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Charles A. Perrone

**From Noigandres to
“Milagre da Alegria”:
The Concrete Poets and
Contemporary Brazilian
Popular Music**

. . . do genuíno grão de alegria que
destrói o tédio—Waly Salomão

The most significant and influential trend in Brazilian avant-garde poetry since the 1950s has unquestionably been concrete poetry.¹ The impact of the literary concepts of Augusto de Campos, Haroldo de Campos, and Décio Pignatari—the trio of São Paulo writers originally known as the Noigandres group—is not limited to the literary arena. The concrete poets have had a major influence on poetic practice in Brazil, but they have made an impression on the arts in general through their poetry, translations, critical essays, and interdisciplinary activities. The present study examines connections between the concrete poets and Brazilian popular music (MPB).² The interrelations of the Noigandres group and MPB are explored on historical, biographical, and specific aesthetic levels with an eye to songs that reveal a concretist parentage.

The first discussion of affinities between concrete poetry and Brazilian popular music dates to 1960, when critic Brasil Rocha Brito incorporated observations by Augusto de Campos into the first interpretative essay about Bossa Nova. Commenting on outstanding compositions of that musical movement, Campos focused on two particularly noteworthy songs by Antônio Carlos Jobim and Newton Mendonça—“Desafinado” (“Out of Tune”) and “Samba de uma nota só” (“One-Note Samba”)—in which he perceived “a search for essentialization of the texts” and “a dialectical process similar to the one that the concrete poets defined as ‘isomorphism’ (the conflict of form and content in search of mutual identity).” Having shown close links between verbal and melodic-harmonic functions in these two classic songs, Campos concluded that, given the “critical intentionality” of some Bossa Nova lyrics, “they form a tendency that, in certain ways, . . . corresponds to manifestations of the poetic avant-garde, participating with it in a common cultural

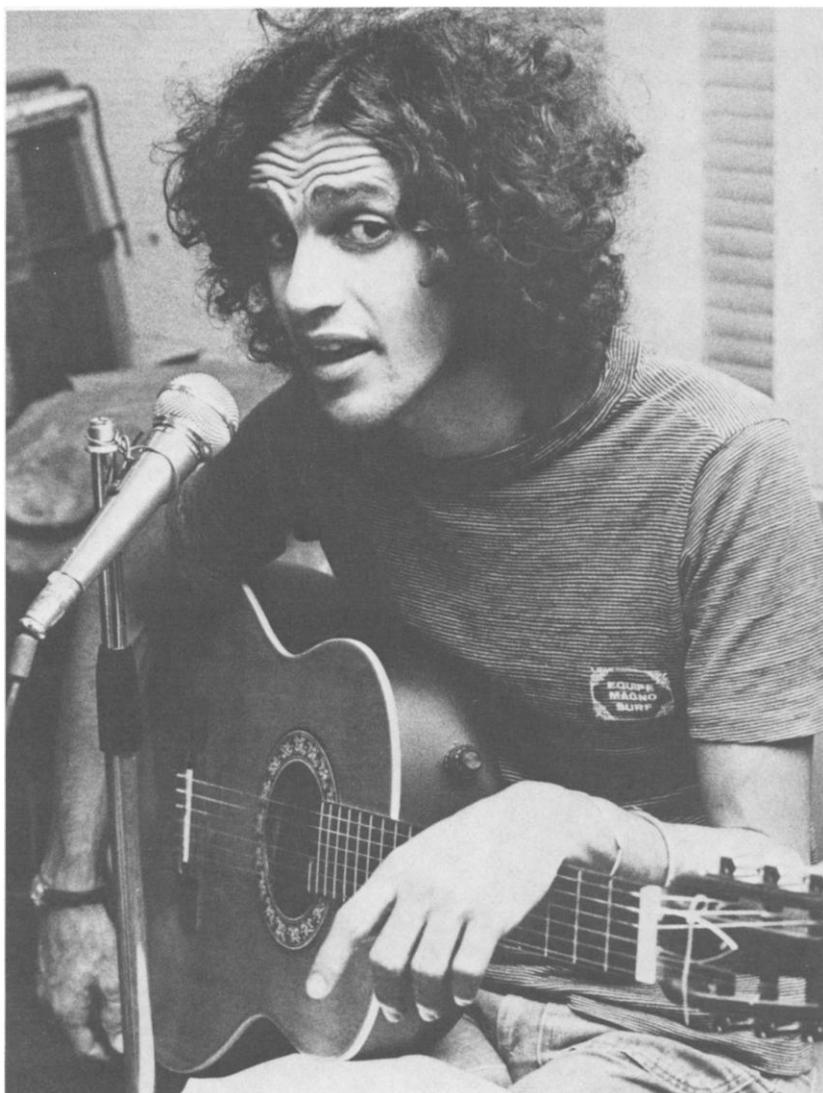
process.” Rocha Brito, in turn, held that other Bossa Nova lyrics deserved highlighting “for their synthesis and functionality,” even describing one lyric as “clearly influenced by the paths of concrete poetry.”³ Unfortunately, he did not transcribe the text to which he was referring in the body of his essay.

In the introduction to *Teoria da poesia concreta* (*Theory of Concrete Poetry*, 1965), Augusto de Campos considers the impact of his work with Haroldo de Campos, Décio Pignatari, and others, and makes a strong statement about the relationship between concrete poetry and national culture: “Its pervasive influence has been most surprising. Concrete poetry is present in everyday speech and sight. It is present in advertising texts, in the pagination and titling of newspapers, in the layout of books, in slogans on television, in the lyrics of *bossa nova*.”⁴

Although here he emphasizes verbal aspects of this contemporary musical tendency, this essayist of the Noigandres group could also have pointed out the modernization and sophistication of instrumental technique to show parallels between concretist research and textual realizations and the composition and performance of those Bossa Nova musicians most aware of their role as innovators. Still, beyond this general technical refinement and the abstract similarity between concretist “iso-



Caetano Veloso, Augusto de Campos, and Arrigo Barnabé



Caetano Veloso

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morphism” and that of Bossa Nova, it is difficult to establish links between the two artistic currents, until the emergence of the Tropicália movement (1967), when contact between the concrete poets and popular musicians becomes increasingly evident.⁵ The following citation from Gilberto Vasconcelos’s *Música popular de olho na fresta* (*Popular Music: Looking between the Lines*, 1977) illustrates the growth of rapport between concretism and MPB: “The connections between *Tropicália* and Concretism are widely recognized.”⁶

This rapport began in 1966 when Augusto de Campos praised the young Bahian songwriter Caetano Veloso and his song “Boa palavra” (“Good Word”) in a review of the second national Festival of Popular Music. Campos drew parallels between Veloso’s support of “evolution” in popular music and the aesthetic “deglutition” of Modernist poet Oswald de Andrade, one of the concrete poets’ prime inspirations.⁷ After the next song festival (October 1967), Augusto de Campos again spoke highly of young composers from Bahia. In a series of reviews, he called special attention to two songs performed at the festival: “Domingo no parque” (“Sunday at the Park”) by Gilberto Gil, and “Alegria, alegria” (“Joy, Joy”) by Caetano Veloso. The concrete poet-music critic found highly creative and inventive qualities in these two songs, and he applauded the “experimental opening” they represented. With respect to Veloso’s song, Campos held that the songwriter was expressing an implicit poetics and singing a note of challenge in the refrain, “por que não?” (why not?). In view of the techniques of montage and fragmentation in both songs, and the radical attitudes Gil and Veloso expressed in a much-publicized interview, Campos associated these composers with the Brazilian avant-garde, “especially with the postulates of Concrete Poetry” (*Balanço*, p. 155).

Caetano Veloso recalls that it was shortly after the third festival that Augusto de Campos sought him out for the first time. The author of “Alegria, alegria” reveals that the Campos brothers gave him their translations of Ezra Pound, Mayacovsky, and James Joyce, along with articles by Haroldo de Campos and Décio Pignatari about the work of Oswald de Andrade.⁸ It was in late 1967, then, that Veloso first had significant contact with the work of the Noigandres group—poems, criticism, and translations (“transcreations”) of the international avant-garde. Coincidentally, Oswald de Andrade’s iconoclastic play *O rei da vela* (*The Candle King*) was first staged at the same time; the wild theatrical presentation of this drama profoundly affected Veloso and gave new direction to his musical composition.⁹

Subsequent critical articles by Augusto de Campos emphasized the affinities between Oswald’s artistic “anthropophagy” and songs by Veloso and Gil—now leading the Tropicália movement. Celso Favaretto thor-

oroughly discusses this relationship, as well as theoretical and philosophical links between the Bahian musicians and the poets from São Paulo, in *Tropicália: alegoria alegria* (*Tropicália: Allegory Joy*). Emphasizing common artistic goals—critical revision of national culture, innovative spirit—rather than speaking in terms of direct influence, Favaretto clarifies Tropicália compositions’ revelation of “reduced use of procedures typical of concrete poetry (nondiscursive syntax, verbo-voco-visibility, verbal concision).”¹⁰ Augusto de Campos also responded to questions about links between the two groups. Before discussing points of contact, however, he offered a caveat: “But what fascinates and enthuses me about them is not so much their eventual coincidence with concrete poetry, but rather the capacity they have to do things different from those we have done and are doing, things that constitute original information even for us, who specialize in inventions” (p. 286).

In the Tropicália repertory, the only song that clearly pursues a concretist concept of composition is the *macumba* (voodoo)-rock “Batmacumba” (Gilberto Gil-Caetano Veloso):

batmacumbaiéié batmacumbaoba
 batmacumbaiéié batmacumbao
 batmacumbaiéié batmacumba
 batmacumbaiéié batmacum
 batmacumbaiéié batman
 batmacumbaiéié bat
 batmacumbaiéié ba
 batmacumbaiéié
 batmacumbaié
 batmacumba
 batmacum
 batman
 bat
 ba
 bat
 batman
 batmacum
 batmacumba
 batmacumbaié
 batmacumbaiéié
 batmacumbaiéié ba
 batmacumbaiéié bat
 batmacumbaiéié batman
 batmacumbaiéié batmacum
 batmacumbaiéié batmacumbao
 batmacumbaiéié batmacumbaoba

(On *Tropicália ou Panis et Circensis*, Philips R 765.040L, 1968)

The song has evoked much critical reaction. Augusto de Campos relates

the composition to literary battles of the 1920s: “Instead of the nationalist ‘*macumba* for tourists’ that Oswald condemned, it seems that the Bahians decided to create a ‘bat-*macumba* for futurists’” (*Balanço*, p. 287). Gerard Béhague discusses the verbal combinations in the text—“*bat*” (English “bat” and Portuguese “bate” for “hits,” as in striking a voodoo drum); “*Batman*”, “*macumba*”, “*oba*” (greeting of African origin), and “*iê-iê*” (Brazilian rock and roll)—and notes how the repetitive melodic line expands and contracts according to the visual configuration of the text.¹¹ Another critic has seen the form of a bat’s wings in this shape,¹² which also can be seen as a *k*, the phoneme (/k/) that divides the text into vertical quarters. In this song, then, varied cultural references enter into a superimposition of verbal, acoustic, and (implied) visual signs that breaks away from linear syntax and semantics, as in the bulk of concrete poetry.

Another echo of the Noigandres group in the Tropicália record is the title of the song “*Geléia geral*” (“General Jam”), by Gil and poet-lyricist Torquato Neto, which comes from Décio Pignatari’s introduction to *Revista Invenção 5*. With respect to these and other contemporary projects, Augusto de Campos emphasizes that Gil and Caetano “were already well on their way to nondiscursive language before becoming familiar with concrete poetry” and that “what exists is not the fruit of any contract or convention, but simply of a natural community of interests” (*Balanço*, pp. 288–289).

In the post-Tropicália phase, Caetano Veloso shows continuing interest in the aesthetic potential of verbal play based on phono-semantic twists and combinations. In the poem “*Acrilírico*” (“Acrylyrical”), recited over varying musical and sound effects, Haroldo de Campos perceives the “stimulating presence” of James Joyce, one of literature’s foremost experimenters.¹³ Veloso first became acquainted with Joyce through the Campos brothers’ translations of *Finnegan’s Wake*. In Veloso’s unusual sound-oriented text, verbal inventions like “*adolescidade*” (adolescence + city) and “*grandicidade*” (great + city) demonstrate an effective process of lexical and semantic fusion. But the title has the most suggestive density: “*acre*” (acid), “*lírico*” (lyrical), “*acrilírico*” (acry(d)lyrical). The final line is also perturbing to the traditional ear; “*Amaro*,” part of the name of Veloso’s home town, is twisted to form “*amargo*,” synonym of “*acre*.”

Olhar colírico
 Lírios plásticos do campo e do contracampo
 Telástico cinemascope
 Teu sorriso tudo isso
 Tudo ido e lido e lindo e vindo do
 Vivido na minha adolescidade
 Idade de pedra e paz
 Teu sorriso quieto no meu canto

ainda canto o ido o tido o dito
 o dado o consumido o consumado
 Ato do amor morto motor da saudade
 diluído na grandicidade idade de pedra
 Ainda canto quieto o que conheço
 Quero o que não mereço: o começo
 quero canto de vinda
 divindade do duro totem futuro total
 tal qual quero canto
 Por enquanto apenas mino o campo verde
 Acre e lírico sorvete
 Acrilírico Santo Amar(g)o da
 Purificação (On *Caetano Veloso*, Philips R 765.086L, 1969)

[Colyrical look / plastic lilies of the field and counterfield / Screenastic
 cinemascope / Your smile all that / All gone and read and becoming and
 coming from / what I lived in my adolescence / Age of stone and peace /
 Your quiet smile in my corner-song / I still sing what has gone, been had
 and said / given consumed and consummated / Act of love mortified motor
 of nostalgia / diluted in the greatcity age of stone / I still sing a still song
 of what I know / I want what I don't deserve: the beginning / I want
 songs of advent / divinity of the hard future total totem / as I want I sing
 / Meanwhile I just (under) mine the green field / Acrid and lyrical ice
 cream / Acrydlyrical Saint Bitter of the Purification]

This song appears on the last LP Veloso made before his exile to London. After his stay in England with Gilberto Gil and the release of the LP *Transa* (1972), the composer of “Tropicália” produced his most radical collection: *Araçá azul* (*Blue Cattley Guava*, Philips 6349 054, 1973). This work is the most experimental in the songwriter’s career, in both poetic and strictly musical terms: harmonies and melodies are juxtaposed with urban noise, Afro-Brazilian choruses and rhythms are mixed with electric guitars, nonmelodic texts are recited to avant-garde arrangements, nonsense sounds are prominent, extensive nondiscursive language is used.

As far as connections between some of these compositions and concrete poetry are concerned, Affonso Romano de Sant’Anna believes that “a text like ‘De palavra em Palavra’ [‘From Word to Word’] would reveal the direct influence of the avant-garde poets with whom Caetano learned the fundamentals of concretist poetry.” He adds that “what appears on the record is spoken text, an experiment similar to those that avant-garde musicians in São Paulo had already conducted with Brazilian concretist texts” (*Música popular*, p. 256). The experiments to which this critic refers include the vocal group Ars Viva’s 1956–1957 performances of several poems by Augusto de Campos, Rogério Duprat’s 1961 setting of Décio Pignatari’s “organismo” (“organism”), and Gil-

berto Mendes’s 1963 compositions using Pignatari’s “movimento” (“movement”) and Haroldo de Campos’s “nascemorre” (“birthdeath”). In these cases, however, we are outside of the field of popular music, strictly speaking.

In any case, it is worth noting that Veloso’s poem-for-performance was expressly “inspired by and dedicated to Augusto de Campos” (LP insert). Moreover, there are certain similarities between “De palavra em palavra” and the following text by Augusto de Campos:

com
som

can
tem

con
tém

ten
são

tam
bem

tom
bem

sem
som

som
mar
amarelanil
maré
 anilina
amaranilanilinalinarama
som
mar
 silêncio
nãõ
som

Lexical key: *som* = sound, *mar* = sea, *amarelanil* = yellow + anile, *maré* = tide, *anilina* = aniline, *silêncio* = silence, *nãõ* = no¹⁴

Several elements distinguish Veloso’s text from its concretist prede-

cessor: accumulative, chromatic and phono-semantic effects that eventually produce the name of a beach in Bahia (Amaralina), and the palindrome at poem's center. But the two texts share tension between sound and silence, distribution of word pairs, and general visual arrangement. Unlike other experimental popular musical pieces of the period, whose actual performance must guide their transcription, the written form of this example from Veloso's repertory is established on the sound recording's lyrics sheet.

Another notable track on *Araçá azul* is "Júlia/Moreno." This opaque song can be associated with concrete poetry because of its structure and nondiscursive language.

uma talvez júlia
 uma talvez júlia não
 uma talvez júlia não tem
 uma talvez júlia não tem nada
 uma talvez júlia não tem nada a ver
 uma talvez júlia não tem nada a ver com isso
 uma júlia
 um quiçá moreno
 um quiçá moreno nem
 um quiçá moreno nem vai
 um quiçá moreno nem vai querer
 um quiçá moreno nem vai querer saber
 um quiçá moreno nem vai querer saber qual era
 um moreno

[a maybe Julia-has-nothing-to do-with this / a perhaps Moreno won't-even-want-to know-what the story was]

If only two selections on this album overtly show relationships with the Noigandres group, it is instructive to cite the following from the best critique of *Araçá azul*: "The whole record is an implicit homage to Oswald, Sousândrade, and the concrete poets."¹⁵

In 1973 Caetano Veloso and Pedro Novis coauthored the "concrete rock" "Relance" ("Glance"), whose lyric is reminiscent of Haroldo de Campos's "*nascemorre*." Both music and song text are symmetrical constructions based on a system of repetition. The text comprises a series of commands, each of which is repeated with the addition of the prefix *re-*, a technique that leads to significant semantic differences.

se
nasce
morre nasce
morre nasce morre

renasce remorre renasce
remorre renasce
remorre

re **re**
desnasce
desmorre desnasce
desmorre desnasce desmorre

nascemorrenasce
morrenasce
morre
se

In the early seventies, Augusto de Campos had continual contact with popular musical figures who were concerned with experimental expression. He wrote provocative liner notes for the first two LPs of the samba-rock ensemble Novos Baianos (New Bahians): *É ferro na boneca* (RGE XRLP 5340, 1970) and *Acabou chorare* (SSIG 6004, 1972). Campos's presence here illustrates his involvement in, and understanding of, new currents in Brazilian popular music. His graphic poem "Viva Vaia" ("Long Live the Boos", 1972) was dedicated to Caetano Veloso and inspired, to a great degree, by Veloso's courageous and intelligent response to the howls of the audience at the Third International Song Festival in São Paulo (1968) when the young songwriter presented the song "É proibido Proibir" ("Prohibiting Prohibited"). In addition to "Viva vaia," Campos published in *Balanço da bossa e outras bossas* an elegy to the deceased Torquato Neto and a collage of quotations, musical notations, drawings, and original texts—"João GilBERTo / Antônio WeBERn"—which constituted a salute to avant-garde music and to the innovative role of João Gilberto in MPB. In 1973 Campos edited a "fractured" lyric with double meanings for an unusual composition by Tom Zé, "Cademar":

O ô cadê mar ô ô cadê	
O ô ô cadê <i>mar</i>	[Oh where's Mar- (sea)
<i>ia</i> que não vem	-ia? (she was going,
O ô cadê mar ô ô cadê	she's not coming)
O ô ô cadê <i>ma</i>	Where's Ma-
<i>ria</i> que não vem	-ria (laugh!) she's not coming]

(On Tom Zé, *Todos os olhos*, Continental SLP 10121)

The cover of this album also has a reproduction of one of Campos’s “popcretos”: the photographic montage “Olho por olho” (“Eye for Eye”). Tom Zé’s next LP includes a declamation and transcription of Campos’s trilingual poem “cidade-cité-city,” “the first concrete poem to appear on a record on the commercial circuit” (*Balanço*, pp. 345, 337).

More evidence that the spheres of Brazilian popular music and concrete poetry share common ground is a project of a songwriter from the state of Ceará: Belchior. He set out to make an entire album of settings of texts by the group of poets that began as Noigandres. On his first LP (Chantecler 2-08-404-039, 1973), Belchior presented four of his compositions in a concretist tenor. The most important of these is “mote e glosa” (“burden and gloss”), the text of which appears on the jacket and forms the initials *hn* (*homem nordestino* [Northeastern man]). Moreover, the song insists on the theme of novelty/invention in performance through repetitions of the phrase “é o novo” (what’s new).

In 1972 songwriter Walter Franco produced a novelty unparalleled in Brazilian popular music: “Cabeça” (“Head”). The composition is a revolutionary montage of *paroles en liberté* shouted over a barrage of sound phenomena. Augusto de Campos accepted the challenge of writing an English version of the text.¹⁷ The text’s graphic disposition reveals similarities with “Batmacumba” and “Júlia Moreno,” although the actual recorded performance does not allow for easy transcription because it is entirely nonlinear and virtually chaotic. Another composition by Walter Franco can be concretely associated with the poetic avant-garde of São Paulo: “Mamãe d’água” (“Water Mother”), whose text appeared in a journal of semiotic art.

When he released his third LP, Franco dedicated the enigmatic “Berceuse dos elefantes” (“Elephants’ Cradle Song”) to Augusto de Campos and his wife: “Gostas/dos elefantes/muito mais do que de mim/Eles são tão pacientes/com seus dentes de marfim” [“You like/the elephants/much more than me/They are so patient/with their ivory teeth”] (on *Respire fundo*, CBS Epic 144243, 1978).

Other musicians have paid homage to Augusto de Campos by recording his poems. Caetano Veloso took “Dias Dias” [“Days Days”] from a collection of chromatic poems and did “an incredible oralization for several voices, placing the poem within ‘Volta’ [“Come Back”] by Lupicínio Rodrigues, Webernized on the electric piano with exchanges of timbres and dynamic touches” (*Balanço*, p. 345). In the opinion of one specialist, Veloso mixed the voices in the poem according to the polychromatic character of the original text.¹⁹ Integrating the poem into a song by Rodrigues is significant, because Campos had been critically

reassessing this composer from the state of Rio Grande do Sul since the sixties.²⁰ In 1975 Veloso also created a suggestive musical atmosphere for the poetico-graphic work “Pulsar.” A 45-rpm record of these two settings comes with the volume of Augusto de Campos’s collected poems.²¹

lara eu
 lara eu te amo
 lara eu te amo muito
 lara eu te amo muito mais
 lara eu te amo muito mais agora
 lara eu te amo muito mas agora é tarde
 lara eu te amo muito mas agora é tarde eu vou
 lara eu te amo muito mas agora é tarde eu vou dormir
 lara eu te amo muito mas agora é tarde eu vou
 lara eu te amo muito mas agora é tarde
 lara eu te amo muito mais agora
 lara eu te amo muito mais
 lara eu te amo muito
 lara eu te amo
 lara eu

The versatile artist Marcus Vinícius (poet, playwright, songwriter, producer) set another of Campos’s polychromatic poems, “Lygia Fingers,” to music for the 1976 LP *Trem dos condenados* (*Train of the Condemned*, Discos Marcus Pereira MPA 9351). Certain preoccupations of the concretists are evident in the composer’s commentary on his own songs: “They have some Weberian intentions too—concision, economy, synthesis. ‘GRR’ is a song with tonal/atonal alternations . . . its words are constructed on the basis of alliterative effects with the phoneme ‘gr’” (jacket of *Trem dos condenados*).

A telling allusion to the concrete poets occurs in the song “Talismã” (“Talisman”), with lyrics by the poet Waly Salomão and music by Caetano Veloso (on Maria Bethânia, *Talismã*, Philips 6328 302, 1979). The epigraph to the present study is extracted from this song. The line is derived from Augusto de Campos’s Portuguese rendering of a celebrated Provençal poem in which the mysterious word “*noigandres*” appears.²²

Returning to the impression that concrete poetry has made on Caetano Veloso’s compositions, one must take into account his album *Jóia* (*Jewel*) (Philips 6349 132, 1975). Here, there are at least three songs that show the continuity of the aesthetic affinities between this songwriter’s and the

concrete poets’ work. The fundamental technique of the song “*Asa*” (“*Wing*”) is reiteration of the word *pássaro* (bird) supported by an unaltered rhythmic pulse. Thus, the song can be associated with concrete poems governed by a single lexical item, for example, “*terra*” (“*earth*”) by Pignatari and “*forma*” (“*form*”) by José Lino Grunewald. On another count, the careful phono-semantic play in the text of “*Asa*” is characteristic of concrete poetry, as is the song’s nondiscursive structure.

Pássaro um	[Bird one
pássaro pairando um	perching one
pássaro momento um	moment one
pássaro ar	air
pássaro impar	uneven
parou pousa	poses
parou repousa	reposes
pássaro som	sound
pássaro parado um	stopped one
pássaro silêncio um	silence one
pássaro ir (ir)	to go
pássaro ritmo (ritmo)	rhythm
passa voou	passes flew
passa avoou	passes flew
pássaro par	even
pássaro par	pair]

The impact of “*Tudo tudo tudo*” (“*Everything*”) also depends on rhythmic fixity, in this case, clapping hands. The textual constituents *mar* and *tudo* contrast with the infinitives *comer* and *dormir* to create a strange and abstract juxtaposition of life and death, as in Haroldo de Campos’s “*nascemorre*.”

mmmmmmmmmm	[sssssssss
mmmmmmmmmm	sssssssss
mmmmmmmmmar	sssssssea
Tudo comer	To eat everything
Tudo dormir	To sleep everything
Tudo no fundo do mar	Everything at the bottom of the sea]

(*Alegria alegria*, pp. 159, 161)

branco branco branco branco
vermelho
estanco vermelho
espelho vermelho
estanco branco

Those familiar with “branco . . . ” (“blank white . . . ”), also by Haroldo de Campos, will not fail to hear echoes of that poem in Veloso’s “Lua lua lua” (“Moon moon moon”).

lua lua lua	[moon moon moon
por um momento	for a moment
meu canto contigo compactua	my song makes a com-compact with you
e o mesmo vento	and the very wind
canta-se compacto no tempo	sings itself compact in time
estanca	stops
branca branca branca branca	white white white white
a minha a nossa voz a-tua	my our (your) voice (acts)
sendo silêncio	being silence
meu canto não tem nada a ver	my song has nothing to do
com a lua	with the moon]

In the song text, enunciated with special care when recorded, the songwriter combines words to create a neologism (“compactuar, to compact” plus “to make a pact,” third line) whose functions encompass rhyme, relation with the possessive pronoun, and general semantic condensation. There is a multiplicity of associations between textual elements, as is frequent in the best concrete poetry. These selections from the *Jóia* album clearly demonstrate the presence of concretist tendencies in Veloso’s composition of the mid-seventies.

Although since *Jóia* Veloso has not produced songs that are directly identifiable with concretist technique, he has continued cultivating personal friendships with the concrete poets and maintains aesthetic affini-

ties. The album *Muito* (Philips 6349 382, 1978) includes the long retrospective lyric song “Sampa” (the composer’s nickname for São Paulo; Sampa sounds almost like samba). In this song, Veloso refers to the importance of the concrete poets in his artistic career.

. . . é que quando eu cheguei por aqui eu nada entendi
da dura poesia concreta de tuas esquinas . . .
da feia fumaça que sobe apagando as estrelas
eu vejo surgir os teus poetas de campos e espaços . . .
e os novos baianos te podem curtir numa boa.

[when I arrived here I didn’t understand anything
of the hard concrete poetry on your corners . . .
from the ugly smoke that rises erasing the stars
I see your poets of Campos (fields) and spaces . . .
and the New Bahians can groove on you just fine.]

On his next album—*Cinema transcendental* (Philips 6349 436, 1979)—Caetano Veloso includes the song “Elegia.” This selection is a musical setting by Péricles Cavalcanti of Augusto de Campos’s version of “Elegie: Going to Bed,” one of 17th-century poet John Donne’s finest erotic poems.²⁴ In such cases, it is important to remember that Haroldo and Augusto de Campos and Décio Pignatari have dedicated a great amount of time and talent to researching and translating (“transcreating”) the most inventive poetry of all epochs. Just as their translations of Joyce in the sixties stimulated the development of verbivocovisual processes in previous works by Veloso, a musical adaptation of a Portuguese version of erotic metaphysical English poetry offered Veloso new interpretative possibilities.

As far as his relationship with the concrete poets and the significance of this exposure are concerned, Veloso made a statement for his 1981 LP—*Outras palavras* (*Other Words*, Philips 6328 303)—which speaks for itself:

I detest some talk I heard from important people who say that my friendship with Augusto de Campos is a strategic move for cultural power whereby I disseminate the unmarketable avant-garde from São Paulo and Augusto intellectually legitimates my irresponsible commercial production. That’s the argument of envy and paranoia of those who work in the mass-entertainment industry but pretend to write the definitive poem because deep down they want to be despotic emperors. “Outras palavras” [the title track] is also the fruit of old readings of the São Paulo translations of Joyce’s *Finnegan’s Wake* and of “Jaguardarte” [Augusto de Campos’s translation of Lewis Carroll’s “Jabberwocky”], but also of a recent con-

versation I had with Haroldo de Campos . . . Augusto understood what I'm into and he understood very early on. Everything else is idle chatter. (Press release and liner notes)

m i l a g r e
a
l
e
g r
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a

With respect to “Jaguardarte,” Veloso is not the only one to express musical interest in this marvelous re-creation. The female vocalist Tetê Espíndola recorded the first strophe of the poem, set to music by the “popular-erudite” composer Arrigo Barnabé in an appropriately playful and anticonventional style. Another young performer, Tiago Araripe, recorded “Asa linda” (“Pretty Wing”), Campos’s version of Jimi Hendrix’s “Little Wing.” Araripe has also coauthored two compositions with Décio Pignatari: “Teu coração bate, o meu apanha” (“Your Heart Beats, Mine Gets Beat,” 1974), and “Drácula” (1975). Vocalist Passosca, in turn has written music for and recorded “Num barraco pre-

cário," Augusto de Campos's partial translation of Ezra Pound's "Hugh Selwyn Mauberly." One of the concrete poet's more celebrated versions appears on an album by the experimental vocalist Eliete Negreiros, who sings his Portuguese re-creation of Song #8 from Arnold Schoenberg's "Pierrot Lunaire."²⁵ All of these Brazilian artists participated in a fitting radio-television homage to Augusto de Campos, performing his versions and musical settings of his poems/translations.²⁶

The "heroic phase" of concrete poetry may have passed, but the influence and creativity of the three leading figures, especially Augusto de Campos, are still evident in the field of Brazilian popular music. Décio Pignatari declared enthusiastically in 1956 that concrete poetry heralded "a general art of language, advertising, the press, radio, television, cinema, a popular art."²⁷ Should it be surprising, twenty-five years later, that the text with which I conclude be employed as a promotional press release for the new record of an outstanding artist of contemporary Brazilian popular music?

Notes

1. I have assumed a basic familiarity with Brazilian concrete poetry. English-language readers nonconversant with this topic who wish to obtain an introduction to the theory and practice of concrete poetry are referred to *Concrete Poetry—A World View*, Mary Ellen Solt, ed. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1970), esp. pp. 71–72, for an English version of the "pilot plan" of Brazilian concrete poetry; Jon M. Tolman, "The Context of a Vanguard: Towards a Definition of Concrete Poetry," in *Poetics Today* 3, no. 3 (Summer 1982): 149–166; and in this same issue, Claus Clüver, "Reflections on Verbivocovisual Ideograms," pp. 137–148, and Tolman's translations of three representative essays by the Brazilian concretists, pp. 167–195. See also *An Anthology of Concrete Poetry*, Emmet Williams, ed. (New York: Something Else Press, 1967); John Nist, "Brazilian Concretism," *Hispania* 42, no. 4 (1964); Douglas Thompson, "Pound and Brazilian Concretism," *Paideuma* 6, no. 3 (Winter 1977):279–294; Haroldo de Campos, "Structuralism and Semiotics in Brazil: Retrospect/Prospect," *Dispositio* 3, nos. 7–8 (Summer 1978):175–187; Jon Tolman, ed. and intro., "Brazilian Concrete Poetry," *San Marcos Review* 2, no. 2 (Fall 1979):26–35; "A Small Anthology of Contempo-

- rary Lusophone Poets (Some Concrete Examples),” *World Literature Today* 53, no. 1 (Winter 1979): 63–68; and other articles cited below.
2. A basic knowledge of Brazilian popular music since 1960 is also assumed. Readers seeking working fundamentals and specifics should consult Gerard Béhague, “Bossa and Bossas—Recent Changes in Brazilian Urban Popular Music,” *Ethnomusicology* 17, no. 2 (May 1973):209–233, with discography and translated song texts; and his “Brazilian Musical Values of the 1960s and 1970s—Popular Urban Music from Bossa Nova to Tropicália,” *Journal of Popular Culture* 13, no. 3 (Winter 1980):437–452, for an updated account.
 3. Rocha Brito’s study originally appeared in *O Correio Paulistano*, 10–23 and 11–6 to 20, 1960. For a slightly expanded version, see Brasil Rocha Brito, “Bossa Nova,” in Augusto de Campos, ed., *Balanço da bossa e outras bossas* (São Paulo: Perspectiva, 1978), pp. 38–39; this is a reprint of the second, expanded edition of *Balanço da bossa* (1968). Subsequent references to *Balanço* in the text or notes are to this reprint edition, [articles by Augusto de Campos himself]. Except where noted, all translations mine.
 4. Augusto de Campos, Haroldo de Campos, Décio Pignatari, *Teoria da poesia concreta*, 2d ed. (São Paulo: Livraria Duas Cidades, 1975), p. 7, translated by Jon Tolman. American publishers have not yet published Tolman’s translation of the entire book.
 5. Albert Bork discussed aspects of this relationship at the Kentucky Foreign Language Conference of 1973. He included many of the poems and songs discussed in this paper in the “Augusto de Campos Birthday Show” on KUT FM-Radio, Austin, Texas, 12 February 1982.
 6. Gilberto Vasconcelos, *Música popular: de olha na fresta* (Rio de Janeiro: Graal, 1977), p. 18.
 7. Augusto de Campos, “Boa palavra sobre a música popular,” *Correio da Manhã*, 10– 14–66, reproduced in *Balanço*, p. 59–66. Campos refers to Veloso’s contribution to a round-table discussion in *Revista de Civilização Brasileira*, no. 7 (May 1966).
 8. Caetano Veloso, *Alegria, alegria*, Waly Salomão, ed. (Rio de Janeiro: Pedra Q. Ronca, [1977]), p. 119. From an interview with Hamilton Almeida.
 9. “Conversa com Caetano Veloso,” in *Balanço*, p. 204. Veloso recorded a poem by Oswald de Andrade on his *Jóia* LP, cited below.
 10. Celso Favaretto, *Tropicália alegoria alegria* (São Paulo: Kairós, 1979), p. 30. See first three chapters.

11. See Béhague, "Bossa and Bossas," pp. 217–218, for a transcription of the text. A full account of *macumba* vocabulary as it relates to the song is given by Virginia Maria Antunes de Jesús, "Jogo com as palavras," *De Signos*, no. 4 (1977?), journal of the PUC-São Paulo.
12. Affonso Romano de Sant'Anna, *Música popular e moderna poesia brasileira* (Petrópolis: Vozes, 1978), p. 258.
13. Haroldo de Campos, "Sanscreed Latinized: The Wake in Brazil and Hispanic America," *Tri Quarterly*, no. 38 (Winter 1977):60. See *Balanço*, pp. 291–292, for additional comments on the cited song. It should be noted that the original version of the song included one more twist: the word "*purificação*" (purification) became "*putrificação*" (putrefaction), making the notion of bitterness even stronger.
14. *Teoria da poesia concreta*, p. 69. See Tolman translation in *Poetics Today*, p. 195.
15. Antônio Risério Filho, "O nome mais belo do medo," in *Minas Gerais Suplemento Literário* 8, no. 360 (21 July 1973):4–5.
16. *Teoria da poesia concreta*, p. 57. See translation by Fred Ellison in forthcoming special Brazilian issue of *Latin American Literary Review* (1986).
17. See *Balanço*, p. 311. First-place entry in the VII International Song Festival, Rio de Janeiro; recorded on *Ou não*, Continental SLP 10095, 1973.
18. Leonora de Barros et al., eds., *Poesia em G* (São Paulo: Edições Greve, 1975); recording: *Revolver*, Continental 1-01-404-118, 1975.
19. Claus Clüver, "*Klangfarbenmelodie* in Polychromatic Poems: A. von Webern and A. de Campos," *Comparative Literature Studies* 18, no. 3 (September 1981): 393.
20. See *Balanço*, pp. 219–251. Gal Costa recorded "Volta" with "Relance."
21. Augusto de Campos, *Poesia 1949–1979* (São Paulo: Livraria Duas Cidades, 1979). Also in the "art box" by Augusto de Campos and Julio Plaza, *Caixa freta (Black Box)* (São Paulo: Edições Invenção, 1975). Caetano Veloso also recorded "Pulsar" on *Velô* (Philips 824 024 1, 1984). On the lyrics sheet of this LP there is a reprint of the original poem. In the "samba-rap" "Língua," Veloso again refers to concrete poetry.
22. The final line to a song by Arnaut Daniel translated by Campos reads, "O grão de alegria e o olor de noigandres" (The grain of joy and the smell of *noigandres*), in *Verso reverso controverso (Verse Reverse Controverse)* (São Paulo: Perspectiva, 1978), p. 52. In a later note,

- Campos renders the mysterious word as “livre de tédio” (free of boredom). The concrete poets discovered the word in Pound’s *Cantos* and adopted it as the name of their first literary circle and publication.
23. *Teoria da poesia concreta*, p. 123. See Tolman’s translation in *Poetics Today*, p. 174.
 24. The translation appears in *Traduzir e trovar (Translators and Troubadors)* (Edições Papyrus, 1968), and in *Verso reverso*. Haroldo de Campos has written “Baladeta à moda toscana,” to be set to music by Péricles Cavalcanti; the lyric appears in *Folhetim (Folha de São Paulo)*, (23 October 1983), p. 12.
 25. “Jaguardarte” appeared in the “Invenção” arts section of the *Correio Paulistano* (23 October 1960), and in *Panorama do Finnegan’s Wake* (São Paulo: CEC, 1962), coauthored by Haroldo de Campos; musical version on *Pássaro na garganta (Bird in the Throat)*, Som da Gente SDG 012, 1982. “Asa Linda” on *Cabelos de Sansão (Sampson’s Hair)*, Lira Paulistana, LP 0002, 1982. “Drácula” was an entry in the 1978 Festival Abertura, sponsored by TV Globo. “Teu coração . . .” was recorded with Tom Zé (data unavailable). Passoca’s setting is of Campos’s translation of part I:10 (“Beneath the sagging roof”) of the original (*Personae*, 1926); recorded on *Sonora guarda (Sonorous Mist)*. Fragment of “Pierrot Lunaire” on *Outros sons (Other Sounds)*, VooLivre -EMI Odeon 31C 062420676, 1982. Campos’s version is part of a larger song, “Peiote” (music by Paulo Barnabé); his rendering is based on Otto Erich Hartleben’s German translation of the original French text by Albert Giraud.
 26. The program, “Fábrica do Som” (“Sound Factory”), aired on TV Cultura São Paulo and Radio Cultura AM on 17 September 1983. Same-day coverage by *Folha de São Paulo* (p. 49): Leão Serva, “Enfim a TV digere Augusto de Campos,” and Ruy Castro, “O poeta que faz as cabeças.” In the course of this paper, I have cited only those versions/poems set to music that are accessible via sound recordings. Many other texts written or translated by Campos have yet to be recorded but were performed during the television special. These include “Nuvoletta,” a fragment of *Finnegan’s Wake*, with music by Péricles Cavalcanti; “Fiz um poema sobre nada,” a rendering of “Feraí un vers de dreitz nien” by the troubador Guilhem de Peiteu, new music by Lívio Trajtenberg; “Canção de amor cantar eu vim,” with original melody by troubador Arnaut Daniel, arranged by Trajtenberg; “Introdução,” fragment of an original

troubador song by Bernart de Ventadorn with new music by Walter Franco; "Quem faz faz bem," Ode 274 of Confucius, set to music by Jards Macalé; and "Tudo está dito," original poem set to music by Arrigo Barnabé. This special performance provides abundant evidence of Augusto de Campos's constant involvement with music, the poetry of song of contemporary Brazil, and that of other epochs and lands.

Several of his versions of American songs have also been recorded. Gal Costa included his renderings of "Crazy He Calls Me" (Sigman-Russell) and "Solitude" (Ellington-de Lange- Mills) on *Caras e bocas (Faces and Mouths)*, Philips 6349 335, 1977). Zizi Possi recorded "Mamãe merece," a version of Billie Holiday's classic "God Bless the Child" (Philips 6A285 215, 1980).

27. *Teoria da poesia concreta*, p. 41, trans. Jon Tolman, originally in *ad arquitetura e decoração* 20 (November-December 1956).