

◆ 4

Altazor: A New Arrangement

Bruce Dean Willis

*La voz que quita el orden lingüístico por el lingual
materializa la inscripción de un cuerpo carnal.*

—Saúl Yurkievich

(The voice that replaces the linguistic order with the lingual
materializes the inscription of a carnal body.)

*el último gorgoteo del músico,
su trombón anegado por el mar.*

—Juan Manuel Roca

(the musician's final gurgle,
his trombone flooded by the sea.)

When we say that Huidobro's 1931 masterpiece *Altazor* is "el fracaso de la Vanguardia" (the failure of the Vanguard), "el poema del fracaso" (the poem of failure), a "dead end," an "ill-fated odyssey," or an "attempt failed," we focus on gradual semantic loss over the course of the long poem, resulting in the inability of the reader, before the end of the final canto, to participate conclusively in the construction of meaning.¹ This critical interpretation of failure, which has held sway for decades, certainly remains valid in the quite literal sense of the breakdown, in the poem, of writing and reading as a shared decoding of a given set of signifiers whose contextualization, at least ostensibly, provides common ground for meaning. The history of this critique of semantic failure, often conflated with the alleged thematic failure of the seven-canto poem to hold together as one unit, dominates critical attention devoted to the poem's transformation of language. According to the tenets of *creacionismo* (Creationism, a movement almost entirely encompassed by Huidobro himself), language transformation serves to: (1) develop a new poetic expression, focusing on the word as the essence and the building block of creation, and (2) then create worlds which are unique and not a reflection of nature (Wood 13–15). René de Costa identifies this

search for an original expression as the only element that unifies the poem.² Guillermo Sucre has elucidated the linguistic “vertigo” of Huidobro’s previously ascendant and confident style, now shown to be a ludic and introspective “metalenguaje, magia verbal” (metalanguage, verbal magic), while de Costa, Lee Dowling, Cecil Wood, and Federico Schopf, among others, have focused on the specific ways in which Huidobro’s games break down the semantic and grammatical systems of the Spanish and French languages. Many critics have studied the poem’s images and metaphors³; however, few if any have focused on Huidobro’s use of a series of corporeal metaphors to illustrate a decomposition that accompanies and accents the linguistic transformation. In *Altazor*, the image of the mortal human body, which can frustrate the manifestation of the eternal soul, reflects the antagonism of words over the expression of poetry. The mirror that Huidobro constructs between body and language makes the reader aware not only of the flexibility between these two entities, but also of their complementary degenerations. Such added elements remind the reader of the text’s imaginative quality, just as the corporeal lexicon of *Altazor* reminds the reader of the limits of the text’s expression.⁴

Through the voice of *Altazor*, Huidobro explores existential frontiers: the boundaries of being of *Altazor* are equal to the semantic and graphic limitations of *Altazor*.⁵ *Altazor*’s quest for his soul does not escape its physical constraints, that is, the body of the poem and the words themselves. *Altazor*, the “high-flying hawk,” has a parachute instead of wings and thus no ability to control his descent. He is poetic expression, locked within a linguistic cage; he is the soul of poetry enclosed by its body of words on a page.

If *Altazor* cannot escape from the constraints of words, then he can at least play at *rearranging* them. Like many of his contemporaries, Huidobro must have been fascinated by the circumstances of the 1912 *Titanic* shipwreck. He harbored an enthusiasm for polar exploration that must certainly have been stoked by the infamous iceberg, and he himself traveled as a transoceanic passenger on numerous occasions. Aside from a half-dozen references to icebergs in *Altazor*, there are a dozen references to shipwrecks in the poem, and more than two dozen to various kinds of watercraft. The following passage typifies the ambivalent shipwreck contextualization in the poem: “O dadme un bello naufragio verde / Un milagro que ilumine el fondo de nuestros mares íntimos / Como el barco que se hunde sin apagar sus luces” (30–31) (Oh give me a beautiful green shipwreck / A miracle to brighten the depths of our intimate seas / Like a ship that sinks without losing its lights). My motivation for speculating on the shipwreck allusions derives from the cliché for futility, “rearranging the deck chairs on the *Titanic*.” The question becomes whether we interpret *Altazor*’s verbal wizardry as an exercise in (semantic) futility, or something else altogether,

something that could, perhaps, lead to the construction of a life raft made from those very deck chairs. Without disputing the importance of the traditional critical interpretation of the poem as a failure—and I am reminded of Paz’s assessment of Sor Juana’s iconic exaltation of Phaeton in her *Primero Sueño* (*First Dream*)—I assert here a more participatory interpretation of *Altazor*.⁶ I wish to highlight musical, anagrammatic, and corporeal aspects of the text relative to the term “arrangement” in order to suggest that Huidobro, quite apart from his obsessive need to pre-date his works, was in fact years ahead of his time.

In the radically experimental milieu of avant-garde Paris, Huidobro engaged the dogmas and doctrines of his contemporaries while staking out his own precarious territory as *creacionismo*. We know from Huidobro’s manifestos that he condemned the practices of certain other “-ismos” only after having tried them himself; for example, writing the first thing that comes to mind, writing collectively sequential “blind” verse, and arranging poetry made from random newspaper clippings. What was missing from these techniques, he claimed, was the voice of reason, enough reason to balance out pure imagination. In fact throughout his manifestos he expresses the desire for an equilibrium of intellect and emotion, or will and imagination, in order to best achieve the kind of innovative poetry he strived for.⁷ But he did not cease to be fascinated by the original image, by that shocking juxtaposition of “palabras enemigas” (enemy words) that was the poet-explorer’s equivalent of planting the flag in unclaimed territory, or the poet-magician’s creation of something completely new from the most ordinary materials. His fundamental conception of the poet as seer, exemplified in “La poesía” (Poetry) and “Las siete palabras del poeta” (The Seven Words of the Poet) among other manifestos, did not waver from the Romantic conceptualization of the artist’s special powers and heightened emotions. But if the poet’s medium is mere language, then he must, Huidobro resolved, play with words not only in juxtaposition but also in decomposition. Essentially, the poet must seek to *rearrange*, to strive not just for the original image or for the new take on an old theme, but to actually rearrange phonemes and syllables and thus play at the creation of new implied meanings, the *abracadabra* that casts an unknown spell. “La operación poética no es diversa del conjuro, el hechizo y otros procedimientos de la magia” (Paz, *Arco* 53) (The poetic process is no different than the spell, the enchantment, and other magical procedures).

The best-known slogan of Huidobro’s *creacionismo* appears as the last verse of his 1916 “Arte poética”: “El poeta es un pequeño Dios” (The poet is a small God). The poet is a god who destroys to create anew; like Zeus, Shiva, Tezcatlipoca, and numerous other mythological deities, he unleashes the purging, chaotic violence that will set the stage for rebirth. Publio Octavio Romero specifies: “Pero antes de crear hay que destruir, y Altazor

lo [logra] con las armas de la ironía, de la blasfemia, y, en suma, con los recursos del lenguaje. Su crítica tendrá como blanco la cultura de la cual proviene: creencias religiosas, ideologías y posturas estéticas” (148) (But before creation must come destruction, and Altazor [achieves this] with his weapons of irony, blasphemy, and, in sum, with language resources. His critique will have as its target the culture from which it came: religious beliefs, ideologies, and aesthetic posturings). The poet cannot truly create, but wants to surpass Adam’s mere naming to something more akin to Dr. Frankenstein’s “creation” of life by recycling and rearranging. Also like Dr. Frankenstein, he will lose control over his creation, except that in the poet’s case this loss is anticipated in a ludic strategy that engages the reader’s participation. Moreover, the poet does not strive for the re-creation of the phoenix. Rather than an exact replica rising from the flames of its own destruction, the creationist poet must achieve an original form and expression. Within the context of *Altazor*, the destruction/creation dichotomy adheres on both the linguistic and the corporeal levels in three stages. First, the rage of annihilation is called for in the beginning of the poem as a kind of cathartic cure for the rigidity of expression that has limited poetry up to this point (Prefacio, Cantos I–III). Next, the poet plays language games in the body of the poem itself that undermine the semantic and grammatical systems of the poet’s mother tongue (Cantos IV and V). Finally, language is entirely deconstructed, yielding the paradoxical result of an expression at last free and uninhibited, but also unintelligible (Cantos VI and VII). Metaphors of bodily and musical decomposition reinforce each of the three stages.

The Call for Renewal

The commencement of the poem (in the Prefacio) coincides with the birth of Altazor: “Nací a los treinta y tres años, el día de la muerte de Cristo; nací en el Equinoccio, bajo las hortensias y los aeroplanos del calor” (2–3) (I was born at the age of 33 on the day Christ died; I was born at the Equinox, under the hydrangeas and the aeroplanes in the heat). Immediately the antithesis of birth is named: “Y ahora mi paracaídas cae de sueño en sueño por los espacios de la muerte” (2–3) (And now my parachute drops from dream to dream through the spaces of death). Altazor’s fall leads him to death through the gradual decomposition of the language; in the beginning, the language is “cargado de contenido, de información, de ideología” (full of content, of information, of ideology) but at the end of the poem it is purely “una mera armonización sonora” (Yurkievich, *Nueva* 84) (a merely sonorous harmonization).

The poet condemns linguistic communication from the start because it is unnatural. The Creator tells Altazor: “Creé la lengua de la boca que los hombres desviaron de su rol, haciéndola aprender a hablar . . . a ella, ella, la bella nadadora, desviada para siempre de su rol acuático y puramente acariciador” (4–5) (I created the tongue of the mouth which man diverted from its role to make it learn to speak . . . to her, to her, the beautiful swimmer, forever diverted from her aquatic and purely sensual role). The paradox of the poem, however, is that as a text it would not exist without language; from this contradiction comes the desire to destroy formal language and create a simpler, more primitive form for the soul’s expression. In addition to the tongue, other body parts encapsulate the unsatisfactory language system: “Anda en mi cerebro una gramática dolorosa y brutal / [. . .] / Lo que se esconde en las frías regiones de lo invisible / O en la ardiente tempestad de nuestro cráneo” (28–29) (A brutal painful grammar walks through my brain / [. . .] / Hidden in the freezing regions of the invisible / Or the burning storms of our brains). Even after acknowledging the potency of some words—“que tienen sombra de árbol” (that have the shade of trees), “vocablos que tienen fuego de rayos” (words with rays of fire), “palabras con imanes que atraen los tesoros del abismo” (words with magnets that attract the treasures of the deep)—the poet warns: “Altazor desconfía de las palabras / Desconfía del ardid ceremonioso / Y de la poesía / Trampas” (46–47) (Don’t trust words Altazor / Don’t trust ceremonious artifice / And poetry / Traps). This criticism includes, necessarily, the very poem that expresses it.

The poet has not yet escaped from his cage: “Soy yo Altazor / Altazor / Encerrado en la jaula de su destino” (16–17) (Altazor am I / Altazor / Trapped in the prison of his fate). This “jaula” is both his human body, the physical entity that contains his soul, and the text of words in the poem. The decaying body controls the expression of his soul just as the words restrict the poetic expression: “Voy pegado a mi muerte / Voy por la vida pegado a mi muerte / Apoyado en el bastón de mi esqueleto” (34–35) (I go on stuck to my death / I go on through life stuck to my death / Leaning on the cane of my skeleton). Here he demonstrates the antithesis of life and death: the soul, which grows and expands with the passing of time, is supported by the body’s frame (“esqueleto”), which gradually loses its vitality. His corporeality is also an empty cave: “El viento que se enreda en tu voz / Y la noche que tiene frío en su gruta de huesos” (14–15) (The wind tangled in your voice / And the night freezing in its cave of bones).

The corporeal frustration manifests itself in sickness and pain: “Se me cae el dolor de la lengua y las alas marchitas / Se me caen los dedos muertos uno a uno / [. . .] / Me duelen los pies como ríos de piedra” (24–25, 26–27) (Pain falls from my tongue and my clipped wings / One by one my dead fingers fall off / [. . .] / My feet hurt like stony rivers). Injury is introduced

with the repetition of forms of the word “herida” (wound) characterizing the first canto: “El hombre herido por quién sabe quien / Por una flecha perdida del caos” (32–33) (The man wounded by who knows what / By an arrow lost in the chaos), “Cuando veas como una herida profetiza / Y reconozcas la carne desgraciada” (46–47) (When you see like a prophetic wound / And recognize the hapless flesh). In resolution, Altazor proposes the destruction of the body to liberate the soul: “Quememos nuestra carne en los ojos del alba / Bebamos la tímida lucidez de la muerte / La lucidez polar de la muerte” (22–23) ([We must] Burn our flesh in the eyes of dawn / Drink the pale lucidity of death / The polar lucidity of death). He also suggests “Que se rompa el andamio de los huesos / Que se derrumben las vigas del cerebro” (26–27) (Smash the scaffold of the bones / Pull down the rafters of the brain) and “Romper las ligaduras de las venas” (66–67) (Break the loops of veins).

The preparation for this act of breaking the existing molds is implied in references to bodily cleanliness and order; Altazor’s bath washes away the old semantic and linguistic associations, leaving him with fresh flesh to start anew. This is the first step in the creation of his new poetic context:

Tengo tanta necesidad de ternura, besa mis cabellos, los he lavado esta mañana en las nubes del alba y ahora quiero dormirme sobre el colchón de la neblina intermitente. (6–7)

(I have a need for tenderness, kiss my hair, I washed it this morning in clouds of dawn, and now I want to sleep on the mattress of occasional drizzle.)

Lava sus manos en la mirada de Dios, y peina su cabellera como la luz y la cosecha de esas flacas espigas de la lluvia satisfecha. (8–9)

(He washes his hands in the glances of God, and combs his hair like the light, like the harvest of those thin grains of satisfied rain.)

Washing hands is a traditional way of disassociating oneself from an unpleasant matter; in this way the poet breaks ties with the old grammar.⁸ Altazor invites the reader to create a new world, but first it is necessary to forget the old one: “A la hora en que las flores se lavan la cara / Y los últimos sueños huyen por las ventanas” (48–49) (At the hour when the flowers wash their faces / And the last dreams escape through the windows).

Before he can move on, however, Altazor lingers and flirts with the old language and the old body in the second canto, an ode to woman. He glorifies the parts of her body in a section similar to *modernista* love poetry, but much more cosmic, reflecting Huidobro’s shift away from the renovated romantic style. Furthermore, this section exemplifies the poet’s view of a particular essence as a collection of separate parts: a corporeal synecdoche.

Here the woman symbolizes all the moving power of poetry (and language) as we know it:

Tu voz hace un imperio en el espacio
 Y esa mano que se levanta en tí como si fuera a colgar soles en el aire
 Y ese mirar que escribe mundos en el infinito
 Y esa cabeza que se dobla para escuchar un murmullo en la eternidad
 Y ese pie que es la fiesta de los caminos encadenados
 Y esos párpados donde vienen a vararse las centellas del éter
 Y ese beso que hincha la proa de tus labios
 Y esa sonrisa como un estandarte al frente de tu vida
 Y ese secreto que dirige las mareas de tu pecho
 Dormido a la sombra de tus senos. (62–63, 64–65)

(Your voice creates an empire in space
 And that hand reaching up as if it were hanging suns in the air
 And that glance writing worlds in the infinite
 And that head bending forward to listen to the murmur of eternity
 And that foot that is a festival for the hobbled roads
 And those eyelids where the lightning bolts of the aether run aground
 And that kiss that swells the bow of your lips
 And that smile like a banner before your life
 And that secret that moves the tides of your chest
 Asleep in the shade of your breasts.)

Yet the poet is not fully enchanted. According to Wood, “since she was not eternal, she could not give eternity. It was therefore impossible for her to provide a solution to man’s problems. The poet sees her and himself as sharing the same destiny” (202). Thus the poet warns: “Sin embargo te advierto que estamos cosidos / A la misma estrella / Estamos cosidos por la misma música tendida / De uno a otro / Por la misma sombra gigante agitada como árbol” (56–57) (And yet I warn you we are sewn / To the same star / We are sewn by the same music stretching / From one to the other / By the same huge shadow shaking like a tree). The woman’s role is not seen as a “solution, but only as a solace or companion in the search for it,” Wood clarifies (202). She is the poetic muse: “Y al fondo de tí misma recuerdas que eras tú / El pájaro de antaño en la clave del poeta” (60–61) (And at the bottom of your self you recall what you were / The bird of yesteryear in the poet’s key). Poet and poetry are in the same boat; they have not yet reached an eternal expression, and must unite, both spiritually and physically, to achieve that goal. Mandlove notes that the male and female identities are drawn together in the canto in the act of creation; only together can they engender a new poetry. Their sexual union is only implied, yet it is another corporeal reference that echoes the idea of textual creation in the body of the poem itself.

In the third canto, Altazor derides the traditional poet as a “Manicura de la lengua” (68–69) (manicurist of language), a title not of “one who creates but of one who polishes” (Wood 205). In this instance, the association of language with the body is again a reference to the poet’s disappointment with previous poetic styles. While it is true that the language can be made beautiful, such beauty is artificial and pejorative. Huidobro explicitly contrasts the manicurists’ subdued polishing with the more violent verbs that the creationist poet must use in his treatment of language, i.e. “romper” (to break), “cortar” (to cut), and “sangrar” (to bleed).⁹ He calls for the end: “Matemos al poeta que nos tiene saturados / [. . .] / Poesía / Demasiada poesía / Desde el arco-iris hasta el culo pianista de la vecina / Basta señora poesía bambina” (70–71) (Let us kill the poet who gluts us / [. . .] / Poetry / Too much poetry / From the rainbow to the piano-bench ass of the lady next door / Enough poetry bambina enough lady). Poetry is exhaustive and even vulgar; once more a corporeal allusion, the appropriately ribald “culo” (ass), pejoratively associates body and language. The extended simile that immediately follows this section is a further example of exhaustion, devised by the poet to show the limitations of poetic possibilities (Wood 205).

Sabemos posar un beso como una mirada
Plantar miradas como árboles
Enjaular árboles como pájaros
Regar pájaros como heliotropes. (70–71)

(We already know how to dart a kiss like a glance
Plant glances like trees
Cage trees like birds
Water birds like heliotropes.)

The chain continues for thirty-six verses, a redundant parody of the caged (“enjaular”) control of the *modernista* metaphoric style. It is an orgy of word couplings in which Huidobro creates innovative images by stretching or violating semantic limitations.

Structural Violations

With the slogan “Mientras vivamos juguemos / El simple sport de los vocablos” (74–75) (As long as we live let us play / The simple sport of words) begins the ludic manipulation of words in Canto IV. The bodies of the words are transforming, and likewise the physical bodies that the word-images stand for begin to change. “El nuevo atleta” (the new athlete) replaces “el último poeta” (the last poet)—we see the athlete “Jugando con magnéticas palabras / Caldeadas como la tierra cuando va a salir un volcán /

Lanzando sortilegios de sus frases pájaro” (72–73) (Frolicking with magnetic words / Hot as the earth when a volcano rises / Hurling the sorceries of his Bird phrases). The image of the athlete, with his strong, well-developed body, symbolizes a new language that will strive, like the athlete, for the perfection of its form, and consequently, expression. Moreover, the poet has declared that “Todas las lenguas están muertas” (both “languages” and “tongues;” Weinberger resolves for “All the languages are dead” and alternates below) and “Hay que resucitar las lenguas” (We must revive the languages) with

Fuegos de risa para el lenguaje tiritando de frío
Gimnasia astral para las lenguas entumecidas
Levántate y anda
Vive vive como un balón de fútbol. (74–75)

(Fires of laughter for the shivering language
Astral gymnastics for the numb tongues
Get up and walk
Live live like a soccer ball.)

Language is a body here that can feel the effects of cold. The third verse of this passage, the phrase Jesus spoke to Lazarus, the man whom he brought back from death, highlights the idea of a corporeal and linguistic resurrection (John 11:1–44).

The Spanish “Lázaro” (Lazarus) is only one letter short of being an anagram of “Altazor.” Anagrams allow for semantic reassignment in a way that suggests that one meaning is inherent in the other, just as one spelling is derived from the other. They represent a vestigial, superstitious assumption that rearranged letters can change meaning but also, somehow, circumscribe meaning within the anagrams of its signifier. Many writers exploit anagrammatic associations¹⁰; in the case of *Altazor*, the anagram with Lázaro emphasizes Huidobro’s insistence on resuscitating language throughout the poem.

In a re-enactment of the biblical scene, the well-known line “Levántate y anda” (Get up and walk) is repeated by the protagonist of the 1927 novel-film *Cagliostro*, a text Huidobro was composing during the same period as *Altazor*.

—Levántate y anda. Levántate y anda, nuevo Lázaro, mi Lázaro.
La voz de Cagliostro es enérgica y a su llamado una bandada de ecos milenarios parece animarse y venir de algún punto lejano perdido en los fondos de la historia y de la geografía.
El joven enfermo se anima, trata de encontrarse adentro de su cuerpo, sus movimientos se

hacen más precisos.

—Levántate y anda . . . Te ordeno que te levantes.

El aire de la sala vibra y brilla cargado de electricidad como un diamante. El milagro

suspende su estrella sobre las cabezas.

—Levántate. Ya. Ya. Levántate.

[. . .]

El enfermo da algunos pasos temblorosos y cae sobre el pecho del mago, que lo estrecha

tiernamente, mientras la madre se arroja de rodillas a sus pies besando el borde de sus

vestidos. (57)

(Arise and walk! Arise and walk, new Lazarus—my Lazarus!

Ringling was the voice of Cagliostro, and at his summons a swarm of echoes millenary seemed to awaken and return to life from some far-distant place, lost in the depths of history and geography.

The sick youth revived; he sought to rally himself within his frame; his movements grew stronger.

Arise and walk! I command you to arise.

Charged with electric force, the air of the room thrilled and sparkled like a diamond. The star of miracle hung above their heads.

Arise! Arise, I say—arise!

[. . .]

Trembling, the youth now healed took a few paces forward, and fell upon the breast of the mage, who embraced him tenderly. His mother threw herself upon her knees at the feet of the mage, kissing the hem of his garment.)

“Altazor” is also a slightly imperfect anagram (one missing phoneme) of “Althotas,” the name of Cagliostro’s alchemical maestro as revealed in the opening scene’s clandestine ceremony. What results is a slightly shifting onomastic arrangement, ALTHOTAS—ALTAZOR—LAZARO, a cabbalistic semantic series suggesting alchemy, magic, and resurrection. Such are the goals of *Altazor*: to make literary gold from banal dross, to create new reality from words, and to breathe new life into moribund morphemes.¹¹ The assignment of a cabbalistic series of names springs from Huidobro’s own declared interest in such topics. In *Vientos contrarios* (1926), among other texts, he glosses his hours of study relegated to “la Astrología, a la Alquimia, a la Cábala antigua y al ocultismo en general” (*Obras Completas I 794*) (Astrology, Alchemy, the ancient Cabbala and the occult in general).

Additionally, the iconic “Levántate y anda” introduces rising motion into the prolonged descent that is *Altazor*, o *El viaje en paracaídas*. With this phrase, and several others like it, Huidobro successfully dissuades gravity, however momentarily, and balances linguistic breakdown with linguistic germination, decomposition with composition. In passages where

he introduces a riff like “La montaña y el montaña / Con su luna y con su luna” (106–07) (The mountain and the moountain / with her moon and his moun), linguistic destruction (in this case, gender) can be somewhat detained by the suggestive possibilities of the creation that arises from it. The reader is still falling down the page with Altazor, yet, on an updraft, admiring the view from the *alturas* (heights) that Huidobro repeatedly associated with poetic potency in his *Manifiestos* (Willis 96). Similarly, the reader’s descent decelerates as he or she is bandied about by the whirling arms of the ever-changing *molino* (mill) while turning the six pages of its rhyming semantic innovations (see below).

The following section focuses on the eye, “precioso regalo del cerebro” (80–81) (precious gift of the brain), and includes thirteen verses with the word “ojo” (eye) in conjunction with varying nouns: “Ojo árbol / Ojo pájaro / Ojo río / Ojo montaña / Ojo mar” (80–81) (Treeeye / Birdeye / Rivereye / Mountaineeye / Seaeye). While it is certainly true that these are novel pairings, it is more to the point that they lend a new function to the idea of “ojo.” This function, within the immediate context, must be considered in terms of both meaning and appearance. First, both the word “ojo” and, by extension, its signified body part, acquire new meaning in the expanding semantic context of the poem. These new meanings cannot be easily extracted from the context; it is better to recognize multiple possibilities such as “look,” “watch out,” “see,” “insight,” “vision,” etc., possibilities that pervade the entire poem beyond these specific verses. The words paired with “ojo” also assume new meanings in the context, creating something like a landscape that both sees and is seen. Second, the repetition of the word “ojo” on the page reinforces the word’s physical form, which visually resembles a pair of eyes and a nose. The importance of words’ visual appearance cannot be understated; it is a function with which Huidobro had experimented earlier, for instance in the 1913 “Nipona.” And the celerity of these verses suggests, as in many other aspects of the poem, the impact of film in the arts in general and on Huidobro, who won a prize in New York from the League for Better Pictures for that never-made silent film *Cagliostro*.

In two passages beginning respectively with “Vaya por los globos y los cocodrilos mojados” (82–83) (Travel the worlds and the wet crocodiles) and “Noche, préstame tu mujer con pantorrillas de florero de amapolas jóvenes” (84–85) (Night, lend me your woman with calves of a flowerpot of young poppies), the poet scrambles the words of the first section to create the second. Semantic limitations have thus been totally ignored.¹² Immediately between the two scrambled sections, the poet hints at what is taking place in his mixture of meanings: “Rosa al revés rosa otra vez y rosa rosa / Aunque no quiera el carcelero / Río revuelto para la pesca milagrosa” (84–85) (Rose upturned and rose returned and rose and rose / Though the warden don’t want it / Muddy rivers make for clean fishing). Here Huidobro builds on the

motif of the “jaula” (jail)—the “carcelero” (warden) is meaning or definition, that which restricts the words semantically.

Periodically the poetic voice plays against the downward trajectory of *Altazor* through uplifting musical interludes, little compositions that stall the grand decomposition. The best known of these is the nightingale scale, the “rodoñol, rorreñol,” (90–91, my emphasis) (nightdongale, nightrengale) up through *mi, fa, sol, la,* and *si*. The most cherished of songbirds, the nightingale as signifier is transformed here into a seven-note exercise suggesting the song of its signified.¹³ Cellos, violins, pianos, arpeggios and other musical images abound in the poem, further supporting a reading of the text as *arrangement* in the sense of a new casting of an already established melody. In the nightingale series, Huidobro follows the ascendant scale to make his point, but in doing so infers that phonemes or syllables—“sílabas que son sonajas que son semillas” (Paz, “Decir” 12) (syllables that are rattles that are seeds)—can be rearranged and sequenced in the same way that musical notes can be. Indeed, this practice is observed in the later cantos where syllabic rearrangement is accompanied by visual experimentation, approximating even more closely the two functions of printed notes on a musical staff (position and duration). The relationship with music should also lead us to ponder the great, unfulfilled fantasy of writers throughout history and geography, especially the vanguard writers: a truly universal language, what Vicky Unruh has described as “prior to all time [that] intimates a universality of human experience and emotion somehow divested of the historical and cultural accretions that shape actual languages in real-life worlds” (221). This is the ur-language that leads writers to enviously behold music’s transcendence without translation.¹⁴ As we drop vertiginously through the cantos, especially the last two, we begin to see letters grouped as words but recognizable only as vocalizations. *Altazor*’s nonsensical noises, “i i i o / Ai a i ai a i i i o ia” (150–51) (ee ee ee oh / Ahee ah ee ahee ah ee ee ee ee oh eeah), could just as likely come from the cradle as from the deathbed, or maybe even from the futile maneuverings of Roca’s musician aboard the *Titanic*, “su trombón anegado por el mar” (epigraph) (his trombone flooded by the sea). To arrive at that truly universal language, the writer must seemingly sacrifice meaning completely, thus drifting into the realm of music and, ultimately, into a dissolution back into the sea / the womb / the semiotic chora of pre-linguistic mysteries.¹⁵

Resembling Mariano Brull’s “jitanjáforas,” wordplay in the poem continues with changing syllables and endings (Dowling 253; Unruh 217). In fragments such as the ones with “golondrina / golonfina / golontrina / goloncima” (88–89) (swooping swallow / whopping wallow / weeping wellow / sweeping shrillow) and “meteoro / meteplata / metecobre / meteópalos” (94–95) (meteoroid / meteojooid / meteovoids / meteonoid),

there is only one part of the word that changes. The next step is seen in the phrase “horitaña de la montazonte” (88–89) (horslope of the hillizon), in which the words interchange their endings, exploiting the fact that in a fictitious world the description of an object, even by merely naming it, gives existence to that object (Waugh 93). It is not essential to know exactly what a “golontrina” is or what the palindrome “eterfinifrete” (98–99) (infiniternity) means; their printed presence on the page is enough to confirm their existence. In the poem’s context, these words do not need concrete definitions; through the sound and the appearance of the words the reader can imply a meaning by recognizing their hybrid quality. The juxtaposition of “golondrina” (swallow) and “trinar” (to warble), or “eterno” (eternal) and “infinito” (infinite), is a linguistic chimera, a fusion of parts from different words, which will be reflected in the culminating image of “la medusa irreparable” (146–47) (Ruined Medusa), the mixture of disparate parts of distinct bodies.

The poetic voice alters the formation of familiar terms: “Entonces yo sólo digo / Que no compro estrellas de la nochería / Y tampoco olas nuevas en la marería” (90–91) (Then I can only say / That I don’t buy stars at the nightery / Or new waves at the seastore). By inserting this mosaic of invented and combined words in a context of normal words, Huidobro displays both the control of the author over his own creation (the poem) and also the arbitrariness of the words themselves. This arbitrary quality stands out especially in names (Waugh 93–94).

Aquí yace Rosario río de rosas hasta el infinito
 Aquí yace Raimundo raíces del mundo son sus venas
 Aquí yace Clarisa clara risa enclaustrada en la luz
 Aquí yace Alejandro antro alejado ala adentro. (94–95)

(Here lies Rosemary rose carried to the infinite
 Here lies Raymond rays of mud his veins
 Here lies Clarissa clear is her smile enclloistered in the light
 Here lies Alexander alas under all is yonder.)

In this passage, as he breaks the names to reveal their components, the forensic poet (“Aquí yace Altazor azor fulminado por la altura / Aquí yace Vicente antipoeta y mago” / “Here lies Altazor hawk exploded by the altitude / Here lies Vicente antipoet and magician”) also dehumanizes the people that the names represent with his alliterative enumeration of them as dead ones; they are nothing more than names. Evocative of the Lázaro anagram, these onomastic pseudo-etymologies exemplify rearrangement as well as semantic reinscription. At the same time, the breaking apart of each name imitates, in a corporeal sense, the decomposition of a cadaver.

The acquisition of new functions for words is also shown by what Dowling calls a “syntactic innovation” (261): “La cascada que cabellera sobre la noche / Mientras la noche se cama a descansar / Con su luna que almohada el cielo / Yo ojo el paisaje cansado” (128–29) (The waterfall tresses over the night / While the night beds to rest / With its moon that pillows the sky / I iris the sleepy land). Words that are usually nouns (in Spanish) function as verbs in this passage. It is not insignificant that two of these four verses display body parts acting as verbs, while the other two have body-related nouns—“cama” (bed) and “almohada” (pillow)—as verbs; again, structure and function couple in the changing context of both body and language. In addition, the creation of masculine counterparts for feminine words (in Spanish) lends the terms a corporeal connotation of androgyny: “La montaña y el montañero / Con su luna y con su luna” (106–07) (The mountain and the moontain / with her moon and his moun). Dowling claims that “Huidobro alters the gender of [the] nouns” (260); it is no exaggeration to say that the poet eventually desires to destroy gender completely, again robbing the poem’s mother tongue of a semantic system.

In the fifth canto, with a recapitulation of the call for cleanliness, Huidobro then introduces the direct substitution of one body for another, one word for another. First he sets up the parallels and then he substitutes:

Nos frotamos las manos y reímos
 Nos lavamos los ojos y jugamos
 El horizonte es un rinoceronte
 El mar un azar
 El cielo un pañuelo
 La llaga una plaga
 Un horizonte jugando a todo mar se soñaba con el cielo después de las siete llagas de Egipto. (112–13)

(We rub our hands and laugh
 We wash our hands and play along
 The horizon’s a bison
 The ocean devotion
 Heaven a hanky
 The page a plague
 A horizon filled with the ocean blew its nose on the heavens after the seven pages of Egypt.)

He also shows us the evolution or continual change of one body—a windmill—into other bodies. The mill itself is a symbol of change because it is always turning, like the wheel of fortune, and because it is associated with Don Quixote’s fantastic giant who, it will be remembered, was turned *back* into a windmill by the evil magician, according to the addled don’s assessment. Huidobro’s “Molino de viento” (Windmill station) becomes a

“Molino de aumento [. . .] del lamento [. . .] con amordazamiento” (114–121) (Mill of proliferation [. . .] of the lamentation [. . .] with expurgation) etc. With the repetition of words for the effect of their sounds much more than their meanings, the poet displays his arbitrary control again. Also, the six pages of the “molino” metamorphosis, with long, unbroken word columns, physically resemble a windmill’s arms as they are turned and therefore, once again, emphasize the physical appearance of words as a unique aspect of their composition (Dowling 262).

As he approaches death, Altazor begins to fragment himself: “Y he aquí que ahora me diluyo en múltiples cosas / Soy luciérnaga y voy iluminando las ramas de la selva / [. . .] / Y luego soy árbol / [. . .] / Y ahora soy mar / Pero guardo algo de mis modos de volcán / De mis modos de árbol de mis modos de luciérnaga / De mis modos de pájaro de hombre y de rosal” (128–31) (And here I must dissolve myself into many things / I’m a firefly lighting the forest branches / [. . .] / And then I’m a tree / [. . .] / And now I’m the sea / But I keep to my volcano ways / My tree ways my firefly ways / My bird and man and rosebush ways). Like the anagrams that conserve mutual meaning, one spelling containing the other without ceasing to offer its own signification, the poetic voice can assume here concentric ontologies springing from an assumed linguistic identity. The consequent dissolution of Altazor’s being coincides with the similar breakdown of the language, which already occurs in the context of newly created words: “Empiece ya / La faranmandó mandó liná / Con su musiquí con su musicá” (126–27) (Crank it up / The faranmandole that manned a linn / With its musicoo with its musical).¹⁶ This breakdown is also found in the disorder and fatigue of Altazor’s body: “El viento norte despeina tus cabellos” (124–25) (The north wind rumples your hair) and “los brazos [. . .] fatigados por el huracán” (126–27) (arms [. . .] worn down by hurricanes); he wants to laugh “antes que venga la fatiga” (128–29) (before weariness comes). Altazor’s bodily symptoms foreshadow the collapse of language that soon follows.

The Death of Meaning

In Canto VI everything falls into confusion, mixing with itself. The prognostic “el clarín de la Babel” (140–41) (the bugle of Babel) evokes Old Testament cacophonous confusion, at the same time that “la medusa irreparable” (146–47) (Ruined Medusa) alludes to mythological mayhem, a wretched recipe of woman and snake. The parts of the Medusa, randomly assembled and “irreparable” (ruined), disintegrate: “Olvidando la serpiente / Olvidando sus dos piernas / Sus dos ojos / Sus dos manos / Sus orejas” (146–47) (Forgetting the serpent / Forgetting its two legs / Its two eyes / Its two hands / Its ears). Indeed, the very verses of the sixth canto seem to fall

apart on the page, imitating the descent of a feather, or a rock bouncing off canyon walls, or perhaps a sinking ship:

En su oreja	viento norte
Cristal mío	
Baño eterno	el nudo noche
El gloria trino	sin desmayo. (146–47)
(In its ear	north wind
My crystal	
Bath eternal	night knot
Glory trilling	without dismay.)

In the final canto, Altazor sings in a babbling voice no longer understandable: “Olamina olasica lalilá / Isonauta / Olandera uruaru / Ia ia campanuso compasedo” (148–49) (Roceaning tradocean laleela / Equinaut / Bannocean raruckoo / Eeah eeah campanily acompassee). This new lexicon seems to be based on Spanish, and therefore it still has a context within the gradual disintegration of the poem; however, the death of meaning has already occurred: the word is only its resonance and its appearance.

To reach the end of the poem is to arrive at the bottom of the abyss in which Altazor has fallen. The “jaula” exists no longer, neither the cage of flesh and bone nor the cage of subject and verb. The verses have diminished from being full, long sentences in the Prefacio to short phrases in Cantos IV and V, to small word groups in Canto VI and finally, in Canto VII, to grouped syllables, first with consonants and then only vowels. The poet has entered, in Paz’s words, “al borde del lenguaje” (on the edge of language), the essential zone of existence that is replete with both life and death (*Arco* 147–48). It is a pure existence; words do not betray with their connotations.

In the end, Altazor has both died and been reborn. He has completed the metamorphosis of his soul into a language/body that is simple and expressive, and he has won the challenge that he proposed before—“el simple sport de los vocablos” (74–75) (the simple sport of words). But by winning he has fallen into the silence that is the absence of expression; the “medusa irreparable” signified that the abnormal possibilities, the confused chimeras, have been exhausted. The fundamental dialogue of any work of art, which is participation with the reader or observer, has been compromised. With the absence of meaning inherent in the final freedom of expression, the reader no longer has a basis for understanding. It is the

culminating demonstration of the paradox; by attempting the absolute expression of the soul, the poet loses the ability for that expression to be shared and evaluated. Huidobro has manifested what Paz described: “La experiencia de la caída en el caos es indecible” (*Arco* 150) (The experience of the fall into chaos is untellable). Falling into the chaos is the same as going back to the beginning when, biblically, there was only the Word. The Word is the very absence of words; it is silence.

By way of conclusion, I return to elaborate on the almost unanimous traditional critical opinions given at the beginning of this essay. Pedro Aullón de Haro proclaims that *Altazor* is a poem “cuyo proyecto, finalmente fracasado, no es más que el fracaso de la Vanguardia, de una vanguardia huidobriana empeñada en el ideal de la trascendencia más allá del propio lenguaje” (58) (whose project, finally failed, is no more than the failure of the Vanguard, of a Huidobrian vanguard insistent on the ideal of transcendence beyond language itself). Guillermo Sucre clarifies:

Altazor no es un poema fracasado, sino, lo que es muy distinto, el poema del fracaso. Insisto: no sobre sino del fracaso; no es un comentario alrededor del fracaso, sino su presencia misma. Uno de sus valores (y de sus riesgos, por supuesto) reside en este hecho: haber ilustrado con su escritura misma la desmesura y la imposibilidad de una aspiración de absoluto. (122)

(*Altazor* is not a failed poem, but rather, and this is quite different: the poem of failure. I insist: not about but of failure; it is not a commentary about failure but rather its very presence. One of its values (and its risks, of course) resides in this fact: to have illustrated through its own writing the excess and the impossibility of an aspiration for the absolute.)

Similarly, René de Costa elucidates that, shortly before the publication of *Altazor*, a popular theory describing Rimbaud’s search for a new poetic language as a “fracaso” (failure) prompted Huidobro himself to reply to a colleague: “Respecto a lo de artista fracasado es posible que tenga Ud. razón [pero] en mi fracaso voy junto con Rimbaud y Lautréamont” (24) (Regarding this bit about the failed artist, it’s possible you’re right [but] in my failure I accompany Rimbaud and Lautréamont).

These judgments of the poem are inevitably linked to the goal of creationism; in his quest to find an original expression, Huidobro has in fact attempted to combine artistic form with artistic content in perfect union. In the struggle to do so, however, both form and content have been reduced such that they are no longer recognizable, even nonexistent. *Altazor* has reached death at the bottom of the fall; his body, like artistic form, has died and his soul, like content, has escaped to someplace beyond perception. Participation, the very base of artistic expression, has also collapsed into the abyss, leaving the reader with only silence and blank space.

It is in this silence, nonetheless, that a new creation is implied. Huidobro alludes to such a silence—a pregnant pause—in the first canto: “Silencio la tierra va a dar a luz un árbol” (50–51) (Silence the earth will give birth to a tree). The tree, of course, symbolizes creation, just as the silence represents the biblical Word. To consider the poem as a “fracaso” is to deny that death’s finality offers a double perspective: it may be true that the death of the body robs the soul of its expression, or it may be the case that the body’s death endows the soul with an infinite range of expression, lending it the newness of a creation liberated by the violent destruction of its previous home, the body. It is precisely this ambiguity of the outcome that allows *Altazor*’s frustrated expression to be viewed not as a failure but rather as simply what it is: a frustration, an impasse.

The metalanguage of *Altazor*, composed over some twelve years during the heart of the avant-garde period, is the process of *creacionismo*. The poem’s original orchestration of word parts and body parts, in a play of composition and decomposition, fixes the reader’s attention on the limitations of expression and existence; the word is then reduced to its most essential qualities—sound and appearance—in order to create a new world or body of expression. The eventual dissipation of the poetic sound into silence, and also the disappearance of the poetic body into blank space, displays the frustration of achieving the original poetic expression that is desired in creationism. The paradox of poetry, as dependent on language and yet desiring to escape its limitations, expands to represent all art as the expression of what it is to be human, to feel the imbalance of a spirit yearning for freedom lodged in an imperfect body perpetually falling toward death.

The numerous ways in which Huidobro’s vision, in *Altazor*, was years ahead of his time expand in scope beyond this essay. To note just a few influences: Mireya Camurati identifies Huidobro as a precursor for the Brazilian Noigandres group of concretist poets; as early as 1957, Haroldo de Campos wrote an essay on *Altazor* (193–204). Some of the Brazilian concretists, fifty years after they began their movement, now maintain websites with interactive poetry in which one can rearrange words, not unlike the popular Magnetic Poetry™ refrigerator game: a virtual legacy of Huidobro’s experimentation in *Altazor* with interchangeable nouns, gender, syllables, and phonemes.¹⁷ Huidobro’s compatriot Nicanor Parra, who took up the mantle of “antipoeta” (antipoet) from *Altazor* and expanded the concept in his famous “antipoemas” (antipoems), maintains an interactive website featuring his “paRRafraseos” (paRRaphrases) and the search for a key that will open a “paRRacaídas” (paRRachute).¹⁸ For the 2003 reissue of his English-language version of *Altazor* cited throughout this text, Eliot Weinberger chose to retranslate from the original, stressing that the poem, like a game, can always yield new results (Weinberger xii). Although

Huidobro criticized blind chance, completely random pairings, and the surrealists' "automatic writing" when creating poetry, he loved shuffling the deck (chairs) in search of new combinations. In the end, this is Altazor's inheritance: to search for new life in language, even when sinking toward death; to bravely hoist your trombone and improvise beyond the soaked sheet music, though the lifeboats have already dispersed. Altazor's linguistic body, composed in pieces to be arranged and shuffled and rearranged again, is Huidobro's greatest legacy.

Notes

1. These descriptions are from Aullón de Haro (58), Sucre (122), de Costa (*The Careers of a Poet* 157), Unruh (218), and Shaw (3) respectively. Translations other than *Altazor* in English (Weinberger's 2003 edition) and *Cagliostro* in English (*Mirror of a Mage*) are my own.
2. See his chapter on *Altazor* in *Vicente Huidobro: The Careers of a Poet* (137–61). De Costa elucidates the differences in composition between each canto.
3. See especially Bary, Benko, Camurati, de Costa, Larrea, Mitre, Moscoso de Cordero, and Perdigó.
4. This approximates the metalinguistic technique that a novelist uses, for example, upon including prologues, marginal notes, and letters to the editor to expose the physical framework of the text (Waugh 97).
5. Pedro Aullón de Haro describes the ambiguous relationship between Huidobro's poetic voice and the poem's protagonist: "Altazor, que al estilo romántico es el doble de Huidobro y, ambivalentemente, sujeto narrador y sujeto narrativo de segunda persona, es el enviado, el mago, el poeta, pero como antipoeta negador del concepto de poeta existente para crear el poeta del futuro, lo cual, como otros varios puntos, se especifica de diversa forma a lo largo del texto" (54) (Altazor, who in romantic style is the double of Huidobro and, ambivalently, narrating subject and second-person narrated subject, is the envoy, the magician, the poet, but as an antipoet who negates the concept of the existing poet in order to create the poet of the future, specified, like several other points, variously throughout the text).
6. In *Sor Juana, o Las trampas de la fe* (*Sor Juana, or The Traps of Faith*), Paz claims that what draws Sor Juana to Phaeton—a key allusion in *Primero Sueño* (*First Dream*) as well as in her sonnet "Si los riesgos del mar considerara" (If the risks of the ocean were considered)—is his having died precisely in his attempt to try something new. Paz also asserts that the kind of intellectual inquiry Sor Juana makes in her long poem is engaged centuries later in *Altazor* (380–86).
7. For a detailed analysis of Huidobro's manifestos, see my *Aesthetics of Equilibrium*.
8. The biblical reference to Pontius Pilate's hand-washing is Matthew 27: 24.
9. The contrast appears to similar effect in the 1919 poem "Vulgívaga" by Huidobro's Brazilian contemporary Manuel Bandeira.
10. For example, when we learn that the name of nineteenth-century Brazilian novelist José de Alencar's Indianist protagonist, "Iracema," is an anagram of "America," it serves to highlight the allegorical reading of the telluric qualities her character represents.

11. We know that an earlier rendition of the name, in one of the textual fragments published in French in the 1920s, was “Altazur.” The “o” in “Altazor” became definitive, giving rise to the numerous associations made to the semantic sense of a “high-flying hawk.” Only with the “o,” however, does the anagram to Lázaro become apparent. Weinberger speculates an anagrammatic relation to *Alastor*, a long poem by Shelley (xi).
12. See Dowling (256–58).
13. See Romero (153–56) for a mystical interpretation of the nightingale.
14. Quiroga specifies that in Latin America particularly, “the desire for this perfect symbiosis [of sound and sense] is related to the longing for an original language, the repository of all perfect meaning, somehow grafted onto or under Spanish” (165).
15. *Temblor de cielo* (Skyquake), also published in 1931 though apparently of a more concentrated composition time, is a prose text less exuberant than *Altazor* in which the narrative voice can ask, “¿Por qué nos empeñamos en resucitar nuestros muertos? Ellos nos impiden ver la idea que nace” (144) (Why do we insist on resuscitating our dead? They impede us from seeing the idea being born). The focus has shifted, in this piece loosely based on *Tristan und Isolde*, from creation as an act dependent on prior destruction, to creation as an act dependent on a love bond. As de Costa points out, the themes of *Temblor de cielo* seem to derive in part from Canto II of *Altazor* (“Introducción” 42).
16. See Hahn for a comparison of these and other verses to the characteristics of the traditionally British “nonsense” verse.
17. For example, Augusto de Campos’s page at www.2.uol.com.br/augustodecampos/clippoema.htm.
18. www.antiweb.cl.

Works Cited

- Aullón de Haro, Pedro. “La transcendencia de la poesía y el pensamiento poético de Vicente Huidobro.” *Revista de Occidente* 86–87 (1988): 41–58.
- Bandeira, Manuel. *Estrela da Vida Inteira: Nova Edição*. Rio de Janeiro: Nova Fronteira, 1993.
- Bary, David. *Huidobro o la vocación poética*. Granada: Universidad de Granada, 1963.
- _____. *Nuevos estudios sobre Huidobro y Larrea*. Valencia: Pre-Textos, 1984.
- Benko, Susana. *Vicente Huidobro y el cubismo*. Caracas: Banco Provincial, 1993.
- Camurati, Mireya. *Poesía y poética de Vicente Huidobro*. Buenos Aires: García Cambeiro, 1980.
- Costa, René de. *Vicente Huidobro: The Careers of a Poet*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1984.
- _____. “Introducción.” Huidobro, Vicente. *Altazor*. Madrid: Cátedra, 1988.
- Dowling, Lee H. “Metalanguage in Huidobro’s *Altazor*.” *Language and Style* 15.4 (1982): 253–266.
- Hahn, Oscar. “Vicente Huidobro: El sentido del sinsentido.” *Inti* 46–47 (1998): 3–11.
- Huidobro, Vicente. *Altazor or A Voyage in Parachute*. Trans. Eliot Weinberger. Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2003.
- _____. *Altazor: Temblor de cielo*. Ed. René de Costa. Madrid: Cátedra, 1988.
- _____. *Cagliostro*. Santiago: Universitaria, 1997.
- _____. *Mirror of a Mage*. Trans. Warre B. Wells. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1931.
- _____. *Obras completas*. Ed. Hugo Montes. Santiago: Andrés Bello, 1976.

- Larrea, Juan. "Vicente Huidobro en vanguardia." *Revista Iberoamericana* 45 (1979): 213–73.
- Mandlove, Nancy B. "At the Outer Limits of Language: Mallarmé's *Un Coup de des* and Huidobro's *Altazor*." *Studies in Twentieth-Century Literature* 8.2 (1984): 167.
- Mitre, Eduardo. "La imagen en Vicente Huidobro." *Revista Iberoamericana* 42.94 (1976): 79–85.
- Moscoso de Cordero, María Eugenia. *La metáfora en Altazor*. Cuenca: Universidad de Cuenca, 1987.
- Paz, Octavio. *El arco y la lira*. Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1972.
- _____. "Decir sin decir." *Vuelta* 9:107 (1985): 12–13.
- _____. *Sor Juana, or The Traps of Faith*. Trans. Margaret Sayers Peden. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988.
- Perdigón, Luisa Marina. *The Origins of Vicente Huidobro's "Creacionismo" (1911–1916) and its Evolution (1917–1947)*. Lewiston: Mellen University Press, 1994.
- Quiroga, José. "Translating Vowels, or, the Defeat of Sounds: The Case of Huidobro." *Voice-Overs: Translation and Latin American Literature*. Ed. Daniel Balderston and Marcy E. Schwartz. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002.
- Roca, Juan Manuel. "Diciembre." *Nueva poesía latinoamericana*. Ed. Miguel Ángel Zapata. Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1999.
- Romero, Publio Octavio. "La modernidad de *Altazor*: Tradición y creacionismo." *La Palabra y el Hombre* 121 (2002): 143–58.
- Schopf, Federico. "Poesía y lenguaje en *Altazor*." *Revista Chilena de Literatura* 58 (2001): 5–18.
- Shaw, Donald. *Spanish American Poetry after 1950: Beyond the Vanguard*. London: Tamesis, 2008.
- Sucre, Guillermo. *La máscara y la transparencia*. Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1985.
- Unruh, Vicky. *Latin American Vanguards: The Art of Contentious Encounters*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994.
- Waugh, Patricia. *Metafiction*. London: Methuen, 1984.
- Weinberger, Eliot. "Introduction." Huidobro, Vicente. *Altazor*. Trans. Weinberger. Middletown, Wesleyan University Press, 2003.
- Willis, Bruce Dean. *Aesthetics of Equilibrium: The Vanguard Poetics of Vicente Huidobro and Mário de Andrade*. Lafayette: Purdue Studies in Romance Literatures, 2006.
- Wood, Cecil G. *The Creacionismo of Vicente Huidobro*. Fredericton: York Press, 1978.
- Yurkievich, Saúl. *Fundadores de la nueva poesía latinoamericana*. Barcelona: Edhasa, 2002.
- _____. *Nueva poesía latinoamericana*. Barcelona: Ariel, 1989.

Willis, Bruce Dean. "Altazor: A New Arrangement." *Huidobro's Futurity: Twenty-First Century Approaches*. Ed. Luis Correa-Díaz and Scott Weintraub. *Hispanic Issues On Line* 6 (Spring 2010): 72–92.
http://hispanicissues.umn.edu/Spring2010/04_Huidobro_Willis.pdf.
