Seamless stitching – One way of restoring a poetic text

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IN THE beginning there were the concrete poets and through them Ezra Pound. Any poetry translator from my generation will hardly have escaped his influence. Translations such as "*O navegante*" (The Seafarer), " *Ode a um rouxinol*" (Ode to a Nightingale) and "*Bizâncio*" (Byzantium), by Augusto de Campos, or even the Cantos of Dante's "Paradise" translated by Haroldo de Campos, among other examples, continue for various reasons to struck me as models of poetic translations.

As I became increasingly experienced in the craft of literary translation, I sometimes was forced to disagree either with one or another strategy[1] adopted in poetic translations by these masters or avowed supporters of Poundian ideas, or with the arguments that justified them. If on the one hand poetic translation was guided by criticism – and that is an unquestionable fact -, on the other some semantic liberties in productions credited to that line sounded to me, so to speak, as true "over-interpretations". As for Pound, over time a closer look at his translations led me to agree with him about what they actually were - extensions of his original poetry,[2] which ultimately had a profound influence in twentieth-century poetry. They were not what I would understand as "translations", but what would later be known as "appropriations", which was probably the reason why these poems have not only been unanimously approved by poetry judges but also the focus of disputes with philologists. As for my commitment to poetic translation, however, this personal view attests to the fact that until the mid-1990s my concerns about the issue were focused on finding out which features in this literary craft would have the magic power of transforming it into a both a "translation" and a "poem." By that time I probably had some vague idea of what *not to do* in poetry translation, though I was not sure about what to do for my efforts to actually result precisely in that – poetic translation.

I believe that things started to change in the early years of the turn of the century, when I found myself dealing with the subject in the classroom while having a closer contact with the work of Michael Hamburger (1924-2007).

Hamburger's legacy is not exactly a theory of translation, but he was the author of a considerable number of critical texts and public statements on poetry translation, in the wake of a monumental translational work[3] which in Europe and the United States have been considered a counterpoint to Poundian ideas or even an alternative to strategies commonly found in his followers. In fact, his work in this area has been a reference to several prestigious European translators,[4] and is roughly characterized by an approach that deliberately strays from some Poundian techniques, questioning and rejecting their semantic liberties without ever neglecting the poetic objective in the texts.

My contact with the work of this triple-talented poet, critic and translator increased from 2002 when, convinced of the importance of spreading his ideas around here, I decided to translate on my own his seminal study on modern poetry, *The Truth of Poetry,* later accepted and released by a Brazilian publishing company. It was during that period that I had the opportunity to exchange ideas with him about the difficulties of that translation, and on one occasion to hear his comments about my translation of a poem by Philip Larkin,[5] with whom Hamburger had been friends. My identification with his ideas about poetic translation was such that I began to trace them down in his other works. I remember that the words that follow, quite unpretentious by the way, had an impact on me when I first read them. An important quotation is in order:

> From time to time I am asked to write or talk about the 'problems of verse translation'. Again and again I find that those problems bore me, as the activity does not. If I comply with the request, sooner or later I am ringing the changes on Dryden's division of verse translation into three kinds - metaphrase, paraphrase and imitation - and affirming that, *mutatis mutandis*, it is as valid now as it was when he made it. At the same time I am nagged by the knowledge that beyond this useful distinction there are regions of speculation and analogy that could be metaphysical, anthropological or aesthetic; that in practice Dryden's three kinds tend to overlap; and that we now have modes of scientific, or quasi-scientific, analysis of language, meaning and interpretation, all of which suggest that translation is an impossibility. [...] If I reflect on anything, it is not on problems, which are the province of the theorists, but on dilemmas, on specific failures either complete or partial. These can be explained, although no amount of explanation will help me translate that which, for me, is untranslatable. [...] One conclusion to be drawn… is that poetry is not necessarily more untranslatable than any other type of writing. A great many lyrical poems may be more difficult to "understand"; but the more difficult the poem, the more complex and idiosyncratic its structure, the more likely it is that a good deal of its "quiddity" can be satisfactorily conveyed in translation. It is the plainest, most limpid, poem that may defy translation, because it leaves the least latitude for paraphrase or interpretation, and the plainness that may be a happy reduction in one language and literary convention can sound like an intolerable banality in another. The kind of translation I practice does require me to understand a poem, in so far as it can be understood, whereas a good many imitators prefer not to be constrained by that requirement, which would restrict their freedom. [...] Linguistic, se-

> mantic and hermeneutical questions about the possibility of rendering in one language what has been written in another, tend to favor freedom of imitation. If translation does not produce true equivalence, the argument runs, a verse translator may just as well give up the attempt to produce it. Far better for him to do his own thing, write a new poem in his own language, his own manner, using the original for his own "creative" ends. I have no quarrel with that procedure, but believe that there is a point where it ceases to be a translation and cannot be judged as such. Variations on a theme, in music, are judged as original works, no matter whether the theme is taken from another composer or not. Translation, as I understand it, is much closer to a transcription, a re-arrangement or re-scoring of another composer's work, such as Bach's of works by Vivaldi. However free, such transcriptions remain interpretations of the work transcribed, and the liberties taken serve to carry it over into another convention, another age, not to break it up and appropriate some promising part. [...] The appropriation, of course, may be more fruitful aesthetically than anything that can be done in the way of translation; but that is a sacrifice a translator owes to the work translated. Any poet capable of reading translations of his own work is likely to prefer a careful, though imperfect, rendering of what he has written to an exercise in appropriation, if the result is going to be presented as a rendering of his text, not as a variation on it. That is not a plea for metaphrase, or pedantically literal translation. [...] Faithfulness to the translated text may demand a considerable measure of freedom on the semantic level - just how much, will vary from author to author, from text to text, from language to language, from period to period. Every translation, as distinct from an appropriation, calls for an act of understanding that is also a weighing up of what constitutes the primary gesture of a poem and a judgment of how this gesture can be re-enacted in another medium. [...] Versions of kind I produce, of course, will be of limited validity, because they are not intended to replace the original texts, but to convey as much of their quiddity as I am able to convey, and to do so more effectively than could be done by description or analysis.[6]

I quote these words because I see, now, that they verbalized what until then were just my intuitions, and helped me to subsequently try to use specific procedures in a more coherent and consecutive way, if I may say so. By that time all that interested me were translational "dilemmas" rather than translational "problems". On the other hand, despite its pragmatic nature, translation becomes an impossible task without reference to a theory or theories about it, so that dealing with the translation of poetry I also found myself using Dryden's old division, even though it deserved repairs or perhaps could accommodate subdivisions. Moreover, I agreed with Hamburger that this *a priori* belief in the untranslatability of poetry - sometimes implicit and others overtly spread - lead to possible semantic liberties, to a tendency towards "Imitation", as the word was understood by Dryden and Hamburger, i.e., *with no negative value judgment*. On the contrary, as he says, these same "imitators" could contribute works able to be incorporated into the literature of the country in which they originated. Besides, one can never underestimate the value of "imitation", as it is the most ancient and important for of this literary craft. Imitation has never completely disappeared, even after Dryden's criticism, and Pound's amazing work in the modern era is the greatest proof of that.[7] Aware of this importance, Hamburger chose to refer to this type of composition, which is able to "take apart" a text in order to select its "most promising" part, establishing with it a free dialogue, as "appropriation". This distinction has always seemed useful to me,[8] as well as that between the idea of the relationship between criticism and translation for Pound and Hamburger. According to them, criticism is the driving and guiding force of the process, although for Pound, from a certain point of the translation process onwards, this force can take on the task of "selecting" or detecting that "promising" part and, depending on the objectives, surrender to the free game of "creation". Hamburger, in turn, sees the end result of the task of translating a poem as what might be called a "criticism in verse", or in the form of a poem whose equivalent or isomorphic structures, depending on the individual talent, organization and resources of a language, took shape, gesture by gesture, from an interpretation process.

I cannot think of the *a priori* untranslatability of poetry, since the continuous practice of poetry translation over time has always denied it. Finnegans Wake and many poems by Celan, for example, by taking language to the limit of the "utterable" or "translatable" have only incited and justified – and still incite and justify, new translations. From this angle, even in the case of texts containing a social or historical phraseology for which there is no counterpart in our language, nothing prevents a translator, by using colloquialisms, regionalisms, neologisms or the like to "translate" aspects of the "quiddity" of that text. Common experience shows that what seems in principle untranslatable might not prove so later, depending on the changes in our interpretation. Long after the iron we have melted solidifies it may still accept other shapes. Whenever confronted, for example, in a novel, with footnotes such as "In the original, untranslatable pun between..." or, "Given the impossibility of translation, I have chosen to…", I always consider these formulations inappropriate, precisely because I have seen several of them being contradicted by acceptable solutions from other translators. This aspect links the "untranslatability" to individual talent and to the extra-literary and prosaic issue of lack of time, since this is an activity which, strictly speaking, should not have a deadline.

Those who believe in the translatable character of most of the poem's quiddity are left but with the hope of expression, since the belief in the untranslatability threatens us either with silence or with a form of expression that will take us beyond a translation, like imitation. For a long time I thought I would never find the "right" word for the translation of this poem by Stephen Spender, incidentally the first one I ever translated:

The word bites like a fish.
Shall I throw it back free
Arrowing to that sea
Where thoughts lash tail and fin?
Or shall I pull it in
To rhyme upon a dish?[9]

On one occasion, however, reading Clarice Lispector ("*Então escrever é o modo de quem tem a palavra como isca: a palavra pescando o que não é palavra. Quando essa não palavra morde a isca, alguma coisa se escreveu*") [T], I had the impression that something "had taken the bait [isca]" and got to this:

Palavra é peixe e belisca.
Devolvo-a livre a esse oceano,
Lançando aonde ideias abanam
A barbatana e a cauda?
Ou a coloco no final da
Linha pra rimar com isca?[10]

In turn, as regards what is more "difficult" to translate when we venture into paraphrases, we are stricken by the truth of Hamburger's words about the fact that the poem with the most complex and idiosyncratic structure is the most likely to have its "quiddity" transplanted, or, what amounts to the same, about the "simplest" poem being the most refractory to translation, for not allowing leeway to accommodate paraphrasing.[11] This explains why the aforementioned poem by Spender, as well as the poems the *Chamber Music* and the *Ballad of the Old Sailor* seemed so refractory to translation.

So far I have referred to paraphrase in a rather vague way, for fear of implying that I have a personal "method" for the translation of poetry. As Wittgenstein said, there can be no systematic method for that and, in my view, this impossibility stems from the fact that the activity requires at one and the same time writing and interpretation skills, which vary from person to person. For the kind of translation I seek to render, I like to think that the activity also requires a certain amount of "negative capability", which for Keats characterized the poetic nature, or the "chameleon poet", allowing him to become a channel for other identities - a quality which, for Hamburger, was an attribute of the translator. Thus, since there cannot be a method, my concerns, parallel to my work, relate to defining operations in order to ensure "latitude" to my paraphrases. I will try to describe only a few, though to me they seem applicable to the description of an endless number of cases.[12] Before this brief description, however, I should clarify some personal views on Dryden's divisions, based on which I have been trying to define my operation for maintaining "latitudes".[13]

According to his division, we know that we cannot produce a poetic text through metaphrases. The most obvious limitation of the metaphrase is that while it enables grasping the meaning of the original perceived by the translator, it does not allow the reader any perception of the structure or technique of that original. In turn, in "imitation" we supposedly go beyond a "translation". We leave aside a translation with "latitude" in favor of what one might call a "translation with attitude", this related more to the translator than to what has been translated. So it seems to me that the "creativity" space of a translation lies in the paraphrase, characterized by what Dryden calls "latitudes". Talking about my attempts to paraphrasing is tantamount therefore to talking about the ways in which *I do not follow the author's words as strictly as the meanings I can perceive in them*.[14] So I should try to describe minimally operating modes.

These modes may accept, for example, changes in the grammatical categories of words in sentences, compared to the original. So, whoever translated the above mentioned Spender verse, "Arrowing to that Sea" as "Lançando ao mar além" ["arrowing beyond the sea"] in my opinion would be paraphrasing, with the idea of distance conveyed by the demonstrative pronoun represented by an adverb in the translation.[15]

In my paraphrases and in those of others I see at least one accepted change of a figure of speech into another – that of comparisons that become metaphors. The verse by Spender mentioned here, "The word bites like a fish", when transposed into Portuguese has its simile transformed into a metaphor ("*Palavra é peixe e belisca*") [The word is a fish and it bites]. These changes will always depend on an analysis of their context, but in this case I suppose that the procedure is usually justified by the opinion that a metaphor tends to be poetically more "effective" than a comparison.

Compared to the original, paraphrases may involve changes in the order of words in sentences; possible changes in the order of verses; meanings detected in a verse and translated in another verse. But the ways of "not following the words so strictly" include another aspect mentioned by Dryden, to whom the meaning can be "enlarged, not abolished"[16] in the paraphrase. In my view, this enlargement of the meaning concerns inevitable nuances that can be added to the translation in the passage from one language to another. Translating poems is a big concern for me, and I admit two types of semantic additions in ideal conditions - those which 1) derive from new poetic values of words in our language, generated in the context given by the original and generally perceived by the translator during the writing process and preserved in the translation as "poetic findings"; and 2) derive from the implicit meanings that a translator can detect in an original and use, in general, based on the need for equivalence to the structures in the original, such as meter and rhyme, for example. In the poem "The Old Fools" ["*Os velhos tontos*"] by Philip Larkin, when translating the term "rising ground " [*subir o terreno*] as "*subir o morro*" [rising hill], I noticed the semantic addition of an ambiguity taking shape, as if spontaneously, in the word "*morro*" (hill), having as primary meaning "*monte de pequena elevação*" (low hill) and as secondary meaning the verb "to die" in the first person of the present tense, because of a context related to old age and death, this represented as a "peak" observed from a distance by young people, but "climbed" by the elderly: "[...] This must be what keeps them quiet:/ the peak that stays in view wherever we go/ For them is rising ground. [...] ["[...] *Talvez seja isso o que os mantém serenos:/Em qualquer canto onde se esteja, o pico sempre à vista/ Para eles é subir o morro*"]. Another example that comes to mind is found in *Venus and Adonis*, in which the choice of "*soltando ais*" to translate "whereat it groans" eventually generated an echo inside the verse, in accordance with a context of "echoes", as the English word "verbal" at the time was linked only to words, not to natural sounds: "And now she beats her heart, whereat it groans, / that all the neighbour caves, as seeming troubled, / Make verbal repetition of her moans; /passion on passion deeply is redoubled" ["*Ora golpeia o peito, soltando ais,/ E as caves perto, como se abaladas, / Fazem dos ais repetições verbais;/Lamúrias gravemente redobradas*"].

In order to seek equivalence to some structure of the original, I only admit semantic additions that can be *deduced* from the analysis of the original text. For example, in the following couplet, also from *Venus and Adonis*, "For lovers say, the heart hath treble wrong / When it is barred the aidance of the tongue"[17] the addition of "*à míngua*" [fated to dwindle] is a *deduction* of the condition of the need of the soul without the comfort of the words ("language") of the beloved: "*Que amantes dizem, a alma sofre à míngua,/ Três vezes mais, se não lhe acode a língua*."

When inferred from the logic of the text, this type of semantic addition seems quite "neutral" to me, and I have the impression of having resorted to the artifice several times in my work, in addition to having seen it the work of other translators.

In literary studies the notion of the ideal condition of "impersonality" by a writer or narrator relates *roughly* to his non-adherence to a defined moral code, and has become a literary value adopted by writers in modern times, with its suspicions regarding the psychological self and exacerbation in sentimentality, especially after the crisis of the subject in the 1960s and 1970s.

I believe that just as one can detect literary artifices that contribute to the impression of "impersonality", these strategies that I have mentioned, which intend to maintain the "author within sight" contribute to an impression, or even an "illusion" of "impersonality" on the part of a translator. This is actually a lesson learned from the good old Dryden, who, commenting on his own translations stated that "…where I have enlarged them, I desire the false critics would not always think that those thoughts are wholly mine, but that either they are secretly in the poet, or may be fairly deduced from him". A metaphor that in my view seems to present a striking analogy with those operations, extracted from the world of sewing, fascinates me: that of "seamless stitching", a craftsmanship that takes a small piece of fabric hidden in clothing to be arranged, thread by thread, on the missing or damaged fabric, covering it. In paraphrases the "hidden" fabric [*textus*] are our deductions from the text, giving us the words and structures which, like the threads in the technique, will be used to reconstruct the "pattern" perceived in the original. This, of course, is different from "cannibalistically devouring" a text in another language which, in terms of translation, to me never seemed distant from what Dryden's imitation could do. While imitation had its glorious past and by giving us "goose bumps" makes it senseless to ask "who is the author of that?", it is the paraphrase that tends to prevail, perhaps because of the strength of historicist approaches long in force in literary studies. And this question, again, seems to lead to the alluded problem of nomenclature, since the same critics capable of frowning upon the semantic liberties of a "translation", perhaps would think twice before doing that if they recognized it as an "imitation", and perhaps they wouldn't feel, when facing something trying to pass as a "translation", that the person who produced it is "offering a gift" instead of "paying a debt".[18]

I cannot paraphrase a text, of course, without reading it, unless I have read as much as possible about it and analyzed it. The nature of poetic translation is dual and materializes simultaneously as reading and writing. So, to try to further clarify the attempt to integrate one thing into the other in the type of poetic translation that I have in mind, I would like to make a brief comment on a poem by Gerard Manley Hopkins, followed by its translation, since the space in an article does not allow any critical effort minimally worthy of the work.[19] To that end, the reader only needs to know that my comments relate to poetic gestures in terms of meaning and signification, which I deem essential and intend to translate.[20] Amid these comments, I mention my semantic translations of the originals, which serve as beacons for my paraphrases.

But here is the poem:

My own heart let me more have pity on; let
Me live to my sad self hereafter kind,
Charitable; not live this tormented mind
With this tormented mind tormenting yet.
I cast for comfort I can no more get
By groping round my comfortless, than blind
Eyes in their dark can day or thirst can find
Thirst's all-in-all in all a world of wet.
Soul, self; come, poor Jackself, I do advise
You, jaded, let be; call off thoughts awhile
Elsewhere; leave comfort root-room; let joy size
At God knows when to God knows what; whose smile
's not wrung, see you; unforeseen times rather – as skies
Between pie mountains – lights a lovely mile.

Photo by Latinstock

Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844-1889).

This is the composition that concludes the famous “Sonnets of Desolation”, its logical consequence, since in it we see the poet more conscious of the selfishness or cowardice that there may lie in over-introspection, in the excruciating rumination of his torments, or else more excited by self-compassion, by the acceptance of his own condition and of faith in God’s mercy.

The first verse contains, magisterially, an artifice typical of Hopkins, marked by radicalism - the violation of syntax and grammar. While the common order of the sentence would be “let me have more pity on my own heart”, the very syntax of the verse, through the emphatic position of the complement suggests a divided consciousness, in which “my own heart” simulates being at one and the same time the subject of an apostrophe and its own object. The unusual position of the adverb of intensity in “more have” is another recurring feature in his poems, and comes from a perception of the degree or extent to which it is inextricably related to the activity expressed by the verb, with the result seeming to sound like a compound verb. The aesthetic effect of that is the impression of a “vocabulary chaos” because of the synchysis, and suggests a mind incapable of properly articulating the sentence: “Meu próprio curacao que eu mais me apiede dele.”

As the result of an *enjambement*, the second verse highlights the pronoun "me" as another self, of the "heart and of another (alliterative) "sad self": "... que eu viva para meu eu tritse de hoje em diante gentil"

In the third and fourth verses the "mind" multiplies like a series (with its subsequent alliterations), alternating the "tormented" and "tormenting" position of the subject and the object and thus setting the vicious circle that torments itself in rumination: "Charitable; not live this tormented mind/ With this tormented mind tormenting yet."(*Caridoso; não viva esta mente atormentada/ Com esta mente atormentada atormentando ainda*).

Considering that the second quartet of the sonnet ends with images relating to "a world of wet", I interpret the primary meaning of the verb "cast" in the fifth verse as if linked to this context: "throw the line", as in catching a fish. And what is caught and sought here is the very "comfort" or well-being (the alliteration in "cast for comfort" will need to be translated). The entire stanza, however, is marked by ellipses of the relative pronouns (which is imperative to translate ...], another trait common to Hopkins ("I cast for comfort, [which] I can no more find in my comfortless [world] than a blind man in his dark world can [get] day...", although "comfort" is pursued, what the poet ends up "groping" is an *accident* without substantive definition, an *absolute condition,* since it is the *world* itself that was subtracted in the ellipse, a condition magnificently expressed by an adjective transformed into a noun - an adjunct, so to speak, struggling to become its own definition. The same process is observed in "in their dark" ("in their dark [world]"), a condition of the "blind eyes" in their quest for the "day", a condition compared to that of the poetic self. Likewise, in its quest for peace the poetic self is also compared to "thirst" (the word "thirst" instead of "thirsty" in the seventh verse), unable to quench its thirst in an entire "wet world", facing, instead the "totality" of thirst, the "essence of thirst" ["thirst's all-in-all"] - another *absolute condition* – in an image, incidentally, with its genesis likely in Coleridge's Ballad ("Water, water every where, / nor any drop to drink") and symbolic of a metaphysical thirst, with the two final verses also marked by strong alliterations: "I cast for comfort I can no more get / By groping round my comfortless, than blind / Eyes in their dark can day or thirst can find / Thirst's all-in-all in all a world of wet". ("*Deito a linha ao conforto que eu não posso obter mais/ Ao tatear ao redor meu sem-conforto, do que cegos/ Olhos em seu escuro podem o dia ou os sedentos podem achar/ A essência da sede em todo um mundo de água").*

In the ninth verse the fragmentation of the lyrical self continues to be suggested in self-clamor through different names, "Soul", "self" and "Jackself", the latter a neologism combining in its semantic orbit notions of the Elizabethan "Jack" [John Doe] and other related popular expressions such as "Jack-of-all-trades", i.e., expressions giving the idea of a modest and industrious person – like the Jesuit Hopkins. This same sense of an industrious character is emphasized below in the word “jaded”, resulting from the ellipse of “who are”: “*Soul, self; come, poor Jackself, / I do advise / You, jaded” (“Alma, eu, vem, pobre joão-eu, eu aconselho/ A ti, esfalfado*”), followed by pious exhortations of the self, introducing a natural imaginary through the compound and alliterative word “root-room” and the verb “size”: “... *call off thoughts awhile / Elsewhere; leave comfort root-room; let joy size / At God knows when to God knows what” (... deixa estar; afasta os pensamentos por algum tempo/ Pra longe; deixa ao conforto espaço para a raiz; deixa a alegria medrar/ Deus sabe quando e Deus sabe em que proporção”)*.In the case of “whose smile,” I understand it as linked to “joy”, not to God.[21] As expected, that “smile” typical of “joy” “s not wrung”. The violent *enjambement* between the twelfth and thirteenth verses (which requires “translation”) contrasts with the spontaneity of the smile. Because it is related to “joy”, the smile is able to change the perception of the sensitive world, lighting a “lovely mile” or part of the way at such “unforeseen times”, like those when sunlight streams from the “skies”. “Betweenpie” is a neologism [that needs to be “translated”, obviously] resulting in a compound verb formed by the preposition “between” and “pie”, this from the adjective “pied”, but with no recognized use in this sense, i.e., that the skies, seen between the mountains produce a pied pattern, or even that sunshine, pouring on a valley, changes the color of parts of the mountain on which it is reflected. At the end of the poem, the expectation generated after the self-exhortation of the poetic self to “see you” is resolved in the evocation of the lit path through an alliteration typical of Hopkins: “... *whose smile ’s not wrung, see you; unforeseen times rather – as skies Between pie mountains – lights a lovely mile”.*

These are the poetic gestures that I consider essential in my reading, and now I can only hope that the reader will find them expressed in the translation more “effectively,” as Hamburger said, than in the words I have just used:

Meu coração que eu mais me apiede dele; e brando
Eu viva ao meu eu triste desde este momento,
Caridoso; não viva a mente em seu tormento
À mente atormentada ainda atormentando.
Eu lanço a linha à paz sem poder ter, tateando
O meu sem paz, mais que o olho cego pode o alento
Do dia em seu sem luz, ou mais que alguém sedento
A sede toda em todo um mundo se inundando.
Alma, eu; vem, mísero João-eu, ouve este aviso,
Ó, trapo; deixa, enxota um pouco estas ideias;
À paz terreno-a-raiz; cresça o ânimo feliz o
Quanto e quando Deus quiser; seu riso não é à
Força, vê: igual aos céus – que de improviso
Entrematizam montes – luz por linda aleia.

Notes

1 I am not referring specifically to the non-identification with readings in solutions, which is so common among those devoted to the craft, but to artifices such as interpolating texts by other authors into the translation, as done by Augusto and Haroldo de Campos, following in the footsteps of Odorico Mendes, to them the "patriarch of creative translation" in Brazil, or even rendering a translation which would result in a poem "harder" than the original, as was the intention of Décio Pignatari in the translation of Keats' "Ode on Melancholy".

2 Pound referred to his translation of "The Seafarer", to those in Cathay and his "Homage to Sextus Propertius" as his main personae. As a title for the collection composed of two previous anthologies and published in 1919, he chose *Personae*, a title which ultimately would be used two more times, one for the poems collected and published in 1926, the other for a selection of the 1919 edition released in 1928. The importance which the poet assigned the word can be verified in his text entitled "Vorticism", published in 1929, in which he calls his poems and their translations simply a series of "elaborated masks". That is, from this point of view, as Hugh Kenner would state in his paradigmatic study about the author, these personae, for Pound, were deliberate dramatizations that amplified ways of thinking and feeling accessible to the common residents of London at a given time.

3 As a translator, Hamburger was responsible for promoting the understanding of German literature in the English world, an event that interestingly began in 1943 with his acclaimed translations of Hölderlin. Among the many writers who were extensively translated are Büchner, Goethe, Celan, Grass, Huchel, Hofmannsthal, Rilke and Trakl. For this work, Hamburger received several awards, among them the Medal of the Institute of Linguists, the Schlegel-Tieck Prize, Wilhelm-Heinse Prize Medallion, Goethe Medal, the European Translation Prize, Hölderlin Prize and the Petrarch Prize.

4 Translators who have been mentioned as heirs of Hamburger's approach include Keith Bosley, Alistair Elliot, Harry Guest, Peter Jay, Anthony Rudolf, David Constantine and David Cram.

5 I include these comments by Hamburger, as well as a text by him on Larkin in my edition of 80 poems by Philip Larkin, to be released by Ateliê.

6 Michel Hamburger, *Testimonies: selected shorter prose,* 1950-1987, London: Carcanet, 1989, p.259-60.

7 It should also be said that Robert Lowell refers to his translations, which are as controversial as Pound's, as "imitations", explicitly claiming his status as a participant in that school.

8 It is a matter of nomenclature, but it determines an attitude or approach, in view of the activity.

9 My semantic translation: "*A palavra morde como um peixe. Devo lançá-la de volta, livre/ Arremessando-a àquele mar/ Onde os pensamentos agitam a cauda e a barbatana? Ou devo colocá-la/ Para rimar num prato?*".

10 Considering the semantic additions of this translation ("...no final da / Linha ") [... at the end of the / Line] as if turning the verse into an "imitation", due to the ambiguity of the word "linha" (line), which does not exist in the original, combining the

main meaning of “linha escrita” (written line) or “verse” and the secondary meaning, dictated by the context, of “linha de pescar” (fishing line), which creates another analogy with “isca” (bait). Even if the solution involves ideas belonging to the semantic field of the poem (“bites”, “fish”) and highlights the metalinguistic nature of the original, it is the weight of this ambiguity in the economy of poetic values of the poem that makes me think of these verses as an “appropriation”.

11 In his paradigmatic essay “A tradução como criação e como crítica”, Haroldo de Campos touches on the same issue: “So, for us, the translation of creative texts will always be a *re-creation*, or a parallel, autonomous but reciprocal creation. The more this text is filled with difficulties, the more re-creationable and seductive it will be as an open possibility of re-creation.” He is not referring, of course, to “paraphrases”, but to me these words seem to betray the subliminal perception of the need for “latitudes”. In fact, he even recognizes a “semantic parameter”: “The meaning, the semantic parameter will be only and solely the beacon of the place of the re-creative task.” My disagreement with this claim lies in the fact that Haroldo considers this parameter “only and solely the beacon.” It does not seem to me to be “only and solely”, precisely because it *delimits* the task, and is an aspect by virtue of which a text will be considered either a translation or an appropriation. I suppose that the “creation” of a poetry translator should occur within the limits determined by this parameter, and that the translation of the “physicality” of the linguistic sign must be part of this “creation.” In my view, part of the “pleasure” that we can draw from a poetic translation stems from our impression of the translator’s success of the translator vis-à-vis of the challenge of reconstructing a “pattern” in the original within the limits of the sphere of action determined by what we can confirm as being latitudes.

12 By doing that, I do not intend to understand precisely the processes involved, and I admit the possibility of being wrong as regards postulating an absolute difference between my approach and that linked to the Poundian line.

13 According to his famous definition, which is found in the preface to his translation of Ovid’s epistles, “It is said that there are three types of translation; first there is metaphrase, a word-by-word, line-by-line translation of an author from one language to another. [...] Second, there is paraphrase, or translation with latitude, in which the author is kept within the reach of our eyes [...] but his words are not followed as strictly as his meaning, which can also be enlarged but not changed. [...] There is imitation, in which the translator (if he has not yet lost that name) takes the liberty not only of changing words and meanings, but of abandoning them when deemed appropriate, taking only the general idea of the original and acting freely and at his pleasure.”

14 One of the “repairs” to Dryden’s definition would come from the question “what is the meaning of the text”?

15 Of course the types of operations mentioned here can be seen in countless translations by other translators, even if they do not think in terms of “paraphrases”.

16 One should put into perspective: the sentence: the meaning perceived by the translator.

17 My semantic translation: “*Pois os amantes dizem, o coração sofre três vezes/ quando é privado do auxílio da língua”*.

18 As I was writing this article, a anonymous text published in Veja magazine on a book with posthumous translations of Cavafy by Haroldo de Campos referred to “improper

mannerisms and liberties" in them, justifying this comment with the explanation that the author of the lines considers "a cute allusion to a famous verse by Carlos Drummond de Andrade at the end of 'Waiting for the Barbarians'." At the same time, the same author acknowledges the "compensation of these slips" through the "fluency of his verse," the "richness of his lexicon" and the "originality of his linguistic inventions." I believe that the feeling of "ambivalence" expressed in these words, although not a deep critical assessment, exemplifies the common impression to which I have just referred.

19 I limit myself here to highlighting key points from my reading of the poem, contained in a book that I am preparing and which will include a critical study of Hopkins and 40 translations of his poems.

20 For reasons of space I am also forced to refrain from commenting on issues of rhythm, very important in the case of Hopkins - in particular his idiosyncratic meter, which he called "sprung rhythm" - and from offering proposals for reconstructing them in Portuguese. On the other hand, less for issues of space and more out of habit I refrain from commenting on two Brazilian translations published before mine, one by Aíla Gomes and the other by Augusto de Campos. I believe that once a translator elaborates his reading of the original and materializes it in verse, it will hardly be possible for him to stray from this reading to the extent of accepting unreservedly other translations as alternatives. I think I express a general feeling among those engaged in the craft by stating that if we come across a translation presenting a reading of the original able to satisfactorily fulfill our "quota of pleasure", we may not feel encouraged to translate it. In my case, I have not had any identification with the reading of these translations, and my belief in the idle character of commenting on them stems from my view that if I think in terms of "criticism in verses", a new translation will suffice to express my disagreements with the reading.

21 There are disagreements about that among scholars, but this interpretation seems to be the most convincing in terms of poeticity.

Abstract – This article offers an appraisal by Alípio Correia de Franca Neto, author of several poetic translations into Portuguese, of his experiences in this area – from the early influence of the ideas of Ezra Pound, disseminated in Brazil by the concrete poets, to his subsequent retreat from those ideas in favor of translation procedures based on ancient concepts of "paraphrase", as formulated by John Dryden and developed in our days in the critical writings and the practices of translating poetry of Michael Hamburger. The article ends with an analysis of a poem by Gerard Manley Hopkins, alongside a poetic translation.

Keywords: Poetic translation, Paraphrase, Imitation, Ezra Pound, Michael Hamburger.

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