Translation as "Transcreation" and Other Productive "Betrayals"

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Résumé de l'article

La reconceptualisation du statut subordonné du texte traduit remonte à l'époque baroque et, plus récemment, à la crise du concept d'auteur dans la critique poststructuraliste. Elle a donné naissance à l'idée de la traduction comme manipulation ou appropriation qui remet en question les critères traditionnels de fidélité au texte original. Dans le même ordre d'idées, l'école brésilienne, dirigée par Oswald de Andrade dans la première moitié du XXe siècle et par les frères Haroldo et Augusto de Campos dans la seconde, s'est distinguée au cours du siècle dernier par sa vision plus élaborée et plus séduisante de la traduction en tant que manipulation, qui est clairement liée, selon eux, au processus créatif. Cette école est intéressante pour son engagement résolu en faveur de la visibilité totale du sujet traduisant et d'une notion de la traduction comme *transcréation* qui présente le traducteur comme *transfingidor* [transprétendant]. Elle est provocatrice parce qu'elle reformule le vieux débat entre cosmopolitisme et nationalisme dans le contexte latino-américain en termes de *transculturation,* afin de décentraliser et déstabiliser la tradition littéraire universelle depuis la périphérie. Cet article présente un bref aperçu de cette école fascinante mais controversée, en mettant l'accent sur ses bases théoriques ainsi que sur la figure, encore largement négligée, du *transfingidor*.

Translation as "Transcreation" and Other Productive "Betrayals"[1]

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> *Se o poeta é um fingidor, como queria Fernando Pessoa, o tradutor é um transfingidor*
> (Campos, 1991, p. 32)
>
> [If the poet is a pretender, as Fernando Pessoa wanted, the translator is a transpretender] (my trans.)

Abstract

Reconceptualization of the subordinate status of the translated text dates to the Baroque period and, more recently, to the crisis of the concept of authorship in post-structuralist criticism. This has given rise to a notion of translation as manipulation or appropriation that challenges traditional criteria of fidelity to the original text. In a similar vein, the Brazilian school, led by Oswald de Andrade in the first half of the 20th century and the brothers Haroldo and Augusto de Campos in the second, stands out over the past century for its more elaborate and appealing view of translation as manipulation, which is clearly linked, in this case, to the creative process. The Brazilian school is interesting for its resolute commitment to the complete visibility of the translator, arguing for a notion of translation as *transcreation* and presenting the translator as *transfingidor* [transpretender]. It is thought-provoking because it reformulates the old debate between cosmopolitanism and nationalism in the Latin American context in terms of *transculturation* and advocates for decentralizing and destabilizing the universal literary tradition from the periphery. This article provides a brief overview of this fascinating though controversial school, focusing on its theoretical basis as well as on the largely neglected figure of the *transfingidor*.

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1. The title obviously constitutes a wink of complicity with the reader in its implicit allusion to Hélène Cixous's thinking about translation.

Résumé

La reconceptualisation du statut subordonné du texte traduit remonte à l'époque baroque et, plus récemment, à la crise du concept d'auteur dans la critique poststructuraliste. Elle a donné naissance à l'idée de la traduction comme manipulation ou appropriation qui remet en question les critères traditionnels de fidélité au texte original. Dans le même ordre d'idées, l'école brésilienne, dirigée par Oswald de Andrade dans la première moitié du XXᵉ siècle et par les frères Haroldo et Augusto de Campos dans la seconde, s'est distinguée au cours du siècle dernier par sa vision plus élaborée et plus séduisante de la traduction en tant que manipulation, qui est clairement liée, selon eux, au processus créatif. Cette école est intéressante pour son engagement résolu en faveur de la visibilité totale du sujet traduisant et d'une notion de la traduction comme *transcréation* qui présente le traducteur comme *transfingidor* [transprétendant]. Elle est provocatrice parce qu'elle reformule le vieux débat entre cosmopolitisme et nationalisme dans le contexte latino-américain en termes de *transculturation,* afin de décentraliser et déstabiliser la tradition littéraire universelle depuis la périphérie. Cet article présente un bref aperçu de cette école fascinante mais controversée, en mettant l'accent sur ses bases théoriques ainsi que sur la figure, encore largement négligée, du *transfingidor*.

Mots-clés : traduction littéraire, transcréation, transculturation, école brésilienne, Haroldo de Campos

Introduction

When questioning the figure of the author and the traditionally hierarchical relationship between original text and translation, the practical and theoretical contributions of the Brazilian brothers Augusto and Haroldo de Campos are at once relevant and highly suggestive. Not only do they postulate the visibility of the translator, they also revive a tradition of thought about translation that dates back to the Baroque by problematizing the criterion of (in)fidelity with respect to the original text and entering into dialogue with the universal literary tradition—both Western and Eastern, in the case of Haroldo de Campos. The "appropriation" of the Baroque, clearly observed in the latter's writing on translation, is closely linked to his literary theory and is the basis for his concepts of "transcreation," "transculturation," and the translator as *transfingidor* [roughly, transpretender].

The Brazilian School is certainly not the only one that has adhered to the notion of translation as subversion of the original text, designed to destabilize the inherited tradition; indeed, more recent feminist translation theories and practices have construed it in a fairly similar way. However, the Brazilian proposal also conceptualizes translation in terms of the cultural periphery confronting the universal literary tradition with what could be called an eccentric glimpse; as such, it is a contribution from Latin America that aims to transform the canon of the source literature(s), as well as the tradition of the host literature itself.

In this article we aim to analyze the main theoretical aspects of a daring and undoubtedly controversial view of translation that is deeply linked to the literary avant-garde of the second half of the 20th century and to literary theory, both of which were largely responsible for the profound transformations in literary criticism that occurred at that time. While the de Campos brothers' theory has been studied by a considerable number of authors[2] and their conception of translation as cannibalism is well-known in translation studies, their notion of transculturation, as defined below, remains an on-going topic of debate in Brazil. By focusing more specifically on this notion, as well as on the as yet largely neglected figure of the *transfingidor*, we hope to contribute to the existing scholarship. First, however, a brief overview of the emergence of the concept of literary translation is necessary to provide historical context.

The Crisis of the Notion of Authorship and the Revision of the Status of the Translator

As is well known, the notion of literary translation took shape in the Baroque period—between 1620 and 1650—in France and England. Translators reflecting on the matter began to conceive of literary translation as a distinct category, altering the traditional insistence on the interdependence of translated and original texts, and subverting the primacy of the author, which was hitherto still in full effect. During the Renaissance, the discourse on translation ranged from an educational approach oriented to the learning of grammar through translation, with a primary focus on philosophical texts, to an approach largely centred on the *imitatio* of classical rhetoric, focused

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2. See Franco Carvalhal *et al.* (2004), Block de Behar (2009), Ruffinelli and Rocha (2011), Campos (2016), Arrojo (2017), Kampff Lages (2017), Wrobel (2018), Soares (2018), Mendonça (2020), Hidalgo Nácher (2020, 2021), among others.

primarily on literary works. In both cases, especially the first, the dependence of the translation on the original, and of the translator on the author conceived as *auctoritas* or authority, exemplified the humanistic respect for classical tradition and *auctoritas*, together with the subordination and inferiority of translation, understood as copy. While *imitatio* paved the way for an approach to literary translation, 17th-century discourse on translation, based on the dichotomy between *ad verbum* and *ad sensum*, attests to the then still prevalent criterion of fidelity to the original text, which wielded ownership over its meaning.

This discourse, however, began to shift by the mid-17th century, reflecting a defence of literary translation as such and an attempt to redeem it from its subordinate status.[3] This change in status went hand in hand with the emergence of a less restrictive definition of translation beyond its solely educational purpose. Edward Sherburne spoke of "paraphrase" rather than translation (1648); Abraham Cowley insisted on a "libertine" manner of translating (1656); and Nicolas Perrot d'Ablancourt stated unashamedly that his *Lucian* was not a translation, but much better than a translation: it was simply another work (1662). In short, the translator ceased to be considered a mere interpreter and acquired for the first time the status of author. While the status of the translator as author has been both upheld and contested since the 17th century, it was not until the 1960s that the concept of the author itself was radically called into question. In post-structuralist criticism, the crisis of the concept of author(ship) led to the author being regarded no longer as a creator but only as a (re)interpreter of intertextual moments that precede the (original) text.[4] Consequently, the concept of author(ship) took on multiple dimensions, with author(ship) being redefined as a textual function created by the text itself: a function that neither precedes the text nor can be located outside of it. The post-structuralist critique of the notion of author(ship) thus had a direct effect on translation, the

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3. Many well-known examples evince this shift, including *Discours sur les oeuvres de M. de Malherbe* by Antoine Godeau (1862 [1630]), the contributions of Nicolas Perrot d'Ablancourt (1972 [1662]; see the foreword to his translation of Thucydides), the views expressed by Chapman on his translation of Homer (1616) or those conveyed by John Denham in his foreword to *The Destruction of Troy* (1656 [1636]), and *An Essay on Translated Verse* by Dillon Wentworth, the 4th Earl of Roscommon (1684).

4. See also Barthes (1968), for whom the author is not a (re)interpreter, but merely a de-substantialized *scripteur* [scripter].

status of the translator, and translation studies. Whether we view translation as a (never neutral) manipulation and construction of the original text's meaning, a deciphering of multiple and unstable meanings, or a fragment that in turn reveals the fragmentariness of every original text, disrupting and dislocating the original and its language, we are compelled to problematize not only the status of translation and its traditional subordinate position, construed as "natural," but also what could be seen as the essentialist notion of the translator as author, inherited from the Baroque and called into question by post-structuralism.

The above section provides the framework for the study that follows, notably by underscoring the centrality of the Baroque when dealing with the Brazilian anthropophagic view on translation. As we shall see below, this view is based on a revision of traditional discussions about (in)fidelity to the original text, as well as on the notion of the translator as *transfingidor* as defined by Haroldo de Campos in a little-known article published in 1991 under the title "Tradução e reconfiguração do imaginário: o tradutor como transfingidor [Translation and the Reconfiguration of the Imaginary: The Translator as a Transpretender]."

Translation as "Transcreation"

Developed in the second half of the 20th century primarily in response to Oswald de Andrade's *Manifesto antropófago* [*Anthropophagic Manifesto*] (1928), the theoretical and practical[5] contributions to translation by the brothers Haroldo and Augusto de Campos gave rise to the Brazilian school of translation. Based on the manipulation and appropriation of the original, the school's approach to translation is interesting for its resolute commitment to the complete visibility of the translator, arguing for a notion of translation as (re)creation and (re)writing or, in their own words, as

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5. It is well known that Haroldo de Campos (1929-2003), Brazil's cosmopolitan writer *par excellence*, translated from multiple languages into Brazilian Portuguese: English, German, French, Russian, Italian, Spanish, Greek, Latin, Japanese, Chinese… His thinking on translation is predicated on this long practice. Furthermore, both Augusto (1931-) and Haroldo (1929-2003) jointly translated several works, including *Finnegans Wake* (partially), by James Joyce. The idea was, in this case, the same as in others, "*subverter o idioma [português] para corresponder as invenções do original inglês* [subvert the [Portuguese] language to match the inventions of the original in English]" (Campos, 1986 [1962], p. 22; my trans.).

"transcreation."[6] In this vein, they adopted Indigenous anthropophagy as a metaphor for the relationship with the Other that implies, at the same time, recognition and homage. According to this view, the "devouring" of the Other is a critical and selective process that aims to revitalize the host literature while ensuring the survival of the original work:

> Creio que, no Brasil, com a "Antropofagia" de Oswald de Andrade, nos anos 20 (retomada depois, em termos de cosmovisão filosófico-existencial, nos anos 50, na tese *A Crise da Filosofia Messiânica*), tivemos um sentido agudo dessa necessidade de pensar o nacional em relacionamento dialógico e dialético com o universal. A "Antropofagia" oswaldiana -já o formulei em outro lugar- é o pensamento da devoração crítica do legado cultural universal, elaborado não a partir da perspectiva submissa e reconciliada do "bom selvagem" [...], mas segundo o ponto de vista desabusado do "mau selvagem," devorador de brancos, antropófago. Ela não envolve uma submissão (uma catequese), mas uma transculturação; melhor ainda, uma "transvaloração": uma visão crítica da história como função negativa (no sentido de Nietzsche), capaz tanto de apropriação como de expropriação, desierarquização, desconstrução. Todo passado que nos é "outro" merece ser negado. Vale dizer: merece ser comido, devorado. Com esta especificação elucidativa: o canibal era um "polemista" (do grego *pólemos* = luta, combate), mas também um "antologista": só devorava os inimigos que considerava bravos, para deles tirar proteína e tutano para o robustecimento e a renovação de suas próprias forças naturais... (Campos, 1992, pp. 234-235).

> [I think that, in Brazil, with Oswald de Andrade's *Anthropophagy* in the 1920s (taken up later, in terms of a philosophical-existential worldview, in the 1950s, in the essay *La Crisis de la Filosofía Mesiánica* [*The Crisis of Messianic Philosophy*]], we had an acute sense of that need to think the national in dialogical and dialectical relationship with the universal. Oswaldian "Anthropophagy"—which I have already formulated in another text—is the thought of the critical devouring of the universal cultural legacy, elaborated not from the submissive and reconciled angle of the "good savage" […], but according to the disabused point of view of the "evil-savage," devourer of whites, anthropophage. It does not imply a submission (a catechesis), but a transculturation, or better, a "transvaluation": *a critical view of history as a negative function* (in the sense proposed by Nietzsche), *capable of appropriation, de-hierarchization, deconstruction*. All the past that is presented to us as "other" deserves

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6. For further information on Haroldo de Campos's theories on translation, see for instance Franco Carvalhal *et al*. (2004) and Block de Behar (2009).

to be denied. That is: it deserves to be eaten, devoured. With this elucidation: the cannibal was a "polemicist" (from the Greek *pólemos* = fight, combat), but he was also an "anthologist": *he only devoured the enemies whom he considered brave to remove protein and marrow from them for the strengthening and renewal of their own natural forces…*] (my trans.; my italics).

Traditional discussions about (in)fidelity to the original text are, in this way, re-signified under the "anthropophagous" view. For Haroldo de Campos, the translator should be not an unscathed and passive mediator in the translation process, but rather a reader-author who usurps and betrays the original text, making its translation a true fictional act. This "fiction" is based on the fiction already embodied in the original, which transforms the poet into a "pretender," as Fernando Pessoa observed many decades ago. Consequently, the translator turns into a *transfingidor* or "transpretender" (Campos, 1991).

From this perspective, the translatability of a literary text no longer lies in the text itself, but in the creative capacity of the translator. By praising the translation "error," as opposed to the "faithful" or "servile" translation, Haroldo de Campos questioned the univocal interpretation of the original. And by associating "creativity" and "error" with literary translation, he conceived translation as transcreation, understood as the result of the transformations to which the original text is subjected, ultimately provoking its "estrangement" through a process of transmutation that confronts the original and produces a creative effect. Errors give rise to alternative readings, which reveal new poetic genealogies through displacement[7] and confer upon the text a surplus of meaning in the Derridean sense. It follows that less conventional texts elicit the greatest interest, since they are the most "untranslatable" and thus represent a greater challenge for the translator. As de Campos pointed out as early as 1969, the essence of poetic translation lies in its impossibility.[8]

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7. For example, his translation of six "canti" from Dante's *Paradiso*, in dialogue with previous readings by Ezra Pound and T.S. Eliot. To justify his translation solutions, de Campos would also draw on Yuri M. Lotman's cultural semiotics, as well as writings on translation by Walter Benjamin and Jacques Derrida. Another example would be his eccentric glimpse on Leopardi and Ungaretti to underline the proto-avant-garde aspects of their work (see Campos, 2016; Kampff Lages, 2017).

8. Francisco Soares links the positions of Haroldo de Campos to those of Lotman, an author prominent in his personal library (2018, p. 293).

Toward a Definition of Transcreation: Reinterpreting Jakobson and Benjamin

One of the concerns Haroldo de Campos sought to address in his early works (before developing his notion of transcreation) was how to unify Jakobson's and Benjamin's theories of translation. Benjamin's notion of *die reine Sprache* [the pure language] (2002 [1923]) is an essential part of de Campos's thought and a central issue in his notion of translation as "virtuality." To this end, de Campos undertook what he called a "secularisation" of Benjamin's Adamic positions on translation, reinterpreting the notion of the pure language through Jakobson's notion of poetic function (1960).[9] For Benjamin, there is an affinity between all languages, expressed not by a superficial similarity between two specific poetic works (the original and the translation), but by the fact that, in each of them, the same thing is designated; something that cannot be achieved by either of the languages separately, only in the totality of their mutually complementary intentionality, that is, in the pure language. Therefore, translation appears as a "virtuality" of the pure language. By the same token, "fidelity" is a criterion no longer linked to the preservation of meaning, but to the thing designated by the original text, in such a way that both translation and original can be recognized as fragments of a higher language. By these means, Benjamin delegates to the translator the task of renewing his or her own language through defamiliarizing translation strategies, in a way close to the notion of "error" in translation. On "the true significance of this freedom" (2002 [1923], p. 261), he cites German philosopher Rudolf Pannwitz:

> Our translations, even the best ones, proceed from a mistaken premise. They want to turn Hindi, Greek, English into German instead of turning German into Hindi, Greek, English. Our translators have a far greater reverence for the usage of their own language than for the spirit of foreign works... *The basic error of the translator is that he preserves the state in which his own language happens to be instead of allowing his*

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9. The encounter with Jakobson was decisive for de Campos, due to the influence on his thinking of "Linguistics and Poetics" (1960) and "On Linguistic Aspects of Translation" (1959). These contributions coincided with de Campos's derivation towards concrete poetry in the mid-1960s and his perception of the close link between translation and creation. Hidalgo Nácher (2021) has proposed this suggestive idea: while Benjamin gave de Campos a "metaphysics of translation" (which he later problematized through Derrida's reading of Benjamin's work), Jakobson offered him a "physics of translation." This enabled him to link the concept of transcreation to Jakobson's paranomastic theory in the 1980s.

language to be powerfully affected by the foreign tongue. Particularly when translating from a language very remote from his own, he must go back to the primal elements of language itself and penetrate to the point where work, image, and tone converge. *He must expand and deepen his language by means of the foreign language* [...]. (Pannwitz, cited in *ibid.*, pp. 261-262; my italics)

In this respect, de Campos views Benjamin's pure language as the semiotic place or operational space of translation that is shared alike by the original text and *all* its different translations. Hence, in his writings, he refers to translation (especially poetic translation) as a semiotic operation in a twofold sense: (1) as a special semiotic practice, or, in his own words, as a "*reconfiguração do 'intracódigo' que opera na poesia de todas as línguas como um 'universal poético'* [reconfiguration of the 'intracode' that operates in the poetry of all languages as a 'poetic universal']" (Campos, 2009, p. 22; my trans.), that is, as a heuristic fiction; and (2) as a critical operation, given that any literary tradition is (re)proposed and (re)formulated through translation.

In the first of these two senses, the intracode to which de Campos alludes corresponds to Benjamin's notion of the pure language and Jakobson's notion of the poetic function. For Benjamin, as we know, the task of translation entails a mission of salvation (2002 [1923]), because it consists of freeing the pure language, which is exiled among alien tongues, and redeeming it into language itself by means of a "transpoetic" process, which can be carried out thanks to a *remissão* [remission], as de Campos calls it, of the "mode of intention" (i.e., the "mode of signifying"), understood as a "mode of re-presenting" the original in the translator's own language. That process must not be confused with referential translation or simple restitution of meaning, which aspires only to transmitting the content or message of the original text. Quite to the contrary: for both Benjamin and Haroldo de Campos, poetic translation (and, by extension, all literary translation) cannot be reduced to the mere communication of meaning. This would betray the very essence of its mode because all translation is ultimately nothing but a mode [*Übersetzung ist eine Form*]. As de Campos points out: "*a tradução desvela o desempenho* [...] *da função poética no poema de partida e transforma o resultado desse desvelamento em metalinguagem* [translation discloses or performs [...] the poetic function of the original poem and transforms the result of this act of disclosure into metalanguage]" (Campos, 1991, pp. 17-32;

my trans.).[10] Consequently, according to de Campos, the aim is to achieve a creative translation or, as indicated earlier, a transcreation of the original. This notion is put across very clearly in the following quote:

> O tradutor […] "desbabeliza" o *stratum* semiótico das línguas interiorizado nos poemas, procedendo *como se* […] esse "intracódigo" de "formas significantes" fosse intencional o tendencialmente comum ao original e ao texto resultante da tradução. Ou seja, o tradutor constrói paralelamente (paramórficamente) ao original o texto de sua "transcriação," depois de "desconstruir" esse original num primeiro momento metalinguístico. A tradução opera, por tanto, graças a uma deslocação reconfiguradora, a projetada reconvergência das divergências, ao "extraditar" o "intracódigo" de uma para outra língua, *come se* na perseguição harmonizadora de um mesmo *telos*. (Campos, 1991, p. 31; italics in original)

> [The translator […] "de-Babelizes" the semiotic stratum of the languages internalized in poems, proceeding *as if* […] this "intracode" of "significant modes" were intentional and tendentially common to the original and to the text resulting from translation. In other words, the translator constructs the text of his "transcreation" in parallel (paramorphically) to the original after first "deconstructing" the original metalinguistically. The translation, therefore, operates thanks to a reconfiguring dislocation, a projected reconvergence of divergences, by "extraditing" the "intracode" of one language to another, *as if* in the harmonious pursuit of a single *telos*.] (my trans.)

Transcreation as a Critical Reading of and Fictional Discourse on the Original Text

This "reconfiguring dislocation," this "projected reconvergence of divergences," is the basis for what would amount to a "bad translation" for Benjamin, which de Campos echoes in his theory: "*uma transmissão inexacta de um conteúdo inessencial* [an inexact transmission of an inessential content]" (*ibid.*, p. 19; my trans.). This is a "provisional" operation for de Campos (as it was for Benjamin) and, therefore, historical in nature. For this reason, the translation theory of the Brazilian writer is naturally akin to the positions put forward in reception theory. From this viewpoint, translation is to be understood

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10. See also Haroldo de Campos, "Reflexões sobre a transcriação de *Blanco*, de Octavio Paz, com um excurso sobre a teoria da tradução do poeta mexicano [Reflections on the Transcreation of *Blanco*, by Octavio Paz, with an Excursus on the Translation Theory of the Mexican Poet]" included in the 2nd edition of *Transblanco* (1994, p. 183).

as reception, and an essential part of the process is a merging of horizons that sees the translator fully implicated in the "reconfiguring dislocation" of the text's meaning. Accordingly, the importance of a work would lie not in its genesis, but in its reception: in its multiple translations, in its reputation, and ultimately in its persistence over time. For de Campos, the importance of these positions lies precisely in the interaction between text and reader (or translator). Carrying this notion over to the field of translation, he advanced the following proposition:

> [A] reconfiguração da estrutura do texto pela "transcriação" redetermina-lhe a função como seu "horizonte de sentido" (o "extratexto do original") [...] sobre a interferência do "extratexto" do presente de tradução pelo qual ele é "ido" [...] o texto se converte em objeto imaginário, na consciência de seu receptor. (*ibid*, pp. 25-26)

> [The reconfiguration of the structure of the text through "transcreation" resets the text's function as its "horizon of meaning" (the "extratext of the original") in relation to the interference of the "extratext" of the translation's present by which it is "read" [...]. The text becomes an imaginary object in the consciousness of its receiver.] (my trans.)

From this angle, the text can be read as a "fictional discourse" and its reception is not so much a semantic process as "*o processo de experimentação da configuração do imaginário projetado no texto* [an experiential process of configuring the projected imaginary of the text]" (*ibid.*, p. 26; my trans.): a project of critical reading and poetic updating that requires a coining of new terms to be fully realized. Hence, de Campos introduced new words like *recriação* [recreation], *transcriação* [transcreation], *reimaginação* [reimagining], *transluciferação* [transluciferizing], *transluminação* [trans-illumination], or *transparadisação mefistofáustica* [Mephistophelean transparadization], the latter of which appears in his study of the closing scenes of Goethe's *Faust Part Two* (1980). These are only some of the terms that de Campos enlists to refer to literary translation, as he understands it.

In 1980, de Campos's concept of transcreation culminated in his parodic version of Goethe's *Faust* under the title *Deus e o Diabo no Fausto de Goethe* [God and the Devil in Goethe's *Faust*], in which he defined the task of the translator as a *transluciferação mefistofáustica* [Mephistophelean transluciferation] and defended the "*inscrição da diferença no mesmo* [inscription of the difference in the same]" (1981

[1980], p. 208; my trans.), in a double displacement of the literary tradition *and* the text that constituted for him an intertextual "plagiotropic"[11] movement. By the same token, the translation became quite a diabolical task, in line with an absolute defence of the visibility of the translator.[12]

On this understanding, literary translation has no qualms in presenting itself as a manipulation of the original. Quite to the contrary, it defends both the critical displacement and the migration of the original content that destabilize authorial meaning, and it points directly toward the (re)writing of the original text. This is understood as a process that not only closely links translation and literary creation, but also considers the reception of the work through translation to be a clear appropriation of the work itself, at the service of the formulation of a new poetics of translation as criticism of the original text, that is, as metaliterature.

> Para nós, tradução de textos criativos será sempre recriação, o criação paralela, autônoma parém recíproca. Quanto mais inçado de dificultades esse texto, mais recriável, mais seductor enquanto possibilidade aberta de recriação. (Campos, 1963, p. 167)

> [For us, the translation of creative texts will always be recreation, or parallel creation, autonomous and yet reciprocal. The more fraught with difficulties the text is, the more re-creatable, the more seductive as an open possibility of recreation.] (my trans.)

Therefore, for de Campos, translation is a privileged form of critical reading (1992 [1980]).[13] This is an essential point in his literary theory that, by linking criticism and creation in the debate

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11. From the Greek *plágios*, "oblique," "transverse." See also, among others, Wrobel (2018).

12. See also Bassnett (1993, p. 18).

13. His view is very close to Ezra Pound's vision of "criticism via translation" (1919), as well as to that of Jorge Luis Borges, for whom "*la traducción* […] *parece destinada a ilustrar la discusión estética* [translation […] appears destined to exemplify the aesthetic discussion] (Borges, 1996, pp. 239-243; my trans.). It also accords with the positions of Octavio Paz. Paz similarly drew a distinction between "literal translation" (or non-translation) and "translation as a literary operation," which necessarily demands a "transformation" or "transmutation" of the original text, aimed at "*producir con medios diferentes, efectos análogos* [*producing analogic effects with different means*]" (Paz, 2009 [1970], p. 26; my trans.; my italics), that is, a translation that can be "metaphorical" or "metonymical" (and therefore allegorical), but never analogical. The same conception of poetic translation appears in the writings of Paul Valéry (whom Paz is referring to in the previous quote), analyzed by de Campos (1984-1985).

on the old vs. the new, is closely connected to his vision of the Baroque and to his controversial revision of the Brazilian normative literary canon, which in turn leads to the questioning of the origin of Brazilian literature and the very concept of "nation"; a topic that remains current in Brazilian intellectual circles.[14]

Transcreation and/as Transculturation

The appropriation of the Baroque was not a minor issue for de Campos. Beginning in the mid-1950s, he repeatedly referred to a Neo-Baroque in his writings, in opposition to the homogenizing and unique reading of texts imposed by the normative canon. His thesis was that Brazilian literature was born an adult, already a form of Baroque insofar as it emerged directly as a differential art, a "parody" (literally a "parallel singing") of a previous text/tradition. This recovery of the Baroque enabled de Campos to revaluate the mechanisms of artificialization in the text (such as proliferation, condensation, ellipsis, hyperbole, parable, parody...), which are key to understanding his theory on translation as transcreation. It also led him to rethink Latin America's relationship to the universal literary tradition, as well as to reformulate the old debate between cosmopolitanism and nationalism in the Latin American context, in terms of the decentralization and destabilization of the cultural centre from the periphery.[15]

In this light, the centrality of the notion of "error" in de Campos's translation theory, linked, as we have seen, to the Derridian concepts of displacement and surplus of meaning, also applies to his theory of literature. From this perspective, translation is seen not only as "transcreation," but also as "transculturation"[16] with respect to the Latin

14. We are referring to the discussion on the literary canon between Haroldo de Campos and his mentor, António Candido, which was part of his review of the origin of Brazilian literature and its relationship to others, through translation. The controversy around the Haroldian positions on this topic is still present (see Wrobel, 2018), specifically regarding Lígia Chiappini's criticism of *O sequestro do Barroco na formação da Literatura Brasileira: O caso Gregório de Matos* [*The Hijacking of the Baroque in the Formation of Brazilian Literature: the Gregório de Matos Case*] published by Haroldo de Campos in 1989 (see Mendonça, 2020).

15. In this sense, see also Hidalgo Nácher, who develops the "propeller" metaphor in this way: "*algo* […] *se descentra, o más bien, duplica su centro, lo desdobla* [something [...] becomes decentered, or rather, duplicates its centre, unfolds it]" (2020, p. 165, my trans.) with another blind and absent centre, which breaks the hegemony, suggesting the existence of an uncentred and unstable observer located on the periphery.

16. *Transculturation* was coined in 1951 by the Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz,

American literary tradition. The eccentric glimpse and displacement of meaning transform both the tradition of the metaliterature and the canon of the source literature(s). Through the translation process, a dialogue is established with the original and other textual voices (local and universal), that is, previous translations. Taken together, they form a cultural series in such a way that the original ends up "becoming the same under the species of difference":

> Somente se pode produzir algo grande mediante a apropriação dos tesouros alheios. [...] No que concerne à tradução, ela pode ser *extensiva*, moderada e mediadora, propondo-se uma função auxiliar [...] de viabilizar ou ampliar o acesso ao significado do original. Ou então, enquanto transcriação, será uma obra de "reinvenção," *intensiva*, fragmentária muitas vezes, preocupando-se antes com a forma semiótica do texto, com a sua "qualidade diferencial" enquanto dicção. Onde não houver uma tradução radical, realmente transcriadora de um grande original, a única maneira de não se contentar apenas com a "imagem do significado" desse texto, mas para além disso, aceder a "imagem do seu significante" [...] será buscar essa "diferença qualitativa" na dicção de outro grande poeta, da língua do leitor, que, num certo sentido (não como tradutor direto, mas como transculturador de uma tradição viva), tenha reconfigurado os acentos mais marcantes dessa dicção "estranha," produzindo em sua língua o mesmo sob a espécie da diferença. Assim, prefiro ler a dicção de Dante em Camões, Sousândrade (ou no admirável *A Máquina do Mundo*, de Drummond), do que na versão explícita, mediadora, satisfeita com o meio termo, de tantos tradutores pouco ousados... (Campos, 1997, p. 50; italics in original).

> [*Something great can only be produced through the appropriation of the treasures of others.* [...] As far as translation is concerned, it can be *extensive* [italics in original], moderate and mediating, proposing an auxiliary function [...] to enable or expand access to the meaning of the original. Or, *as a transcreation, it will be a work of "reinvention,"*

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in contrast to the term *acculturation*. In 1983, the Uruguayan literary critic Ángel Rama appropriated it as a way to rethink Latin American literature in terms of the exogenous revitalization of local tradition, understood as a two-way process by which the Other is in turn affected and transformed. However, in a 2003 interview with Cláudio Daniel, Haroldo de Campos stated that, in fact, he had already applied the term to translation: "*En la* Nota Previa *a mi libro* La Operación del Texto *(*1976 [...]*) yo ya hablaba de traducción como "transculturación," expandiendo la idea práctico-teórica de "transcreación" en el tiempo y proyectándola en la historia.* [In the *Nota Previa* to my book *La Operación del Texto* (1976 [...]) I already spoke of translation as "transculturation," expanding the practical-theoretical idea of "transcreation" in time and projecting it into history.]" (cited in Santaella, 1999, pp. 145-165; my trans). See also Campos (2010).

intensive [italics in original], often fragmentary, worrying first about the semiotic form of the text, about its "differential quality" as diction. Where there is no radical, truly transcreating translation of a great original, the only way not to be satisfied with just the "image of the meaning," but beyond that, access "the image of its signifier" […] will be to look for that "qualitative difference" in the diction of another great poet of the reader's language, who, in a certain sense (*not as a direct translator, but as a transculturator of a living tradition*), has reconfigured the most outstanding accents of that "strange" diction, producing, in his language, *the same under the species of difference*. Thus, I prefer to read Dante's diction in Camoes [or] Sousândrade (or in the admirable *The Machine of the World*, by Drummond), rather than in the explicit, mediating version, satisfied with being a middle ground, of so many undaring translators...] (my trans.; my italics).

Thus, for de Campos, the translator is, ultimately, "*um leitorautor, no extremo um 'traidor' o um 'usurpador'* [a reader-writer, even a 'traitor' or 'usurper']" (*ibid.*, p. 25; my trans.), whereas translation is a way of rescuing and revealing the original (a concept later developed as the technical reproducibility of the work within a poetics understood as the history of modes of art). The representativeness of translation is thus manifested in its "ambiguous" figuration, due to its status as an "*análogo da representabilidade* [analogy of representativeness]" (*ibid.*; my trans.). For de Campos, this analogical dimension should, with greater semiotic rigour, be called the translation's "iconicity."

If we consider, as we noted in earlier remarks, that the text can be read as a "fictional discourse," and that its reception is not so much a semantic process as "*o processo de experimentação da configuração do imaginário projectado no texto*" [an experiential process of configuring the projected imaginary of the text]" (*ibid*; my trans.), we will agree that de Campos's concept of transcreation is simply a process of "transfictionalisation." In other words, "*o fictício da tradução é um fictício de 2º grau, que reprocessa, metalingüisticamente, o fictício do poema* [the fiction of translation is a second-degree fiction, which metalinguistically reprocesses the fiction of the poem]" (*ibid.*, p. 26; my trans.). In a fully transgressive mode and to varying extents, the literary translator undertakes a new selection and a new combination of the extratextual and intratextual elements present in the original and in other previous translations or originals. From this viewpoint, every literary translation must have a transgressive, dialogical vocation, and the practice of translation must become a critical collaboration that

fulfills a transcultural (therefore, historical) objective. Once again, de Campos argues openly against the "naturalized" notion of a literal, faithful or slavish translation subordinated to the original, construed as *aurático* [auratic] and *verocéntrico* [real-centric] (Campos, 1991), into which the translator should modestly fade away. Quite to the contrary, as we have seen, he formulates his conception of literary translation as one of defamiliarizing and destabilizing meaning, that is, as both transculturation and transcreation:

> [A]o significar-se como operação "transgressora," a tradução põe desde logo "entre parênteses" a intangibilidade do original, desnudando-o como ficção exibindo a sua própria ficcionalidade de segundo grau na provisoriedade do *como se.* (*ibid.*, p. 30; italics in original)

> [[T]o be sure, translation as a "transgressive" operation "brackets" the intangibility of the original, stripping down the original as fiction while displaying its own second-degree fictionality in the provisionality of an *as if*.] (my trans.)

This interrogation of the intangibility of the original that undercuts its purity and inviolability, together with the perception of the original as fictional discourse, gives rise to the transgressive intent of translation as transcreation posited by de Campos. With respect to the original, a translation will bear a relationship of asymmetry, of "stigmatic perspective," defined as an "asymptotic convergence"[17] or an ever-deferred approximation (Campos, 1991, p. 31). From this viewpoint, the translated text never denotes, but rather connotes its original—in the same way that the original does not denote, but rather connotes all its potential translations. The result is the establishment of an absence-presence dialectic that completely eschews the traditional hierarchy between original and translation, the latter being understood as an authentic critique of the original in its metaliterary dimension. Consequently, if literature is a specialized function of language, then for de Campos translation will always be a specialized function of literature: a *metafunction* (or second-degree function), with a clear critical value in relation to the original text (Campos, 1987, p. 189).

The Translator as *Transfingidor*

We shall now return to the figure of translator as "usurper" and the concept of *transfingidor*, which are key to appreciating the evolution

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17. From the Greek *asymptotos*, that "does not match."

of de Campos's thinking on translation, as well as its originality. As already mentioned, de Campos proposed this concept in a little-known essay published in 1991, intitled "Tradução e reconfigurção do imaginário: o tradutor como transfingidor," where he pointed out:

> [N]ada mais oportuno […] no momento em que se desmitifica a "ideologia da fidelidade," a ideia servil da tradução-cópia, do que repensar a própria tradução enquanto fantasia, enquanto ficção. (p. 27)

> [[N]othing is more appropriate […] when demystifying the "ideology of fidelity," that slavish idea of translation as copy, than rethinking translation itself as fantasy, as fiction.] (my trans.)

The same process of demystification lies behind his approach to translation when, in an essay published in 1994, he defined the metafunction of translation as a "re-version" (a concept that harks back to Nietzsche's idea of "transvaluation"):

> como percurso "inverso" em relação ao do poema, a tradução propõe, por uma dialética que lhe é inerente, uma negação da negação, ou seja, uma reversão. Que é também uma "transvaloração." (1994, p. 189)

> [as an "inverse" precursor of the poem, the translation proposes, by means of a dialectic that is inherent to it, a negation of the negation, that is, a "re-version." Which is also a "transvaluation."] (my trans.)

In both these assertions, transcreation—or textual transgression—aims to subvert the West's firmly established cultural constructs which, as noted above, pertain to key notions of "authorship" and "ownership" of meaning. The translation refers to the original, re-creating it from the image that the translator renders of it, as if it were an image reflected in the mirror; an image, however, that is always distorted, constructed, and that ends up reversing and throwing back its own text-source in an eccentric manner. In the same way, the voice of the original author is transformed into a constructed image by the translator and his or her interpretation of the text. In this way, the translator not only assumes the position of the author but confers upon the translation a true fictional character. The subject-translator, therefore, (re)composes the text and its imaginary. This is the basis for the Haroldian notion of the translator as *transfingidor*.

More specifically, in any translation we find, in fact, not the voice of the author, but that of the translator, who delegates to the author the role of the Other and feeds the illusion that the only voice present is the author's: an author "constructed" by the translator in

the translation process. In this way, from the Haroldian point of view, the translator not only assumes the authorship of the text but makes a journey towards Otherness: the greater the estrangement with respect to the original, the greater the effect of fictionalization of the translation, and the greater the surplus of meaning that the translator brings to it, supplementing the universal literary tradition with new fictional perspectives and readings. From this angle, the translator becomes a *transfingidor* [transpretender], in the same way that the original text evolves into an "imaginary object" for its receiver.

The subversion of authorship and, more broadly, of the universal literary tradition is linked in Haroldo de Campos's writings with the topic of *Weltliteratur*, anchored in the debate between universal and national cultures. As we have seen, in earlier essays he proposed a relationship with tradition that implies an eccentric glimpse from the cultural periphery (Latin America in general, and Brazil in particular); a transculturation or displacement that brings a surplus of meaning. This eccentric, displaced gaze triggers the revision of the canon (in the source literature *as well as* in the meta one), forces us to literally re-read the canonical texts in order to question the previous readings inherited from and consolidated by tradition.[18] In other words, for de Campos, transcreation and transculturation involve an anthropophagic appropriation of the cultural legacy coupled with its critical reversal, thereby enabling the establishment of new genealogies, the (re)discovering of silenced readings, purged authors, censured works... Anthropophagic displacement thus construes the literary process as a "*produto do revezamento contínuo de interpretantes* [...] *que se desenrola no espaço cultural* [product of the continuous relay of interpretants [...] that unfolds in the cultural space]" (Campos, 1994, p. 183; my trans.). As such, it coincides roughly with the notion of "parody," which de Campos described as a "*movimento não linear de transformação dos textos ao longo da história, por derivação nem sempre imediata* [non-linear movement of transformation of texts

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18. The affinity with Borges is more than evident. This is a notion of cosmopolitanism that, from the cultural periphery (Latin America), sends back to the metropolis an interpretation of the canon that unfailingly alters the text, together with the tradition or cultural series it was deemed to serve. See, for example, the famous example of Pierre Menard "rewriting" *Don Quixote*, as several critics have shown before. The resulting text is not a "copy," but a differential creation/translation acting as a mechanism capable of interrupting the continuity of inherited and homogenizing discourses from the Western-Eastern traditions: the same as and different from itself.

throughout history, by derivation not always immediate]" (1981, p. 76; my trans.), and ultimately corresponds with his notion of translation as transcreation, as it continued to evolve in the early 1980s.

From this perspective, as *transfingidor*, the translator's task is to pour into his or her own (meta) language, not the mere content of the text, but "the significant forms" that remain captive in it (like in every work of art), revealing the way in which the source text signifies, beyond its pure and simple content (Campos, 1991, p. 20). [19]

Returning to the anthropophagic metaphor, it bears repeating that the metaphorization of translation and the obsession with its (in)fidelity are an outgrowth of an omnipresent concern in the West over the opposition between production and reproduction, which encodes originality and creativity in terms of "paternity," "authorship," and ultimately "legitimacy." Indeed, this discursive tradition shows the stark sexualization to which the notion of translation has been subjected throughout history, usually expressed through metaphors that irrefutably reveal the anxiety over the notion of paternity (authorship/authority). In this sense, "cannibalistic" translators clearly show this filiation when opting for an "aggressive" translation of the original; at the same time, they betray an implicit desire to kill and usurp the author/father. While this frees translation—and the translator—from their subordinate and secondary status insofar as the aggressive translator is one "who seizes possession of the 'original,' who savors the text, that is, who truly feeds upon the words, who ingurgitates them, and who, thereafter, enunciates them in his own tongue, thereby having explicitly rid himself of the 'original' creator" (Chamberlain, 1988, p. 462), there is clearly a dynamic at work that reveals a patriarchal conceptual framework similar to the one within which translation has traditionally been inscribed, culturally and ideologically. Over the centuries, this framework has found a privileged means of representation in traditional constructions of gender. [20] As many theorists, specifically in the areas of cultural studies

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19. By this token, and following Benjamin, Haroldo de Campos revitalized the centuries-old discussion about the (in)fidelity of translation to the original text and inscribed it at once in a theory of translation, as well as in the general framework of a new literary theory that includes and renews it.

20. Deconstruction, too, can be seen to resort once again to the sexualization of translation, employing gender as a conceptual framework to subvert the notions of mimesis, fidelity, and originality, and thus to question the basic criterion of equivalence. We have only to recall the celebrated Derridean metaphor of the hymen

and postcolonial studies, have noted, culture is a representation that cannot be extricated from power relations and then shown through a lens of political neutrality. Nor can translation.

Indeed, the anthropophagic subversion of the traditional hierarchy between original and translation, which entails the transformation of translating into a truly productive, primary activity, as opposed to merely a reproductive, secondary one, closely links the positions of the Brazilian school of translation with feminist and postcolonial theories. In all cases, the subordinate status of translation is decried and the full visibility of the translator-subject as creator is heralded, through a violation or transgression of the original text and the subversion of author(ship)—including the translator's. Thus, translation relinquishes its slavishness in order to become a highly manipulative practice, even savage in its appropriation of the original text—and, more broadly, of dominant postcolonial European cultures—, which are literally "cannibalized," that is, devoured and assimilated by the *transfingidor*, in accordance with the theses set forth by the Brazilian poet Oswald de Andrade in his influential 1928 *Anthropophagic Manifesto*. This is evident in Augusto de Campos's preface to his anthology of essays and poems intitled *Verso, reverso, controverso*:

> A minha maneira de amá-los [os companheiros de espírito] é traduzi-los. Ou degluti-los, segundo a Lei Antropofágica de Oswald de Andrade: só me interessa o que não é meu. Tradução para mim é *persona*. Quasi heterônimo. Entrar dentro da pele do fingidor para *refingir* tudo de novo, dor por dor, som por som, cor por cor. Por isso nunca me propus traduzir tudo. Só aquilo que sinto. Só aquilo que minto. Ou que minto que sinto, como diria, ainda uma vez, Pessoa em sua própria *persona*. (1978, p. 7; my italics)

> [My way of loving them [the spirit companions] is to translate them. Or to swallow them, according to Oswald de Andrade's Anthropophagic Law: I'm only interested in what isn't mine. Translation for me is *persona*. Almost heteronym. Get inside the skin of the *pretender* to refashion it all over again, pain for pain, sound for sound, colour for colour. That's why I never proposed to translate everything. Just what I feel. Only what I lie. Or that I lie that I feel, as Pessoa would say, once again, in his own *persona*.] (my trans.)

(Derrida, 1985, p. 192).

This manipulative practice of appropriation through translation is also evident in "Da razão antropofágica: Diálogo e diferença na cultura brasileira [From Anthropophagic Reason: Dialogue and Difference in Brazilian Culture]," a text written by Haroldo de Campos in 1980:

> A mandíbula devoradora desses novos bárbaros vem manducando e "arruinando" desde muito uma herança cultural cada vez mais planetária, em relação à qual sua investida excentrificadora e desconstructora funciona com o ímpeto marginal da antitradição carnavalesca, dessacralizante, profanadora. (Campos, 1992 [1980], p. 251)

> [The devouring jaws of these new barbarians have long been gnawing and "ruining" an increasingly planetary cultural heritage, in relation to which their eccentric and deconstructive onslaught works with the marginal impetus of the carnivalesque, desacralizing, desecrating anti-tradition.] (my trans.)

The traditional author/translator hierarchy, which comes to be defined in the writings of the de Campos brothers as anthropophagic collision, is not at all exempt from violence—a violence similar to the one that we observe in the sexual metaphors applied to translation throughout history. Having disturbed the asymmetrical postcolonial power relations, it aims at establishing and (re)defining, *via* the *transfingidor*, a new connection both with the author and the source literature(s) in terms of a transcultural relationship between the cultural centre and periphery. As Else Vieira aptly noted more than twenty years ago:

> The cannibalistic translational philosophy of nourishing from two reservoirs, the source text and the target literature, and, to the same extent, the reverse reading of translation operated by Benjamin and Derrida exposes a number of epistemological questions that traditional traductology is unfit to answer. Or, using Benjamin's terms, traditional traductology demands a translation, a revision […] if, in the cannibalistic philosophy translation becomes a two-way flow, the very terminology "source" and "target" becomes depleted. By the same token, the power relation between source and target, superior/inferior ceases to exist. (cited in Bassnett, 1993, p. 155; see also Vieira, 1999)

Conclusion

A desire to frame the practice of translation as transculturation, as a mode through which the periphery challenges the dominant cultural canon and its relationship to the universal Western and Eastern literary tradition, is what underpins the anthropophagic

propositions of the Brazilian school of translation. On the one hand, the school considers translation to be an assimilative (re)writing, at once defamiliarizing and destabilizing, creative and "transcreative"; on the other hand, it proclaims the status of creator for the translator-subject construed as a transpretender, *transfingidor*. This means much more than simply making the translator visible in the translation. It also involves granting a crucial importance to textual transgression that rescues the transcreation from being a mere "betrayal" of the original text and the author, so recurrent in metaphors historically applied to literary translation and translators. In this way, the original figure of the *transfingidor* that emerged in Haroldo de Campos's 1991 essay metaphorically embodies a strategy of subversion to alter the universal canon and demystify the Eurocentric nature of the cultural tradition; a strategy designed to programmatically anthropophagize, swallow, chew, and incorporate the original into the metaliterature for its "digestion" and productive assimilation, before controversially "reversing" ("*reverso, controverso*") it back onto the universal literary tradition as an eccentric destabilizing glimpse or gaze.

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