

In the wake of the Wake

1000
 900
 800
 700
 600
 500
 400
 300
 200
 100
 0

Sheen is a short for Shenn...
 John for Jacob. A few are...
 He says that originally he was of
 respectable connections (— from among
 his cousins) but every hour to goodness
 more in the town knows that his best
 life will not stand behind...
 about. Putting truth and lies together
 some slight may be made at least the
 hybrid actually looked for being...
 it seems...
 I am...
 a hundred...
 5...
 a...
 himself...
 in...
 under the...
 when...
 a...
 one...
 said...
 next...
 smile...
 wine...
 said...
 at...
 I...
 when...
 when...
 another...
 when...
 another...
 of...
 for...

Sanscreed Latinized: The Wake in Brazil and Hispanic America

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Abstract: *Finnegans Wake* became known in Brazil due to the Movement of Concrete Poetry. Various technical dimensions used by these poets are mentioned here in comparison with Joyce's technique to show how the Irish writer has influenced Brazilian and Spanish-speaking writers.

The diffusion of *Finnegans Wake* in Brazil was largely due to the movement of Concrete Poetry, launched in the early fifties by Décio Pignatari and the brothers Augusto and Haroldo de Campos. The latter, by a favorable coincidence—"by a commodius vicus of recirculation"—were great-grandsons of an Irishman, Theobald Butler Browne; he had emigrated from Galway to Salvador, which is the capital of baroque Bahia, northeast of Brazil, and is also called the "Land of All Saints."

Their first articles and manifestoes concerned Concrete Poetry. (See "Poetry: Structure" and "Poetry: Ideogram," 1955, by A. de Campos; "Poetry and Paradise Lost" and "The Open Work of Art," 1955, by H. de Campos; "Concrete Art: Object and Objective," 1956, by D. Pignatari.) Joyce's work—*Finnegans Wake* in particular—was a fundamental point of departure and an obligatory term of reference (along with Mallarmé's *Un coup de dés* and Ezra Pound's *The Cantos*, as well as the "gestural" poetry of e. e. cummings) for the developing project of a

new poetry, corresponding to a new, "semiotic" textual conception and akin to new trends in music (serial and postserial) and in painting (post-Mondrian).

The "verbivocovisual" elements of Joyce's prose—the "montage word," regarded as a composite mosaic unit or a basic textual node ("silvamoonlyake," for instance)—were emphasized from the very beginning of the Concrete Poetry movement:

The Joycean "micro-macrocosm." which reaches its pinnacle in Finnegans Wake, is another excellent example of the problem we are discussing. The implacable novel-poem of Joyce succeeds too, in its own manner, as a feat of structure. Here counterpoint is moto perpetuo. The ideogram is obtained by superimposing words, true lexical montages. Its general infrastructure is "a circular design, of which every part is beginning, middle, and end" (cf. J. Campbell and H. M. Robinson). The scheme of the vicious circle is the link which joins Joyce and Mallarmé by means of a "commodius vicus of recirculation." Mallarmé's cycle in Un coup de dés is very similar to that of Vico reinvented by Joyce for Finnegans Wake. The common denominator, according to Robert Greer Cohn, for whom Mallarmé's poem has more in common with Finnegans Wake than with any other literary creation, would be the formula: unity, dualism, multiplicity, and again, unity. The circular construction common to both works is evident at first glance: The first sentence of Finnegans Wake continues the last, and the last words of Mallarmé's poem are also the first—"Toute Pensée émet un Coup de Dés."¹

Joyce is led to the microscopic world by the macroscopic, emphasizing detail—panorama/panaroma—to the point where a whole metaphoric cosmos is contained in a single word. This is why it can be said of Finnegans Wake that it retains the properties of a circle, of the equidistance of all points on it from the center. The work is porous to the reader, accessible from any of the places one chooses to approach it.²

Décio Pignatari, in his 1956 manifesto "New Poetry: Concrete," reshaped for programmatic purposes a Joycean leitmotif ("Tis optophone which ontophanes," *Finnegans Wake*, p. 13), with the simultaneous invocation of Dante ("... esto visibile parlare, / novello a noi perchè qui non si trova," *Purgatorio* X, 95):

*O olhouvido ouvê
(The careye seeshears).*

It is important to accent here a most significant fact. While several American and European scholars and critics were still insisting on considering Joyce's work (in particular *Finnegans Wake*) as a kind of dead end or blind alley, the Brazilian foun-

ders of the Concrete Poetry movement (the members of the 1952 Noigandres group) were using the *Wake* to stimulate and focus their poetical experiments—looking at it not as an apocalyptic finale of Western literature, but rather as an open ground, full of manifold possibilities, seminal.

Quite apart from the theory, they made use of some Joycean devices in their poetry. The montage word is an operative function, for instance, both in D. Pignatari's 1955 "Stèles pour vivre" and in H. de Campos' poems, printed in white ink on black paper, "O â mago do ô mega" ("The core of the omega"; *mago* in Portuguese means also "magician"), subtitled "a phenomenology of composition" (1955–1956). The same is true of A. de Campos' 1953 "poeta menos" ("poetminus") series, which draws its principles of composition from Anton Webern's "*Klangfarbenmelodie*" ("tonecolormelody").

Another dimension of the concrete poets' concern with *Finnegans Wake* is illustrated by the fragments of *Finnegans Wake* translated by A. de Campos and H. de Campos (together or separately) which began to appear in the Brazilian press in 1957.³ In 1962, both translators brought out the result of their work in book form, under the title *Panaroma do Finnegans Wake*. The 86-page volume consisted of the creative transposition ("transcreation") of eleven fragments (bilingual presentation), accompanied by interpretative comments. In its appendix, besides bibliography and a bio-bibliographic Joycean synthesis, was a companion translation, by A. de Campos, of Lewis Carroll's "Jabberwocky" (in Portuguese, "Jaguadarte")—the *cellulamater* of Joyce's scriptural art. The book also contained a Portuguese version of "Introduction to a Strange Subject" (from *A Skeleton Key to Finnegans Wake*) and a critical essay by A. de Campos, "O Lance de Dados do Finnegans Wake" ("The Throwing of Dice in *Finnegans Wake*"), dealing with David Hayman's 1956 *Joyce et Mallarmé*.⁴ At the time, the Brazilian *Panaroma* and the French selections from *Finnegans Wake* edited by André du Bouchet (1962) were the largest anthologies of translated fragments from Joyce's most challenging work.

It is worth mentioning that *Finnegans Wake* was rebaptized by its Brazilian translators as FINNICIUS REVEM: FIM + INICIO =

END + BEGINNING, onomastically resounding with an echo of both FINN and VINICIUS. The latter is a latinized Portuguese proper name which carries a hint of *vinho / vinum* = wine; RE (AGAIN) + VEM (COMES).

In 1962, Pignatari wrote one of his most ambitious “*stèles*”: No. 3, “Cuban stele.” It is a “mural poem,” a condensed epic pivoting about three typographically marked axes (phrases intermittently in Latin, English, and Portuguese), which reproduces bits of the fable “The Wolf and the Lamb” (“*Lupus et Agnus*”). The three “major syntagms” that semantically and visually govern the entire composition are the following:

LUP	US	STAB	AT SUPER
LUC	ROS	NA BA	SE DE AÇÚCAR
LAMB	USA	ÁGUA DE OUT	UBRO

In the first line: LUPUS STABAT SUPERIOR / US (U.S.) STAB AT SUPER; in the second line, in Portuguese: LUCROS NA BASE DE AÇÚCAR (profits derived from sugar, plus a hint of “nababo” / “nabob,” a wealthy luxury-loving person); in the third line: LAMB (corresponding to LUPUS in the first line): USA OUT (in Portuguese: USA/LAMBUSA ÁGUA DE OUTUBRO/[Lamb] uses water of October to splash [lupus].) Differentiated by typographical characters, other subjacent levels of discourse spread over the page—from indistinct chattering rumor (gulping down speech, utilitarian, enervating admonitions from father to refractory son) to a clarifying final statement in which the admonished young man rebuffs the “paternalistic” (“colonialist”) peroration and proclaims his struggle for new values. The poem unfolds in a double mood: subjective-existential and politico-satirical. This discussion is, of course, schematic and simplified with regard to the actual complexity and richness of the original text (published as a folder, a *dépliant*, in *Noigandres Anthology*, 1962).

Augusto de Campos, since his 1953 “poetminus” series, has written several works that are of interest from a Joycean perspective. A good example is the trilingual poem *cidade-city-cité* (1963)*—one enormous polysyllabic word, consisting of enchain- ed vocables ending with the suffix *-cidade* and conveying a

* See page 61

somewhat terrifying diorama of a modern "megalopolis" like São Paulo (whose "omnivoracity" emerges in the process). The "one-hundred-letter words," or "thunderclaps," of *Finnegans Wake* are called up by association. Another more explicit instance is the book-poem COLIDOUESCAPO (1971). Its title, a direct homage to Joyce, derives from the phrase, "Answer: A collideor-scape!" (*FW*, 143), taken as an epigraph. By combining its unbound pages (each of which contains a different segment of a word), the reader forms new, frequently "portmanteau," words. On the other hand, the reader's expectation is frustrated by words which could appear but in fact never do—words that "collide" or "escape" in a Joycean card game. To give a single combinatory example: EXISPERO (EXIS+PERO), hinting at EXISTO, ESPERO, EXASPERO, or, in English, I EXISPAIR (EXIS+PAIR), suggesting EXIST, DESPAIR, EXASPERATE, EXPIRE.

In 1963 I began to write my BOOK OF ESSAYS / GALAXIES. Its first fragments were published in numbers 4 (1964) and 5 (1966–1967) of the magazine *Invention (Invenção, S. Paulo)*. The book was conceived as an experiment in doing away with the limits between poetry and prose, and projecting the larger and more suitable concept of *text* (as a *corpus* of words with their textual potentials). A short introduction, "*Dois dedos de prosa sobre uma nova prosa*" ("Little chat on a new way of writing")—brought out in *Invenção* 4 under a Mallarmé epigraph, "*Tout au monde existe pour aboutir à un livre*"—outlines the project of the book. The *text* is defined as a "flux of signs," without punctuation marks or capital letters, flowing uninterruptedly across the page, as a *galactic* expansion. Each page, by itself, makes a "concretion," or autonomously coalescing body, interchangeable with any other page for reading purposes. There are "semantic vertebrae" which unify the whole, a kind of leitmotiv such as the idea of a book being like travel and travel like a book ("travel" here is taken in all its possible meanings, from a transoceanic geographic voyage to daily peripeteia, to a psychedelic "trip"). It constitutes a search for "language in its materiality," without "beginningmiddleend." "Exterior monologue" was the phrase I used to express this "materiality" "without psychology," that is, language that auto-

enunciates itself. The expression is first found in my 1964 introductory essay, and was employed in deliberate contradistinction to Molly Bloom's "interior monologue," to emphasize an intensified concentration on language by itself, as a kind of locutorial outer space. In one of the first fragments, the book, as its own interlocutor, auto-states itself as "*uma álealenda*" ("an alea-legend"), "*um milicoro em milicórdio*" ("a millichorus in millichord"), "*um caleidocamaleoscópio*" ("kaleidochameleonscope").⁵ At the time, the more innovative books in French were Michel Butor's *Mobile* (1962) and Maurice Roche's *Compact* (1966), the latter more audacious in its handling of language.⁶ Philippe Sollers' *Nombres* (1968) did not offer any noticeable innovation in terms of lexical texture. His first Joycean experiment was *Lois* (1972), parts of which began to appear in *Tel Quel* number 46 (Summer 1971).

In the larger context of Brazilian literature, one cannot help mentioning the work of Guimarães Rosa, especially *Grande Sertão: Veredas* (1956). (Its English translation, *The Devil to Pay in the Backlands*, 1963, didn't do justice to the original, missing almost completely its linguistic inventiveness.) Though some Brazilian critics refuse to admit this, the influence of various Joycean processes (from *Ulysses*, in particular) on Rosa's major novel is manifest. And his later work, as for instance the story "Meu Tio o Iauaretê (My Uncle the Jaguar," 1961) or the miscellaneous book *Tutaméia (Trifles*, 1967), derives some of its effects from *Finnegans Wake*, or at least from the 1962 Brazilian *Finnegans Wake* anthology.⁷

Recently Paulo Leminski, a young writer from Paraná (southern Brazil), brought out his first novel, *Catatau (Chitchat*, 1975). Influenced by Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* and its Brazilian translations, by Rosa's *Grande Sertão*, and by H. de Campos' *Book of Galaxies*, it is a wide-ranging monologue using Descartes (Renatus Cartesius) as soliloquist. The author pretends that Descartes was a member of the Dutch expedition commanded by the Prince of Nassau, who in 1636, with his army, invaded the northeastern coast of Brazil and settled down in Recife. While inspecting Brazilian flora and fauna through a glass, Cartesius smokes a miraculous herb (marijuana) and finds himself dissolving into a tropical delirium, conveyed through Joycean rhetoric.

Even in Brazilian popular music (in its sophisticated urban forms derived from the bossa nova), one finds the stimulating presence of *Finnegans Wake*. Having read the translations in *Panaroma*, the singer-composer Caetano Veloso (who lived for some time in London) introduced typical Joycean verbal games into his songs. One of these, for instance, is ACRILÍRICO, which suggests ACRE, LÍRICO, ACRÍLICO (ACRILYRIC = ACRID, LYRIC, ACRYLIC). It plays with the toponymic SANTO AMARO DA PURIFICAÇÃO, transformed into SANTO AMARGO DA PUTRIFICAÇÃO, by changing *Amaro* (the name of a patron saint) into *amargo* ("bitter"), and *Purificação* ("Purification") into *Pùtrificação* ("Putrefaction").

The impact of *Finnegans Wake* on Spanish-speaking countries has been more sporadic than systematic. We might mention, however, a forerunner, the Chilean poet Vicente Huidobro. His long poem *Altazor* (begun in 1919, finished in 1931) includes in Canto IV a fragment of great imaginative verbal power which anticipates Joycean influence. This fragment, in the author's own French version, was first published in 1930 in *transition*, in which Joyce's "Work in Progress" had been appearing since 1927. Consider, for instance, Huidobro's crisscross word transmutations, like *l'horitagne de la montazon* instead of *l'horizon de la montagne*, or *mandodelle* (*mandoline* + *hirondelle*), *lunaile* (*lune* + *aile*); or in Spanish, *Al horitaña de la montazonte, violondrina, lunala*.⁸

Julio Cortázar, the Argentine writer, continues this tendency in *Rayuela* (1963; translated as *Hopscotch*, 1966), where some passages are written in "gliglic," an invented amorous language. Of course, these are perfectly limited idiomatic "zones," conceived as lyrical moments, emerging autonomously from the book's always imaginative, metaphorical and / or ironical, but otherwise linguistically "normal," fluent prose. More radical from this viewpoint is *Los Tres Tristes Tigres* (1965; translated as *Three Trapped Tigers*, 1972), by the Cuban exile Cabrera Infante. Openly influenced by Joyce's *Ulysses* and by Joyce's forerunners, Laurence Sterne and Lewis Carroll, Cabrera is a master of *calembour* ("punning") and full of verbal wit. As Carlos Fuentes once put it, Cabrera writes in his own "Spanish language." But the clearest example of this sort of transformative language in Castilian is not by a Latin American, but

rather by a very gifted young Spanish writer living in Madrid and London, Julián Ríos. Excerpts from his unfinished novel *Larva* were published in number 25 of Octavio Paz' magazine *Plural* (October 1973).

Given the above, one may question whether the labyrinth-minded, paradox-loving old master Jorge Luís Borges was not being ironical, when, in an interview for the Italian magazine *Il Verri* (number 18, 1965), he called *Finnegans Wake* "a book entirely made up of compound-words." "In Spanish," he said, "this is not possible. It is possible in the German languages, maybe in Greek, a language I don't know. The principal virtue of Spanish, it seems to me, is a certain direct character. . . . Spanish does not lend itself to excessively complex verbal games. At least, in my opinion." But he quickly pointed to an exception in Quevedo's "efforts to introduce Latin effects into Spanish" (" . . . a most arduous task . . . Quevedo was a genius, a great poet"), strategically omitting any mention of the Daedalian "prince of darkness" of Spanish letters, Don Luís de Góngora y Argote."

Notes

1. From A. de Campos. "Poetry : Ideogram." The articles and manifestoes of D. Pignatari and A. and H. de Campos were collected in 1965 as *Teoria da Poesia Concreta/Textos Criticos e Manifestos, 1950-1960* (second ed. 1974; Editora Duas Cidades, São Paulo, Brazil). There is an English translation of *Teoria* by Jon Tolman, still unpublished in book form. The present quotation is from *Studies in the Twentieth Century* (ed. Stephen Goode), no. 7 (Spring 1971).

2. From H. de Campos. "The Open Work of Art." Jon Tolman's translation (unpublished).

3. "Panaroma in Portuguese: Joyce Translated," by H. de Campos, with the version of two exhibits. *Jornal do Brasil* (Rio de Janeiro), 15 September 1957; "James Joyce in Finneganscope," double page organized by A. de Campos, with an introductory text and six translated fragments. *Jornal do Brasil*, 22 December 1957.

4. Hayman's book, as well as R. Greer Cohn's 1951 *L'Oeuvre de Mallarmé—Un coup de dés*, were invaluable as sources of inspiration for the Noigandres group, both critics being in accord in emphasizing the heuristic, prospective values in Joyce's and Mallarmé's last works.

5. In 1966, fragments of *Galaxies*, translated into German and preceded by my introduction, "Zwei Finger Prosa über eine Prosa," were published as no. 25 of the ROT series, directed by Max Bense and Elisabeth Walther (*Versuchsbuch 'Galaxien*, Stuttgart). In 1970, through Maurice Roche, some French translations of *Galaxies* were included in the September issue of the Parisian magazine *Change* ("La poétique, la mémoire"), with "Deux doigts de prose sur une nouvelle prose" as introduction.

6. Cf. A. de Campos, "A Prosa é Mobile," *Suplemento Literário de O Estado de São Paulo*, 23 and 30 March 1963 (on Butor's *Mobile*); H. de Campos, "A pele da escritura," *loc. cit.*, 11 October and 1 November 1969 ("The skin of writing," on M. Roche's *Compact*, with a translation of its initial excerpt).

7. Guimarães Rosa was aware of the *Panorama* translations, and his correspondence with his Italian translator, Edoardo Bizzarri (*J. Guimarães Rosa—Correspondência com o tradutor italiano*, 1972, São Paulo), reveals his esteem for the critical writings of the concrete poets dedicated to his work. (In A. de Campos, "Um Lance de DES do Grande Sertão," 1959, and in H. de Campos, "A Linguagem do Iauaretê," 1962, there are several references to Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*; see also Pedro Xisto, A. and H. de Campos, *Guimarães Rosa em Três Dimensões*, 1970, São Paulo.)

8. Cf. A. de Campos, "Vicente Huidobro: Fragmentos de *Altazor*," *Suplemento do Jornal do Brasil*, Rio de Janeiro, 3 March 1957.

9. Borges is an admirer of Joyce. In his 1925 *Inquisiciones* there is an essay on *Ulysses*, and he has dedicated two poems to Joyce ("James Joyce" and "Invocación a Joyce"), praising Joyce's courage ("Qué importa nuestra cobardía si hay en la tierra / un solo hombre valiente") and "obstinado rigor." Borges' essay on Flaubert ("Flaubert y su destino ejemplar," *Discusión*, 1957) ends with a tribute to Joyce, "the intricate and almost infinite Irishman who wove *Ulysses*."

Augusto de Campos: Poem

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