



Undergraduate Honors Theses

2019-12-19

Pages of the Revolution: Symbolism in Sophia de Mello Breyner Andresen's *O Nome das Coisas*

Madalyn Alice Harper Lyman

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/studentpub_uht

BYU ScholarsArchive Citation

Lyman, Madalyn Alice Harper, "Pages of the Revolution: Symbolism in Sophia de Mello Breyner Andresen's *O Nome das Coisas*" (2019). *Undergraduate Honors Theses*. 100.
https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/studentpub_uht/100

This Honors Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by BYU ScholarsArchive. It has been accepted for inclusion in Undergraduate Honors Theses by an authorized administrator of BYU ScholarsArchive. For more information, please contact scholarsarchive@byu.edu, ellen_amatangelo@byu.edu.

Honors Thesis

PAGES OF THE REVOLUTION: SYMBOLISM IN
SOPHIA DE MELLO BREYNER ANDRESEN'S *O NOME DAS COISAS*

by
Madalyn Lyman

Submitted to Brigham Young University in partial fulfillment
of graduation requirements for University Honors

Department of Spanish and Portuguese
Brigham Young University
December 2019

Advisor: Anna-Lisa Halling

Honors Coordinator: Gregory Stallings

ABSTRACT

PAGES OF THE REVOLUTION: SYMBOLISM IN SOPHIA DE MELLO BREYNER ANDRESEN'S *O NOME DAS COISAS*

Madalyn A. H. Lyman

Department of Spanish and Portuguese

Bachelor of Arts

In the midst of political turmoil surrounding the Portuguese *Revolução dos Cravos* (Carnation Revolution), Sophia de Mello Breyner Andresen wrote the anthology *O Nome das Coisas* ["The Name of Things"] (1977). With this historically significant period as the background of her poetry, Andresen addresses the politics of the time with repeated metaphor, particularly the symbol of paper in various forms, such as a poster or a blank page. Through this repeated and evolving symbolism, she illustrates how the anxiousness and oppression of the Portuguese people turned first to relief and rejoicing after the dictatorship fell and then to disappointment as political instability followed. The symbol of paper also asserts the importance of writing, which is a direct comment on the nation's censorship prior to the revolution in 1974. An analysis of the dynamic metaphors in significant poems from before, immediately following, and some time after the *Revolução dos Cravos* reveals the importance of Andresen's politically themed writing in highlighting the voice of the Portuguese people.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I want to thank my advisor Dr. Anna-Lisa Halling for the many hours she dedicated to helping me with this project. She did far more than anyone else to help make this thesis a success, and she has become a great friend to me. I also want to thank my faculty reader Cristina Cowley, who has been nothing but kind and encouraging throughout my time in the Portuguese major and through the thesis process. I will always consider her a wonderful friend as well. I want to thank Dr. Gregory Stallings for enriching this incredible experience for me with his unique insight and thoughtful questions. Finally, I want to thank my husband Alex Lyman, my mom Michele Carr, and many other family members for their love and support—especially my sister Paige Pratt, who came to my thesis defense and celebrated the achievement with me.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Title	i
Abstract	iii
Acknowledgments	v
Table of Contents	vii
List of Figures	ix
Introduction	1
Biography	3
Review of Literature	5
Historical Background	9
Part One: Before the <i>Revolução dos Cravos</i>	13
Part Two: Reactions to Revolution and Instability	19
Part Three: Formation of Democracy	27
Conclusion	33
Works Cited	35

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE 1: “God, Country, Family: The Trilogy of National Education” 15

Introduction

“[A poesia] é uma luta contra a treva e a imperfeição. É a tentativa de ordenar o caos, de nos salvarmos do caos, embora dele sempre alguma coisa fique” [Poetry is a struggle against darkness and imperfection. It is the attempt to organize the chaos, to save ourselves from the chaos, although from it something always remains] (“Sophia: a Luz Dos Versos”). This quote by Sophia de Mello Breyner Andresen in an interview with *Jornal de Letras, Artes e Ideias* describes the role of poetry in a tumultuous world. To her, it is a source of order and meaning, even when life remains incomprehensible and disorganized. Since the author lived during the period of the *Ditadura Nacional* and *Estado Novo* (“National Dictatorship” and “New State,” also known collectively as the Second Portuguese Republic), the *Revolução dos Cravos* (Carnation Revolution), and the years of instability that followed, this definition of poetry has even greater significance. While the State fought in the Colonial War in Africa and the Portuguese people suffered, she wrote. When the people rose up and rebelled against the government, when the dictatorship fell, and when the instability continued, she recorded her sentiments in the metaphors of her poems. One symbol in particular that appears in several poems is a page or piece of paper, which represents the various phases of these moments in the history of Portugal. In her anthology of poems *O Nome das Coisas* (“The Name of Things”) (1977), Sophia de Mello Breyner Andresen uses an evolution of meaning in the symbol of paper to express the anxiousness, rejoicing, and eventual disillusionment of the Portuguese people before and after the revolution on 25 April 1974. Additionally, this symbolism serves to comment on the censorship that was in place

during the dictatorship and hint at the importance of writing as a form of free expression as well as a way to elicit change.

Biography

Sophia de Mello Breyner Andresen was born on 6 November 1919 in Porto, Portugal. She had her first experience with poetry at age three when she began learning to recite the works of the famous Portuguese poet Luís Vaz de Camões. She wrote her first poems at age twelve and published her first book, *Poesia* ["Poetry"], in 1944. Most academic criticism of Andresen's work centers around her poetry; however, she is also known for her short stories and children's books. In her lifetime, she published close to 50 books, including translations of famous works such as Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. She received many prestigious literary awards for her writing, including the two major Portuguese ones: the *Prémio de Poesia Luís Miguel Nava* and the *Prémio Camões*. The *Prémio de Poesia Luís Miguel Nava*, awarded by a foundation that aims to internationally promote poetry, was given to Andresen in 1998 for her book of poems entitled *O Búzio de Cós e Outros Poemas* ["The Seashell of Cós and Other Poems"]. The *Prémio Camões* is the highest literary honor in the Portuguese language, given to writers whose work has "contributed to the development of the cultural and literary patrimony of the Portuguese language" (M. Silva). Awarded in 1999, Andresen was the second female poet to receive this honor. Beyond the Portuguese literary world, in 2001, she was the first international writer to receive the Max Jacob Prize, and in 2003, she won the *Premio Reina Sofía de Poesía Iberoamericana*, the highest Spanish literary award (M. Silva).

In the 1970s, Andresen decided to get involved in the political world, emphasizing in her writing and interviews the importance of defending values such as justice and freedom. Throughout the early 70s, she was a representative of the

opposition to the Salazar regime in her hometown of Porto. In 1973, she served as president of the *Assembleia Geral da Associação Portuguesa de Escritores* [General Assembly of the Portuguese Association of Writers]. The following year, she helped found the *Comissão Nacional Portuguesa de Ajuda a Prisioneiros Políticos* [Portuguese National Commission for the Aid of Political Prisoners], and in 1975, after the fall of the dictatorship, she was elected deputy for the *Assembleia Constitucional Portuguesa* [Portuguese Constitutional Assembly] as a representative of the Portuguese Socialist Party (M. Silva). Andresen died in 2004, following a successful career as a writer and political figure.

Review of Literature

Despite the major focus of academics on the nature-related symbolism in the poetry of Sophia de Mello Breyner Andresen, scholars also agree that her participation in public affairs influenced her works. As noted in the short biography of the author, the majority of the literary criticism surrounding Andresen's works concentrates on her poetry, particularly her use of the sea and other natural symbols to explore the deeper meanings in life (M. Silva). According to Carlos Ceia, one of the most impressive components of Andresen's poetry is her interaction with the four basic elements: earth, water, air, and fire (*Iniciação aos Mistérios* 10). Ceia also explores how Andresen repeats significant mythical symbols, such as a labyrinth, a Python, and a Minotaur, to represent the journey of discovering one's own being (*Comparative Readings* 155). Catarina Firmo argues that the landscapes evoked in Andresen's poems indicate the privilege of escaping from the world and communing with the cosmos (169). I would argue that the absence of these landscapes in the poems about political problems in *O Nome das Coisas* symbolizes a reality from which no one can escape.

While much of Andresen's poetry does explore the beauty and purpose of life through natural and mystical symbols, some critics claim that social topics were most important to Andresen. Sofia de Sousa Silva declares, "O livro em que a preocupação social do poeta é mais evidente é também o livro preferido de Sophia" [A book in which the social concern of the poet is more evident is also Sophia's favorite kind of book] (27). One of the social concerns which is predominant in Andresen's literature is the difference between masculine and feminine roles in

society (Klobucka 202). Additionally, her poetry encompasses the values of existentialism, classicism, Christian humanism, and individualism (M. Silva).

Andresen's strong ideology prompted her involvement in politics, which in turn influenced her poetry. According to a biographical essay, Andresen's "experience with the social and political problems of Portugal, combined with her analytical view of post-World War II society, resulted in the search for a more direct and simple literary language" (M. Silva). In other words, the politics of Andresen's time impacted her writing by causing her to seek out a way to present quotidian themes without sacrificing her symbolic explorations of life's meaning. The result is poetry such as that found in *O Nome das Coisas*, which directly and metaphorically explores political themes and provokes change. Carlos Ceia discusses one example of this in the poem "Pátria" ["Homeland"], found in *Livro Sexto* ["Sixth Book"] (1962). He argues that the recurring appearance of wind in poetry can symbolize political oppression, as in Andresen's poem "Pátria" (Ceia, *Iniciação aos Mistérios* 44). Similarly examining the political potential of poetry, Fernando Martinho states, "Dos principais sucessos ligados ao processo revolucionário, é possível encontrar eco na poesia" [Of the key successes linked to the revolutionary process, it is possible to find echo in poetry] (20). Andresen is among the prominent authors of the revolution he lists, particularly because of the political poems in *Livro Sexto*, *Dual*, and *O Nome das Coisas*.

Although *O Nome das Coisas* is recognized as one of Andresen's most acclaimed books of poetry (M. Silva), little scholarship exists on this particular anthology. In my research, I found only three authors who have written critically

about some of the political poems I will analyze.¹ In his extensive three-part analysis of Andresen's poetry,² Carlos Ceia references poems from *O Nome das Coisas* several times in conjunction with other anthologies in his discussion of themes listed above (*Comparative Readings; O Estranho Caminho; Iniciação aos Mistérios*). Most relevant to my research is his brief argument that *O Nome das Coisas* reinforces the idea that Andresen was a "poeta de intervenção . . . que soube lutar pela liberdade" [poet of intervention . . . who found out how to fight for freedom] (Ceia, *O Estranho Caminho* 114). Rodrigo Corrêa Martins Machado similarly explores the interaction between poetry and politics in *O Nome das Coisas*, arguing that Andresen's poems are a record of history and a manner in which the poet fought for a better future (*A Emergência de Abril; "Revolução e Poesia"*). Finally, in her analysis of *Paisagem com Mulher e Mar ao Fundo* by Teolinda Gersão,³ Mariana Marques de Oliveira briefly includes a discussion of the poem "25 de Abril" ["25th of April"]. She explains how the poem "associa o sentimento de liberdade após a Revolução ao ato de acordar depois de um tempo sombrio e dominante" [associates the feeling of freedom following the Revolution with the act of waking up after a dark and dominant time] (Oliveira 117). While each of these authors contributes to my argument that *O*

¹ I encountered a book that includes *O Nome das Coisas* in its argument that Sophia de Mello Breyner Andresen's poetry was covertly political during the time of the *Estado Novo* (Ascenso). However, as this book is in German, it is beyond the scope of this paper.

² What began as the author's dissertation became a lengthy study comprising of three books: *Iniciação aos Mistérios da Poesia de Sophia de Mello Breyner Andresen; O Estranho Caminho de Delfos: Uma Leitura da Poesia de Sophia de Mello Breyner Andresen*; and *Comparative Readings of Poems Portraying Symbolic Images of Creative Genius: Sophia de Mello Breyner Andresen, Teixeira de Pascoaes, Rainer Maria Rilke, John Donne, John of the Cross, Edward Young, Lao Tzu, William Wordsworth, Walt Whitman* (Ceia, *Comparative Readings* i).

³ The poem in *O Nome das Coisas* is relevant to the analysis of this book because *Paisagem com Mulher e Mar ao Fundo* was published eight years after the *Revolução dos Cravos*, thus carrying the influence of decades of dictatorship (Oliveira 112).

Nome das Coisas demonstrates Andresen's expression of political ideology in her poetry, not one of them acknowledges the repetitive symbolism involving paper, nor do they explore the connection between Andresen's poetry and the censorship of the *Estado Novo*. In this paper, I will analyze a selection of politically themed poems in *O Nome das Coisas*, providing an important poet's perspective on the events that accompanied the revolution against the Portuguese dictatorship and emphasizing the symbolic and social significance of Andresen's political poetry.

Historical Background

In May of 1926, a coup d'état overthrew the First Republic of Portugal, beginning the *Ditadura Nacional* run by a group of army generals (Birmingham 162). Following the great depression in 1930 and the economic difficulty that resulted, these leaders sought the help of António Salazar, who was glorified for his financial omniscience. This ultimately led to his reign as “prime minister” from 1932 to 1968 (Birmingham 163). With the support of the Catholic church and the military, Salazar kept control of what he named the *Estado Novo* with powerful propaganda and infiltration of secret police who were tasked with silencing dissidents.⁴ As ideas contrary to the government were not permitted, there was also strict censorship of everything published and broadcast. Anything that could possibly taint public opinion or malign the dictatorship was cut from newspapers, radio broadcasts, and even music and literature (Birmingham 168).

This intense and costly scrutiny harkens back to earlier Portuguese history with the Catholic church's control of written material through the Inquisition (1536-1821).⁵ During this time, books had to pass three stages of investigation required by the *Real Mesa Censória* before publication. Anything that could be seen as opposing the teachings of the Catholic church or antagonistic towards the government was prohibited (Proença 459).⁶ As such, one can imagine the difficulty authors faced in

⁴ The *Polícia Internacional e de Defesa do Estado* (PIDE), the police force of the *Estado Novo*, is often compared to the German Gestapo due to its secret police activity to quell opposition to the government (Birmingham 167).

⁵ The Inquisition was established in Portugal in 1536, and while its influence waxed and waned and it was even suspended for some years, it was not officially abolished until 1821, following the Liberal Revolution (Proença 767).

⁶ Because of these strict requirements, it often took months to get things to press.

the whole writing process, with the Inquisition influencing everything from start to finish. When Salazar instituted similar censorship during his reign, his policies uprooted past trauma that Portuguese writers likely thought they had left behind in 1821. Sophia de Mello Breyner Andresen references the writer's struggle with censorship in the context of the *Estado Novo* with her repeated reference to a blank page. The empty piece of paper alludes to the inability of the writer to put words on the page because of imposed restrictions. This allusion stays consistent throughout *O Nome das Coisas* while the rest of the symbolism progresses alongside the historical events, representing the constancy of restrictions on writing through the editing and publication process. With such metaphors, Andresen alludes to the writer's perpetual struggle to put the "right" words on the page, expressing how censorship exacerbates this problem.

In addition to controlling publication and other forms of communication, both the Inquisition and the Salazar regime regulated formal education. During Salazar's years in power, the dictator intentionally limited the education of his country's citizens, replacing trained teachers with non-specialized educational leaders who taught the simplified curriculum contained in the *livro único* [single book]. Valorized subjects included choral singing, religion, and ethics, and history classes were used as a form of indoctrination through the transmission of nationalistic ideals. Salazar even established an organization similar to The Hitler Youth, called *Mocidade Portuguesa* (Proença 682). The desired result was an ignorant band of followers who would support and not question their oppressive government.

The unwavering support Salazar aimed for was especially necessary during the Colonial War in Africa. The so-called “overseas provinces” of Angola, Mozambique, and Guinea were a source of economic strength and patriotism for the Portuguese “empire” (Birmingham 175). Consequently, when rebellion broke out in Angola in 1961, followed by Guinea in 1963 and Mozambique in 1964, the government felt it necessary to send large armies to crush the revolts and maintain these valuable colonies. The result was an unpopular war that lasted over a decade, costing the lives of many Portuguese and African soldiers. Several Portuguese men took their families and fled the country to avoid the mandatory draft (Proença 695). The suffering would only end with the fall of the dictatorship.

After Salazar suffered a stroke in 1968, leadership of the *Estado Novo* was passed on to Marcelo Caetano, who mostly maintained the current policies and continued Salazar’s legacy (Birmingham 182). However, a recession and the continued expenses of the Colonial War heightened unrest among citizens (Proença 699-700). As demands for change remained unmet, a group of army officials from the Colonial War began to think the only way to end the bloodshed in Africa was to oust the current Portuguese government (Proença 709). On the morning of 25 April 1974, at 25 minutes past midnight, the song “Grândola, Vila Morena” played on *Rádio Renascença*, signaling the members of the *Movimento das Forças Armadas* [Armed Forces Movement] to begin their “attack” on Lisbon. Nineteen and a half hours later, news of the fall of the dictatorship was spread, following a bloodless revolution (Proença 710). This became known as the *Revolução dos Cravos* because soldiers

with carnations in their guns and on their uniforms filled the streets of Lisbon, bringing hope of change without firing a single shot.

Unfortunately, the promise of a better government was not fulfilled immediately. A provisional government was put in place on 16 May 1974 by the *Junta de Salvação Nacional* [National Salvation Junta], but it only lasted until July of that same year (Proença 712). Thankfully, the Colonial War ended shortly thereafter, with Angola being the last country to gain independence in November of 1975 (Proença 721). Meanwhile, the struggling nation of Portugal underwent two failed military coups (one in September of 1974 and another in March of 1975), a total of five provisional governments, and a final military coup in November of 1975 before finally adopting a constitution. This officially occurred on 25 April 1976, two whole years after the *Revolução dos Cravos* (Proença 712-14). After fifty long years of restriction and instability, Portugal was at last free of censorship and social control, and the country could grow culturally in the modern world.

Part One: Before the *Revolução dos Cravos*

The first section of *O Nome das Coisas* corresponds with events in the years 1972-73. These mark the final years of the *Estado Novo* and the Colonial War, when tensions are high and Portuguese citizens are growing weary of the country's failure to progress. Sophia de Mello Breyner Andresen captures these feelings with the shifting metaphor of paper in six⁷ of the twelve poems in this section. The appearance of this symbol in half of these poems demonstrates the value of printed communication and the effects of its control. I will focus my analysis on the poems "Che Guevara" and "Guerra ou Lisboa 72" ["War or Lisbon 72"], in which different paper objects shape the central message of the poems and clearly comment on the political turmoil of this period.

In the first part of the anthology *O Nome das Coisas*, Andresen uses a pattern of incorporating paper in different forms as a way to express the restlessness and despair of the Portuguese people during the *Ditadura Nacional* in the Colonial War phase. In the poem "Che Guevara," she describes the image of the political figure and how it impacts society: "De poster em poster a tua imagem paira na sociedade de consumo / Como o Cristo em sangue paira no alheamento ordenado das igrejas" [On poster after poster your image hangs in a society of consumption / As Christ in blood hangs in the ordained alienation of churches] (Andresen 38). In these lines, the author explores different viewpoints about revolution through a comparison between the roles of Che Guevara and Christ in their respective societies. The simile

⁷ These poems include "Cíclades," "Para Arpad Szenes," "Che Guevara," "Guerra ou Lisboa 72," "Sua Beleza," and "'Fernando Pessoa' ou 'Poeta em Lisboa.'"

suggests that Guevara represents a kind of savior to the Portuguese people because he is a symbol of resistance and breaking free from oppressive government.⁸ On the other hand, like Christ, Guevara is a controversial figure who was executed for acting according to his beliefs, and many people disagree with his ideology. The distinct and strong opinions commonly held about both these historical figures point to the conflict among the Portuguese people about challenging the dictatorship. While there are clear revolutionary sentiments among Portuguese citizens, some are still unsure about the risk and betrayal involved in taking action.

One potential reason for the reluctance of the people is the large impact of simplified education and propaganda which glorified the government during the time of the *Estado Novo*. Andresen's inclusion of posters in the poem "Che Guevara" hints at this form of control. Her mention of the "sociedade de consumo" evokes the idea of a populace that devours everything it is fed; in the context of the dictatorship, the people are fed pro-Salazar ideas and conservative Catholic principles. This is done through the infiltrated educational system and with propaganda promoting simple values such as religion, family, and loyalty to the State (see fig. 1). The posters spread throughout society in the poem reveal the pervasiveness of the government's influential messages. At the same time, the symbol of rebellion that Che Guevara represents implies the existence of ideas contrary to the dictatorship, despite the government's effort to quell them. Through

⁸ Guevara was a major figure in the Cuban Revolution (1953-58) and became a symbol of rebellion in pop culture following his death in 1967 (Casey 128).



Fig. 1. “God, Country, Family: The Trilogy of National Education” from Martins Barata; *A Lição de Salazar*; 1938; *Jornalíssimo*, www.jornalissimo.com/historia/1064-a-propaganda-um-pilar-do-estadonovo.

her paper-related symbolism, Andresen suggests that a significant portion of the Portuguese population wants change and that the people want to free themselves from the tyrannical influence of the dictatorship.

Andresen further communicates this sentiment by moving from collective to individual feelings about revolution. In the final stanza of “Che Guevara,” the desire for change is even clearer: “Em frente do teu rosto / Medita o adolescente à noite no seu quarto / Quando procura emergir de um mundo que apodrece” [In front of your face / The young man meditates at night in his room / When he seeks to emerge from a decaying world] (38). These lines use the poster of Che Guevara to embody

the unrest of the Portuguese people who want to secure a better future for their country. The young man represents the beginnings of revolution as he gains inspiration from the acts of other revolutionaries and contemplates resisting the source of the decay of his world: the dictatorship. In other words, the paper in this poem symbolizes revolutionary ideas and the people's desire to be set free. Through metaphors such as these, the author depicts the climate of high tension that permeated Portugal in the last years of the *Ditadura Nacional*.

The poem "Guerra ou Lisboa 72" builds upon the sentiment of "Che Guevara" by using paper symbols to express the suffering of the Portuguese due to the Colonial War in Africa. The first stanza focuses on the sacrifices of the soldiers: "Partiu vivo jovem forte / Voltou bem grave e calado / Com morte no passaporte" [Alive the strong young man departed / Solemn and silent he returned / With death in his passport] (Andresen 39). These lines comment on the tragedy of youth being wasted in war because of the mandatory draft requiring all men to serve up to four years in the military (Birmingham 176). The young man in the poem represents all Portuguese males forced to fight in a futile war to maintain a dying empire. The image of the passport, which typically signifies freedom and adventure, instead symbolizes the unfortunate fate of these men, especially of the vibrant and hopeful youth whose future should be bright. Instead of using his passport to explore other countries and return with exciting stories and good memories, he goes to war and comes back traumatized by death and violence, "Com morte no passaporte." In a more literal sense, the "morte no passaporte" conveys the possibility that he might

not come back at all. Andresen employs this symbolism to lament the negative impact of the Colonial War on the Portuguese soldiers.

Adding to the themes in the beginning of “Guerra ou Lisboa 72,” which center around a soldier’s experience, the second stanza describes the impact of these wars on the country as a whole:

Sua morte nos jornais

Surgiu em letra pequena

É preciso que o país

Tenha a consciência serena

[His death in the papers

Appeared in small print

It’s important for the nation

To keep a calm conscience] (Andresen 39)

Here, the papers demonstrating the climate of Portugal are the newspapers, which are so full of news of death that they must use “letra pequena.” The tiny lettering also indicates that the dismal state of the war and its negative impact on the nation was whispered about and hidden by the government. This distorted truth alludes to the government’s censorship of the news, attempting to block any anti-government material from circulating. While the press hid reality from the people in its whispers of devastating news, the people similarly whispered their sorrows and complaints. The incongruous “consciência serena,” like a happy face the Portuguese citizens were required to wear despite difficulty, references the delicacy with which people had to speak and behave so as not to cause suspicion on the part of the political

police. Although the somber tone of this poem manifests the depressed and desperate feelings in Portugal during the Colonial War, the hint of irony acts as a jab at the government's methods of covering up the negative elements of the *Estado Novo*. Thus, Andresen symbolically expresses the frustration and sorrow of the Portuguese as they suffer the consequences of war.

Part Two: Reactions to Revolution and Instability

Section two of the three-part anthology considers the years 1974-75, which were characterized by the end of the *Estado Novo* and the beginning of a period of confusion and political instability. At first, the tone of this section is hopeful, reflecting the reactions of the Portuguese people as they saw the change they had desired for so long. The poems about the *Revolução dos Cravos* are optimistic, alluding to the excitement of a new beginning. In later poems, however, the people's hope couples with disappointment caused by the aftermath of the revolution. Over the course of these developments, Andresen weaves a metaphor of writing a poem from a blank page, exploring the people's sentiments from a writer's perspective. Fourteen⁹ of the twenty-five poems in this part include variations of this metaphor, including mentions of words, notebooks, and syllables, and still more allude to the revolution and other political events. My analysis will center around four of these poems: "Revolução" ["Revolution"], "Revolução — Descobrimento" ["Revolution—Discovery"], "Liberdade" ["Freedom"], and "Os Erros" ["Mistakes"]. The four poems I have chosen demonstrate the positivity of the people due to the promise of change brought by revolution, followed by the evolution of this feeling to include some frustration with the unstable course of the nation's politics.

In contrast with the tone of the first part of the anthology, the author's initial reaction to the *Revolução dos Cravos* in the second section reflects the enthusiasm of the Portuguese people in their hope for a better government and a better life. Using

⁹ These poems include "Lagos I," "Revolução," "Nesta Hora," "Com Fúria e Raiva," "Revolução—Descobrimento," "Enquanto Longe Divagas," "Breve Encontro," "Liberdade," "A Casa Térrea," "A Palavra," "Os Erros," "Caderno I," "Caderno II," and "Separados Fomos."

the metaphor of a blank page, Andresen transmits these feelings while commenting on censorship and the significance of writing. In the poem “Revolução,” she compares the revolution to a “página em branco / Onde o poema emerge” [blank page / Where the poem emerges] (54). The parallel between the revolution and a blank page on which a poem will appear shows how the revolt and the fall of the *Estado Novo* opened an opportunity for the country to start over. The blank page expresses the idea of infinite possibilities that are only limited by the author’s capacity to write. In this sense, the Portuguese people had the empowering feeling that they could rewrite their destiny and shape their nation’s history. At the same time, Andresen’s use of the word “emerge” suggests the author does not yet know what will appear on the page and implies she has little control over it. Her word choice seems to foreshadow the unfolding of history she and her fellow citizens could not control. Accordingly, Andresen conveys both a false sense of command of the future and the contrasting reality of the people’s powerlessness.

The symbolism in this poem also alludes to the importance of writing and freely sharing one’s ideas. Once the dictatorship had fallen, the government’s censorship was abolished, and a world of possibilities was at the tip of the writer’s pen. Just as Portuguese citizens felt powerful through their newfound ability to craft their country, writers felt more influential because of their capacity to express their ideas without fearing the consequences. Through her poetic metaphor, Andresen refers to writing as an impactful way of inspiring change. Although aware of inevitable uncertainty, the author rejoices with the Portuguese people as opportunity opens up for writers and non-writers alike.

Expanding upon the idea of a writer filling a blank page, the poem continues with a new metaphor involving construction. The final stanza reads, “Como arquitectura / Do homem que ergue / Sua habitação” [As architecture / Of the man who erects / His dwelling] (Andresen 54). This stanza paints an image of revolution as the start of construction on a house. Like the poet, the architect uses pencil and paper to create a beautiful map of his design. Then, as construction commences, his imagination transforms into reality. Similarly, following the revolution, Portugal seemed ready to begin mapping out a new state and constructing a nation that would transform the people’s dreams into their reality. The images drawn through poetic language demonstrate the feeling of empowerment the revolution provided to Portuguese citizens while simultaneously paying homage to writers and other artists.

In the poem “Revolução — Descobrimento,” Andresen extends the metaphor of the blank page to relate the effects of the *Revolução dos Cravos* to the success of Portuguese explorers in the past. She writes, “Revolução isto é: descobrimento / Mundo recomeçado a partir da praia pura / Como poema a partir da página em branco” [Revolution this is: discovery / World recommenced from a beautiful beach / As a poem from a blank page] (Andresen 59). These lines give the impression that the revolution is not only a new beginning, but also an opportunity for discovery. This idea harkens back to the height of Portugal’s power during the Age of Discovery, which began on the “praia pura” of many lands that became Portuguese colonies. The allusion to this celebrated part of Portuguese history suggests that the people felt optimistic about the future of their country once the dictatorship had

ended. Instead of discovering new lands, the Portuguese were then discovering their capacity to improve their nation and establish their own land as one of liberty and promise. Much like a poet who discovers the words of a new poem, the Portuguese people were discovering the new possibilities for the future of their country; all they had to do was fill in the space of the blank page. The empty page and the “Mundo recomeçado” echo the excitement of new beginnings expressed in the poem “Revolução.” The themes of discovery and starting over convey the newly found strength of the Portuguese people following the collapse of the *Ditadura Nacional*.

The poem “Liberdade” reinforces the power of the people after the *Revolução dos Cravos* by implying divine intervention. It begins with a simple metaphor: “O poema é / A liberdade” [The poem is / Freedom] (Andresen 63). As the poem progresses, Andresen elaborates on this idea of freedom by comparing the people’s ability to form their government to the creation of poetry through divine inspiration:

Sílaba por sílaba
O poema emerge
— Como se os deuses o dessem
O fazemos
[Syllable by syllable
The poem emerges
— As if the gods gave it
We create it] (63)

In this metaphor for the results of the revolution, the Portuguese citizens are writing a poem that Andresen calls freedom. The inclusion of the declaration “Como de os deuses o dessem” suggests that the people involved in the revolt had divine approval.¹⁰ This is a powerful assertion that vindicates the rebellious actions of the revolutionaries and proposes that they were destined for freedom. The poem affirms that, following the *Revolução dos Cravos*, Portugal was free to create a government according to the voice of the people. However, a poem must be written “sílabo por sílabo.” In other words, the formation of democracy from a history of dictatorship, like the creation of poetry from a blank piece of paper, takes time and effort. This fact alludes to the difficulty Portugal would have in building a stable government. Still, with divine help, the Portuguese could write a beautiful history as if finding inspiration from the muses to write a beautiful poem. Through this symbolic metapoetry, Andresen demonstrates the optimism and sense of power of the Portuguese at the end of the *Estado Novo*.

Building upon the optimism of the earlier poems, the end of this section of the anthology reveals a new feeling of frustration while still holding on to the hope of another chance to start with a blank page. The poet’s frustration is evidently tied to the second failed military coup that occurred in the same year she wrote these final poems (1975). The poem “Os Erros” expresses a feeling of disappointment while maintaining a hint of optimism:

Deverá tudo passar a ser passado

Como projecto falhado a abandonado

¹⁰ This is particularly significant in a Catholic nation in which doctrine was used to control the people.

Como papel que se atira ao cesto
Como abismo fracasso não esperança
Ou poderemos enfrentar e superar
Recomeçar a partir da página em branco
Como escrita de poema obstinado?
[Should everything that's passed become past
As a failed to abandoned project
As a paper you throw in the trash
As an abyss of failure without hope
Or can we face and overcome
Recommence with the blank page
As writing an obstinate poem?] (Andresen 71)

In this stanza, Andresen compares the first failed attempt at creating a better country to a “papel que se atira ao cesto,” like the many drafts thrown away by authors who detest their initial efforts to write a text. This simile suggests that the Portuguese people thought they were doing the right thing, but in the end what they produced was worse than before. Maintaining the faith in her country that she had immediately following the 25th of April, the author asks if they can throw away the disaster they created and “Recomeçar a partir da página em branco.” The parallel she makes between the construction of government and a “poema obstinado” further demonstrates her optimism. Like the work of any writer, Andresen’s poetry emerged after filling pages and pages that ended up in the garbage, deemed unworthy of publication. She uses this writer’s perspective to pardon the nation’s

failure to form a functional government, emphasizing the importance of Portugal not giving up on this undertaking. Alternatively, the country needs to leave behind “os erros” and recommence the writing of its history. The comparisons in this poem encourage the Portuguese to liberate themselves from the past by starting fresh like they did on 25 April 1974.

Part Three: Formation of Democracy

The final section of *O Nome das Coisas* includes poems written in 1975-76 when Portugal finally broke the pattern of instability and established a democratic constitution. Similar to the poems in the previous section, these poems do not shy away from critiquing the flawed reality of the Portuguese government while still looking hopefully to the future. However, freedom and democracy were no longer the future—they were the present. While Andresen celebrates this triumph, she also recognizes the problems in the developing democracy and continues to push toward an even brighter future for her country. As in earlier poems, symbols of writing and paper woven throughout this section assert her role as a writer, as well as the role of art in general, in the formation of that future. Nine¹¹ of the fifteen poems in this section include such symbols. I will analyze two of these: “Açores” [“Azores”] and “A Forma Justa” [“The Just Way”]. These particular poems use the metaphor of poetry as a representation of improvement and progression.

The poems of early 1976 demonstrate the relief of the Portuguese to finally have an established constitution and a stable government. “Açores,” evidently written around the time of the constitution’s approval, repeats the metaphor of a poem to celebrate the document that unites Portugal. The final few lines of the poem convey this source of unity:

Poema onde está

A palavra extrema

¹¹ These poems include “Museu,” “Projecto II,” “Carta de Natal a Murilo Mendes,” “Regressarei,” “Será Possível,” “Tripoli 76,” “Carta a Ruben A.,” “Açores,” and “A Forma Justa.”

Que une e reconhece —

Pois só no poema

Um povo amanhece

[Poem where exists

The crucial word

Which unites and recognizes —

For only in the poem

Is the dawn of a people] (Andresen 95)

In this short excerpt from “Açores,” Andresen repeats the idea of the poem as a symbol for the formation of a new Portuguese State. The line “Um povo amanhece” implies that until that point, the people had been in darkness, and the new democracy was like a sunrise that marked the dawn of a new day. The cause of this dawn, the poem containing “A palavra extrema / Que une,” represents the unifying power of the constitution with its crucial components that protect the rights of the people. The assertion that success is possible “só no poema” suggests that this sole political document was the solution to the turmoil that had so long beset the Portuguese people. Through the repeated metaphor of the poem, Andresen addresses the triumph the constitution meant for so many Portuguese citizens.

However, although relief was a popular sentiment, Andresen had a different feeling about the constitution from her position in the *Assembleia Constitucional*

Portuguesa. In a letter she wrote to her good friend and fellow writer Jorge de Sena, she expresses her exasperation with the way the constitution finally came about:

O problema, a tragédia de toda esta revolução é a sua IMCOMPETÊNCIA CULTURAL. . . . Passando pela constituição onde se lutou pela vitória da estupidez com o maior sucesso salvo alguns pontos que a muito custo foi possível salvar. Houve até quem no grupo parlamentar, numa reunião de discussão, respondesse à minha crítica à má redacção de um articulado, dizendo-me que “o povo não precisa de gramática.”

[The problem, the tragedy of all this revolution is its CULTURAL INCOMPETENCE. . . . Moving to the constitution where we fought for the victory of stupidity with the greatest success, save a few points that were possible to keep at great cost. There was even someone in the parliamentary group who, in a debate meeting, responded to my criticism of the bad wording of an article, telling me that “the people don’t need grammar.”]

(qtd. in Guerra e Paz 134)

This quote from Andresen’s letter conveys her irritation with the inefficiency and stupidity of the new democratic government. It is humorous that she, a writer, complains about the wording of the constitution, a detail a non-writer may not understand or appreciate. Her lament of the “IMCOMPETÊNCIA CULTURAL” indicates that while the ideas of the new Portuguese government may have been good, the execution was lacking. As someone involved in the process, Andresen demonstrates her dissatisfaction with the beginnings of democracy, though her

poetry continues to convey a sense of faith that she and others could work to improve their country's situation.

The poem "A Forma Justa" reflects Andresen's awareness of the pitfalls of the Portuguese democracy but revisits the idea of a blank page to show that she will not stop working toward a better future. Despite her disappointment with politics at the time she wrote this poem, she remains optimistic:

Sei que seria possível construir o mundo justo

.....

Por isso recomeço sem cessar a partir da página em branco

E este é meu ofício de poeta para a reconstrução do mundo

[I know it could be possible to build a just world

.....

Which is why I recommence without ceasing from a blank page

And this is my job as a poet for the reconstruction of the world]

(Andresen 97)

These lines firmly assert Andresen's view of her role as a writer to elicit change through her work. She communicates to the world that she will never stop writing in both a literal and a figurative sense, declaring her intention to continue publishing impactful texts and to continue using her political influence to work toward "o mundo justo." As she expresses this sense of duty, she implies each member of society has the same responsibility to aid in the "reconstrução do mundo." In essence, this poem uses the metaphor of the "página em branco" to encourage the Portuguese people to keep fighting for a better tomorrow. The

placement of this poem towards the end of the anthology presents it as a concluding message, inspiring readers to do their part in creating a better world.

Conclusion

Sophia de Mello Breyner Andresen wrote the anthology *O Nome das Coisas* in the context of the *Estado Novo*, followed by the fall of the dictatorship with the *Revolução dos Cravos* and the years of instability leading up to the formation of democracy in Portugal. The poems in the anthology reflect this time of political turmoil, commenting on historical events and documenting the reactions of the Portuguese people to said events. Andresen communicates the unsettled and revolutionary feelings of the people in the final years of dictatorship, their excitement following the revolution, their disillusionment as the nation struggled to form a stable democracy, and their hope for a brighter future as politics progressed. She expresses these strong sentiments by weaving symbols of paper throughout the work, evolving their meaning as history unfolds. These metaphors, including symbols such as posters, newspapers, and blank pages, also assert the importance of writing as a tool for the free communication of ideas that can provoke beneficial change in society. Furthermore, allusions to censorship comment on the constant struggle writers have with various forms of restriction, from the extreme of governmental control to the inevitable editing and publication process. These powerful devices demonstrate how Andresen's poetry addressing social topics is just as poignant and noteworthy as her beautiful evocations of nature.

Works Cited

- Andresen, Sofia de Mello Breyner. *O Nome Das Coisas*. 5th ed., Assírio & Alvim, 2015.
- Ascenso, Diana Gomes. *Poetischer Widerstand Im Estado Novo: Die Dichtung Von Sophia de Mello Breyner Andresen*, Boston, MA, De Gruyter, 2017. ProQuest Ebook Central, ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/byu/detail.action?docID=5156714.
- Birmingham, David. *A Concise History of Portugal*. 2nd ed., Cambridge UP, 2003.
- Casey, Michael. *Che's Afterlife: The Legacy of an Image*. Vintage, 2009.
- Ceia, Carlos. *Comparative Readings of Poems Portraying Symbolic Images of Creative Genius: Sophia de Mello Breyner Andresen, Teixeira de Pascoaes, Rainer Maria Rilke, John Donne, John of the Cross, Edward Young, Laso Tzu, William Wordsworth, Walt Whitman*. Lewiston, NY, The Edwin Mellen Press, 2002.
- . *O Estranho Caminho de Delfos: Uma Leitura da Poesia de Sophia de Mello Breyner Andresen*. Lisboa, Vega, 2003.
- . *Iniciação aos Mistérios da Poesia de Sophia de Mello Breyner Andresen*. Lisboa, Vega, 1996.
- Firmo, Catarina. "Paisagens Evocadas em Marguerite Duras e Sophia de Mello Breyner Andresen." *Studia Universitatis Babeş-Bolyai, Philologia*, vol. 62, no. 4, p. 159.
- Guerra e Paz, editors. *Sophia de Mello Breyner e Jorge de Sena: Correspondência 1959-1978*. 2nd ed., Editor, 2006.
- Klobucka, Anna M. *O Formato Mulher: A Emergência Da Autoria Feminina Na Poesia Portuguesa*. Coimbra, Angelus Novus, 2009.

- Machado, Rodrigo Corrêa Martins. *A Emergência de Abril em O Nome das Coisas* (1977), de Sophia de Mello Breyner Andresen. 2012. Universidade Federal de Viçosa, master's thesis. locus.ufv.br/handle/123456789/4859.
- . "Revolução e Poesia em 'O Nome das Coisas' de Sophia de Mello Breyner Andresen." *Revista Desassossego*, vol. 7, 2012, pp. 85-95, doi: 10.11606/issn.2175-3180.v4i7p85-95.
- Martinho, Fernando J. B. "Dez Anos de Literatura Portuguesa (1974-1984): Poesia." *Colóquio/Letras*, no. 78, Mar. 1984, pp. 17-29, coloquio.gulbenkian.pt/bib/sirius.exe/do?issue&n=78.
- Oliveira, Mariana Marques de. "Outro Mar, Outro Eu: Uma Leitura Sobre a Natureza Metafórica De Paisagem Com Mulher e Mar Ao Fundo." *Anuário De Literatura*, vol. 18, no. 2, 2013, pp. 112-122, *ProQuest*, doi: 10.5007/21757917.2013v18n2p112.
- Proença, Maria Cândida. *Uma História Concisa de Portugal*. Lisboa, Círculo de Leitores e Temas e Debates, 2015.
- Silva, Marco G. "Sophia de Mello Breyner Andresen." *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, edited by Monica Rector and Fred M. Clark, vol. 287, 2004, *Gale Literature Resource Center*, link.galegroup.com/apps/doc/H1200011473/LitRC?u=byuprovo&sid=LitR&xidffc1cf29.
- Silva, Sofia de Sousa. "Arte e Artesanato em Três Poetas: Mário de Andrade, João Cabral de Melo Neto e Sophia de Mello Breyner Andresen." *Colóquio/Letras*, no. 180, May 2012, pp. 30-41, coloquio.gulbenkian.pt/cat/sirius.exe/do?bibrecord&id=PT.FCG.RCL.9382&org=I&orgp=180.

“Sophia: a Luz Dos Versos.” *Biblioteca Nacional Digital*, Biblioteca Nacional De Portugal, 2011, purl.pt/19841/1/galeria/entrevistas/06.html.