

Pessoa, Concrete Poet, Influence, Muse

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Keywords

Fernando Pessoa, Concrete Poetry, Augusto de Campos, Décio Pignatari, Form, Materiality of language, Influence, Joyce.

Abstract

Brazilian concrete poetry can teach us to see, where the language is materialized, the concrete in Pessoa's writings. To do this is to see Pessoa as a precursor of the Brazilian concrete poets. But precursorship is not the only link between them. In the case of the founding group of concrete poetry, the work of Pessoa traverses the whole of their critical and creative journey and is present from their first books up until their digital animations and last poems. I read Pessoa's work through the lens of concrete theory in order to reveal him as a concrete poet in his own right. I examine Pessoa's pervasive presence in the work of Augusto de Campos, the last surviving founder of concrete poetry and the one in whose work the critical and creative assimilation of Pessoa is most marked.

Palavras-chave

Fernando Pessoa, Poesia Concreta, Augusto de Campos, Décio Pignatari, Forma, Materialidade da linguagem, Influência, Joyce.

Resumo

A poesia concreta brasileira pode ensinar-nos a ver, onde a linguagem seja materializada, o concreto nos escritos de Pessoa. Fazer isto implica perceber Pessoa como um precursor dos poetas concretos brasileiros. Mas o status de precursor não é a única conexão entre eles. No caso do grupo fundador da poesia concreta, a obra de Pessoa atravessa todo o caminho percorrido e está presente desde os seus primeiros livros até às animações digitais e os últimos poemas. Leio a obra de Pessoa através da perspectiva da teoria concreta para revelá-lo como um poeta concreto ele mesmo. Examinado a presença abrangente de Pessoa na obra de Augusto de Campos, o último fundador sobrevivente da poesia concreta e o poeta em cuja obra a assimilação crítica e criativa de Pessoa está mais marcada.

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The pedigree of the Brazilian concrete poets (Haroldo de Campos, Augusto de Campos and Décio Pignatari), who in 1952 founded the literary magazine *Noigandres*, which launched an international movement, is amply documented. In the manifesto that introduced the term, Augusto claimed for “concrete poetry,” and the shift it marked from versified expression to autonomous structure, a modern lineage that descended through Mallarmé, Joyce, Pound and Cummings and that counted João Cabral de Melo Neto as a domestic relation (1956a). Soon, the concrete poets would extend this lineage to other practitioners of the literature of invention (Apollinaire, Gertrude Stein, the Futurists, the Dadaists), including other countrymen (Oswald de Andrade, Mario de Andrade). They would also count as collateral relations artists in whose work they discerned analogues to the kinds of spatiotemporal structures they were bent on creating: filmmakers (Eisenstein), visual artists (Mondrian, Klee, Schwitters, Max Bill, Albers), musicians (Stockhausen, Webern, Boulez).

To use their own metaphors, the Noigandres Group began by regarding concrete poetry as the product of a “critical evolution of forms” [evolução crítica de formas], with *Un Coup de Dés* (1897) constituting the initial “leap” [salto] (CAMPOS *et al.*, 1958). They stressed that theirs was not a case of “spontaneous generation” [geração espontânea] but that concrete poetry had its origins in an “active historical tradition” [tradição histórica ativa]. While they continued to cite Mallarmé, Joyce, Pound and Cummings as the chief drivers of the “metamorphosis” in verbal forms, eventually the canon of concrete poets *avant la lettre* would swell in proportion as concrete poetry came to be identified in the Group’s eyes (and ears) with poetry itself (CAMPOS *et al.*, 1956). For, they argued, all great poetry exploits the material resources of the language. Thus, the trio’s view of concrete poetry as a modern evolutionary development itself evolved toward locating their brand of poetry in a transtemporal context that linked the latest technical advancements to the monuments of the past. The notion of earlier forms leading to later forms leading to concrete poetry gave way to a broader understanding of the concreteness of poetry as such. Borges claimed that every writer creates his own precursors. Haroldo, Augusto and Décio went further in not only modifying our conception of the past but undertaking, in multiple genres, to make that very modification the principal focus of their work.

If I have dwelled so long on the Brazilian concrete poets’ multifarious genealogies, it is both to underscore the relative rarity with which Fernando Pessoa is mentioned (and critics have not mentioned him at all in this connection) and to prepare the ground, by highlighting the importance they attach to this sort of discourse, for inscribing the Portuguese writer into their lineage. This is important work because the scattering of times his name appears in their critical writings, in fact, belies the important place Pessoa occupies in their lineage. Readers of this journal might know that *Pessoa Plural* 7 reprinted, from a São Paulo newspaper,

Augusto's 1990 article analyzing a trove of poetry translations by Pessoa recently discovered in Brazil. Yet, while the article revealed a deep knowledge of Pessoa's verse, it gave no hint of a linkage with concrete poetry. For that, we must turn to the first mention of Pessoa in the Noigandres Group's writings.

In his 1956 theoretical piece "Nova Poesia: Concreta" [New Poetry: Concrete], Décio cites as the "maximum" [máximo] goal "to be uncommon and clear, as the late fernando pessoa said [*sic*]" [ser raro e claro, como disse o último fernando pessoa]. This passing reference shows that the *concretos* were thinking of Pessoa, if still in general terms, in connection with the poetics they were formulating at the time. A decade and a half later, in *Contracomunicação*, Décio glances at the nature of the connection: "A estirpe mallarmaica [The Mallarmean lineage]: James Joyce, Fernando Pessoa, Drummond, João Cabral de Mello Neto, os poetas concretos [the concrete poets], Guimarães Rosa" (2004: 103). As well as articulating a tradition of Lusophone poets and novelists writing in a Mallarmean vein, Décio's fragment stimulates with its pairing of Pessoa and concrete poetry on the basis of a shared commonality with, presumably, the "prismatic subdivisions of the Idea" and visual spatialization of the page that the Group found so inspiring in *Un coup de dés*.¹

Now, the linkage of Pessoa and Mallarmé is counter-intuitive. Pessoa criticized the French symbolist's work, as he did Joyce's, for its reflexive focus on its own process of construction, for being "about" itself: "A arte de James Joyce, como a de Mallarmé, é a arte fixada no processo de fabrico, no caminho" (2006: 444) [The art of James Joyce, like that of Mallarmé, is art preoccupied with method, with how it's made].² Yet, this is exactly the reason Décio praises Mallarmé's poetry in *Contracomunicação*: "Nela se reconhece o processo heurístico e fenomenológico da poesia-descoberta, da poesia-invenção, que vai dizendo a sua descoberta na medida mesma em que a faz" (2004: 103) [One recognizes in it the heuristic and phenomenological process of the poetry of discovery, the poetry of invention, which tells of its discovery as it goes about making it].

It is left to Haroldo in *O Arco-íris Branco* [The White Rainbow] (1997) to elaborate the tie between Pessoa, concrete poetry and Mallarmé:

Tenho dito, em mais de uma oportunidade, que a "poesia concreta" dos anos 50 e 60, [...] ensinou-me a ver o concreto na poesia; a transcender o "ismo" particularizante, para encarar a poesia, transtemporalmente, como um processo global e aberto de concreção signíca, atualizando de modo sempre diferente nas várias épocas da história literária e nas várias ocasiões materializáveis da linguagem (das linguagens). Safo e Bashô, Dante e

¹ Haroldo, Augusto and Décio regularly quote, and translate, Mallarmé's phrase "subdivisions prismatiques de l'Idée," taken from the preface to *Un coup de dés* (MALLARMÉ, 1914).

² All translations are mine, with this exception, which I take from PESSOA (2001: 222). For a discussion of Pessoa's fragment on Mallarmé and Joyce, see SCHWARTZ (2014: 227-30).

Camões, Sá de Miranda e Fernando Pessoa, Hölderlin e Celan, Góngora e Mallarmé são, para mim, nessa acepção fundamental, poetas concretos. (268-269)

[I have said, on more than one occasion, that the “concrete poetry” of the 1950s and ‘60s, (...) taught me to see the concrete in poetry; to transcend the local “ism,” to regard poetry, transtemporally, as a global, open process of semiotic concretion, crystallizing in always different ways in the various periods of literary history and on the various materializable occasions of the language (of the languages). Sappho and Basho, Dante and Camões, Sá de Miranda and Fernando Pessoa, Hölderlin and Celan, Góngora and Mallarmé are, for me, in that fundamental sense, concrete poets.]

Where the sign is concretized, there the poetry is concrete. Pessoa materializes the language, and so he counts as a concrete poet. The heterogeneous writers enumerated by Haroldo resemble the concrete poets; they do not resemble each other. In their work is found the concrete idiosyncrasy, but if the concrete poets had not written, we would not perceive it. It is in his emphasis on the phonetic and visual aspects of words, then, rather than in the analogical juxtaposition of thematic material or the use of blank space and typography as substantive elements of composition, that Pessoa forms part of Mallarmé's, and concrete poetry's, stock. In *Metalinguagem* (2010), Haroldo repeats these two points and adds a third: poetry is poetry only insofar as it is concrete. “Para mim, hoje, toda poesia digna desse nome é concreta. De Homero a Dante. De Goethe a Fernando Pessoa. Pois o poeta é um configurador da materialidade da linguagem (lembre-se o teorema de Jakobson). É só enquanto linguagem materialmente configurada, enquanto concreção de signos, “forma significante”, a poesia é poesia” (264) [For me, today, all poetry worthy of the name is concrete. From Homer to Dante. From Goethe to Fernando Pessoa. For the poet is one who configures the materiality of language (recall Jakobson's theorem). It is only insofar as it is materially configured language, insofar as it is the concretion of signs, “significant form,” that poetry is poetry].

If the movement he co-founded taught Haroldo to see the concrete in the poetry of the past, then it can also teach us to see, where the language is materialized, the concrete in Pessoa's poetry. To do this is to see Pessoa as a precursor of the Brazilian concrete poets. But precursor-ship is not the only link between them. Pessoa was very important for the concrete poets' generation, as the *Ática* editions arrived in Brazil in the era of their launching, in the mid-1940s, and the poet's greatness was immediately recognized there. Adolfo Casais Monteiro and Jorge de Sena lived in Brazil for many years and surely contributed to Pessoa's dissemination. In the case of the founding group of concrete poetry, the work of Pessoa traverses the whole of their critical and creative journey and is present from their first books up until their digital animations and last poems. Thus, to give Pessoa his genealogical due calls for a double strategy of inscription. In the first part of what follows, I read Pessoa's work through the lens of concrete theory in

order to reveal him as a concrete poet in his own right. In the second part, I examine Pessoa's pervasive presence in the work of Augusto, the last surviving founder of concrete poetry and the one in whose work the critical and creative assimilation of Pessoa is most marked.

Pessoa, Concrete Poet

To read the concrete in Pessoa, I first offer a brief exposition of the Noigandres Group's principles. In their program statements, the Group defined concrete poetry in terms of three kinds of fusions, identifications, or correspondences. The first is a fusion of form—a specific kind of form they called “structure”—and content. By structure, the Concrete Poets had in mind the nonlinear arrangement of the written material, as distinct from the disposition of words into rhythmic units, characteristic of verse. Methods for arranging words in a manner free of “perspectival syntax” (CAMPOS, 1956a) include the use of graphical space as a structural agent (Mallarmé's *Un coup de dés*); the ideogrammic juxtaposition of disparate elements (Pound's *Cantos*); circular narrative construction and the compounding of multilingual puns into a single “ideogram-word” (Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*); the expressive use of punctuation and spacing, along with the “atomization” [atomização] of words (cumplings) (CAMPOS *et al.*, 1958).

The fusion of structure and content lies in the concrete poem's autoreferentiality. “[T]he concrete poem communicates its own structure: structure-content,” the Group insisted. “It is an object in and for itself, not an interpreter of external objects or subjective sensations” [o poema concreto comunica a sua própria estrutura: estrutura-conteúdo. o poema concreto é um objeto em e por si mesmo, não um intérprete de objetos exteriores e/ou sensações mais ou menos subjetivas] (CAMPOS *et al.*, 1958). Recall Haroldo's reference to the English art critic Clive Bell's definition of art grounded in “significant form” and “aesthetic emotion.” Propounded by Bell in 1914 under the inspiration of post-Impressionism, this formalist theory differs from mimetic and expressivist theories in defining art in relation to an internal quality, namely, the arrangement of material into forms that stir the aesthetic emotion. This material consists of “relations and combinations of lines and colours” (Bell, 2015: 11). Similarly, the Group define concrete poetry in terms of the (nonlinear) arrangement of written material into aesthetically moving, and thus significant, form. Just as, for Bell, art does not represent the world or express the artist but carries its meaning in its very composition, so concrete poetry communicates no message but only its structure.

What makes this structure pleasing, what makes it worth communicating, is its “verbivocovisual” character, and this brings us to the second fusion that marks concrete poetry. The Group take this term from Joyce to refer to the integration of the visual, semantic and sonorous aspects of words. These aspects correspond to

what Pound, whose *ABC of Reading* inspired so much of concrete poetics, identified as the three ways of charging words with meaning—*phanopoeia*, *logopoeia*, *melopoeia*—with one important difference. Pound defined *phanopoeia* as the use of “a word to throw a visual image on to the reader's imagination” (1991: 37), while the concrete poets mean by the visual aspect of words both the image in the reader's mind and, even more, the visual form of the word on the page. To proceed: If the concrete poem takes the verbivocovisual aspects of words as its material, it assumes as its problem the “functions or relations of that material” (CAMPOS *et al.*, 1958) [funções-relações desse material]. To this problem the Group propose an analogical solution, wherein the sight, sound and meaning of the poem's words come together in mutual reinforcement. Again, this idea finds support in Pound, who spoke of “inducing emotional correlations by the sound and rhythm of the speech” (1991: 63). The nonlinear arrangement of words can serve these correlations by foregrounding the ways the materiality of language merges with the poem's meaning. The exploitation of the phonetic and visual properties of words constitutes non-verbal communication; that of the meaning of words, verbal communication. The “coincidence and simultaneity” [coincidência e simultaneidade] of verbal and non-verbal communication give to the poem the character of “metacommunication” [metacomunicação]: “a communication of forms, of structure-content, not of the usual communication of messages” (CAMPOS *et al.*, 1958) [uma comunicação de formas, de uma estrutura-conteúdo, não da usual comunicação de mensagens]. Again, then, the concrete poem communicates its own structure. But now it becomes clear that the fusion of the verbivocovisual aspects of words is inseparable from the broader identification of structure and content.

Parallel to these twin correspondences is that between space and time. This space-time “isomorphism” [isomorfismo], as they call it, generates the poem's “movement” [movimento]. The concrete poets understood that modern writers had, through their nonlinear arrangement of the material, in effect, spatialized literature, by definition a temporal art. They discerned a similar tendency in other arts, where some members of the postwar avant-garde had added a spatial dimension to music (a temporal art) or a temporal dimension to the visual arts (spatial by definition). The concrete poets aspired in their structures to a similar interpenetration of time and space;³ hence, their definition of concrete poetry as the “tension of word-things in space-time” (CAMPOS *et al.*, 1958) [tensão de palavras-coisas no espaço-tempo].

³ In doing so, they were renewing an important theme in modernist culture, most closely associated with the visual arts: the pursuit of a fourth dimension. Cf. MEECHAM *et al.* (2005: 75); HENDERSON (2018).

com	can	
som	tem	
con	ten	tom
tem	são	bem
	tom	sem
	bem	som

Fig. 1. Tensão.

Augusto's poem "tensão" illustrates this double tension between words and things, and space and time (1956b). The poem is organized into three rows and three columns, staggered so that the first and third of each contain two stacked pairs of morphemes while the second row/column contains three such pairs. Each morpheme consists of three letters each (consonant-vowel-consonant), with one exception (consonant-vowel-vowel). The reading of the pairs from left to right yields, "com som can tem | con tem ten são tam bem | tom bem sem som" [with sound they sing | they contain tension also | tone well/also without sound]. The top layer of the middle row conceals a pun: "contentam" [they satisfy]. It is clear from the differential repetition of the morphemes that the poem forms an extended paragram, comprised of words bearing an analogical, as opposed to logico-syntactic, relation to one another. What makes this paragrammatic poem interesting is the careful selection, morphological decomposition and spatial disposition of the words, intended to highlight the coincidence of their sound (and sight) and meaning, of their material and semantic properties. The words, submitted to such concrete treatment, reveal themselves to be "word-things" rather than simply symbols of ideas. The implicit subject of the fragmented syntax is "words": words "sing with sound"; they "contain tension" between their verbal and nonverbal communication. The simultaneity of these respectively temporal and spatial forms of communication, as gridded on the page, charges the poem with a space-time tension: a "dynamic structure" [estrutura dinâmica], indeed (CAMPOS *et al.*, 1958).

All three fusions definitive of concrete poetry have their resonances in Pessoa's writings. Like the Noigandres Group, Pessoa distinguished the word into its verbivocovisual dimensions: "toda palavra representa uma ideia, projecta uma imagem e tem um som" (PESSOA, 1990: 407) [every word represents an idea, casts an image and has a sound]. Pessoa believed that these dimensions reinforce each, a belief that grew from a keen appreciation for the material properties of words. For example, he considered gold, in its archaic spelling, "brilliant" [brilhante], and in its modern orthography "dull" [baço] (PESSOA, 2009: 115), and in his writing chose between the words according to the effect he wished to produce. Pessoa found motivation for these signs in both their graphic and phonetic embodiments. Indeed, the motivation of the sign, as against Saussure's theory of its arbitrariness, propels so much of concrete (and, here, Pessoa's) poetics (cf. CAMPOS, 1986: 101). The Symbolist and Decadent embrace of synesthesia as both a theme and a device aligns Pessoa's sensitivity to the overtones in *oiro* and *ouro* with Baudelaire's perception of "Correspondances" [Correspondences] among perfumes, sounds and colors and Rimbaud's assignment of different colors and "naissances latentes" [latent origins] to the individual vowels.

In his writings on Sensationism, Pessoa espoused a broader identification of form and content that converged with the concrete poets' belief in the isomorphism of structure and content. On multiple occasions, Pessoa advocated the principle that "art is the adequation of expression to consciousness" (2009: 129) [a arte é a adequação da expressão á consciencia]. Indeed, he considered it "the true artistic thesis" [a verdadeira these artística] that expression is conditioned by the emotion to be expressed. "I said that each idea, by virtue of its potentiality, its simplicity or complex nature, demands that it be expressed in a simple or complex manner" (2009: 185) [Dissemos que cada ideia, pela sua virtualidade intima, pela simplicidade ou indole complexa, impoe que se exprima de modo simplice ou complexo]. This is one of the points that separate Pessoa's aesthetic philosophy from Classicism: "Sensationism rejects the Classical notion [...] that all topics should be treated in the same style, in the same tone, with the same external line delineating their form" (2009: 166) [O Sensacionismo regeita do Classicismo a noção (...) de que todos os assuntos devem ser tratados no mesmo estylo, no mesmo tom, com a mesma linha exterior a delinear-lhes a forma].

Now, it is one of the ironies of literary history that a neoclassical writer was the first to articulate, and demonstrate, what would become a modernist precept. In "An Essay on Criticism" (1709), Alexander Pope writes:

The sound must seem an echo to the sense.
Soft is the strain when Zephyr gently blows,
And the smooth stream in smoother numbers flows,
But when loud surges lash the sounding shore,
The hoarse, rough verse should like the torrent roar,

In their book on writing classic prose, a book many of whose insights apply to poetry, Francis-Noël Thomas and Mark Turner define an individual style not by its surface marks but “by its conceptual stand on truth, presentation, writer, reader, thought, language, and their relationships” (THOMAS *et al*, 2011: 2). According to the classic stand, writing is a transparent window through which a subject is presented. “The subject is conceived of as a ‘thing’ distinct from writing, something that exists in the world and is independent of any presentation” (32). Because language is sufficient to serve this presentation, the classic writer “must not make the language appear to struggle” and so “avoids colloquialisms, neologisms, periphrases, and slang” (THOMAS *et al*, 2011: 61-62). In arguing that sound must seem an echo to the sense, Pope broke with the prevailing attitude, or at least one aspect of it. His dictum contradicts the classic principle that language “is clear when it follows the order of reason, and unclear when it follows the movements and order of our experience” (THOMAS *et al*, 2011: 13). For Pope, poetic language must align precisely with the thought or feeling being expressed.

Two centuries after Pope, modernist writers rediscovered and reaffirmed his precept, arguing for a closer fit, in both poetry and prose, between form and content. A crisis in language had arisen that made this correspondence not just advisable but necessary. The problem with the classic conception of writing as a window was that the window had grown foggy with culture, and language no longer served to present the thing. Conceptual categories and utilitarian considerations so mediated the English language, in particular, that, in the words of Beckett, it lost all “sensuous suggestion” and became “abstracted to death” (1961: 10).

Gertrude Stein gave an account of this change for the worse. In English literature of the sixteenth century, “one word and another word next to the other word was always being chosen.” Both poets and prose writers enjoyed a fresh relationship to words, words that had not yet suffered centuries of encasement in print. “There was no losing choosing in what they were saying,” as Stein put it (1974: 157). But an explosion in printed matter, matched by a boom in the reading public, eventually rendered conventional the formerly conscious choosing of words. The arrangement of words grew automatic; their vivid meanings became indistinct; words no longer “sang,” as their audibility (and visibility) faded. In short, “Words had lost their value in the Nineteenth Century, particularly towards the end, they had lost much of their variety.” Stein responded to this situation by attempting “the recreation of the word.” This meant stripping words of their usual associations by placing them in irrational syntactic arrangements. It also involved juxtaposing words in such a way as to foreground their “weight and volume,” or phonetic and visual values, as in “losing choosing” above (STEIN, 1971: 18). These are but two of the many ways that Stein, a key influence on the concrete poets, sought to redress the newly felt inadequacy of language to thought.

But scrubbing the window of language was not the only modernist solution to the problem (nor was Stein the only modernist to take up a sponge). Pessoa sought to make language not the window but the mirror of thought, and in his correlation of sense and sound, of content and form, he converges with Joyce. Beckett stressed this “conceptual stand” in a 1929 essay intended to explain and defend the radical linguistic experimentation in Joyce’s future *Finnegans Wake*, then being serialized as *Work in Progress* in the magazine *transition*. “Here form is content, content is form,” Beckett wrote. “It is not to be read—or rather it is not only to be read. It is to be looked at and listened to. His writing is not *about* something; it is *that something itself*.” For example, “When the sense is sleep, the words go to sleep”; “Where the sense is dancing, the words dance” (1961: 10). The sense Beckett speaks of is both visual and auditory. In the mash-up of words and the mesh of onomatopoeic sounds, Joyce’s writing so closely mimics the thing that it becomes the thing itself.

Joyce’s “thingly” writing approaches the condition of poetry, as differentiated from prose by T.E. Hulme, whose writings and lectures on art and literature proved crucial in shaping Anglo-American modernism. According to the English poet, critic and philosopher, prose resembles algebra, in that “concrete things are embodied in signs or counters [...] without being visualized.” In contrast, poetry “is not a counter language, but a visual concrete one. [...] It always endeavours to arrest you, and to make you continuously see a physical thing, to prevent you gliding through an abstract process” (HULME, 2010: 135). In short, Pessoa’s remedy for the inadequacy of language to thought—to cast one in the mold of the other—is continuous with Beckett’s insistence on the physicality of Joyce’s language.

Situating concrete poetics, as well as Pessoa’s “style,” in this wider modernist context clarifies the connection between them. The conception of poetic language as essentially visual and concrete leads directly to the concrete poets’ verbivocovisual emphasis. What Andrew Thacker has called the modernist trend toward the “the reification of language, where the attention given to language results in a desire to turn words into things” (2016: 47) culminates in the concrete definition of poems as “word-things.” From Beckett’s insistence that Joyce’s writing is “not about something; it is that something itself,” it is but a short step to the Noigandres Group’s understanding of the concrete poem as a self-communicating structure. In both cases, the writing is autotelic, neither imitative nor expressive of any object outside itself. If, for Shklovsky, “*Art is a way of experiencing the artfulness of an object*,” for the Group, the concrete poem is a way of experiencing the artfulness of a structure. The Russian formalist wanted poets “to make the stone *stony*” through defamiliarizing techniques (1965: 12). The concrete poets aimed to reveal the stoniness of the *word* stone by arranging it together with

other words into verbivocovisual, nonlinear forms. In short, Brazilian concrete poetry completes the modernist dissolution of content into form.

Yet, the stylistic differences between Pessoa and the concrete poets must not be ignored. To help with the contrast, I begin with the classic style. A classic sentence might run thus: "Down the street and lost to the world he goes, drunk and weaving." The language here serves as a window through which the subject is presented; clarity, not mimicry, is the aim. A very different style, broadly modernist, is at work in Joyce's poetic prose. Take a passage (at the end of Shaun's pastoral) about which Beckett says, "The language is drunk. The very words are tilted and effervescent" (1961: 10): "To stir up love's young fizz I tilt with this bridle's cup champagne [...]." Here, the subject is not conceived of as a thing independent of its presentation. Rather, the two are so identified that in the writing is found the intoxicated Shaun (analogue to the drunk, weaving, abstracted pedestrian) himself. The same may be said of the heady verse of "Pierrot Bêbado," with its similar verbivocovisual fusion of form and content.

In contrast to both the classic and modernist styles, the concrete poets (particularly Augusto) might dismember the sentence (e.g., "Down the street and lost to the world he goes, drunk and weaving") and arrange some or all of its parts nonlinearly on the page, according to their phonetic, visual or semantic values, or their grammatical symmetry, or any other principle of equivalence; that is, they would arrange the parts of the classic sentence according to word themes, not logical-discursive syntax. Put another way, the concrete poets would, in this hypothetical example, establish the "weight and volume" of the individual words or word groups, using their spatiotemporal structures as a metric.

To vary the metaphor and apply it to their practice in general: The concrete poets perform surgery upon the signifier, cutting directly into its materiality, with a view to reconnecting it to the signified, their ultimate aim being to restore the linguistic sign to semiotic health. According to David Harvey, modernists "presupposed that there was a tight and identifiable relation between what was being said (the signified or message) and how it was being said (the signifier or medium)" (1991: 13). Certainly, the concrete poets share with their high-modernist forbears the goal of strengthening this weakened relation. But the fusion of form and content in Joyce's and Pessoa's style must not be confused with the isomorphism of structure and content characteristic of concrete poetry. A concrete poem is not the thing itself (the referent) but a "word-thing" (a concretized sign) instead.

Just as Pessoa's poetics appear concrete, then, in their fusion of form and content, and of the material and semantic properties of the word, so they appear concrete, when seen through the corresponding lens, in their fusion of time and space. To see a spatiotemporal dimension in Pessoa's work, it is again necessary to turn, briefly, to Beckett. "[T]he Beauty of 'Work in Progress' is not presented in

space alone, since its adequate apprehension depends as much on its visibility as on its audibility,” Beckett writes. “There is a temporal as well as a spatial unity to be apprehended” (1961: 10). Beckett here offers the insight that language, by definition a temporal medium, assumes a spatial dimension insofar as the unfamiliar sight or sound of individual words (e.g., Joyce’s neologisms) merges with the meaning and, thus merging, induces the reader to look at the words (as at a painting, to which Beckett compares them) and not just through them.

But there is an alternative means of spatializing language only hinted at here, which Roman Jakobson’s famous definition of literariness, or the poetic function of language, helps to draw out. “The poetic function projects the principle of equivalence from the axis of selection into the axis of combination” (1977: 155). Joyce’s writing bears a pattern of paradigmatic equivalences concealed in the narrative syntagm that gives to the writing a spatial form.⁴ These equivalences are of two types: the manifold puns, through their multiple meanings, yield mosaic variations on the central narrative concerning the character HCE (equivalences at the level of signifieds); the reiteration of phonetic and visual units creates a harmony for eye and ear to perceive (equivalences at the level of signifiers). To achieve spatial unity, then, it is not necessary for writing to be structured non-linearly, as in Augusto’s “tensão,” nor, as in Joyce’s “Ana Livia” section, which opens with pyramidal spacing, to approximate visual poetry. In effect, wherever the writing fuses form and content, verbivocovisually, there a spatiotemporal structure obtains.

From reading the concrete in Pessoa’s poetics, I now turn to reading the concrete in his poetry. A few short examples should suffice. Pessoa’s metaphysical drama *Fausto* offers a prime illustration, because it takes as its very theme the inadequacy of language to thought, an inadequacy cast in the metaphor of the “formless” [informe] (PESSOA, 2018b). To render the prevailing psychological, linguistic and metaphysical disorder, Pessoa devises a form marked by a dislocation of logical language. Contrary to the classic convention, Pessoa “make[s] the language appear to struggle,” through the use of a complex vocabulary and complicated grammatical constructions, among other stylistic devices. The formlessness of his language (and of the drama’s structure) thus corresponds to the formlessness of the self and the world.⁵

A concretist approach to Pessoa helps us appreciate in “Mar. Manhã.” [Sea. Morning.] the paranomastic images of the undulant wave that forms the poem’s subject (2018a: 15). Consider, in the first stanza, the repeated morphemes of suaveMENTE | pausadaMENTE and of DESce | DEScansar; the adverbial, syllabic, conceptual and accentual symmetries of su-A-ve-MEN-te | pa-SA-da-

⁴ For a brief gloss on the convergence between Jakobson’s definition of the poetic function and what the New Critics called “spatial form,” cf. NEWTON (1992: 63).

⁵ For an article devoted to the fusion of form and content in *Fausto*, cf. SCHWARTZ (2018).

MEN-te; the paired voiced labiodental fricatives of suaVemente | aVança; the reiteration of near-close near-back unrounded vowels in suavEmentE grandE; and, of course, the ABAB rhyme scheme reinforcing, through the alternation of sounds, the sense of the fluxing wave. The confluence of melopoeia and phanopoeia is also evident in the sibilance, as of the sea, in the later verse, “No são sossego azul do sol.” The chiasmic sound figures in the lines “O oceano ébrio de arrebol” and “Ébria de alheia” and “ondula | Na onda lúcida” again evoke up-and-down motion. The internal rhyme of “cobra” and “dobras” [folds], a simile for the wave, aptly coils over consecutive lines. The parallel structures and sounds of “Quer de prazer, quer de pesar” [whether from pleasure, whether from pang] highlight the antithesis established in the line. “Mar. Manhã.” is not about the morning sea; it is, as Beckett would say, the morning sea itself.

“Saudade Dada,” a riot of paranomasia and internal and terminal rhyme, parodies avant-garde sound poetry, even as it demonstrates Pessoa’s mastery of phonetic values (2018a: 53). In such “verse without words” as Hugo Ball’s “gadji beri bimba,” Dadaist poets cast aside all semantics and syntax to forge clusters of phonemes with no recognizable links to existing words. Their exclusive focus on sonority aimed at dismantling rationality at the level of language, as part of their broader assault on the institution of art. In contrast, “Saudade Dada” draws on logopoeia and phanopoeia, as well as melopoeia, to induce emotional correlations. In his sound and visual poem, *Zang Tumb Tumb*, Marinetti used onomatopoeia and *parole in libertà* [words-in-freedom] to represent a battle in Tripoli he participated in. For his use of such devices, Pessoa accused the Futurist of straying outside of literature (“sahe da literature”) (2009: 109). In “Saudade Dada,” Pessoa shows that it is possible to cross literature with music and attain some of the same effects as sound poetry without “cheating” and while remaining within conventional verse. He proves that avant-garde techniques need not be incompatible with the organic work of art.

The verbivocovisual fusion of form and content in “Saudade Dada” is equally stressed in all five of the poems that Pessoa published in *Portugal Futurista*. Their simultaneity of verbal and nonverbal communication resonates with the concurrent presentation of elements from different places and multiple points of view in the works of Blaise Cendrars, José de Almada-Negreiros and Santa-Rita Pintor, printed in the same magazine. The Cubist dislocation of one-point perspective in these self-consciously simultaneist works has its counterpart in the synthetic perspective that *Fiçções do Interlúdio* evoke in the reader. “Pierrot Bêbado,” with its pentasyllabic verses, alliteration and dense rhyme, calls for comparison (more sustained than the one I initiate above) with the “drunk” passage that, according to Beckett, gives spatial dimension to Joyce’s writing. Expression and emotion execute in Pessoa’s poem a perfect *pas de deux*, as the

weaving-around to the same words, lines and images mimics the drunken circle the speaker traces as he looks up at the moon and projects his movements onto it.

Instances in which Pessoa's language follows the movements and order of experience are too many to mention. I will cite only the jumbled syntax in "Chuva Oblíqua" and "Pauis," as well as the latter's parataxis and alternate use of commas, dashes and ellipses to mark the caesura; the neologism and transitivized verbs in "A Voz de Deus"; the use of pronominal verbs to mimic the blurring of dreams and reality in "Realejo"; the expressive typography, punctuation and formatting, along with the extensive onomatopoeia, in "Ode Maritima," by the engineer—or rather, "designer of language"⁶—Álvaro de Campos; the repetitions of "foi," "tudo," "dor" and "deixou," appealing to both eye and ear, in the short poem "Eu amo tudo o que foi." In sum, Pessoa's is a poetry rife with equivalences, at lexical, phonetic and syntactic levels, that render Pessoa a signal *poeta concreto*.

Pessoa, Concrete Influence and Muse

The concrete poets created a precursor out of Pessoa—Pessoa *concreto*—whose materialization of the Portuguese language they linked to their own project of concretizing the sign. But if Haroldo, Augusto and Décio, in effect, changed the way we read Pessoa, Pessoa, in turn, influenced what and how the concrete poets wrote.

Consider the opening of the title poem of Augusto's first book of poetry, *O rei menos o reino* (1951) [The King Minus the Kingdom]:

Onde a Angústia roendo um não de pedra
Digere sem saber o braço esquerdo,
Me situo lavrando este deserto
De areia areia arena céu e areia.

Este é o reino do rei que não tem reino
E que - se algo o tocar - desfaz-se em pedra.
Esta é a pedra feroz que se faz gente
- Por milagre? de mão e palma e pele.

Este é o reino este é o rei e eu sou ambos.
Soberano de mim: O-que-fui-feito,
Solitário sem sol ou solo em guerra
Comigo e contra mim e entre os meus dedos.

Por isso minha voz esconde outra
Que em suas dobras desenvolve outra

⁶ Décio defined the poet as "um designer da linguagem" (qtd. in CAMPOS, 1986: 199. By this, he meant two things: the poet is akin to a constructivist; the poet operates on what Saussure referred to as *langue* (language as a sign-system), as opposed to *langage* (human speech).

Onde em forma de som perdeu-se o Canto
Que eu sei Aonde mas não ouço ouvir.

(CAMPOS and PIGNATARI, 2016)

[Where Anguish always gnawing a no of pure rock
Digests, unknowing, its limp-hanging limb alive,
I find a place for myself by tilling this desert
Of sand more sand yet a field of sky and sand.

This the kingdom of a king who has no kingdom
And which – were something to touch it – would crumble to stones.
This the stone so fierce that it is now people
– Miraculously? of hand and palm and skin.

This the kingdom with king, and I am both.
Sovereign of myself: What-I-was-made,
Alone in a sunless zone or alone in war
Yet with me, against me, between my very fingers.

That's why my voice now hides the voice of another
Which hides in its folds the developing voice of that other
Where in the body of sound the Song was lost
Whither I know but can hardly incline to hear.]

The decasyllables, end-stopped lines and organization into quatrains mark Augusto's origins in the conventional versification that he would change in *Poetamenos* (1953) [Poetminus] for structural arrangement, the destruction of syntax and the disarticulation of words. At the same time, the paranomasia ("areia areia arena céu e areia"; "reino do rei que não tem reino"; "Solitário sem sol ou solo"; "ouço ouvir"), substantivization ("um não de pedra") and (thematic) foregrounding of the phonetic ("em forma de som perdeu-se o Canto") anticipate the aforementioned series of poems in colors (which function as directions for reading and to designate word themes), intended for both eye and ear, and considered the first example of concrete poetry in Brazil (SOLT, 1968). The themes of disquiet ("Angústia"), destitution ("O rei menos o reino"), alterity ("minha voz esconde outra"), together with the objectification of the self in poetry ("este é o rei"), recall Pessoa's own subject-matter. The wasteland imagery and dual valence accorded to poetry (lost Song, desert, stone, yet also kingdom and fierce stone) are also worth noting.

In another poem from the same book, "O Vivo," the poet, described as a "living dead" [vivo-morto], addresses himself thus: "You don't want to be more alive than dead | [. . .] | You don't want to be more dead than alive" (CAMPOS and PIGNATARI, 2016) [Não queiras ser mais vivo do que és morto | (. . .) | Não queiras ser mais morto do que és vivo]. These lines evoke those in Pessoa's poem "Noite," in which the speaker implores the "Night": "In lieu of breath, | Give me whatever

thing more mine than life, | Give me whatever thing more yours than death” [Dá-me por sorte | Qualquer coisa mais minha do que a vida, | Qualquer coisa mais tua do que a morte]; even if Augusto’s speaker lacks the latter’s death-of-consciousness wish (2018a: 17).



Fig. 2. Dias dias dias.

Décio’s “Eupoema” (1951) [Ipoem], a veritable *ars poetica* of depersonalization, owes a similar debt to Pessoa, whose “Autopsicografia” [Autopsychography] it recalls:

O lugar onde eu nasci nasceu-me
 num interstício de marfim,
 entre a clareza do início
 e a celeuma do fim.
 Eu jamais soube ler: meu olhar
 de errata a penas deslinda as feias
 fauces dos grifos e se refrata:
 onde se lê leia-se.
 Eu não sou quem escreve,
 mas sim o que escrevo:
 Algures Alguém
 são ecos do enlevo.

(CAMPOS and PIGNATARI, 2016)

[The place where I was born bore me
 in a crack in the ivory,
 between the clarity of the beginning
 and the clamor of the end.
 I never knew how to read: directly my gaze,
 wracked with errata, makes out the fickle
 fauces of the italics, it becomes refracted:
 where it reads, there it is read.
 I am not the one who writes,
 rather, that which is written:
 Anywhere Anyone
 are echoes of the ecstasy.]

The compound word in the title; the alliteration (“feias | fauces dos grifos e se refrata”); the chiasmus (se lê leia-se); the concept of the interval (interstício), involving a double negation (neither “celeuma” nor “fim”); the dispersal of the self (Algues Alguém; enlevo), reinforced by both the transitivized verb (nasceu-me), which transforms the speaker from the subject of the action to its object, and the impersonal verb (leia-se), which displaces the speaker as the agent of the action; the shift from the subjectivity of the poet (Eu não sou quem escreve) to the objectivity of the poem (mas sim o que escrevo); the very conflation of poet and poem (Eupoema), all attest to Pessoa’s influence. As well as echoing Pessoa’s interest in failure, whether metaphysical, sociocultural or artistic, the theme of failed eyesight (meu olhar | de errata) resonates with that of failed hearing in Augusto’s poem (não ouço ouvir)—themes that will be reversed in the *concretos*’ valorization of their verbivocovisual faculties. A shared anti-sentimentalism and anti-psychologism further binds Augusto’s and Décio’s poems to Pessoa’s. In “Eupoema,” the travails of reading, writing and speaking (fauces), like those of singing in “O rei menos o reino,” speak to the impoverished state of Brazilian poetry, which the concrete poets would come to attribute to the Generation of ’45, whom they accused of suffocating Modernist experimentalism (CAMPOS and CAMPOS, 1956). Both “Eupoema” and “O Rei Menos o Reino” begin with attention to place, an indefinite place little propitious to writing the kind of inventive poetry they were even then adumbrating.

These early poems suggest, as much in their content as in their form (and in their budding fusion of the two), shades of Pessoa. Of course, Augusto and Décio, along with Haroldo, would shortly venture onto the path of concrete poetry, leaving conventional verse behind. Nonetheless, the Brazilian trio would continue to engage, critically and creatively, with Pessoa over the course of their careers.

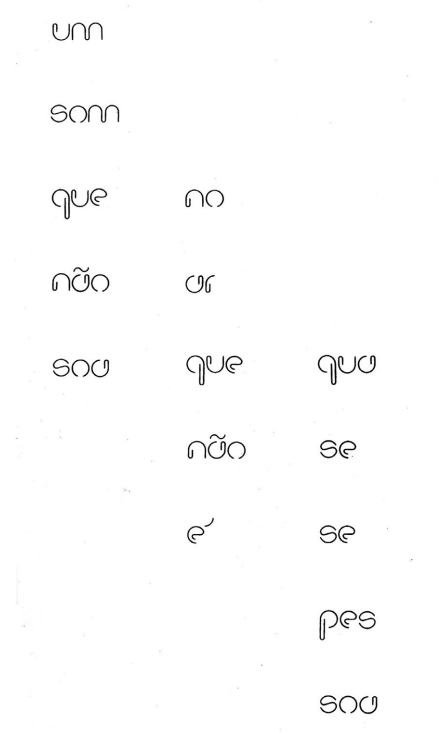


Fig. 3. Pessoa.

Take Augusto's 1981 homage, "Pessoa." This poem, published in 1985, consists of 15 syllables, arranged evenly into three columns, staggered on the page so that they also form five rows: "um som que não soa | no ar que não é | qua se se pes soa" [a sound that is soundless | in the air that is airless | almost pessoarizes/pessounds/becomes a person]. This proportionality reflects the Noigandres Group's emphasis on mathematical, as opposed to imitative (e.g., Apollinaire's *calligrammes*), forms of structuration. The poem is read column by column, that is, top to bottom, left to right. The disarticulation of Pessoa's name into three syllables yields a pun: a reflexive verb ("se pes soa") that perfectly captures that absorption of reality into dream, that ontological tension between being and non-being, that oxymoronic figure that governs so much of Pessoa's writing. For what is a thing that both is and is not ("um som que não soa | no ar que não é") but a thing that has been *pessoa-ized*? All the world, in the work of Pessoa, submits to this metaphysically destabilizing process, aptly christened by Augusto as *pessoar-se*.

The disintegration of "pessoa" into two syllables puns visually on Pessoa's penchant for depersonalization. The pervasive paranomasia rivets attention onto the sound of each syllable, as well as reinforces the poem's conceptual linkages. The use of a typography so streamlined that the letters, at first glance, resemble each other forces the reader to look at the words in order to comprehend them; the sleek font also echoes, by sight, the echoing of sense by sound. The columnar arrangement of the material offers a visual diagram of the poem's syntactic (and syllabic) symmetry, that is, the way it uses parallel structures to highlight

similarity in ideas or images. The concord of the two opening clauses (noun-relative pronoun-adverb-verb) provides a pleasing rhythm that calls readers' attention to the shared unreality (a Pessoaan theme) of sound and air. It is important to note that all of this meaning, or information, is communicated *structurally*, and that this communicational structure *is* the poem. Rearranged as verse, especially enjambed verse, the poem would shrink to an anecdote.

Pessoar-se characterizes what happens to Augusto's words as much as it describes what happens to the world in Pessoa. Augusto's words do not just "sound"; they *pessound*, that is, resound with the visual and semantic values they simultaneously bear. Alternatively, his words "become person[s]" and, in doing so, people the poem with visual and phonetic values, in addition to semantic ones. The punning on Pessoa's name is especially appropriate because Pessoa figures so prominently in Brazilian concrete poetry – as precursor, influence and muse.



Fig. 4. Conversograma.

Pessoa's presence surfaces again in Augusto's "Conversograma," an interactive poem included on the CDR that accompanies his book *Não* (2003). This "clip-poema," made with Macromedia Director, consists of a photomontage of Cesário Verde, Mayakovsky and Pessoa. Clicking the mouse over the icons precipitates a triologue of citations voiced by the three poets, at the same time that the images vary randomly among 256 colors. Pessoa's speech is adapted from the last stanza of his poem "Sorriso audível das folhas" ["Audible Smile of the Leaves"], a poem whose seven repetitions of *olhar / olhas / olha / olhando* strike the

concrete note. The lines run thus: “Estamos os três [“dois” in Pessoa’s poem] falando | o que não se conversou. | Isto acaba ou começou?” [The three of us are speaking | of what has not been discussed” | Does this end or did it begin?]. This “clip-poem” encapsulates Augusto’s longstanding aesthetic concerns: multimodality (visual, oral); structural dynamism (concomitant changes in speech and color); ideogrammic composition (the citations are juxtaposed rather than arranged linearly); creative translation; and continuity in relation to the past. It is worth noting that Augusto’s interest in multimedia aesthetics anticipates the advent of the kind of digital technology that made the clip-poem possible. The processes of citation, remediation and recontextualization distinguish this particular piece of creative assimilation from Augusto’s other productions in the field.

The forging of continuity with the past is noteworthy for several reasons. Augusto suggests that Pessoa and Verde (Álvaro de Campos’s and Alberto Caeiro’s “Mestre”), on the one hand, and a Russian Futurist on the other, who otherwise little resemble each other, have in common an Augusto-ish trait that without the author’s rich legacy we might never have noticed. Their commonality resides, of course, in their status as Poundian “inventors,” revolutionaries of poetic form.⁷ Precursor-creation is the real theme of “Conversograma,” as it is of so much of Augusto’s work. But that operation is inseparable from the critical mapping Augusto does here. In effect, “Conversograma” traces a global cartography of proto-, high and late modernism that disregards or negates the boundaries that separate periphery and center⁸ and connects Portuguese and Russian poets— together with the Brazilian Augusto—on their shared basis of revolutionary form.

Mayakovsky joined artistic to political revolution, of course. The Noigrandes Group quoted him to this effect in their 1961 post-scriptum to their program statement “plano piloto para poesia concreta” [Pilot Plan for Concrete Poetry]: “sem forma revolucionária não há arte revolucionária” [without revolutionary form there is no revolutionary art]. This raises the question of how closely Brazilian concrete discourse in the 1950s and 1960s aligned with the international postwar renewal of the historical avant-garde’s protest against “art as an institution” (BÜRGER, 1984: 22). The question cannot be dealt with adequately here. Suffice it to say that the Group’s discourse displays ambivalence toward the autonomy of the work of art in bourgeois society. On the one hand, their preference for metacommunication and for promoting the palpability of the sign, with its consequent deepening of the fundamental dichotomy of signs and objects, suggest a separation of art from the world. On the other hand, their likening of the concrete poem to “an object of consumption, integrated into everyday life” [um

⁷ “Inventors. Men who found a new process, or whose extant work gives us the first known example of a process” (POUND, 1991: 39).

⁸ I borrow this phrase from SALGADO (2014).

objeto de consumação, integrado na vida cotidiana], firmly locates art at the intersection of advertising, propaganda, entertainment and mass media. Augusto's poem "Brazilian 'Football,'" published in 1964 in the British press, which denounced the military regime with a play on the words "goal" and "goal," along with his poem "Greve" (1962), which puns on the words "greve" [strike] and "escreve" [write], demonstrate the concrete movement's political involvement. Haroldo's theorization of the "neo-baroque" [neo-barroco] "open work of art" [obra de arte aberta] has rich implications for the classic subordination of parts to the whole. Finally, the concrete poets' repeated affirmations of literary continuity stand in stark contrast to the neo-avant-garde's emphasis on rupture.

The point I am making about "Conversograma" is that its revolutionary overtones, together with the precursor-creation and literary cartography it engages in, give critical and political bite to Augusto's pastiche. This distinguishes the clip-poem from the kind of neutral, ahistorical pastiche that Fredric Jameson associates with postmodernism (1991: 17-18). Though it may appear to treat history as a museum of simulacra, "Conversograma," in fact, continues the high modernists' deep concern with connecting the literary present to the past. Indeed, Augusto resembles a Benjaminian collector in re-collecting literary history in accord with the cultural-political exigencies of his moment (cf. BENJAMIN, 1969).⁹ In this digitally animated conversation, three—and with Augusto, four—writers are "speaking | of what has not been discussed" or understood sufficiently in academia (at least at the time), in effect, the links between revolutionary form, art and politics, as well as the ways in which the ongoing translation, dissemination and creative assimilation of modernist modes of writing "overflow," in the words of one critic, "the models of a world literature system or an 'international republic of letters' debated by comparatists today" (SALGADO, 2014: xiii-xiv). "Conversograma" neither "begin[s] nor end[s]" this important conversation but, through citation, remediation and recontextualization, contributes vitally to it.

Augusto's creative assimilation of the past, itself, takes inspiration from Pessoa. In *Anticrítico* (1986) Augusto writes on, and rewrites, a long line of inventors whose poems illustrate one or another of the author's formal concerns: Dante, John Donne, Gregório de Matos, Edward Fitzgerald, Emily Dickinson, Lewis Carroll, Verlaine, Mallarmé, Maranhão Sobrinho, Huidobro, Gironde, Stein, Cage. Augusto likens this genealogical project to Pessoa's invention of 136 fictitious authors:

se me perguntarem porque prefiro falar dos mortos
podendo falar dos vivos
respondo com fernando pessoa:
"com uma tal falta de gente coexistível
como há hoje

⁹ For a materialist perspective on collecting in Benjamin, cf. CRIMP (1993: 200-35).

que pode um homem de sensibilidade fazer
 senão inventar os seus amigos
 ou quando menos
 os seus companheiros de espírito?"

(1986: 179-80)

[if i were to be asked why i prefer to speak of the dead
 when i could speak of the living
 i would respond with fernando pessoa:
 "with such a lack of coexistible people
 as there is today
 what can a man of sensibility do
 but invent his friends
 or at least
 his spiritual companions?]

The book's chronological order reinforces what the concrete poets had long stressed, namely, their continuity in relation to the past, a genealogical attitude that links them to Joyce, Pound, Eliot and Pessoa. The inclusion of a Colonial Brazilian Baroque poet (Matos) and a Brazilian Symbolist (Sobrinho), along with João Cabral at the head of the book (prior to Dante), both roots the cosmopolitan Group in a regional context and recuperates these regional writers for world poetry as redefined in concrete terms. *Anticrítico* functions as a Poundian textbook and exhibit, much like *ABC of Reading*: an ideogram of excerpts, translations and commentary illustrating, through these direct examples, general ideas of what and how to read concretely. A work of "criticism via creative translation" ([c]rítica via tradução criativa), *Anticrítico* blurs the boundaries between those two genres and a third, poetry (10).

Translation, of course, formed a huge part of Concrete enterprise—Augusto reckons it two-thirds of his output—and the renovation of translation counts as one of the Group's largest contributions to Brazilian literature. Born of an increased awareness of the impossibility of recreating the original, their "transcrições" [transcreations] served as the perfect vehicle for assimilating world literature to concrete poetry (CAMPOS, 2015). They allowed Haroldo, Augusto and Décio the liberty to emphasize the verbivocovisual aspects of language, the fusion of which, from the beginning, they considered definitive of the concrete. Translation was the perfect means, then, for creating their precursors. Such precursor-creation was inseparable from the concrete poets' transcendence of "isms" and "transtemporal" understanding of poetry in terms of semiotic concretion. Brazilian concrete poetry thus shares with Pessoa's Sensationism, that "ism" that synthesizes all other "isms," a cosmopolitanism in time and space.

Augusto's homage continues in his latest book, *Outro* (2015), which brings together "intraduções" [intro / translations] and "outraduções" [outro / other / translations], visual poems created around fragments taken from foreign-language

and Lusophone authors, respectively. “Pessoares” visually remixes a fragment taken from *Livro*: “aérea a hora era uma ara onde orar” [of air, the hour was an altar whereat to pray]. The poem is dedicated to Bernardo Soares, semi-anagram of Fernando Pessoa. The title fuses their surnames and puns on *soar* [to produce a sound], *ar* [air] and *ara* [altar]. This ideogram-word forms the phonetic fulcrum on which the poem’s structural logic turns. The names are printed horizontally, one on top of the other, in the center. Both the title above and the fragment below are printed in rows of three letters each. The cruciform structure of the poem foregrounds—renders concrete—the phonemes repeated in the title, the names and the fragment. Looking at, and listening to, the phonemes, the reader gradually becomes aware that the poem’s title itself amounts to a semi-anagram of the fragment.

```

      p e s
      s o a
      r e s

    fernando pessoa
    fernando ressoa
    bernardo soares

      a é r
      e a a
      h o r
      a e r
      a u m
      a a r
      a o n
      d e o
      r a r
  
```

Fig. 5. *Pessoares*.

I conclude by discussing yet another homage, “Pessoandando” (1996) [Pessoambling], also a clip-poem, this one available on YouTube. Over a photomontage of Pessoa, arranged so as to suggest a moving figure, a voice intones three lines taken from *Livro do Desassossego*. The first line, “Sou uma placa fotografica prolixamente impressionavel” (PESSOA 2010: 1, 70) [I am a photographic plate verbosely impressionable], characterizes not only Bernardo Soares but also the endless susceptibility of literature to its own impressions via translation, citation, re-creation, remediation and recontextualization: aesthetic strategies that Augusto has mastered and deployed over the course of his seven-decade career. These verbose impressions effect a modification of our conception of the literary past; for example, the impressions produced by the concrete poets have taught us that where the language is materialized, there is concrete poetry. In the case of “Pessoandando,” digital media, not a photographic plate, makes possible both the impression of *Livro* that the clip-poem consists of and the impression it leaves upon Pessoa’s work.



Fig. 6. Passos em Lisboa / Anjos em Pessoa
[with Augusto dos Anjos], in *Outro*.

The last two lines of the voice-over come from this passage in *Livro*: “*Avanço lentamente, morto, e a minha visão ja não é minha, ja não é nada: é só a do animal humano que herdou, sem querer, a cultura grega, a ordem romana, a moral cristã e todas as mais ilusões que formam a civilização em que sinto. Onde estarão os vivos?*” (PESSOA 2010: I, 290-291; italics mine) [*I advance slowly, dead, and my vision is no longer mine, is now nothing: it is only that of the human animal who inherited, without his wanting to, Greek culture, Roman order, Christian morality and all the other illusions that form the civilization in which I feel. Where might the live ones be?*]. “In Brazil,” Haroldo, Augusto and Décio would resolutely reply. For, in concretizing the sign and the graphical space that surrounds it; organizing thematic material according to the ideogrammic method; mixing arts, genres, media, modes, languages and cultural registers; providing, with every poem, an object lesson in how to read literature; and fusing form and content, and time and space, into self-communicating structures that are yet continuous with the fabric of everyday life, the Brazilian concrete poets take their place alongside Pessoa in stripping language of its cultural encrustations (“illusions”), in the attempt to revivify “vision” and thereby prepare a utopia: a quintessential modernist enterprise.

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