pessoa's diary from March to June 1906. On document (BN/E3 48B -153) (Pessoa 2012: 59), there is a list containing the types of texts Faber will write together with a list of texts for Anon. Anon and Faber were also co-authors of the essay *Plausibility of all Philosophies* (BN/E3 48A – 66).

#### Faber

Detective Stories

Satirical + Humorous essays

Satiric poetry

Critical essays

Classical editions

Classical essays

Historical essays

#### Anon

Poetry

Critical Essays

Stories of Imagination. (MS. BNP/E3 48B-153. My transcription)

Charles Robert Anon was friends with William Jinks – another of Pessoa's youth literary collaborators – as he wrote the text *An Elegy on the Marriage of my Dear Friend Mr Jinks* (BNP/E3 27<sup>21</sup> K<sup>4</sup>-1), and loose signatures of Wm. Jinks can be found together with Anon's in document (BNP/ E3 13A-65<sup>v</sup>), “[I] personally knew Jinks. He was, if I remember well, a man of noble appearance, honest glance and of Greek beauty [...]” (My transcription of BNP/E3 27<sup>21</sup> K<sup>4</sup>-1). Anon could have existed even before he started to write texts “Ao que parece, existem assinaturas de Anon ainda antes de este ter obra” (Zenith, Martins in Pessoa 2012: 56). In Anon, one already discovers many of the characteristics that are common of Pessoa's heteronyms, that will later be found in the heteronyms of Pessoa's adulthood: “como acontecerá com Álvaro de Campos, Anon tem uma faceta pública e provocadora, uma vez que envia cartas e poemas de escárnio ou denuncia ao diretor de The Natal Mercury, que publica em julho de 1904 [...]” (Zenith, Martins in Pessoa 2012: 56).

### 3.1. Notes on Anon's prose writings

As has been explained, some of Anon's poems were later attributed by Pessoa to Alexander Search around 1906. There are however loose prose texts signed by Anon which were not assigned to Search. These prose fragments are mostly written in essay style, although they are found fragmented or unconcluded. This study considers important the edition, publication and even translation of these texts as they are a small but valuable corpus of writings which gives account of young Pessoa's concerns as a writer and centres in aspects and themes which will later occupy the author's more serious and conscious works: "Os poemas e outros escritos de Anon exprimem opiniões e atitudes (incluindo um acentuado anticlericalismo) que são de Pessoa, mas exacerbadas e como que dramatizadas" (Zenith, Martins in Pessoa 2012: 57). These prose fragments are mostly found undated, which complicates the task of placing them in the exact moment of the author's childhood and adolescence. Nonetheless as they were signed by C. R. Anon, so one is inclined to assume they were probably written between 1903 and 1906, although some of the texts could have been written after 1906, for example the text 'I am tired of confiding in myself' dates from July 1907 (Pessoa 2021: 12).

*Excommunication* – 1<sup>st</sup> published in 1988<sup>12</sup> –, is a personal statement "I, Charles Robert Anon" (Pessoa 2001: 12) where Anon informs the reader "[t]o spare the reader further pains" (*ibidem*), about himself and the themes of his writings: "[b]eing, animal, mammal [...] poet, with pretensions to written humor, citizen of the world, idealistic philosopher [...]" (*ibidem*). This text has an anticlerical tone, which can be associated with other texts belonging to the author: "in the name of TRUTH, SCIENCE, and PHILOSOPHY, not with bell, book and candle but with pen, ink, and paper— pass sentence of excommunication on all priests and all sectarians of all religions in the world" (*ibidem*). The exaltation of the anticlerical attitude together with an antimonarchical opinion can also be read in Anon's text "I saw the little children..." (Pessoa 2021: 11),

[...] When I had been a Christian I had thought men responsible for the ill they did – I hated tyrants, I cursed kings and priest. When I had shaken off the immoral, the false influence of the philosophy of Christ, I hated tyranny, kinghood, priesthood – evil in itself. Kings and priests I pitied because they were men. (*idem*.)

Although Pessoa was young when these texts were written, one finds it curious to point out how there are references to having lived a whole life of experiences, as if the subject who writes and is giving his opinion was old and full of knowledge and self-aware: "Ten thousand times my heart broke within me. I cannot count the sobs that shook me, the pains that ate into my heart" (Pessoa 2001: 11). The heteronym is writing from experience while trying to teach humanity universal life lessons: "I have seen men and woman giving life, hope, all for others. I have seen such acts of high devotedness that I have wept tears of gladness. These things, I have thought, are beautiful, although they are powerless to redeem" (*ibidem*).

In Anon's text 'I am tired of confiding in myself', one finds the element of fear of madness: "I seemed for a moment to lose the sense of the true relations of things, to lose comprehension, to fall into an abyss of mental abeyance" (Pessoa 2001: 11). The same preoccupation and fear towards madness or going mad is latent in some of Search's poems and Pessoa's adult writings: "[...] So to my glance, as if with opium wide, / My very self is grown a mystery; In inextatic fear Life doth abide / And Madness like my breath is within me" (Search in Pessoa 2007b: 68 vv. 37-40). As Colom argues when analyzing the fear of madness in Search's poetry, there are numerous texts written on this topic found throughout Pessoa's youth:

Evidence of the weight which the fear of madness and the constant doubts and questions caused upon the young poet's mind and spirit are the many poems dedicated to these issues: *Sepulcher*, *Horror*, *Rage*, *Song of Dirt*, among others. In folder BNP/E3 78 –which gathers the neat copies of some of Search's poems– one finds some of the poems which were to be included under the title 'Documents of Mental Decadence', that is: *Flashes of Madness*, *Mania of Doubt*, *The Curtain*, *The Picture* and *A Temple*. (2016: 315)

The uneasiness or fear of madness emerges from the need to find meaning to his self in the world. As Bréchon points out,

en el comienzo de la trayectoria de Search y en la base de la construcción de su obra se halla una reivindicación idealista sin concesiones. La única verdad es la del espíritu, y el único modo de ser válido es la total inocencia. La poesía es la búsqueda (search) de este ideal, al que debe sacrificarse todo lo demás. (1999: 110)

Anon's text 'I am tired of confiding in myself' combines the element of fear of madness with the lack of understanding and support he finds in his family accentuating his feeling of being an outsider: "In my family there is no comprehension of my mental state – no, none. They laugh at me, sneer at me, disbelieve me; they say I wish to be extraordinary" (Pessoa 2001: 12). The outburst of madness seems to happen after a discussion with family members "I have just had a kind of scene with Aunt Rita over and F. Coelho. At the end of it I felt again one of those symptoms which grow clearer and ever more horrible in me: a moral vertigo" (*ibidem*). One can't help but imagine if the family discussion which later triggered the writing of this text happened in young Pessoa's real life, as in this text the British heteronym seems to have had a Portuguese Aunt and a family friend with a Portuguese second name "Coelho". A predominant

<sup>12</sup> Pessoa (1988) in *Moral, Regras de Vida, Condições de Iniciação*. Texts established and presented by Pedro Teixeira da Mota.) Lisboa: Ed. Manuel Lencastre.



sense of deep loneliness fills the text “I have no one in whom to confide. My family understands nothing. My friends I cannot trouble with these things; I have no really intimate friends [...] I feel as lonely as a wreck at sea. And I am a wreck indeed” (*ibidem*). One finds that there is also the assimilation that he will never be able to find real friendships because of differences in character: “An intimate friend is one of my ideal things, one of my daydreams, yet an intimate friend is a thing I never shall have. No temperament fits me; there is no character in this world which shows a chance of approaching what I dream of in an intimate friend [...]” (*ibidem*). One also reads how young Pessoa was then already conscious of his position as a writer: “What confidence is there in these lines? There is none. As I read them over I ache in mind to perceive how pretentious, how literary-diary-like they are! In some I have made style” (*ibidem*). Anon puts his feeling of inadaptation and his suffering because of how lonely it is to be a thinker, at the same level as Shelley’s and the spirit of solitude from his poem *Alastor* (1816): “It cannot be as I dream. Alas! poor Alastor! Shelley, how I understand thee!” (*ibidem*).

Two other prose fragments signed by Anon and found in Pessoa’s archive (BNP/E3 15<sup>2</sup>-33 and BNP/E3 25-56), ‘The idea of infinity’ and ‘Theory of Perception’ respectively, have a less personal and more philosophical tone.

The idea of infinity..

The idea of infinity cannot co-exist with the idea of evolution. The infinite cannot be evolved.

Proof. We have 2 ideas within the idea of space – space and no-space.

What is the infinite? Space? No. No-space? No, likewise. Both together? No, for they would eliminate each other. The infinite therefore is neither space nor no-space.

Remark. Supposing it impossible to prove the infinite to be as above, then: the infinite is either both space and no-space, or neither of both, thus evolution takes place in space and in no-space at the same time

If neither, evolution is impossible, for it can take place but in space.

Needs deeper consideration Evolution and Infinity.

Anon.

(My transcription from original MS. BNP/E3 15<sup>2</sup>-33)

#### Theory of Perception

Let us consider, say, my perception of a table, and let us attempt to find what is the process of my thought in the perception. We find these to be the [actions?] of our mind:

Previously, I know what a table is; this idea is in me, rooted. When I see this thing before me, my conception of a table passes out of me into the object, which is similar, of a generalist to it. My thought returns to me [?] with itself a particularized idea of a table – the table that I see before me. Thus thought after passing through the object binds object itself, as a particularization of thought. (My transcription of MS. BNP/E3 25-56)

Anon’s prose – although fragmented – expresses many of the inner conflicts one finds throughout Pessoa’s works. There is an anticlerical attitude in some of these texts and a constant fear of madness or even death. Some texts are written in the form of essays with reflections on a wide range of topics such as, science, philosophy, life, religion, literature... The first person is used constantly in the texts, and the subject is depicted as being mature and knowledgeable, besides suffering because of being conscious and aware of the reality which surrounds him. The writer has a clear conscious of his role as a writer, sometimes directing his opinions straight to the reader. The feeling of loneliness and solitude is palpable and is manifested through the idea that because of being different and thinking differently the writer has difficulty in finding his equals. The fact of being misunderstood by others triggers the feeling of inadaptation and feeling of outcast, even feeling like a stranger in his own family. Pessoa’s British education is not only found in the usage of the English language in these texts, but also in the many references made in these texts about English culture and history and the allusions to English literature and authors<sup>13</sup>.

#### **4. Final remarks**

This study has insisted upon the importance of Pessoa’s bilingualism not only for his intellectual growth and literary production, but also for the conception and creation of his fictional literary universe. The coming together of English writing literary characters during Pessoa’s youth anticipates some of the intellectual and literary concerns which will later be present in Pessoa’s adulthood and Portuguese heteronyms. Literary depersonalisation is already at heart in Pessoa’s youth and there are in fact numerous names and texts which prove the author’s tendency towards the creation of a drama-in-people. With early texts such as *Ultimus Jocularum* or *The Transformation Book*, Pessoa is able to bind his literary characters in a literary coexistence where both languages also inhabit the same fictional literary universe.

The literary characters with whom Pessoa cohabits during his youth are through their literary production examples of the author’s personal and literary concerns. In the works signed by Charles Robert Anon, one finds thoughts and reflections on a wide range of topics which are later echoed in Pessoa’s adult essays. The

<sup>13</sup> See, for example: Colom Jiménez, María (2016). *Los personajes literarios ingleses de Fernando Pessoa: estudio crítico y valoración de personalidades y textos*. Tesis Doctoral en Estudios Literarios, Universidad Complutense de Madrid.

English literary characters and the texts or fragments they produced should be considered, analyzed and edited as they represent the starting point of the Portuguese author's artistic aesthetic.

This study hopes to raise scholarly interest and to stimulate further debate about Pessoa as a bilingual writer and the study of his literary bilingualism. Pessoa should be included in current debates on bilingual writers and bilingual writing. In this regard, additional studies of Pessoa's bilingual literary characters and bilingual translators seem crucial. Also, as the present study has noted, considering Pessoa's youth writings as a pre-heteronymic process is of importance to fully analyse and understand his heteronymic aesthetic.

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