

Martelo, Rosa Maria.

Antologia Dialogante de Poesia Portuguesa.

Lisboa: Assírio & Alvim, 2020.

Collecting 102 poems by forty-four authors over nine centuries, this anthology presents a substantial and sustained selection of intertextually linked poems written by representative poets from different periods, whether (near) contemporaries or chronologically distant. In tracing dialogic genealogies of echoes and reverberations in Portuguese poetry based on “pre-existing links” of affiliation among the selected poems, as stated in the editor’s preface (7), the volume celebrates the poems’ productive afterlives and invites the reader to consider both their ability to engage and inspire subsequent poets to respond to them in varied ways, underscoring their significance as foundational texts or as milestones in Portuguese poetry, and the influential role of the poets who authored them in an unfolding poetic tradition. However, the anthology resists a fixity that the genealogical treatment of canonical works and authors and the chronological arrangement might impose. In a proleptic gesture, it reads the intertextual poems as elective allegiances by the later poets (i.e., the poets who produced their works in dialogue with a previously written poem or poems), thereby demonstrating that “twentieth- and twenty-first-century poetry oftentimes renders explicit the intertextual relationships which gave birth to it” (9).

This at once historical and prospective conceptualization of how texts relate to one another evokes a definition of intertextuality such as Norman Fairclough’s, reflecting the “ways in which texts . . . are shaped by prior texts they are ‘responding’ to and subsequent texts that they ‘anticipate.’”¹ The dialogic approach that underpins the organization of this anthology is aligned with Fairclough’s views and those of his precursors Mikhail Bakhtin, Julia Kristeva, and Gérard Genette. In turn, Martelo’s reference to T. S. Eliot’s “good” and “bad” poets (10), depending on how fully a poet incorporates the diction of his/her precursor, and her use of the term “correction” (emenda) naturally evoke Harold Bloom’s tropes of “anxiety” (*The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry*, 1973) and “misreading” (*A Map of Misreading*, 1975), which recast Eliot’s dichotomy, qualifying

“strong” (as opposed to “weak”) poets as those whose poetry is most subject to corrective appropriation. It follows that the anxiety felt by those writing in the wake of influential poets engenders what Bloom terms a “misprision”—a deliberate misunderstanding—as a “swerve” away from the predecessor by the new poet, who completes the parent poem by retaining its terms and its fragments but gives these terms another meaning. The notion “that every poem is the result of a critical act, by which another, earlier poem is deliberately misread, and hence re-written,” regarded as essential to Bloom’s concept of passing on the poetic tradition, could be seen as partly animating Martelo’s editorial project.² However, in her choices, she expands the rewritings to poems that are sometimes contemporaries of the originals, and she transcends or sublimates the contesting, conflictual metaphor underpinning Bloom’s agonistic criticism, proposing instead a dialogic, constructive relationship whereby the two or more poems in dialogue intersect in seemingly harmonious, choreographed nodes of renewed meanings. In effect, the new poems intertextually linked to the original ones achieve what Linda Hutcheon has termed a “bitextual synthesis,” describing the “dialogic relation between texts” established by parodies (which applies to intertextually linked pairs of works in general).³ Arguably, the degree of imbrication of the two texts—as parts of a new whole of entangled signifier and signification—is comparable to that of diptychs in the visual arts, or even occasionally triptychs, as when the poem dialogues concomitantly with two texts, as is the case with certain sets of poems in this anthology.

Martelo terms the sustained practice of elective allegiances underpinning the anthologized poems an “epigraphic way of writing” (9), a concept she traces to one of the poets anthologized, Fiamma Hasse Pais Brandão, for whom, she argues, “literature is epigraphic in the sense in which it progresses over the texts of the past, celebrating them while subverting, assimilating and transforming them at the same time” (7–8). Martelo highlights key precursors in Portuguese literature of this “hypertextual” practice, which she contextualizes amid the neo-avant-garde movements of the 1970s, and revisits some of their views, such as Manuel António Pina’s suggestion that hypertextuality could be regarded as characteristic of a late modernity (9). Martelo identifies illustrative works and significant figures belonging to this intertextually based dialogic lineage in contemporary Portuguese poetry, many of whom feature in this anthology as its committed and consummate practitioners. Their transcreative poems connect to our contemporaneity, partaking in the co-creation of a transtemporal poetic community

that encompasses some of the most significant contemporary Portuguese poets. Given that the thematic, stylistic, and tonal intertextual links among the texts gathered in this anthology include emulation, pastiche, and parody as modes of rewriting, it could be argued that the aforesaid elective allegiances establish poetic genealogies of affect, relying on such values as affiliation and conviviality in their sustained effort to reveal multilayered, cross-temporal affinities. These features, Martelo argues, can potentially lead to an extension of the “dialogical exercise” (13) that resulted in this anthology to include “hypertextual dialogues with a transnational breadth”—providing as example dialogues with poems by certain Brazilian and other overseas poets, mentioning some of the preferred interlocutors of contemporary Portuguese poets, and leaving a promise of further dialogic anthologies of poetry in Portuguese.

NOTES

1. Norman Fairclough, “Intertextuality in Critical Discourse Analysis,” *Linguistics and Education* 4 (1992): 269–93, at 269.
2. Edward W. Said, “The Poet as Oedipus,” review of Harold Bloom’s *A Map of Misreading*, *New York Times*, April 13, 1975, <https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/books/98/11/01/specials/bloom-misreading.html>.
3. Linda Hutcheon, *A Theory of Parody* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000), xiii.

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