

T.P.'s Weekly - Academy - Athenaeum - Saturday Review - The Southern
 17/62 Alberto Caeiro. The Ostrich

The twentieth century has at last found its poet - not in the sense that this poet sings the 20th century, but in the sense that a poet has at last appeared who represents an absolute novelty, something altogether unconnected with literary traditions of any kind whatsoever. It is natural to say that the 20th. century has found its poet for no other reason than this - that the extraordinary originality of this poet happens in the 20th. century. The Rime of the Ancient Mariner ~~no correlation~~ to its time is, if anything, less original than A.C.'s ~~at this time~~ - The Keeper of Sheep - (O Guardador de Rebanhos) which has just appeared in Lisbon.

No one in Portuguese literary milieux had ever heard of him. He appeared suddenly. And his contribution to Portuguese, and European literature, breaks away, as we have said from all traditions and currents that were valid in the past or are active to-day.

A.C. is the poet of absolute materialism. This is his first originality; there never was, properly speaking, a poet of materialism... The second innovation is that Caeiro puts into his absolute materialism a poetical colour and intensity which ~~only~~ we have been accustomed to find only in the highest spiritual/(istic)\ poetry.

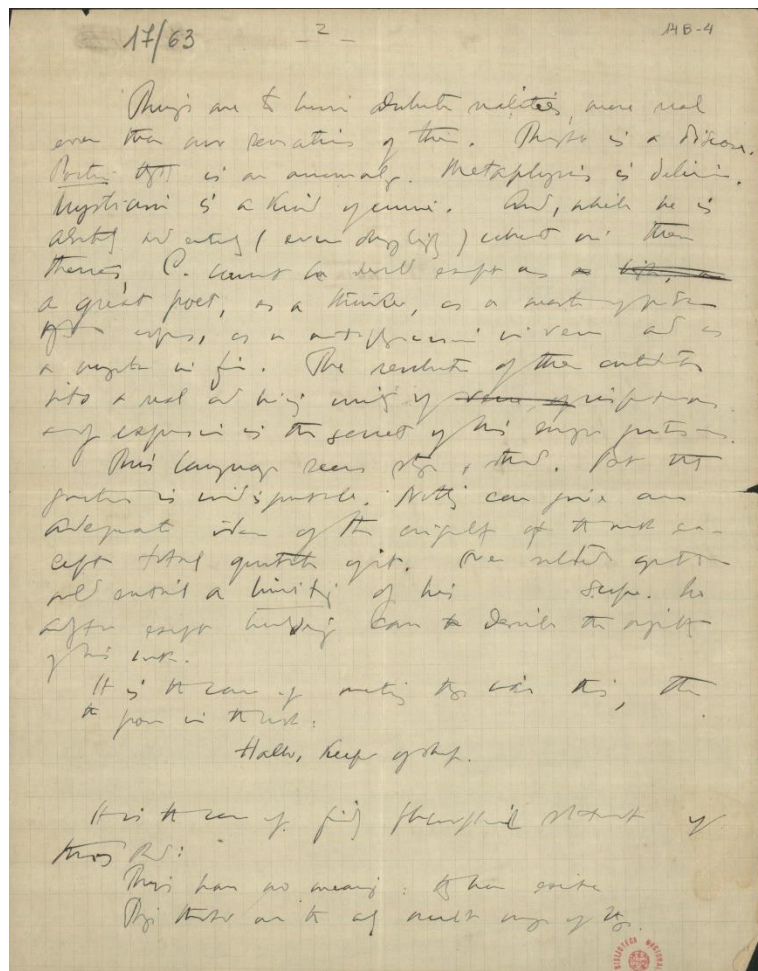
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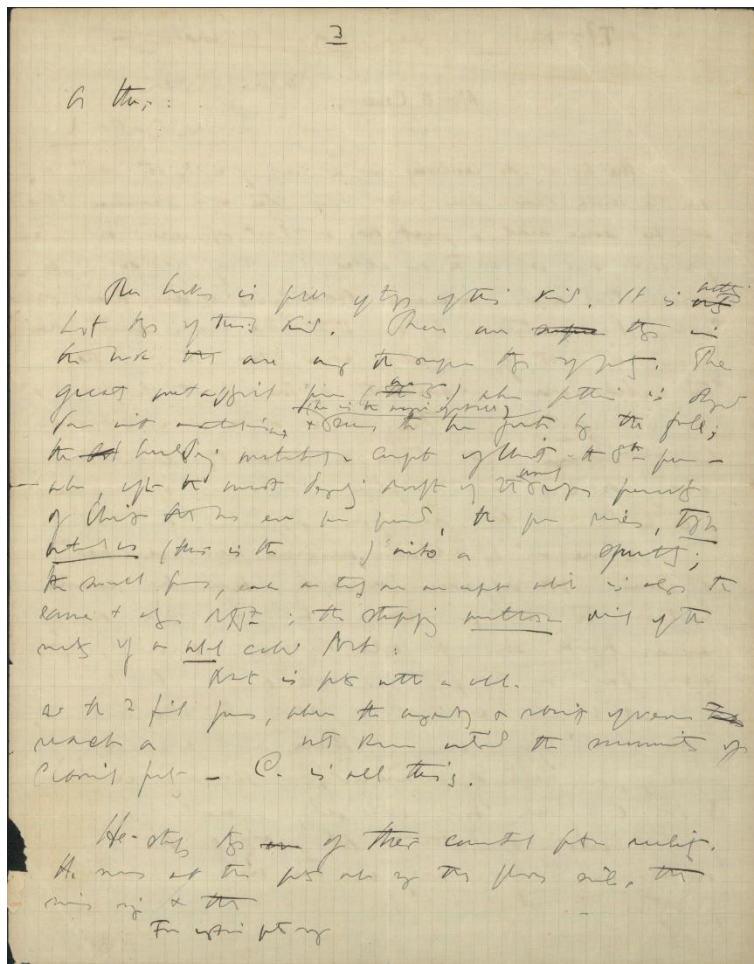
Alberto Caeiro.

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No one in Portuguese literary milieux had ever heard of him. He appeared suddenly. And his contribution to Portuguese, and European literature, breaks away, as we have said from all traditions and currents that were valid in the past or are active to-day.

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Or this:

{...}

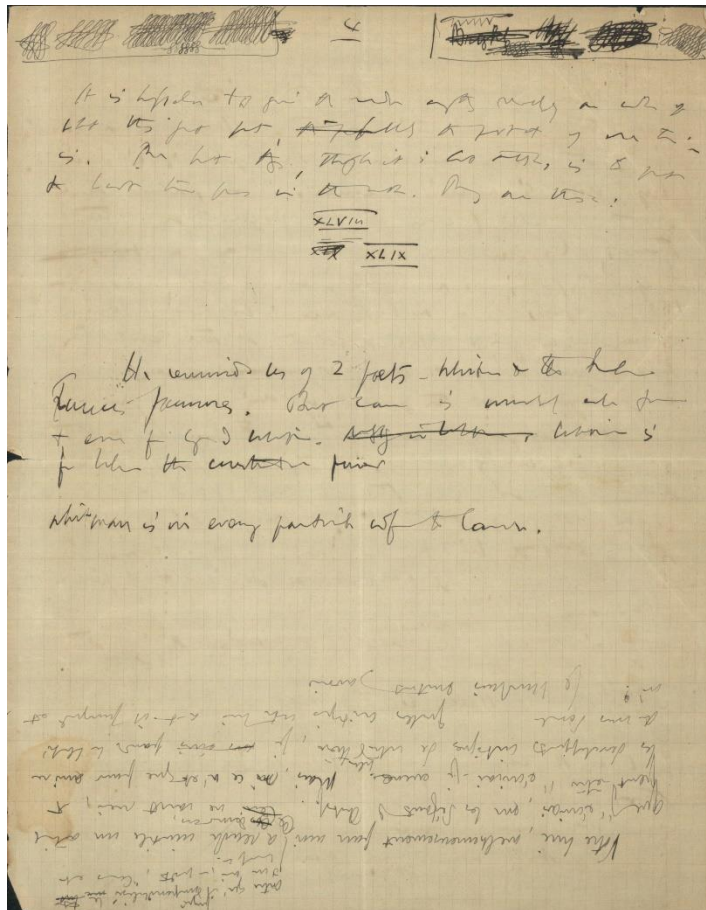
The book is full of things of this kind. It is ~~only~~ nothing but things of this kind. There are ~~supre~~ things in the work that are among the supreme things of poetry. The great metaphysical poem (~~the~~ no. 5) where pantheism is dragged down into materialism and (he is the major of all) seems to be just by the full; the ~~ast~~ bewildering materialistic concept of Christ - the 8th poem - where after the most |*degrading draft of the moral image presumably| of Christ that has ever been found, the poem rises, through materialism (this is the {...}) into a {...} spiritualist; the small poems, each as truly as one |*concept| which is always the same and always different; the staggering materialistic denial of the reality of a whole called Nature:

Nature is parts without a whole.

And the 2 final poems, where the majesty and sobriety of verse ~~take~~ reach a {...} not known until the summits of classical poetry - Caetano is all this.

He strips things ~~even~~ of their constant poetic reality. He seems not those who say that flowers smile, that rivers sing and that {...}

For mystic poets say {...}



It is hopeless to give the reader anything resembling an idea of what this great poet, the greatest of all time, is. The best thing, though it is |*bad method|, is to quote the last two poems in the work. They are these:

XLVIII

XLIV

He reminds us of 2 poets - Whitman and the bucolic Francis Jammes. But Caeiro is undoubtedly above Jammes and even far beyond Whitman. ~~Nothing in Whitman~~ Whitman is far below the constructive power {...}

Whitman is in every particle inferior to Caeiro.

Votre livre, malheureusement pour moi autre qu'il parfois {...} ~~une texte~~ le thème d'un livre, un †, "† et †" a rendu inutile un article que j'écrivais, sur les défauts |*d'orthographe|. ~~Ceci~~ Ce ~~cas~~ demeure ne vaut rien, et peut-être l'écrivais-je aucune. Mais, si ce n'est que pour suivre les développements critiques de votre belle thèse, je ~~vous écris~~ † le † dans vous † {...} quelles critiques contre lui a-t-il propos et où? Je voudrais surtout savoir {...}

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