PO.EX

ESSAYS FROM PORTUGAL ON CYBERLITERATURE & INTERMEDIA

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"THE DEAD MUST BE KILLED ONCE AGAIN" PLAGIOTROPIA AS CRITICAL LITERARY PRACTICE[140]

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Introduction

Húmus by Herberto Helder is recognized for its direct quotation from Raul Brandão's 1921 text of the same name. However, Helder's work is more than the simple intertextual suggestion of a text: it transforms it, putting into motion its latent power, reviving it. As may be read in the epigraph of this work, the "words, sentences, fragments, images" from *Húmus* are used by Helder in order to achieve, through re-writing, a full reading of the text by Brandão. Such reading multiplies and transforms the meanings that are crystallized in the work by Brandão, thus articulating the scope the poet refers: "freedoms, freedom."

Maria dos Prazeres Gomes, in *Outrora Agora* (*Once Now*), seeks to map the dialogical relationships in Portuguese poetry of invention, which, according to the term coined by Haroldo de Campos, constitute a "plagiarian/plagiotropic movement of the culturally settled forms" (19). Including Helder's texts in a vast set of texts marked by a "critical-ludic-transgressive attitude" (22), Gomes defines plagiotropia within a conceptual domain (20) that involves several theoretical concepts such as metalanguage, intertextuality, dialogism, and parody. Despite having articulated all these concepts, the critical-ludic-transgressive attitude of Portuguese poetry involves, in her opinion, an enhanced "operation of translation in the sense of a critical rereading of tradition" (20).

To creatively explore the plagiotropic relationships between Helder and Brandão's work, we have engaged in our own plagiaristic experiment in the creation of a third work. The resulting text generator, also entitled *Húmus*, draws upon its predecessors as databases, allowing readers to once again re-read the tradition and conceptualize the links between its historical forbears.

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140 Rui Torres, "The dead must be killed once again: Plagiotropia as Critical Literary Practice," originally published in *Electronic Book Review*, August 5. 2012, http://www.electronic-bookreview.com/thread/electropoetics/plagio.

1. Re-reading, Re-writing

The topic of critical rereading of tradition is inscribed in the realization that every text is created in a dialogue with the past. In Portugal, this issue was addressed by the Experimental Poetry group, namely in works by Ana Hatherly, Ernesto de Melo e Castro, and Herberto Helder. In the preface to the first issue of the *Experimental Poetry* anthologies (*Poesia Experimental* 1 and 2), Helder points out that "tradition is a movement" (5), thus paving the way towards its recovery in current literary practices. Ana Hatherly is perhaps the one to better summarize these experiences:

> The cultural heritage of a people, and even of a continent, is ever present, one way or the other: what is required is to become aware of that, because when this awareness takes place, it ingresses our lives and transforms it. [...] What the Experimentalists did was to bring tradition to the daily lives of their poetic creation: by "translating" it into new forms they created the new [the novelty]. (Hatherly 179)

This dialogic process, as Bakhtin proposed and Julia Kristeva showed, implies that "every text is built as a mosaic of quotes, every text is an absorption and transformation of another text" (Kristeva 146). In a study on parody, Linda Hutcheon also recognizes the significance of intertextuality and self-reflexivity (12). For the author, this increasing interest allows the emergence of "an aesthetics of the process, of the dynamic activity of perception, interpretation and production" of works of art (12). Hutcheon further defines this attitude as a "structural and functional relationship of critical review" (27).

Raul Brandão and Herberto Helder are writers who constantly rewrote their productions: they are author and reader, one and the same. Concerning the elaboration and transformation of *Húmus* revisions and re-writings by Raul Brandão, Maria João Reynaud interprets the three versions of *Húmus* as "the inherent possibility of a continuous metamorphosis" (92). The existence of three versions of *Húmus*, according to the author, places us

> before a complex discontinuous process of "written enunciation" in which each version is presented as "variation" of the same work—witnessing the mobility of writing Mallarmé refers in his utopia of the Book—projecting it onto a virtual horizon of perfection. (56)

Governed by a clearly modern indeterminacy principle, Raul Brandão staged in his work a process of "destruction-reconstruction (of rewriting), performed in the course of rereading, reactivating a 'project' of integration and determining the aesthetic object's 'metamorphosis'" (95).

In turn, this metamorphosis expands in Helder's text, as it seems precisely this project of an "unfinished" work that warrants Helder's poem its "freedom" to recover through remaking.

Regarding the metamorphosis in Helder's work, recently given visibility through the publishing of *Ou o poema contínuo* (*Or the continuous poem*), a long poem in which all the poems by this author are connected, Maria de Fátima Marinho has studied the changes introduced by the author in his poems, at the time of the re-edition of his works in *Ofício Cantante* (*Singing Duty*) and *Poesia Toda* (*The Whole Poetry*), as well as in the subsequent re-editions of *Os Passos em Volta* (*The Steps Around*). Marinho recalls that "Herberto Helder is almost unable to republish his work without rereading it—without transforming it" (25).

Regarding the act of reading, Umberto Eco explains that "[o]nce it must be updated, a text is always incomplete" (53), thereby leaving to the reader "the interpretation initiative" (55). The text is "interwoven by blank spaces, of interstices to be filled" (55). In charge of a task of concretization, the reader holds the possibility of abolishing points of indeterminacy and, for that reason, the reader is an entity whose role is to complete. As Wolfgang Iser demonstrated regarding the phenomenological process of artwork reception, "one text is potentially capable of several different realizations, and no reading can ever exhaust the full potential" (55).

2. Raul Brandão

Raul Germano Brandão was born in 1867 in Oporto and died in 1930 in Lisbon. His work includes theater, diary, history essays, journalistic pieces, and prose.

The work that concerns us here, *Húmus*, was written during the First World War (1914–1918) and first published in the year of the Russian Revolution (1917). Considered by many critics as his masterpiece, to the point of repeatedly referring to Raul Brandão as "the author of *Húmus*," this work originated the most varied readings from literary critics—sometimes assigning it to Symbolism, emphasizing the emotional grotesque elements, or considering it a rare example of Portuguese Expressionism. A certain "character of anticipation" should be

noted in this work because its presence as living legacy seems to justify the admiration still aroused in so many Portuguese writers (Vasconcelos 14). Jacinto do Prado Coelho even states in 1967 (also the publication date of Herberto Helder's poem) that "now, fifty years away, *Húmus* seems indeed more lively and admirably present" (327).

Húmus is written in the form of a diary—therefore depending on a time dimension—that covers November 13th to December 25th of the following year in the first edition. In the second edition, revised by the author, the diary covers a period that ends November 30th, with no indication of year except in the end: "Foz do Douro, 1916."

The structure of the work also changes in the different versions. The first edition is divided in 19 chapters. In the second edition (1921), the one that seemingly was used[141] by Herberto Helder, the last chapter disappears.[142]

As the title seems to suggest, *Húmus* stages transformation: composed by animal and vegetal organic matter, humus is the fertile portion of soil where life and death became involved and confused, "all rotting together in the same mixed and composted soil" as the author of the text informs us (Brandão 27).[143]

The motto to develop along the whole "metaphysical perambulation" is forwarded in the first lines of Brandão's text: "I always hear the same sound of death that slowly gnaws and persists" (17). Only then does the author establish the scenery where the action (or absence of action) will occur:

> A soiled village—deserted streets—yards with slabs uplifted by the sole effort of grass—the castle—the remains of fortifications with no use: a staircase carved in the alveoli of walls leading nowhere. (17)

From this we learn that the village is located in a negative space, symbolically associated with death, representing a landscape that, as put by Jacinto

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127 Our (comparative) reading of the works by Herberto Helder and Raul Brandão begins with the 3rd edition (Lisbon: Vega, 1991), reproducing the text from the 1st edition (1917). Verifying the inexistence of some portions of the poem in that edition, we retrieved the 2nd edition (Lisbon: Aillaud & Bertrand, 1926), concluding that was the edition "read" by Helder.

142 The changes resulting from the rereading/rewriting of Brandão—the text's metamorphosis—may be consulted in the appendix of the above-mentioned study by Maria João Reynaud (2000).

129 Except where stated, all citations refer to the text of the 1st edition from 1917 (Vega, 1991). To simplify and make the text more readable, when this work by Raul Brandão is cited , we will only indicate his last name and page number.

do Prado Coelho, is "subjective, dreamlike, made of glacial paper, meanness and tragedy" (221). Because the village is a fictional and not representational space, it represents itself alone.

The beings inhabiting the village are ghosts that, by having a second life, create over time a network of habits, trifles, and smidgens—aspects of a trivial immediacy that pulls them away from the contemplation of life. This permanent opposition between apparent and real life assists, however, in suggesting that the human being is composed of overlapping layers of subjectivity: "In every soul, as in every house, beyond the façade, there is a hidden interior" (47), learning that "on the inside, man does not conform [desconforme]" (65). On the other hand, it leads to the conclusion that between one side and the other "interposes a wall" (69).

In this grotesque atmosphere of stagnation and immobility, the village faces the possibility of change. Because this village, although "grimy and tomb-like, hides within its walls a non-conforming dream" (34). It is the dream that will play the role of triggering the opposition between the everyday mask and something that grows within and corresponds to a dissimilar dimension of life. In the dream, uncontained forces coalesce, agitating death and life and thus reconnecting the living and the dead:

> Here walk not only the living—but also the dead. The village is populated by those who agitate in a transient and dull existence, and by others imposing themselves as if they were alive. Everything is connected and tangled. (27)

In this sense, death is a chance to face life in a dynamic way, to the extent that it reveals its ideal of authenticity. Death is also an opportunity to regenerate. And *Húmus* precisely ends with a cry of revolt against immobility, against the imposing tradition, authoritarian, reactionary, in favor of the revolt of creativity and the new: "Can you hear the cry? Can you hear it?...—The dead must be killed once again" (181).

As it is impossible to address in detail the various symbologies common to the work of Raul Brandão, we will mention some keywords that obsessively inhabit *Húmus* and which we find in Helder's poetry as well: stone and mineral elements, gold and its alchemical properties, water and its purifying properties, spring and the regeneration it brings, and also the grotesque, despair, and pain.

One of the possible lessons from *Húmus* by Raul Brandão is the line of thought proposed regarding the issue of language's creative sphere. Since consciousness only becomes reality when embodied in signs, Brandão poses the problem of social immobility alongside the problem of language wearing out, as reflected in the statement: "Always the same things repeated over and over, the same words, the same habits […]" (21).

Raul Brandão was aware that "we live on words. To the grave we live with words. They subdue us, restrain us […] Words contain us, words drive us" (24). This route still upsets us:

> It is with words, that are just sounds, that everything in life is built. But now that values have changed, what is the use of these words? We need to create different ones, to use other ones, obscure, terrible, in the flesh, that translate the angers, the instinct and bewilderment. (106)

3. Herberto Helder

Herberto Helder (Luís Bernardes de Oliveira) was born on the November 23, 1930, in Funchal, Madeira Island. His first poetry book, *O Amor em Visita* (*Love Visiting*), is from 1958. In 1964, he organized the first anthology of *Poesia Experimental* (*Experimental Poetry*) with António Aragão, and that same year he published *Electronicolírica* (*Electroniclyric*, later renamed *A Máquina Lírica—The lyrical Machine*). In 1967, he published *Húmus*. Helder is also dedicated to the "translation" of poems, resulting in three volumes of "poems changed into Portuguese." More recently, Helder has been reediting his works, as with the publication of *Ou o Poema Contínuo—Súmula* (*Or the Continuous Poem—Abridged*) and *A Faca Não Corta o Fogo—Súmula & inédita* (*The Knife Does not Cut Fire—Abridged and Unpublished*).

The work *Húmus* belongs to several intertextual exercises developed by Helder mainly during the 1960's. The first poem in this category, which was already partially quoted, is "'Transformed is the lover into the beloved,' with his," published in *A colher na boca* (*The Spoon in the Mouth*). Helder exploits the reading made of Camões to the edge of transgression, where the code of idealized love usually read in the Camões' sonnet is eroticized in Helder's poem. This line of

action may be regarded as subversive, since it reads the past as a system of impositions, thus proposing a redefinition of the present.

In *Electronicolírica*, Herberto Helder explores for the first time the combinatory process, which is the starting point for our approach to combinatorial and cybernetic poetry. The afterword of the book's first edition would fit as preface for *Húmus*. It mentions an experience with an electronic calculator performed by Nanni Balestrini in 1961 in Milan, Italy, in which old and modern texts were processed through a given set of combinatory rules previously instated, which resulted in 3,002 combinations. Helder explains that the same attitude takes place in his book, through a transfer system, though not bound to any rule (49). Subsequently, according to the poet, there is a resemblance with "some primitive magical texts, some popular poetry, and some medieval lyricism" (50), thus creating a peculiar "magic ritual formula in which there are traces of popular refrains, as well as traces of medieval lyrics, such as the cantigas (songs) from the cancioneiros (songbooks)" (50). Helder concludes that "[t]he combinatorial principle is truly the linguistic foundation for all poetic creation" (50).

In *A Máquina de Emaranhar Paisagens* (*The Machine to Entangle Landscapes*), first published in the anthology of *Experimental Poetry* and later included in *Ofício Cantante* and *Poesia Toda*, fragments from the books of Genesis and the Apocalypse are freely combined, mixed with fragments from François Villon, Dante, Camões, and Helder himself. This work is quite similar to the one performed in *Húmus*, although the latter is exclusively built from Raul Brandão's work.

In the preface for the first anthology of *Poesia Experimental*, Helder explains that "there is only one law governing both the world of things and the world of imagination. That law would be metamorphosis" (5). And in the preface to the anthology *Eloi Lelia Doura* (*Communicating Voices in Portuguese Poetry*), Helder tells two stories from which we cite the first one, "caught somewhere, through reading." It is about:

> a tribe that buried their dead in the concave of large trees. The trees, that were given the name of the people: baobab, devoured the cadavers, and from them they webbed their own natural flesh. From the name removed from them and put into alchemy, the tribe invested in general transmutations: death took the name, and the name, active and tangible, grew in the soil. (7)

Such a "tribally magical commitment, governed by the overwhelming understanding of the metamorphosis of the flesh in the organic scheme of matter" drives Herberto Helder to the conclusion that "an image of itself, an absolute image, universal, devours this people, and this people places a signature in the image returned to the world" (7). All poets, as all poems alike, are "surrendered to serve a common inspiration, a common art of fire and night, to a same constellated subsidy" (8).

In the afterword for *O corpo o luxo a obra* (*The body the luxury the work*), Helder recalls that the "transmutation is the general and universal foundation of the world. [...] to work in transmutation, in metamorphosis, is a work of our own."

This work of transformation is precisely what is carried out in *Húmus*: metamorphosis of meanings, enlargement of connotations, text inscribed in another text. In this sense, Helder's text can be interpreted as a path towards the rebirth of Raul Brandão's text. As described by Maria Lúcia Dal Farra, Brandão's text is displayed "as a submerged universe whose appeals for restitution and rediscovery were assumed by the still combustive energy of written words, stated and drowned in time" (200). If writing is driven by the principle of regeneration, it is irreversibly tied to death: "death becomes the appropriate response to the impulse towards regeneration" (Lindeza Diogo 40).

In the same manner we find Brandão's *Húmus*, Helder uses, in his poetry before *Húmus*, symbols such as water, stone, gold, death and the dead, spring, the tree, silence, resurrection.

The first edition of *Húmus* by Herberto Helder has the suggestive subtitle of *Poema-Montagem* (*Montage-Poem*). Montage is a term borrowed from film-making language, concerning the work of "concocting the various scenes from a film, according to particular goals in syntactic organization" (Reis and Lopes 240). The master theorist of montage was the Russian filmmaker Sergei Eisenstein. In his essays on film-making language, Eisenstein explains that "two film pieces of any kind, placed together, inevitably combine into a new concept, a new quality, arising out of that juxtaposition" (4), collision and conflict being ideal for montage (37).

Montage is therefore the main system through which Helder's poem establishes and updates the reading of Brandão's text. Montage links parts, forming an autonomous whole. Helder explains the system that he is about to implement: the "material" being used is composed by "words, sentences, fragments, images, metaphors from Raul Brandão's *Húmus*," and the governing

rules are "freedom, freedoms." Helder also includes in the first pages a proverb: "Death is an ever new thing."

One of the aspects conferring intertextual coherence to the poem is the fact that the beginning and the end of Helder's poem coincide with the beginning and the end of Brandão's novel. The scenario is the same, although in Helder's text there is no reference to the village, or to the small fragment preceding the text by Brandão: "I always hear the same noise of death, slowly nibbling and persisting." Regarding the abolishing of the latter, it may be justified by the inclusion of "Do you hear the scream of the dead?" With it, a more comprehensive communication circuit is introduced, thus calling "the other" and interrogating it: "Ouves?" ("Do you hear?"), instead of using the first-person singular "Ouço" ("I hear").

What Helder transforms in the text by Raul Brandão cannot be thoroughly rehearsed in these pages; nevertheless we will display some examples deriving from the deconstruction we performed on the texts.

4. Deconstruction—Herberto Helder reader of Raul Brandão

We will now confront both texts by displaying them next to each other. Helder's text was divided in eleven sections, concerning the first 82 verses out of 380 (therefore 30% of the overall text of the poem). This is the starting point for the combinatory that we will explain later.

While the full scope of correspondences is documented here, some key passages illustrate the relationship between Helder's and Brandão's work. Take for instance the following series of passages from Brandão:

> A soiled village—deserted streets—yards with slabs uplifted by the sole effort of grass—the castle—the untouched remains of fortifications with no use. A staircase carved in the alveoli of walls leading nowhere. Only a wild fig tree succeeded in entering the interstice of stones and thereof extracts juice and life. The tower—the door of the Cathedral with the saints in their niches—the square with dessicated trees and a zinc bandstand. Over this a denigrated and uniform tone: moisture embedded into stone, the sun embedded into moisture. (17)

> All this seems to float under water, which greens under water. (11, 2nd ed.)

> All dreams are standing for a thousand years and a day.—Do you hear them? Do you hear the scream of the dead?... (187, 2nd ed.)

These passages, edited and recombined, become the first eight lines of Helder's work:

> Yards with slabs uplifted by the sole
> effort of grass: the castle
> the staircase, the tower, the door,
>   the square.
> All this floats under
> water, under water.
>   - Do you hear
> the scream of the dead?

Helder's reading of Brandão continues. Note the following passages from Brandão:

> At every scream grows paler, blazing, changes color, opens the golden tail, from fall to fall. [...] The combat is relentless between the living and the dead, among the living and the dead. (258–259, 2nd ed.)

> And the silence is mounting. Only water speaks on wholes dilapidated from stones, in dialogues that never cease, in a chorus of uninterrupted and fuzzy voices. [...] (166, 2nd ed.)

> Her words rare and small, pronounced afraid of landing, saddened me, and the paleness the black hair was framing made her look like a creature not belonging to this world. (177, 2nd ed.)

> Now I remember her as an afternoon coming slowly on tiptoe, and clinging to a minute, to silence, to things suspended in the light of the buttons about to open. (Brandão 57)

> Now I do remember her as an afternoon coming slowly on tiptoe, and clinging to a minute, to silence, to things suspended in the light of the buttons about to open. (57)

> [...] more screaming to the world, more volcanoes of colors that portend disaster, and a buffered noise, weird, unbearable within ourselves, that I can only compare to the sound from a butterfly flapping against the walls of a vase. (175)

> That is why I insist that Death does not have only five letters, but the most beautiful, the most tremendous, the deepest of mysteries. (101)

In my soul is reflected the dialogue of the universe as the clarity on the water to make me dizzy. (210 2nd ed.)

A street descends to the church in stonework carved. […] The stone crumbles, but I contemplate it alive, with a people of statues on top, with a people of dead below. (27)

In Helder's work, this provides the source material for lines 9–20:

> The stone uncloses the relentless gold tail,
> only the water speaks on holes.
> They are words pronounced afraid of landing,
> an afternoon coming on tiptoe, the sound
> slowly of a
> butterfly.
>   - Death does not have
> only five letters. As the clarity on the water
> to make me dizzy,
> the stonework
> carved:
> with a people of statues on top,
> with a people of dead below.

And so the correspondence between the two pieces continues, affirming Helder's plagiotropic process, while demonstrating the richness with which such reading/writing activities can be performed.

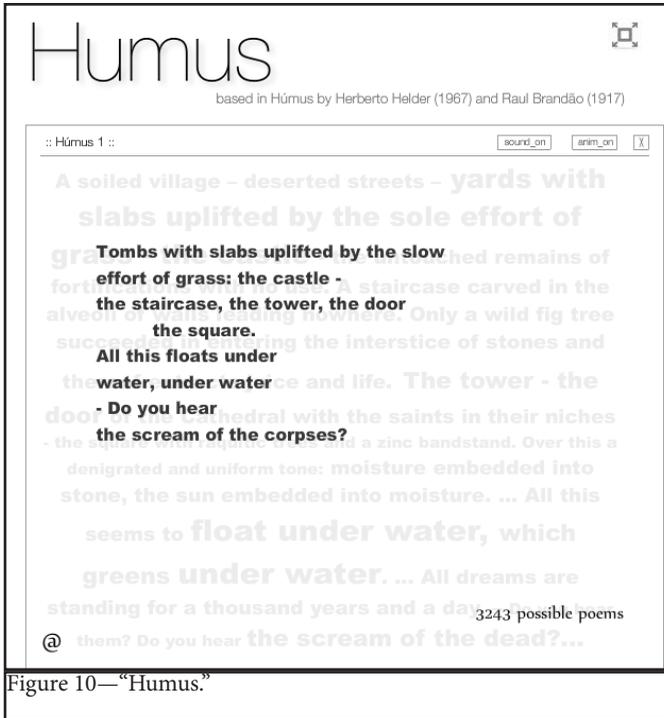## 5. Recombination—Reading Herberto Helder reader of Raul Brandão

Figure 10—"Humus."

Húmus—Continuous Poem[144] is a creative research project in the area of cyberliterature aiming at proposing new ways of re-creating the montage-poem studied above. The numerous versions virtually available in these program-texts use as a tool for textual programming the *Poemário*[145] programmed in Actionscript 3.0, allowing the user/author to create texts (poems, short stories, etc.) by following combinatorial procedures.

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144 English version (experimental) online http://www.telepoesis.net/humuspoemacontinuo/humus.html. Portuguese version available in CD-ROM (ISBN 978-989-643-063-4). Conception, design, and textual programming by Rui Torres; sound by Rui Torres and Luis Aly; voice by Nuno M Cardoso. The software Poemário was created by Rui Torres and Nuno F. Ferreira

(programming). Layout and navigation system by Ciro Miranda. The resources employed to build this work include, besides the software Poemário, include Adobe Flash, Perl, XML and WordPress. Internet access is required in order to read and interact with this work.

145 Available at http://www.telepoesis.net/galeria-poemas/pplayer.php. Conceived and designed by Rui Torres, programming by Nuno F. Ferreira.

In terms of reading and interaction, these are the operating options of the program-text:

- Automatic animation or interaction: Depending on the reader's choice, the poem *Húmus* can be automatically animated (words change in automatic and random mode) or through the interaction of the reader (the reader will have to click on the words in order to process the respective combinatorial processes).

- List editing: The reader of the poem has access to programmed lists of words and thus can invoke and change them by clicking on the respective word(s) while pressing the Control button (Ctrl).

- Sound: Allows the reader to use sound in combinatorial and random mode. If the reader chooses to listen, reading will be accompanied by a soundtrack generated through combinatorial procedures, switching between voices and sound textures.

- Dir-WordPress: The reader may also choose to send his/her readings to the blog *Poemário* (by clicking @), thus allowing the archiving of versions by different readers. Posts published in the blog *Poemário* are also displayed on the right side of the interface available on CD-ROM, and therefore do not require any browser to access them. However, if the reader wishes to consult the blog outside the CD-ROM, the address is http://www.telepoesis.net/poemario.

The text of *Húmus—Poema Contínuo* was programmed taking into account these software features.[146]

Let us now see how this textual programming took place.

First, we selected a few verses from *Húmus* by Herberto Helder which were divided into 11 sections. These excerpts were programmed to allow the reader to change, in runtime and through combinatorial and random procedures, the different categories (or paradigms) that supply the original syntax of Helder's text. The vocabulary animating these categories was selected from Raul Brandão's work.

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146 To access other works within this combinational rationale using the software *Poemário*, see: *Amor de Clarice 2.0*—versão combinatória (Love by Clarice 2.0—combinatory version) (texts by Rui Torres and Clarice Lispector), available at http://www.telepoesis.net/amorclarice/ v2/amor_index.html; *8 brincadeiras para Salette Tavares* (*8 games for Salette Tavares*) (text selection by Rui Torres from verses and with vocabulary by Salette Tavares), available at http:// telepoesis.net/brincadeiras; *Do peso e da leveza* (*On weight and lightness*) (texts by Rui Torres from poetry and lexicon by Sophia Andresen and Fernando Pessoa), available at http://telepoesis.net/dopesoedaleveza/index2.html.

The sound is also generated dynamically and randomly, from previously recorded databases, consisting of readings of fragments of both texts, with sound textures and varied musical atmospheres. Each new reading of this work takes as its starting point a completely new textual configuration, distinct from the previous, both verbally and in terms of the soundtrack, generated to facilitate and encourage navigation and exploration. Hence the chosen title, playing with Helder's earlier works: this is a continuous poem and in continuous metamorphosis.

The large amount of possible text executions led to the use of one of the features available in *Poemário*: the ability to record versions created by the readers. Thus, in addition to changing the poem's arrangement, the reader can keep her/his versions/readings in the weblog available on the Internet, constituting a sort of community of readers.

In short, in terms of reception, the reader is able to read, listen, and combine textual fragments. Subsequently readers may interact, discover and scroll the navigation space in which they are operating, and finally they can contribute and share their versions of combinatorial poetry, saving them in the previously mentioned weblog.

Húmus—Poema Contínuo is intended to be an experiment testing the limits of various languages, along with their possibilities of interaction and relation. Inscribed within cyberliterature, the variety of generative elements presented intends to give to the reader the means of the production of meaning. As a virtual space of intertextual reading, this work calls for the reader's reflection on language and textuality, promoting instability and variability in interpretation, as indeed was proposed by Helder in his assembly/montage-poem.

Conclusion

Plagiotropia exists in the Portuguese tradition as a process of active, reflexive, literary appropriation. This is useful for scholars of digital literature and culture. Contemporary notions of poaching in digital media practice tend to emphasize the productive relationship between audiences; however, given an abundance of popular culture resources and access to networks of transmission, plagiotropia implies a more sustained practice of appropriation focused on close readings of literary texts, that are resonant with contemporary notions of authorship as both contested and distributed.

On the other hand, implicit in this practice is an understanding of literature that is often lacking in contemporary criticism: that the dead can scream via the text, and that they can be killed once again, suggesting that our relationship to the work of literature is rich and enriched by the long, tangled process of regeneration documented in the genealogy of works known as *Húmus*.

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