# *Never-ending black and white*: Wordplay and the limits of language in the work of Jorge Eduardo Eielson

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Peruvian artist Jorge Eduardo Eielson (1924-2006) offers a rich collection of works (written, plastic and performative) that reveals his interest in exploring the nature of verbal language and other artistic codes. One of the axes of his work is the question of the limits of language, understood as looking into the process by which words acquire and lose meaning and how this affects the possibility of producing relevant and autonomous poetic universes. All through this exploration, Eielson arrives to the use of wordplay as a way to evince the contradictions or limitations of language when expressing or creating realities; as a consequence, his poems change from referential constructions to metalinguistic artifacts, where wordplay does not privilege ambiguity but serves two roles: first, it becomes a way of exploring how traditional poetical mechanisms, especially stylistic devices based on repetition (phonetic or morphosyntactic), bring out the physical nature of language (shape, color, sound). Second, it leads to the question of meaning, especially when it is confronted with images.

When Eielson starts to doubt the referential capability of verbal language, he begins to use it as a mixed system of verbal and non-verbal signs, ranging from the abnormal use of capital letters to the inclusion of images that pushes written language to a stage located on the edge of the text. In Eielson's poetry, wordplay demands to be analyzed beyond paradigmatic or syntagmatic choice, describing the complete operation of the graphic wordplay as more than texts mixed with drawings; instead, it is a metalinguistic strategy that brings the reader inside the context of the wordplay, keeping the process of interpretation on the limit between the inside (the poem) and the outside (the visual referent/object). The study of Eielson's use of wordplay is central not only to the understanding of his work as a whole but also to widen the analysis of wordplay in a literary corpus.