

Melancholia, Nostalgia: Bernardo Soares after Fernando Pessoa

Authors : Maria de Fátima Lambert

Abstract : Bernardo Soares is one of Fernando Pessoa's several heteronyms (and "half-heteronyms"). Perhaps the one that brought together the majority of his qualities and characters of self-identity within the famous inner-persona-alter-diversity. The Book of Disquiet by Bernardo Soares was released in 1983, consisting of ontological remarks caught by an obsessive inquiring about self-existence. The book became a highly valuable substance when focusing upon the philosophical grounds of Pessoa's aesthetics. For sure, we cannot consider a single aesthetic, admitting that each heteronym has its own particular one, developed after different principles and convictions. Regarding Bernardo Soares, his thought arises from sequenced self-clues expressing peculiar existential doubtless presented as certainties -and vice-versa. His written self-search-images are reported, molding the painful awareness of existence through the discredited tolerance of any conclusive dialogue with others. Given the nature of Soares' [maybe] unfinished writings, it is obvious that he headed far from his self-insurance-capsule: the office, bedroom, or even the walksapes through Lisbon. The idea of travel/journey is one of the most relevant when recognizing his profound - although undercover - anguish as melancholy and nostalgia. In Bernardo Soares, Aesthetics is taken agonizingly, grounded upon discreet poetic phraseology and terms. His poetical awareness developed compulsive titles such "Aesthetics of Indifference", "Aesthetics of Discouragement". Soares' Aesthetics emerges directly from oneself, understanding art as inner acts and living experienced issues. Art is not freed from the intellectual expression of oneself emotions. The Disquiet Book is an existential nightmare nourished by everyday life, single written thoughts, balanced by melancholia, nostalgia, and distress. One might wonder if it was dreams that guided his fictional literary persona or the narrow facts of life itself. Along with his endless disquiet writing, Pessoa's semi-heteronymous traveled without physically going anywhere. The complexity of inner existence is fulfilled by lonely mental walks and travels, as in two texts titled The Never Accomplished Journey. Although we also can consider other fragments, these are the deepest reflections about travelling. Let's recall that Fernando Pessoa's heteronyms writings -poems and essays- also addressed this issue from a philosophical perspective. We believe that this theme is one of the meaningful concepts for featuring the main principles of his aesthetics. As we know, Fernando Pessoa did not travel to foreign countries (or in Portugal), except for the journey, with his family, from Lisbon to South Africa (as a child) and, some years later, the return back to Lisbon. One may wonder why the poet never undertook other journeys. Maybe due to a disbelief in moving away from his comfort zone or due to the fear of becoming addicted to endless travels and the loss of his convenient self-closeness. In The Book of Disquiet, the poet shared his internal visions of the outer world but mainly visualizing his deepest enigmas and experiences -so strongly incorporated into reality and fiction.

Keywords : aesthetic principles, Bernardo Soares, Fernando Pessoa, melancholia, nostalgia, non-accomplished travel, The Book of Disquiet

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