

SEARCH, Alexander, fictional author of Fernando Pessoa, 2014, *Un libro muy original. A Very Original Book*, bilingual edition, translation and notes by Natalia Jerez Quintero; "A Very Original Dinner", translated by Diego García Sierra; Medellín, Colombia, Tragaluz (Colección Lusitania). 239 pp.

Fernando Pessoa's trunk – his famous patrimony (*espólio*) – seems to be a bottomless trunk – its exploration is continuing to modify our knowledge of Pessoa's body of work and has an influence on anthologies and translations of his works. Thanks to the dynamism of Colombian scholars at the Universidad de los Andes in Bogota and the Universidad de Antioquia in Medellín as well as to the excellent quality of Tragaluz's publications, Spanish-speaking readers have access to careful and current editions of works by Pessoa, which incorporate the newest discoveries and critical appreciations of his work.

In this book, Natalia Jerez Quintero provides us with an anthology of the texts of one of the 136 heteronyms (i.e., fictional authors) created by Fernando Pessoa and identified and anthologized by Jerónimo Pizarro and Patricio Ferrari in their book *Eu sou uma antologia: 136 autores fictícios* (Lisboa: Tinta da China, 2013). This anthology is based on a review of Pessoa's known works, since more are still being discovered in his *espólio*. Alexander Search, author no. 72 in the anthology, is an example of the complexity of the phenomenon of heteronyms. To begin with, not only Alexander but also his family are registered in Pessoa's archives, where, for example, we find Charles James Search, John C. Search, Anthony Search, Catherine Search, and Augustus Search. The only (or almost the only) member of this family to have produced artistic or intellectual work of note is Alexander. Although Alexander Search wrote primarily in English, works in French and Portuguese have also been found (p. 218). He appeared formally in the world of Fernando Pessoa in 1906, when Charles Robert Anon, another heteronym, another imaginary author, was transformed into Alexander Search (loc. cit.). To make things more complicated and perhaps to make things easier for himself, Pessoa attributed the translation of the first part of *El estudiante de Salamanca* by José de Espronceda to Charles James Search, one of Alexander's brothers (finally, as is evident from the publications list in the journal *Oisipo*, after 1921, he attributed the translation to himself, under his own name). It was wise of the editor to include this translation since it is very good (I personally greatly appreciate the dynamism of the narration of the end of the duel, which is a praiseworthy equivalent of the verses of the minor art of Espronceda), even though it is not actually the work of either Alexander or Charles James Search (of course, one could argue that genetically the translation "was" done by the Search brothers). One cannot say that the latter complication is the last one. Pessoa imagines a mask of Search, that is, a heteronym of a heteronym. In one of the pages of Pessoa's archive one reads: "When my friend A[lexander] S[earch]

is the pseudonym of Will[iam] Search [...]."\* This transformation can be considered, as Jerez believes (p. 222 and 223), as an homage to Shakespeare (indeed, Will [iam] Search = Will[iam] Shake[speare]).

Search's works probably include Pessoa's only fantastic story, "A Very Original Dinner," translated in this book directly from the English by Diego García Sierra (surprisingly, only David Jackson had previously done this: all the other Spanish translations of Search were from María Leonor Machado's Portuguese version of 1988). García Sierra's translation corrects some of Jackson's errors and improves the fluidity of the Spanish (in this sense, the text is in the vein of the translation of *El banquero anarquista*, excellently done by Nicolás Barboza López and also included in Tragaluz's Lusitania Collection).

As noted, *A Very Original Book* (a syntagma based on the model of "A Very Original Dinner") is an anthology. It is divided into the following sections: poems (I. "Delirium," II. "Agony," IV. "Other Poems"); essays on different topics: philosophy (III. "The Death of God," VII. "Philosophical Fragments"), politics (VI. The Portuguese Regicide and the Political Situation in Portugal), and psychology (VIII. "The Mental Disorders of Jesus" [a text that should be read in the context of texts about the genius and madness of Fernando Pessoa]); the aforementioned fantastic story (V. "A Very Original Dinner"), an autobiography (IX. "Fictional Autobiography") and other texts (X), which includes "A Mad Dictionary of the English Language" and XII. "Alexander Search's Library" (unique in Pessoa's work: other than Pessoa himself, no other heteronym in the Pessoa universes has a library).

In the Spanish version of Search's poems, Jerez chooses to maintain the rhymes and stanzas of the original, with very satisfactory results, it has to be recognized, despite the difficulties involved. The high quality of the Petrarchan sonnets on pages 34-36 and 36-37 (the other tradition of sonnets in English is Shakespearean, used by Pessoa in his 35 *sonnets* published in 1918). As is true of every translation, the choices made can always be questioned. For example, Jerez translates "Death in Life" as "Muerto en vida." I think that "Muerte en vida" would be a more appropriate choice. In the stanza "How they are more than Horror fair!" of the poem "Flashes of Madness," *fair* is translated as 'justos': "Más justos que el Horror" ('justos' modifies 'ojos' in the previous stanza) (p. 25). While *fair* can be translated as 'justo', as in *fair trial* ('juicio justo'), I suspect that the *intentio operis* of the text is to understand *fair* as 'bello', in the sense of *beautiful*, as when one says (in the example provided by the *Cambridge International Dictionary of English*): "She was known to be wise as to be **fair**."

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\* Translation from Portuguese by Apuntes.

The usage may be archaic or poetic, but I think that this constitutes all the more reason to think that Pessoa was thinking of 'bello' more than about 'justo'. There would have been no problem in substituting 'bello' for 'justo' in the Spanish stanza since both words have two syllables, the syllabic count is maintained with any hypo- or hypermetrics. In addition, to a certain degree, one could consider that associating the eyes (to which this poem refers in the previous stanza) with Horror and the beautiful (and the feminine beautiful) might be more imaginative, less conceptual and abstract, than to associate it with the just.

Despite this, it is only fair to point out that there are a number of refined touches in Jerez's translations such as in the stanza "From eyes **unsensual** that would see" ("The Curtain," v. 4, p. 22). Jerez's version is: "del mirar casto por completo" ("La cortina," v. 4, p. 23). In my opinion, Jerez's solution is to make explicit the abstract sense of **unsensual**: to have translated this word more literally as, for example, **\*asensual** or **\*antisensual**, would have represented a loss. A very curious text retrieved by Natalia Jerez is "The Mad Dictionary of the English Language," whose linguistic games with their subtle humor are very difficult to translate. Jerez has tried to achieve this in various cases ("**Heir-apparent**: a wig" [p. 184] is translated as "**Cabello aparente**: peluca," [p. 185]; the play with 'cabello' remains (*heir* is phonically is the same as *hair*, 'cabello'), but the sense of 'heredero' is lost. Moreover, "**Pistol**: the son of a gun" is well translated as "Pistola: el hijo de una carabina," in which the play of "filiación" (*son* = *hijo*) with that of an insult (according to the *Cambridge Dictionary of English*, "son of a gun" is a euphemism for "son-of-a-bitch") since "carabina" can refer to "carabina de Ambrosio," which, according to the *Diccionario de la Real Academia Española*, is 'no servir para nada', that is, 'inútil'.

One of the accomplishments of Jerez and García Sierra is the careful and, at the same time, ingenious version of "A Very Original Dinner," the fantastic story mentioned above. For example, almost at the end of Search's original text, we read: "I see nowhere anything fishy, unless, in a decent sense, the fish" (p. 102), a phrase that did not survive in the Portuguese translation nor the Spanish ones. Jerez and García translated this as "No veo por ningún lado nada escamante, salvo, en sentido estricto, el pescado" (p. 103). By using the word "escamante," 'que produce recelo o desconfianza', which is very similar to "fishy," 'apparently dishonest or false', which obviously plays with "pescado," the translators found a very satisfactory equivalence.

Once again, the Lusitania Collection by Medellín-based publishing house Tragaluz has enriched the universe of Portuguese texts in Spanish, as it had already done with *Plural como el universe* by Fernando Pessoa, edited by Jerónimo Pizarro; *El banquero anarquista y una entrevista sensacional* also by Fernando Pessoa, edited by Nicolás Barbosa López; *Catálogo de luces* by José Eduardo Agualusa, translated by Jerónimo Pizarro; *El pintor*

*debajo del lavaplatos* by Alfonso Cruz, translated by Nicolás Barbosa López; and *Los mató la vida. Antología de escritores suicidas portugueses*, edited by Pablo Javier Pérez López (compiler and translator).

Jorge Wiese Rebagliati†  
*Universidad del Pacífico, Lima*

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† Email: [wiese\\_jr@up.edu.pe](mailto:wiese_jr@up.edu.pe)