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BETWEEN STRANGENESS AND FAMILIARITY: recreating Chaucer's tales in modern Brazil

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I dedicate this work to my family: my daughter, Eleonora; my wife, Laura; my parents, José Maria and Dercy; and my sister, Maria Daniela.

I also dedicate it to the memory of my dear friend Robson Pandolfi.

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RESUMO

O comentário de uma tradução, feito pelo próprio tradutor, pode ser um instrumento eficiente para outros tradutores e também para teóricos da tradução em busca de exemplos e casos que ilustrem o funcionamento prático de suas teorias. Minha tradução de The Canterbury Tales, de Geoffrey Chaucer, foi publicada em 2013 no Brasil por Penguin Companhia. Esse estudo é uma análise de trechos selecionados de minha tradução, explicando minhas estratégias, soluções e escolhas, à luz de diversas teorias tradutórias. Desenvolvo aqui também minha própria proposta teórica, descrevendo um tipo de tradução que se entende como busca por verossimilhança tradutória e equilíbrio entre estranheza e familiaridade, efetuado por meio da construção de um mundo linguístico. Esses conceitos são desenvolvidos tendo em vista as discussões sobre tradução "literal" e "libertina", abundantes na história da tradução. Inicialmente associo a tradução dita literal ao impulso de tornar o texto estranho; e a tradução dita libertina ao impulso de tornar o texto familiar. Em seguida, trato de demonstrar como os elementos de estranheza e familiaridade estão presentes de forma global no próprio ato de traduzir, e como esse ato pode ser encarado como uma forma de negociação entre impulsos aparentemente opostos. Interpreto os problemas da tradução à luz do conceito de hospitalidade linguística, de Paul Ricoeur. Assim, os impulsos de "levar o leitor até o autor" e "trazer o autor até o leitor", descritos por Schleiermacher, são encarados como ângulos no jogo de alteridade e identidade que se pressupõe em todo o ato tradutório. Explico de que forma busquei um equilíbrio entre estranheza e familiaridade em minha tradução de The Canterbury Tales, utilizando tanto escolhas linguísticas extraídas de fontes europeias medievais e renascentistas quanto fontes populares sul-americanas e brasileiras, dentre essas, em particular, a literatura regionalista do Rio Grande do Sul. Demonstro de que maneira elementos especificamente brasileiros, ou, em alguns casos, elementos relacionados a uma região específica do Brasil, uma vez situados no jogo de significações no contexto de uma tradução de poema medieval, ativam a relação entre estranheza e familiaridade e podem ser utilizados para construir uma realidade linguística particular, dotada de sua própria forma de verossimilhança. Examino de que forma essas relações se estabelecem em uma série de trechos selecionados de minha tradução e, em

seguida, utilizo essas reflexões para desenvolver minha própria metáfora funcional do ato tradutório, como representação do status artístico do tradutor.

Palavras-chaves: Geoffrey Chaucer. Literatura inglesa. Tradução. Poesia. Regionalismo.

ABSTRACT

A translation's commentary, made by the translator himself/herself, can be an efficient tool for other translators and also for translation theorists in search of examples and cases to illustrate the practical working of their theories. My translation of Geoffrey Chaucer's The Canterbury Tales was published in 2013 in Brazil by Penguin Companhia. This study is an analysis of selected excerpts from my translation, explaining my strategies, solutions and choices, in the light of several translation theories. I also develop here my own theoretical proposal, describing a type of translation than can be understood as a search for translational verisimilitude and as a form of balance between strangeness and familiarity, accomplished through a process of linguistic world-building. These concepts are developed in view of the opposition between "literal" and "libertine" translations, a kind of discussion to be abundantly found in the history of translation. Initially I associate the so-called literal translation to the impulse to make the text strange; and so-called libertine translation to the impulse to make the text familiar. Next, I try to demonstrate how elements of strangeness and familiarity are present globally in the very act of translating, and how this act can be seen as a form of negotiation between seemingly opposite impulses. I interpret the problems of translation in the light of Paul Ricoeur's concept of linguistic hospitality. Thus, the impulses of "bringing the reader to the author" and "bringing the author to the reader", described by Schleiermacher, are seen as different angles on the interplay of otherness and identity that the translating act presupposes. I explain how I sought a balance between strangeness and familiarity in my translation of The Canterbury Tales, using both linguistic choices extracted from European Middle Ages and Renaissance, and popular South American and Brazilian sources; among these, in particular, the regionalist literature of Rio Grande do Sul. I demonstrate how specifically Brazilian elements, or, in some cases, elements related to a specific region of Brazil, placed within the context of a translated medieval poem, activate the relationship between strangeness and familiarity and can be used to build a particular linguistic reality, endowed with its own form of verisimilitude. I examine how these relations are established in a series of selected excerpts from my translation and then use these

reflections to develop my own working metaphor on the translation act, as a representation of the translator's artistic status.

Keywords: Geoffrey Chaucer. English Literature. Translation. Poetry. Regionalism.

SUMÁRIO

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 HISTORY OF A TRANSLATION

This thesis is, first and foremost, a translator's statement. It looks back at my own work as a translator and samples an specific opus, **Contos da Cantuária**, as a means to self-analyze my own professional method and to and explain my theoretical stance on a number of problems regularly faced by professional translators – specially, but not exclusively, translators of poetry – in the course of their work. This thesis aims at recording the history of that particular translation – the strategies that lead to its completion as it now stands, the translational theories that influenced its shaping, and at least part of its reception within the target language. Also, this thesis puports to function as a potentially useful tool for other translators. Chronicling the problems met, and the solutions offered by a translator faced with a very challenging task, the following chapters shall endeavor to propitiate reflection and to provide expressive examples of how some of the most celebrated and unendingly discussed problems of translation theory are dealt with in the day-to-day operations of translation's laborers. I shall include as many first-hand accounts of the translating process – including rather prosaic and yet momentous minutiae, like how I dealt with publishers' deadlines – as memory and contemporary annotations allow. For this work is, at its core, a practical-minded thesis – but by contemplating and delineating the praxis of translation, it purports to illuminate theory and, at the same time, to be illuminated by it.

Contos da Cantuária is the title of my translation of Geoffrey Chaucer's **The Canterbury Tales**. Its origins lie in my personal history as a reader. I developed an acute interest in Chaucer after reading Jorge Luis Borges' **Historia de la Noche**, at some point in the 1990's – the precise moment went, unfortunately, unregistered, and therefore cannot be recalled. A specific passage in the prose poem "El Caballo" draw my attention:

> La llanura que espera desde el principio. Más allá de los últimos durazneros, junto a las aguas, un gran caballo blanco de ojos dormidos parece llenar la mañana. El cuello arqueado, como en una lámina persa,

> y la crin y la cola arremolinadas. Es recto y firme y está hecho de largas curvas. **Recuerdo la curiosa línea de Chaucer: a very horsely horse**. No hay con qué compararlo y no está cerca, pero se sabe que es muy alto. Nada, salvo ya el mediodía. Aquí y ahora está el caballo, pero algo distinto hay en él, porque también es un caballo en un sueño de Alejandro de Macedonia.[1]

The line "a very horsely horse" stuck with me for a number of reasons: the earthy alliteration that made me think of horse's feet stamping the ground of an imaginary land, the impactful conciseness, the Platonic *mise en abyme* launched by the idea of a horse that is more like a horse than other horses... My lifelong passion for Chaucer's literature was born under the sign of Alexander's Bucephallus reimagined by Borges; and it took me some years until I could finally read **The Canterbury Tales** in the original Middle English and then find out that "a very horsely horse" is either a misquote or a Borgesian fiction. Borges avowes that much on a note to his poem, a note that I failed to read at the time:

> EL CABALLO. Debo corregir una cita. Chaucer (The Squieres Tale, 194) escribió:
> Therwith so horsly, and so quik of ye.[2]

I had already started my work on Chaucer's verses when editor Leandro Sarmatz from Companhia das Letras inivited me to translate **The Canterbury Tales** in its entirety, to be published in the series "Clássicos", by Penguin Companhia. Although I had done some work on **The Squire's Tale** and **The General Prologue**, the translation's bulk would be accomplished between January 2012 and February 2013. Therefore, I have translated over 17000 verses in about 13 months, on an average of 1300 verses monthly, or more than 40 verses a day (weekends included). With an extremely strict deadline set by the publishers, I relied on other translations as support to my work, specially Nevill Coghill's modern English version. At some points I have worked Coghill's interpretations and solutions into my text, but more often than not I have translated directly from the Middle English original, according to the Riverside edition. The most direct equivalence between Coghill's translation and my own is that the two prose tales –

[1] BORGES, Jorge Luis. **Historia de la Noche**. Buenos Aires: Emecé, 1976, posição 400 de 641.
[2] BORGES, op. cit, posição 608 de 641.

"Chaucer's Tale of Melibee" and "The Parson's Tale" – have been abridged; the two synopsis in my translation have been rendered from Coghill's version. Also, I adopted Coghill's organization of the tales and translated several of his notes, adding others of my own. Those and other aspects of my translation have been explained in a short translator's preface, written when the deadline was almost overdue:

> Quando as soluções de Coghill me pareceram sonoras e engenhosas, adotei-as e adaptei-as. Em outros casos – buscando redespertar traços de um certo estranhamento cultural, que às vezes são amenizados na versão moderna – voltei à letra do original.
> De forma geral, tentei elaborar minhas próprias soluções para as fascinantes complexidades dos Contos. Talvez a decisão mais importante tenha sido optar pela forma poética do decassílabo, que adotei na maior parte do texto, exceto no "Conto do Monge". Essa decisão não se explica apenas como uma tentativa de aproximação a métrica original de Chaucer, mas como uma estratégia para recriar o fluxo poético-narrativo da obra. O decassílabo tem uma merecida tradição na poesia narrativa – seu ritmo favorece a ação, oferecendo ao leitor, linha a linha, uma combinação precisa de informação e melodia. Minha opção, contudo, levou-me a sacrificar um outro aspecto do texto: o número de versos. (...) As escolhas de vocabulário seguiram a minha decisão inicial: criar familiaridade na estranheza, e o estranhamento na fruição; aproximar o texto do leitor brasileiro moderno, mas sem rasurar sua distância e peculiaridade.[3]

Despite the preface's forceful brevity – there was simply no time to write a longer note – I managed to mention at least three important elements in my translating method: my chosing of "decassílabo" to render Chaucer's pentameter, the unorthodox approach to line numbers and the search for a combination of "strangeness" and "familiarity". All those aspects shall be extensively discussed in the following chapters, and also another translating choice that was not mentioned in the preface: the combination of "rimas toantes" and "rimas consoantes". The choice of meter and rhythm was the main subject on the first critical responses to my translation – among them, a letter sent by poet and translator Ivan Junqueira in January, 2014, and published that same month by Companhia das Letras in its official website:

> Meu estimado José Francisco:

[3] BOTELHO, José Francisco. Prefácio. In: CHAUCER, Geoffrey. **Contos da Cantuária.** Tradução e notas de José Francisco Botelho. São Paulo: Penguin Classics Companhia das Letras, 2013.

> Li, maravilhado e quase incrédulo, a sua excepcional tradução de *The Canterbury Tales*. Jamais passou por minha cabeça que se pudesse verter Chaucer para nosso idioma com tamanha fluência, elegância, concisão e inteligência métrico-rítmica. Vou mais longe: não se percebe que se trata de uma tradução, e apraz-me às vezes dizer, calcado naquele conceito coleridgiano da *suspension of disbelief*, que gosto mais de certas traduções do que dos originais, exatamente porque se trata de uma tradução, ou seja, a poesia 'alheia' que nos serve o 'homo ludens' a partir do que escreveu o 'homo faber'. Pode estar certo de que você realizou um milagre… Abraço afetuoso do seu
> Ivan Junqueira.[4]

It is important to remember that, before **Contos da Cantuária** came out in 2013, there was no full translation of **The Canterbury Tales** versified sections in Portuguese. In Brazil, Paulo Vizioli translated the **Tales** into prose in 1985, and also translated a few parts into verse for his 1992 anthology *A Literatura Inglesa Medieval*. In Portugal, Olívio Caeiro translated "The General Prologue" and two of the tales in 1990. To my knowledge, my translation remains the most complete versified version of Chaucer's masterpiece in Portuguese. Dr. Pedro Theobald, from the Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio Grande do Sul, compares **Contos da Cantuária** to other translations in Portuguese, in an article published in 2013:

> A tradução de José Francisco Botelho (CHAUCER, 2013), exceção feita de alguns trechos que se costumam apresentar em prosa – o "Conto de Chaucer sobre Melibeu", o "Conto do pároco" e a "Retratação de Chaucer" –, inteiramente em versos, emula não só as traduções de Paulo Vizioli, mas todas as traduções dos Canterbury Tales "in existence" na língua portuguesa. (...)Brinda-nos ele com uma tradução integral em decassílabos rimados. Para um texto de grande fôlego como os Canterbury Tales, a simples tentativa de fazê-lo, independentemente das qualidades do resultado, já merece ser enaltecida como um ousado empreendimento. O tradutor levou-o

[4] SARMATZ, Leandro. Chaucer, Chico, Ivan. **Blog da Companhia**, 14 jan. 2014. Disponível em: < http://historico.blogdacompanhia.com.br/2014/01/chaucer-chico-ivan/ > Acesso em 20 out 2020. "My dear José Francisco: I read, amazed and almost incredulous, your exceptional translation of The Canterbury Tales. It never crossed my mind that anyone could render Chaucer into our language with such fluency, elegance, conciseness and metric-rhythmic intelligence. I go even further: one does not realize that your translation is a translation, and, recalling the Coleridgian concept of "suspension of disbelief", I sometimes say that I like certain translations better than the original, precisely because they are translations; i.e., another person's poetry supplied to us by the "homo ludens", who works from what the "homo faber" wrote. Rest assured that you performed a miracle. An affectionate embrace from your Ivan Junqueira."

> a cabo com proficiência e capacidade. De fato, no longo texto, o leitor comum encontra uma rendição fidedigna de uma das obras centrais da literatura inglesa, e o observador da tradução, além disso, uma demonstração de recursos de toda ordem – temáticos, narrativos, poéticos, humorísticos, lexicais, para mencionar apenas alguns – que compõem uma grande obra literária. Seria difícil, nas quase 600 páginas que compõem essa tradução, encontrar os trechos mais bem realizados. (...) Pautando-se pela fidelidade, o tradutor não deixa de ser inventivo em suas soluções para as passagens difíceis, que são inúmeras em obra de tamanha variedade e magnitude. Tem curso atualmente entre os teóricos o ideal da manutenção de certo "estranhamento cultural" – de que o tradutor está consciente (CHAUCER, 2013, p. 17) –, e que se opõe a uma tradução domesticadora, em que quase tudo é adaptado ao ambiente de chegada. Não podemos dizer se tal foi a intenção ao manter no masculino o nome da Morte ("Dom Morte", no "Conto do vendedor de indulgências"). Nesse caso, o masculino é de uso corrente na língua inglesa em situação em que na língua portuguesa se emprega sempre o feminino. Comparando, verificamos que Paulo Vizioli preferiu o emprego consagrado em português.[5]

My translation won second place of the *Prêmio Jabuti* 2014, in the category translations of fiction from English into Portuguese. By then, **Contos da Cantuária** had already become object of international study. In November 2013, I had been approached by Dr. Candace Barrington, a medievalist, Chaucerian expert and author of **American Chaucers**, who teaches medieval literature at Central Connecticut State University. Together with Dr. Jonathan Hsy, from George Washington University, she started in 2012 the Global Chaucers project, "an online archive and community for post-1945, non-Anglophone Chauceriana"[6], which tracks and analyzes translations and retellings of Chaucer's works worldwide and has collaborators in every continent[7]. From November 22, 2013, to March 13, 2014, Dr. Barrington performed an long interview with me, through a series of e-mails containing 22 questions about my translation strategies. My interview to Dr. Barrington served as a source of information to two articles, included in the books **Medieval Afterlives in Contemporary Culture** and **The Cambridge Companion to Medievalism**:

[5] THEOBALD, Pedro. CHAUCER, Geoffrey. Contos da Cantuária. Tradução do inglês moderno e notas de José Francisco Botelho. São Paulo: Penguin Classics Companhia das Letras, 2013. 680p. **Navegações: Revista de Cultura e Literatura Portuguesas,** v.8, n.2, p.198-201. jul - dez 2015.
[6] Communication to the author by Dr. Candace Barrington in November 2013.
[7] Global Chaucers. In: https://globalchaucers.wordpress.com/

José Francisco Botelho's translation into Brazilian Portuguese, *Contos da Cantuária* (2013), was published as a joint project between Penguin Books and a major Brazilian publishing house, Companhia das Letras. To make his translation simultaneously medieval and accessible, Botelho combines terms from medieval Portuguese with genres, idioms, meter and dialects associated with the Brazilian rural south. Somewhat foreign to Brazilian urban, educated classes, the rural elements give the *Contos* a strange feel and contribute to the medieval flavour otherwise unavailable in Brazilian Portuguese. Spiced with well-known idioms and proverbs, the translation gives Chaucer the voice of a rural *cavalheiro* whose old-fashioned ways and knowing wisdom evoke a long-lost Brazilian sensibility. The traditional Portuguese poetic form, *decassílabo*, evokes antique associations, while *rima toante* (rhyme that matches only vowels and is not as prestigious as the more literary *rima consoante*) affiliates *Contos* both with both popular music and an oral poetry form called *repentismo* (in northeastern Brazil) and *pajada* (in the south). Together, these elements create a new language for conveying Brazil's fictional Middle Ages.

A weave of rural idioms conveys the animal lust at the moment in *The Merchant's Tale* when the elderly January looks up into de trees and sees, as the Middle English euphemistically expresses, that a young clerk has 'dressed' the old man's wife (IV.2361-2362); 'Vê que outro está engatando-a de tal jeito' (Botelho, p. 473) uses 'engatando' (with its multiple standard definitions meaning 'to clamp or bind', 'to hook' or 'to hitch up horses'). Because, however, rural areas use 'engatando' for animal mating, the rural idiom conveys the crudity of Damien's animal-like thrusts. This mixture also appears in *The Franklin's Tale*, translating the cold, winter landscape (The bittre frostes, with the sleet and reyn / Destroyed hath the greene in every yerd; / Janus sit by the fyr, with double berd, / And drynketh from his bungle horn the wyn [V.1250-1254]) as 'Geadas e granizos fustigantes / Já mataram as plantas verdejantes; / Jano, com grande barba bifurcada, / Em uma longa guampa recurvada, / Bebe vinho, sentado junto ao fogo' (Botelho, p.518). Here Botelho evokes a white, wintry scene with 'geadas', a ground frost that appears in early winter mornings on the dry southern pampas, and he identifies Janus' bugle as a 'guampa', the southern term for horn. Later, in an eloquent full circle, Botelho handles the Host's reference to 'brasile' (VII. 3459) by distinguishing between its Chaucerian reference to a red dye from India, 'o rubro brasil oriental', and the tincture derived from the *pau-brasil*, the eponymous tree that grows abundantly *(sic)* in modern Brazil.[8]

(...) José Francisco Botelho Chaucerian voice speaks a Brazilian Portuguese associated with the south of his country, far from the

[8]BARRINGTON, Candace. Global Chaucers. IN:_ASHTON, Gayl (editor). **Medieval Afterlives in Contemporary Culture**. New York: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2015. p. 150-151.

> urban modernity of São Paulo or Rio de Janeiro, where the old *cavalheiro* of the pampas still sits around telling tales and dispensing wisdom. *Contos da Cantuária* (2013) combines well-known proverbs, *decassílabo* (a traditional Portuguese verse form), *rima toante* (a low-status rhyme scheme[9]), and *pajada* (oral poetry from southern Brazil) to create a new language for conveying Brazil's fictional Middle Ages. Both translations, the Turkish and the Brazilian-Portuguese, re-imagine the European past in ways that elevate a culture subjected to orientalising or colonialising; at the same time they deflate the West's pretentious projections of inevitable modernity.[10]

As a result of my collaboration with Drs. Barrington and Hsy, I was invited to provide the opening address at the George Washington Digital Humanities Institute's symposium, "Global Chaucer and Shakespeare in a Digital World," on 4 February 2017. The contents of my talk were later turned into an article, "Old Janus drinking from his guampa: A Brazilian re-creation of The Canterbury Tales", published on 9 May 2018 by "Literature Compass"[11].

Besides earning such critical attention abroad, **Contos da Cantuária** has been taken to the stage in Brazil – as far as I know, the first theater adaptation of Chaucer's work in this country. **O Prólogo da Mulher de Bath** and **O Conto da Mulher de Bath** has been adapted by Maitê Proença and Amir Haddad as "A Mulher de Bath", opening at SESC Bom Retiro in São Paulo in 28 January 2018 and afterwards touring the country. It has been perfomed in Porto Alegre, Rio de Janeiro, Belo Horizonte, Manaus and other cities. Very importantly, the adaptation respected the translation's verse form: the entire play was staged in rhymed verse, a move that might be seen as risky, considering that the production was publicized as a comedy. However, according to Maitê Proença, after an initial bewilderment, audiences throughout Brazil would eventually "adapt" to the strangeness of staged verse and grasp the humor expressed in rhymes and meter:

> O público está habituado a um humor mais mastigado do que aquele proposto no texto de Chaucer e em sua magnífica tradução.

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[9] rhyme scheme: Actually, the *rima toante* is not a rhyme scheme, but a type of rhyme.

[10] BARRINGTON, Candace. Global medievalism and translation. IN:_D'ARCENS, Louise (editor). **The Cambridge Companion to medievalism**. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016. p.191-192.

[11] Botelho, José Francisco. Old Janus drinking from his *guampa*: A Brazilian re-creation of *The Canterbury Tales.* In: **Literature Compass**, v. 15, n. 6, Special Issue - Chaucer's Global *Compaignye*, mai 2018

> Ainda assim, após alguns minutos de adaptação à sonoridade dos versos, às rimas, à beleza que há nisso, eles embarcavam na história e no inusitado daquela mulher e suas circunstâncias. Não é corriqueira a associação da beleza poética ao humor, à ironia beirando o deboche, esses elementos que aparecem tantas vezes no conta de A Mulher de Bath. Com todas essas novidades, que poderiam ter se tornado obstáculos intransponíveis, o público logo se tomava de encantos, se desapegava dos condicionamentos com que chegara ao teatro, e ria solto do princípio ao fim.[12]

1.2 CONTOS DA CANTUÁRIA IN THE CONTEXT OF CHAUCERIAN TRANSLATION

Abroad, **Contos da Cantuária** continues to nourish critical reflection. In "The Global Pilgrimage of Geoffrey Chaucer's The Canterbury Tales", Barrington compares my work with earlier appropriations of Chaucer's masterpiece[13]. At this point, an overview of the history of Chaucerian translations might be useful in placing my own work within the broader context of worldwide "Chauceriana".

Chaucer, writes Barrington, always had a global scope[14]. He was the first English writer to "read and respond" to the three great authors from the Italian trecento, Dante, Petrarca and Boccaccio[15]. Besides channeling Biblical texts and classical authors such as Virgil and Ovid, Chaucer borrowed themes and forms from continental Europe, such as French meter and rhyme. Therefore, he can be justly called "England's first European poet" – but the reach of his imagination also went beyond Europe[16]. Some of his **Tales** are set in faraway lands: around the Mediterranean, in Asia and in Africa. Even his stories set in England "incorporate material from Scandinavian, Egyptian, Hebrew,

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[12] Communication to the author by the actress Maitê Proença in February 2018. "Audiences are used to a kind of humor that is less sophisticated than that offered by Chaucer's text and [Botelho's] magnificent translation. And yet, after adapting for some minutes to the sonorousness of the verses, to the use of rhyme and its beauty, they would dive into the unlikely tale of that woman and her circumstances. We do not usually see the beauty of poetic form associated to humor, to a kind of irony that verges on debauchery, elements that are so common in the Wife of Bath's story. For all those novelties that could have become an insurmountable obstacle, the audience would soon become enchanted by the text, forgoing the mental conditionings they had brought into the theater, and therefore exploding in unfettered laughter to the end."

[13] BARRINGTON, Candace.The Global Pilgrimage of Geoffrey Chacer's The Canterbury Tales. In: SEIGNEURIE, Ken (ed.) **A Companion to World Literature**. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd., 2019, p. 1-12.

[14] BARRINGTON, op. cit., p. 10.

[15] Ibid, p. 2.

[16] Ibid, p. 1-2

Greek, and Arabic sources"[17]. Of the 24 **Tales**, 21 deal, in some way or another, with settings or characters located beyond the English shores. Chaucer was himself a translator – "a great translator", according to Eustache Descahmps, a contemporary French poet[18]. His earliest works include translations of Boethius' Consolatione Philosophiae and the Roman de la Rose, and many of his Tales are either actual translations, or are based in translations, or present themselves as translations[19].

In his own time, Chaucer introduced his readers to influences from different parts of the globe[20]; and later his work was taken, in different ways, to that same outside world whose resonances he had brought into England. Soon after his death, Chaucer was being translated and read in those same languages and literary cultures in continental Europe that had influenced him[21]. In the age of expansion of British colonialism, Chaucer's works traveled with English settlers to their outposts in the Americas, Australasia, Asia, and Africa[22]. As English became a dominant language globally, Chaucer was read by non-Anglophone writers and translators. In the 18th-c., Chaucer's **Tales**, originally written in Middle English, were modernized by John Dryden. Other modernizations appeared in the 19th-c., penned by William Wordsworth, Elizabeth Browning and others[23]. It was mostly under Dryden's clothing that Chaucer was exported, appearing in "various inexpensive anthologies available at libraries and booksellers"[24]. Throughout the distant colonies or former colonies of England, Chaucer came to be identified "with the Middle Ages and the foundation of English culture", becoming "shorthand for several (often contradictory) values: cultural purity, sexual bawdy, and outdated morals"[25].

According to Barrington, non-Anglophone translations made in the early 20th–c. were based not on Chaucer's original text but on "a plethora of simplified and sanitized children's editions published in English during the nineteenth century"[26]. The first modern Spanish translation of Chaucer, for instance, appeared in Franco's fascist Spain and came "via English redactions for children that promoted pious children,

[17] Ibid, p. 2.
[18] Ibid, p. 3.
[19] Ibid, p. 3.
[20] Ibid, p. 2.
[21] Ibid, p. 2.
[22] Ibid, p; 2.
[23] Ibid, p. 7.
[24] Ibid, p. 7.
[25] Ibid, p. 7.
[26] Ibid, p. 8.

valiant men, and submissive women"[27]. Between 1913 and 1935, the first Chinese translations of Chaucer appears, also based on children's books.[28] Those early translations, writes Barrington, present "an infantilized Chaucer bowdlerized almost beyond recognition", but also "remind us of the ways the Tales were (mis)used both to represent conservative values and to make non-Anglophone readers aware of (if not conversant with) key elements of British culture, the dominant cultural force"[29]. Later, less abridged versions of Chaucer's masterpiece appear in more than 50 languages, including academic translations that strive to achieve "literal accuracy" and whose emphasis has been "on transporting the reader to fourteenth-century England" through a deliberate "awkwardness" that aims at bringing forth the text's exoticism. However, over the last 30 years, several non-Anglophone translations have taken "a different tack":

> Noting resonances between their non-medieval, non-European culture and Chaucer's, they have remade Chaucer's verse so that it feels strangely familiar rather than distant and strange. Brazilian author and translator was drawn to the Tales through Jorge Luis Borges (...), the Argentine author who referenced the mythic past with his reference to the "horsely horse" found in The Squires Tale. Botelho's Contos da Cantuária create a sense of the medieval past to his Brazilian audience by drawing on the imagery and vocabulary of southern Brazil's gaucho culture near the Uruguayan border (...). Without attempting to create a Brazilian Chaucer, the translation allows reader associations with the Brazilian south and its ancient traditions to create the sense of a medieval past that Brazil never experienced. In a different approach, Iranian author and translator Alireza Mahdipour uses his Farsi translation of The Canterbury Tales as a vehicle for questioning a theocratic regime (...). Botelho's and Mahdipour's translations are both what Borges identified as "creative rewritings", yet they manage to reveal to their readers the surprising congruities between fourteenth century England and modern Brazil and Iran.[30]

As Theobald points out, my translation avoids "domesticating" the original text, by keeping elements of "cultural strangeness" (such as referring to Death as a masculine entity). On the other hand, as Barrington notes, neither does my "creative

[27] Ibid, p. 8.
[28] Ibid, ibidem.
[29] Ibid, ibidem.
[30] Ibid, p. 8-9 .

rewriting" attempt to take the reader "to fourteenth-century England", but rather endeavors to create "a sense of the medieval past" to my audience. Indeed, I see **Contos da Cantuária** neither as utterly domesticating, nor as completely foreignizing: instead, it envisions a third space, a different sphere of experience, the aesthetic realm of strange familiarity, or familiar strangeness. As evidenced by the citation above, my deliberate combination of strangeness and familiarity is not an isolated peculiarity, but a strategy with global resonances, in keeping with the work of other translators across the world. As Barrington pointed out, non-Anglophone translations of Chaucer have passed at least through three different phases over the last century: domesticating, bowdlerized translations; academic translations that seek to plunge the reader into exoticism, sometimes providing "awkward" renderings of Chaucer's verse; and, finally, translations that aim at a different angle, combining a sense of distance with a sense of proximity. I was not aware of all those developments when I elaborated my own theory of "familiarity within strangeness" a decade ago – but it so happens that, as I set to translate Chaucer, finding my own answers to the translational challenges presented by the **Tales**, I was placing myself within a living, evolving tradition. Now is the time, then, to look back and investigate my own previous steps, analyzing how and why I recreated Chaucer the way I did.

Despite Theobald's noteworthy contribution, no extensive analysis of **Contos da Cantuária** has being produced by Brazilian scholarship so far. By explaining in detail my own translation choices and putting them within a cultural and social perspective, I can give a significant contribution to translation studies in Brazil. My translational self-analysis will be organized as a series of commentaries on selected translation samples, preceded by a theoretical exposition of how I developed my strategy of "strangeness within familiarity" as an answer to already existing translation challenges and theories. Commenting one's own translation is not a novelty, but producing *delayed* commentaries on a translation published years ago is a procedure that might require some explanation. On the following pages, therefore, I shall elaborate on the relation between the acts of translating and commenting, and how a combination of the two might bring forth the otherness of the self, illuminating depths of meaning that might otherwise remain obscured – and how commenting one's own translation can function as a refusal, on the translator's part, to disappear on the background of the text's life.

1.3 ON COMMENTING TRANSLATIONS

"Where translation ends (and every translation must stop somewhere) commentary begins"[31]. This remarkable statement by Antoine Berman is an appropriate starting point to my reflection upon commentary as a theoretical extension of the translator's activity – and self-commentary as a potentially useful tool not only to translation theorists who seek to better understand translation, but also to other translators who seek new ways to translate. The present work, therefore, has a pragmatic purpose at its core. It aims at analyzing translating problems faced by the thesis's author in his role as a translator of an specific text, and to explain how these problems where turned into creative opportunities, and also how translation itself can be seen as commentary – a commentary on cultural history, on cultural transposition, on difference and permanence. This thesis can be understood as a very particular kind of translation commentary: a commentary written by the translator himself, not during the translating act, but afterwards, with the enhanced perspective of theoretical musing, and with the knowledge of how that translation affected many of its readers, and also with the cumulative experience of other translations produced in the meantime. At this point, however, it would be useful to examine the different kinds of translation commentary that are generally considered from an academic point of view, and how my work is simultaneously similar to, and different from, them.

When it comes to translators writing about their own work, one of the commonest forms of commentary is the translator's note. In **Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation** and **Palimpsestos: la Literatura en Segundo Grado**, Gerard Genette theorizes about the "note" as a paratext, that is, one of a series of "accompanying productions" that surround the text and extend it, in order "to make [it] present, to ensure the text's presence in the world, its 'reception and consumption in the form (nowadays, at least) of a book"[32]. Genette is talking specifically about author's, and not translator's, notes, but the categories he offers are useful in explaining the kind of "text" presented in this thesis. Moreover, I stand with Maire-Heléne Torres when she says that translations

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[31] BERMAN, Antoine. **Critique, commentaire et traduction (Quelques réflexions à partir de Benjamin et de Blanchot)**. **Po&sie**, 37. 1986. p. 105. Disponível em < https://po-et-sie.fr/texte/critique-commentaire-et-traduction-quelques-reflexions-a-partir-de-benjamin-et-de-blanchot/ > Acesso em 23 nov 2019

[32] GENETTE, Gerard. **Paratexts, Thresholds of Interpretation**. New York: Cambridge University Press. 1997, p. 1

can be considered as originals[33]. If the status of translations is thus envisioned, then translator's notes and authorial notes can be analyzed under the same terminology.

According to Genette, a note is a statement of variable length connected to a more or less definite segment of text – that is, the text referred to by each note has a partial or local character, while the preface deals with the text as a whole[34]. Despite that formal distinction, there is often an affinity of function, for "in many cases the discourse of the preface and that of the apparatus of notes are in a very close relation of continuity and homogeneity"[35]. That continuity of discourse is more evident in later editions, where authors might adopt either a defensive or an autocritical tone towards their own work. Notes function as "a second level of discourse, one that sometimes contribute to textual depth"[36], and, like prefaces, they can appear "at any time during the life of the text"[37]. Genette then describes three categories of notes, according to their temporal distribution: original notes, or those that appear in the first edition; later notes, appearing in the second edition; and delayed notes, appearing after the second edition. Original notes generally carry "definitions or explanations of terms used in the text", functioning as a supplement, rather than a commentary[38]. Things are very different with later and delayed notes, where "commenting" is one of the stronger aspects:

> the later or delayed preface comments on the text taken as a whole, and the notes of the same date extend and explain this preface in detail by commenting on the particulars of the text (...)[the] function of this localized commentary is generally identical (except for its point of application) to that of prefaces of the same occasion: the later notes and preface perform the function of responding to critics and possibly of making corrections; the delayed notes and preface, the function of providing long-range autocriticism and putting the author's own achievement into perspective.[39]

[33] TORRES, Marie-Helène. Por que e como pesquisar a tradução comentada? **Coleção Transletras**, Florianópolis, 2017, p. 16. Disponível em < http://www.repositorio.ufc.br/bitstream/riufc/40930/1/2017_capliv_mhtorres.pdf > Acesso em 20 nov 2019
[34] GENETTE, op. cit., p. 320.
[35] Ibid, ibidem.
[36] Ibid, p. 328.
[37] Ibid, p. 322.
[38] Ibid, p. 327.
[39] Idem, p. 328-329.

As for commentaries written by a third party, Genette calls them "metatexts": "metatextuality is, by excelency, the critical relation"[40]. However, other theorists have preferred to use the term "metatext" when referring to prefaces and notes; that's the case with José Lambert and Hendrik Van Gorp, who describe both prefaces and notes written by translators or editors as "metatextual comments"[41], while Marie- Heléne Torres argues that translator's notes do not represent a "rupture" within the text, but a "parallel reading", or a "hypertextual reading"[42].

According to Pascale Sardin, the most widespread function of footnotes is exegesis – that is, when notes briefly clarify the translation's contents in order to make them more intelligible[43]. The note's primary and less controversial function then is to denote, or "supplement meaning"[44], as Sardin puts it. The translator's note becomes more problematic and might even attract criticism when it goes beyond denotation and performs a meta-function, commenting on the difficulties faced by the translator and breaking the stillness of the text's surface, while also delineating its margins and bringing forth the very image of the translator as a social and cultural being, who, as a commentator, refuses to disappear on the background of his or her own words:

> Avec cette deuxième fonction, la N. D. T. renseigne davantage sur les manques à traduire des traducteurs, dont le plus courant est certainement le fameux « jeu de mots intraduisible ». Elle devient une mise en marginale et paratextuée des difficultés rencontrées. Par le dispositif d'émargement, le traducteur assume l'incapacité *de son propre discours* à s'effectuer (...) Mais si la note du traducteur est parfois tant décriée, c'est probablement aussi parce qu'en rompant l'unité du texte et en le décentrant, elle lui fait violence, et manifeste une crise de la traduction à être homologique, identique à soi, *self-contained*. La note signale un hiatus, le jeu différentiel qui affecte tout texte traduit. Lieu de surgissement de la voix propre du traducteur, elle trahit, au plus près du texte, la nature dialogique du traduire et le conflit d'autorité qui s'y trame. La note est scandaleuse car elle révèle au grand jour que la « disparition illocutoire du traducteur » n'est qu'un leurre, que le traducteur ne s'efface jamais derrière l'auteur, mais qu'il imprime au contraire le texte de sa subjectivité et des présupposés du contexte socioculturel dans lequel il évolue. Elle

[40] GENETTE, Gérard. **Palimpsestos, la literatura en segundo grado**. Madrid: Taurus-Altea, 1989. p. 13
[41] GORP, Hendrik van. LAMBERT, José. On Describing Translations. In: HERMAN, Theos (ed.) **The Manipulation of Literature**. London: Routledge, 2014, p. 48.
[42] TORRES, op. cit., p. 17.
[43]SARDIN, Pascale. De la note du traducteur comme commentaire: entre texte, paratexte et pretexte. In: **Palimpseste 20**, Paris, 2007. p. 4.
[44] Idem, p. 14.

> signale par sa présence même que la frontière qui sépare traduction et commentaire est floue, instable, et que le commentaire est toujours à la tangente du texte. (...) Cependant, indirectement, la note dans sa fonction « méta- » interroge aussi le fonctionnement des langues et du langage (...)[45].

Sardin further observes that a translator's commentary might not appear as a footnote, but as an end note; also, it might take the form of a text preceding the translation, therein placed so the translator might "explain the translation, or explain himself/herself, that is to say, exercise exegesis or justification"[46]. In any case, a translator's commentary defies the idea that a translation is a finished product and points to a micro-structural level where the translating act presupposes an exercise of recurring interpretation, a game of artful choices and variations[47]. As we leave the realm of pure "denotation", we enter the universe of commented translations, a "literary-academic" genre that has been the subject of crescent academic interest[48], as it deals with translation criticism and translation history, while also allowing the translator-as-researcher to go through a process of self-analysis[49].

In "**Critique, commentaire et traduction (Quelques réflexions à partir de Benjamin et de Blanchot)",** Antoine Berman stresses the affinity between commentary and translation: both involve the act of gazing minutely at the text, of getting lost in the fastness of its meaning. Thus, translation comments on its original; and the *way it comments on the original* is later turned into the subject of another commentary; therefore, a translation commentary is always a meta-commentary, or a meta-translation.

> A partir de là, on peut entrevoir tout ce qui fait la paisible communauté du commentaire et de la traduction. Le travail du traducteur est rigoureusement parallèle à celui du commentateur. Lui aussi, il longe le texte, s'enfonce dans son épaisseur signifiante, s'attarde et s'attache aux détails : pour lui, en fait, le texte n'est que détail signifiant (...) Et si le commentaire vise l'être-en-langue de l'œuvre, la traduction, elle, habite originellement la dimension où langue et œuvre s'entrelacent : sa tâche est de rechercher, dans sa propre

[45] Ibid, p. 14.
[46] Ibid, p. 2.
[47] Ibid, p. 2.
[48] Ibid, p. 15.
[49] Ibid, ibidem.

> langue, les « lieux » où elle pourra accueillir un tel entrelacement. De même que le traducteur doit postuler l'existence de ces lieux accueillants de sa langue, de même le commentateur doit postuler qu'il y a dans sa langue la possibilité d'ouvrir la signifiance de la lettre de l'œuvre. Alors que la critique est clarification du sens, commentaire et traduction sont des manifestations de la lettre.[50]

However, what did Berman mean, exactly, when he wrote that "where translation ends (...) commentary begins"? One might take an optimistic view and read it as a statement on translation's endlessness; but Berman is actually speaking about translation's finitude or "le defaut de traduction", an expression borrowed from Freud[51]. Commentary, writes Berman, is so harmoniously joined to the act of translating precisely because commentary clarifies the "untranslatable" ("l'intraduisible"), *c'est à dire*, "that which a translator and his or her language cannot translate hic et nunc"[52]. Translation's finitude, as Berman defines it, has a temporal meaning: hic et nunc, some things cannot be an object of translation; through commentary, however, the translator's language can "clarify what cannot be translated", and this clarifying act ("éclaircissement") prepares the "future translation" ("la traduction à venir")[53]. "Témoignage, certes, de sa finitude, le commentaire est pour la traduction son Autre et la Figure discursive de son achèvement."[54] In "A Prova do Estrangeiro", Berman further defines the untranslatable, or rather untranslatability, as "aquilo que, na diferença das línguas, revela-se ser o irredutível, em um nível que não precisa ser o da lingüística, e que cada tradutor encontra como o próprio horizonte da 'impossibilidade' de sua prática – impossibilidade que ele deve entretanto enfrentar e habitar"[55]. Sardin links translator's notes to what she calls "les manques à traduire"; Berman associates the translator's commentary to that which is "irreducible" in the difference between languages; on the following pages, I shall explain my own method to deal with that which at first sight seems impossible to reduce, that which creates a "manque" (a lapse, an absence, a vacuum) within the target language; and how I turn that lapse into creation, or recreation.

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[50] BERMAN, op. cit., p. 104.
[51] BERMAN, op. cit., p. 105.
[52] BERMAN, op. cit., p. 105.
[53] Ibid, p. 106.
[54] Ibid, p. 106.
[55] BERMAN. Apud: TORRES, op. cit., p. 37.

We must now advance to a tentative definition of my translational self-analysis, in the light of what has been said so far. According to Torres, commented translation as a genre has the following characteristics:

1) Authorial character: the translation's author is also the commentary's author.

2) Meta-textual character: the commented translation contains the translation itself in its entirety. The commentary's object is within the commentary (the text within the text).

3) Critical-discursive character: the commented translation's aim is to show the translating process in order to make intelligible the translating choices and strategies and also to analyze its ideological, political and literary effects, etc.

4) Descriptive character: every translation commentary deals with an already existing translation, therefore promoting reflection upon translating tendencies and the political-ideological effects of translating decisions.

5) Historical-critical character: every commentary theorizes about a particular translating practice, therefore substantiating the history of translation and of translation criticism.

This work can be easily fit in all above categories except for 2), as neither the commentaries are included within the translation, nor is the translation entirely included within the commentary. Rather, this thesis shall select representative samples from **Contos da Cantuária** – an "already existing translation" – in order to fulfill the commentary's function expressed on the 3rd and 4th items above: that is, I shall endeavor "to show the translating process in order to make intelligible the translating choices and strategies and also to analyze its ideological, political and literary effects, etc", and to "theorize about a particular translating practice". Firstly, however, I shall "substantiate" the history of translation and translation criticism. Thus, Chapter 1 will deal with translation theories that impacted my translation practice; while Chapter 2 will explain the aesthetic project at the base of my translation; and Chapter 3 will show how my method works in practice. If we take into account Genette's definitions, we must initially make it clear that this work is in no way a "paratext", as it is not attached in any way to the translation in question; neither is it a series of later or delayed notes, at least not according to Genette's own definition. We might call it, however, a delayed self-commentary: a metatext produced by the translator himself, without reproducing the commented text in its entirety. The commentary's function is similar to that attributed by

Genette to delayed preface and delayed notes. Chapter 2 shall comment "on the text taken as a whole", while Chapter 3 shall further comment "on particular of the text".

Bearing in mind Berman's and Sardin's association of commentary to the "default de traduction", I shall present my own stance on the concept of "untranslatable" in Chapter 4, where I shall also discuss the translator's status as a creative being. For my stance on translation, as will become abundantly clear, is an optimistic one. Contrary to Berman, I do not believe we should rely on the "future translation" to fulfill our work, or to justify it, or to accomplish that which we lack. Translations differ in time, but past translations can teach us a lot about our present dilemmas (as I shall endeavor to demonstrate in Chapter 1), and our own translations must be seen as complete linguistic worlds that bridge past and future through that which we *can do* hic et nunc. We need not to measure ourselves against the "traduction à venir": indeed, we have no reasons not to build our own monuments of word and meaning, whereof the tools, the stones, the pieces, the matter and the mind are all in our hands, here and now.

2. BETWEEN STRANGENESS AND FAMILIARITY

2.1 BABEL'S LEGACY

Some places are unavoidable. Be they real or imaginary.

As much as many of us would like to escape from Babel, something always draws us back to the mythical tower and its fateful destruction. To write about translation, it seems, is a task that demands, at some point or another, a rethinking of the Biblical story – directly or indirectly. I decided to state right here, at the start, how things stand between Babel and me.

First, let us take a look at the myth itself. I shall quote from the King James' translation:

> And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech.
> And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there.
> And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there.
> And they said to one another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly.
> And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar.
> And they said, Go to, let us build a city and a tower, whose top [may reach] unto heaven; and let us make a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.
> And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded [sic].
> And the LORD said, Behold, the people [is] one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do.
> Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech.
> So the LORD scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city.
> Therefore is the name of it called Babel: because the LORD did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the LORD scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth.

When it comes to translation theory, there are, at first sight, two main interpretations to the myth of Babel. One of them is marked by the nostalgia for the

Ursprache, Adam's language, spoken by all humankind before God's punishment. The act of translating, therefore, might be seen as a gesture towards pre-Babelic harmony; the quest for a way back, or at least a glance into that original estuary of pure communication, where all meanings were equally available to all human minds[56]. Translating then can be seen as a momentary reversal of the Babelic curse. The translator might be the visionary sentinel who glimpses, beyond the labyrinth of languages, the forms and ideas in their Adamic clarity. As George Steiner wrote in **After Babel**,

> [t]ranslators are men groping towards each other in a common mist. Religious wars and the persecution of supposed heresies arise inevitably from the babel of tongues: men misconstrue and pervert each other's meanings. But there is a way out of darkness: what Bohme calls 'sensualistic speech' – the speech of instinctual, untutored immediacy, the language of Nature and of natural man as it was bestowed on the Apostles, themselves humble folk, at the Pentecost.[57]

Translation's sacred scripture on *Ursprache* nostalgia is, of course, Walter Benjamin's *The Translator's Task*, which will be tackled later on this Chapter. It is also possible, however, to read the myth in the opposite way: one might say that God failed, and that His punishment became a blessing. Translation might be seen as a celebration of the Babelic condition of humankind: translating then becomes a gleeful appreciation of human incongruity, an endless contemplation of the very fact that all language has something peculiar to itself, something infinitely idiosyncratic and impossible of being fully replicated. Each language has a personality and puts us in touch with a different face of human experience in the world, or, as philologist V.V. Ivanov put it, each language offers its own model of the Universe, and, if we have 4 thousand languages, then we have 4 thousand different ways of looking at the world[58]. Trying to reach the skies, we were paradoxically cursed with a sort of bliss, the bliss of difference, the multiplication of worlds through the potentially infinite variation of languages. In *Le Plaisir du Texte*, Roland Barthes points to a *blissful* interpretation of the Babel myth, a happiness that arises not in the lack of communication, but in the endless possibility of linguistic collaboration:

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[56] MILTON, John. **Tradução: teoria e prática**. Martins Fontes, São Paulo, 1998, p. 154.
[57] STEINER, George. **After Babel**. Apud: MILTON, op. cit, p. 173. Footnote.
[58] IVANOV, V. V. Apud: ECO, Umberto. **A Busca da Língua Perfeita na Cultura Européia**. São Paulo: Edusc, 2002, p. 87.

> Fiction d'un individu (quelque M. Teste à Fenvers) que abolirait en lui les barrières, les classes, les excursions, non par syncrétisme, mais par simple débarras de ce vieux spectre: la *contradiction logique* qui mélangerait tous les langages, fussent-ils reputées incompatibles; qui supporterait, muet, toutes les accusations d'illogisme, d'infidélité; qui resterait impassible devant l'ironie socratique (améner 1'autre au suprême opprobre: *se contredire)* et la terreur légale (combien de preuves pénales fondées sur une psychologie de 1'unité!). Cet homme serait 1'abjection de notre société: les tribunaux, 1'école, 1'asile, la conversation, en feraient un étranger: qui supporte sans honte la contradiction? Original, ce contre-héros existe: c'est le lecteur de texte dans le moment ou il prend son plaisir. Alors le vieux mythe biblique se retourne, la confusión des langues n'est plus une punition, le sujetaccède à la jouissance par la cohabitation des langages, *qui travaillent côté à côté:* le texte de plaisir, c'est Babel heureuse.[59]

There are, of course, several different shades of opinion between these two opposing interpretations, as John Milton pointed out in **Tradução: Teoria e Prática**. Haroldo de Campos, for instance, can be seen to rejoice in the plurality of languages, but at the same time falls under the alluring call of pre-Babelic "totality"[60]. Octavio Paz also seems to be envisaging some sort of middle ground, when he writes in **Traducción y Literalidad**: "ni la pluralidad de las lenguas ni la singularidad de las obras significa heterogeneidad irreductible o confusión sino lo contrario: un mundo de relaciones hecho de contradiciones y correspondências, uniones y separaciones"[61].

My own stance in this never-ending debate is neither a *via media*, nor a reiteration of one of the two opposing views; but rather a synthesis, which requires contemplating the problem from a different angle. As Paul Ricoeur points out in **On Translation**, the original Biblical myth offers no valuation, either positive or negative, of the *confusio linguarum*: it simply describes it as a fact of life. "[T]here is no recrimination, no lamentation, no accusation (...) They left off building the city! That is a way of saying: this is the way things are", writes Ricoeur[62]. And also: "This is how we

[59] BARTHES, Roland. Le Plaisir du Texte. Apud:_MILTON, op. cit., p. 176. Footnote.
[60] MILTON, op. cit., p. 158.
[61] PAZ, Octavio. Traducción y Literalidad. Apud: MILTON, op. cit., p. 174. Footnote.
[62] RICOEUR, Paul. **On Translation**. Londres: Routledge, 2006, p. 20.

are, this is how we exist, scattered and confounded, and called to what... well, to translation!"[63]

Translation is that to which we are called by the very nature of things, writes Ricoeur: and it is my opinion that this same nature of things also calls for creative translation, or creative rewriting, which simultaneously celebrates and transcends the myth of Babel. It points to a mysterious and unanimous stratum, an ancient repository of understanding and human experience that lies below all languages; and, at the same time, it stresses and intensifies the richness and the variety, the peculiar and irreplaceable expression of each individual language. The kind of translation that interests me as a practitioner is that which apprehends the strangeness of a language and attempts to reinvent it in a different one; creative rewriting, as I understand it, neither domesticates the Other, neither leaves the Other alone; the act of translating contaminates the reader's familiar universe with strangeness, and at the same time makes the stranger familiar – and it does so with aesthetic consistency, producing the effect of a composition that does not replicate the original, neither tries to replace it, but functions as an autonomous work of art in constant dialogue with its source.

That's the kind of translation that I will endeavor to theorize throughout this chapter. To do so, I shall analyze how the relation between strangeness and familiarity has been tackled in theoretical texts from different ages, and how this twofold question relates to one of those great dichotomies in the theory of translation: the divide between word-for-word and meaning-for-meaning renditions. To do so I shall go back, although briefly, to the very origins of translation theory among the writers of Antiquity, and then proceed to famous theoretical texts from the Renaissance, the Enlightenment, the Romantic Age and the 20th-c.; but first I would like to delve a little deeper in Ricoeur's contribution to the field. And I shall do so because the dialogical relationship between strange and familiar is central to his understanding of translation, as it is to mine. For Ricoeur, to translate is

> to serve two masters: the foreigner with his work, the reader with his desire for appropriation, foreign author and reader dwelling in the same language as the translator. Indeed, this paradox falls within the domain of an unparalleled problematic, doubly sanctioned by a vow of faithfulness and a suspicion of betrayal.[64]

[63] Ibid, p. 19.
[64] RICOEUR, op. cit., p. 4. The "two masters" metaphor, according to Ricoeur, was taken from Franz Rosenzweig.

Whoever serves two masters will be bound to betray through faithfulness, and to be faithful through treason. And whenever we translate, adds Ricoeur, we are met by two forms of resistance: the source-text resists to be rendered in a different language, and target-language resists the intrusion of a foreign element. The translator is bound to force the two sides into an encounter, a mutual contamination: his own language must be filled with incongruity by the strangeness of the text, and the foreign language must be interned into the translator's tongue[65]. This double work of faithfulness and betrayal is always marked by some sort of loss and by some sort of salvaging; therefore, the act of translation resembles a form of mourning: a mourning for that which could not be salvaged[66]. And, yet, for Ricoeur, translation can always be a form of happiness. But how does one turn mourning into rejoicing? In the case of translation, writes Ricoeur, one does so by renouncing the idea of a perfect, final, and absolute rendering: this renunciation makes it possible to live with that "fact of life", the translator's need to serve two masters[67]. And the apparently unsolvable paradox of the double vow (betrayal versus faithfulness) can be reinterpreted as an occasion for what Ricoeur calls *linguistic hospitality*:

> (...) it is this mourning for the absolute translation that produces the happiness associated with translating. The happiness associated with translating is a gain when, tied to the loss of the linguistic absolute, it acknowledges the difference between adequacy and equivalence, equivalence without adequacy. There is its happiness. When the translator acknowledges and assumes the irreducibility of the pair, the peculiar and the foreign, he finds his reward in the recognition of the impassable status of the dialogicality of the act of translating as the reasonable horizon of the desire to translate. In spite of the agonistics that make a drama of the translator's task, he can find happiness in what I would call *linguistic hospitality* (...) where the pleasure of dwelling in the other's language is balanced by the pleasure of receiving the foreign word at home, in one's own welcoming house.[68]

It must be noted, however, that for Ricoeur the concept of strangeness is not limited to what is linguistically foreign, and neither does translation deals only with the

[65] RICOEUR, op. cit., p. 8.
[66] Ibid,. p. 3 e 4.
[67] Ibid, p. 8.
[68] Ibid, p. 10.

exchange between two tongues. For Ricoeur, there are two paradigms of translation. First, the linguistic paradigm, which refers to "how words relate to meanings within language or between languages", and then there is the ontological paradigm, which refers to "how translation occurs between one human self and another"[69]. Foreignness, then, is an instance of strangeness, which can be understood as the quality of Otherness in the dialogical relationship presupposed by all translation. Writing about the two-masters metaphor in Ricoeur's philosophy, Dominico Jervolino states that

> [t]o speak is already to translate (even when one is speaking one's native language or when one is speaking to oneself); further, one has to take into account the plurality of languages, which demand a more exacting encounter with the different Other. One is tempted to say there is a plurality of languages because we are originally plural. The encounter with the Other cannot be avoided. If one accepts the necessary nature of the encounter, linguistic pluralism appears no longer as a malediction, as the received interpretation of the myth of Babel would have it, but as a condition which requires us to surrender the all-encompassing dream of a perfect language (and of a global translation, so to speak, without residues). The partiality and the finitude of individual languages is then viewed not as an insurmountable obstacle but as the very precondition of communication among individuals.[70]

The translator, then, is as a middleman placed between the Self and the Other, and is due to carry a double duty: "to expropriate oneself as one appropriates the other"[71]. Ricoeur's notion of linguistic hospitality comprehends, also, a double movement: that of dressing our own language on the stranger's clothes, and that of taking the stranger into the texture of our own speech[72]. A good translation, according to Ricoeur, involves an element of openness to the all-encompassing other – the other as an individual, the other as a language, and even the other as a different translation:

> Just as in a narration it is always possible to tell the story in a different way, likewise in translation it is always possible to translate otherwise, without ever hoping to bridge the gap between equivalence and perfect adhesion. Linguistic hospitality, therefore, is the act of inhabiting the word of the Other paralleled

[69] KEARNEY, Richard. Introduction: Ricoeur's philosophy of translation. In: RICOEUR, op. cit., p. xii.
[70] JERVOLINO, Domenico. The hermeneutics of the self and the paradigm of translation. Apud: KEARNEY, op. cit., p. xv.
[71] KEARNEY, op. cit., p. xvi
[72] Ibid, Ibidem.

> by the act of receiving the word of the Other into one's own home, one's own dwelling.[73]

Along this Chapter, besides dealing with Ricoeur's concepts of selfhood and otherness[74], or familiarity and strangeness, I shall also make good of Ricoeur's call for renunciation. As it will become clear in the following pages, the idea of any translation as definitive and final is utterly alien to my method; on the contrary, I take for granted that translators have always a lot to learn from translations made according to methods opposite to their own. That is a heterodox position in the history of translation theory, according to Douglas Robinson in *The Limits of Translation*:

> The relation between translation theory and translation might seem similar to the one between poetics and literature, but there is one special feature of translation theory: until quite recently, with few exceptions, it was the works of practitioners, some of them eminent ones. Many of the most famous texts are not so much academic treatises as short personal statements, often conceived as prefaces to translations made by the author. [Dryden's preface, Schleiermacher's essay and Benjamin's essay, published originally as the preface to his 1923 German translation of Baudelaire's Tableaux Parisiens] It is hardly surprising then that such theoretical texts are often strongly normative, indeed that translation theory is often translation ideology. The theorist will defend the translator's method implicitly or explicitly condemning other methods.[75]

In my case, although the present work is definitely a "personal statement", albeit not a short one, the "normative" aspect will be absent. After working as a literary translator for almost ten years, I am firmly and quite serenely convinced that translation admits no final solution, and there are several ways to translate an original text that might be considered, in some way, acceptable. That does not imply a philosophy of utter permissiveness in translation, neither an anything-goes methodology; it simply takes for granted that there are several possible ways to translate a text, and even more so if we are talking about a great literary text. In one way or another, all translation theorists contributed in some way to give us a broader understanding of translation as a literary

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[73] RICOEUR, op. cit., p. xvi.
[74] RICOEUR, op. cit., p. xvii
[75] ROBINSON, Doulgas. The Limits of Translation. In:_FRANCE, Peter (ed.). **The Oxford Guide to Literature in English Translation**. Oxford University Press. London. 2000. p. 19.

phenomenon, and even quite opposite theories can be taken as representations of different aspects to the same mysterious reality.

In many ways, my personal statement on translation theory and practice will take the form of an attempt to supersede what Douglas Robinson called "translation's dualisms", that is, the different re-shapings of the opposition between "literal" and "libertine" translations, taken as irreconcilable extremes ("libertine translation" is an expression coined by John Denham, as we shall see further ahead). The first recorded emergence of this undying Agon is to be found in the Ancient debate on "word for word" translation as opposed to "sensus de sensu" translation; later it took different forms, but all of them, according to Robinson, somewhat derivative[76]. In 17th c. England, as we shall see, John Dryden set up three different methods of translation – metaphrase, paraphrase and imitation –, and recommended the middle ground, which, theoretically, corresponded to his own practice (although Dryden himself was not so faithful to his own recommendation). Dryden's tripartite presentation is based on the opposition set up in Antiquity. "Metaphrase" stands for literal, whereas "imitation" stands for libertine translation, and paraphrase is Dryden's attempt to find a translational *juste mesure*. Other theorists, on the contrary, stuck to one of the opposing methods as the only appropriate, or the only possible, or the only real way of translating a literary work of art[77]. For Walter Benjamin, for instance, a veritable translation is concerned solely with language, not with meaning; therefore, the only real way of doing it is translating literally, that is, imposing the foreign syntax unto the target language and "foreignizing" the target culture (to use a term popularized by Lawrence Venutti). A clear-cut example of the same dichotomy can be seen in the opposing methods of Bible translation proposed by Henri Meschonnic and Eugene Nida. In *Poétique de la traduction* (1973), Meschonnic champions a method he calls "décentrement", similar to Venuti's "foreignization", which opposes the "domestication" (which Meschonnic calls "annexion") of the foreign text and keeps the distance between original and translation under the eyes of the reader. By "annexion", Meschonnic refers to the fitting of a foreign text into the norms of French poetry[78]. Nida on the other hand advocates the communication of meaning (which he calls "dynamic equivalence") as the mark of a good translation – instead of "formal equivalence" which contemplates language, and not meaning. "Meschonnic and Nida wrote about Bible

[76] ROBINSON, op. cit., p. 4
[77] Ibid, p. 5.
[78] Ibid, p. 6.

translation, but a similar dualism can be found in the debate on poetic translation. Some champion formal mimesis, some see the task of the translator of poetry as being to work outwards from the original impulse towards a new poem."[79] Thus, meaning for meaning and word for word translations can be associated, respectively, with the opposite drives to familiarize or to foreignize the source text: when we translate the meaning, we can be said to appropriate the Other and fit it into our own linguistic world; whereas, when we translate literally, we can be said to push our own language into Otherness. Friedrich Schleiermacher, as we shall see further ahead, coined the most famous metaphor to express this dichotomy: according to him, a translator might endeavor either to "bring the author to the reader" or to "bring the reader do the author", and no compromise could possibly be made between the two methods. If we were to organize translation's dichotomies visually, we might come up with a map as this one:

Word for word translation (verbum pro verbo)	Meaning-centered translation (senso de senso)
Literal translation	Libertine translation
Bringing the reader to the author	Bringing the author to the reader
Foreignization	Domestication
Décentrement	Annexion
Formal equivalence	Dynamic equivalence

In this thesis, I propose yet another reshaping of translation's dichotomy. In my work as a translator, I recognize two urges that might seen opposite (and generally are), but which ultimately may be complementary: one of those impulses is to make the original text familiar through translation, the other is to make the translation itself strange by stretching the literary norms of the targeted culture. The search for familiarity might take the form of a global rendition of meaning (i.e. the meaning of the entire work, or the meaning of a paragraph or phrase) in a way that can be easily grasped by target readers; the adaptation of foreign syntax to the norms of the targeted culture; word choices that might sound more natural to the reader's time and place; and – when one translates poetry

[79] Ibid, p. 4.

– the choice of a poetic form that can be historically linked to the literary tradition of the targeted culture. The search for strangeness, on the other hand, might take the form of an adherence to the literal meaning of each word, even when that adherence makes for a truncated text according to the rules of the target culture; an attempt to mimic the syntax of the original language into the target language; the choice of poetic forms that are uncommon of even unknown to the readers in the target culture. The search for strangeness, which functions as a liaison between source and target text, might be called *external estrangement*; but there is also what I call *internal estrangement*, i.e., translating choices pertaining to the literary norms of the target language and culture whose purpose is to create a sense of dislocation or renewal. Thus, even when a translator familiarizes or appropriates a foreign text, by fitting it into the literary norms of the target culture, he might foreignize that very same familiarity, by bending the received rules and creating something new. One example of *internal estrangement* in translation is my choice to combine the scholarly *decassílabo* verse with the *rima toante* taken from popular music, as shall be seen in Chapter 2. Thus, in my translation of **The Canterbury Tales**, I attempted to transcend translation's dichotomies not by steering away from them, but by plunging in their turmoil. What I attempted to do – and what I reasonably accomplished, as I shall argue – was to find *a balance between strangeness and familiarity*.

2.2 WORD-FOR-WORD AND SENSE-FOR-SENSE TRANSLATION

The first recorded instance of the general dichotomy that pervades the history of translation theory, and that would take several forms along the centuries, comes from Antiquity in the form of the opposition between *verbum pro verbo* and *sensus de sensu* translation.[80] A brief overview of those methods shall be useful better to understand John Dryden's search for a middle ground between metaphrase and imitation and my own position in the great game.

Sebastian Brock, in *Aspects of Translation Technique in Antiquity*, states that both methods coexisted at least since the Hellenistic period, within the context of Greek translations from Pakrit and Egyptian:

[80]BROCK, Sebastian. **Aspects of Translation Technique in Antiquity.** Greek, Roman and Bizantine Studies. Oxford: The Oriental Institute, 1978, p. 70.

> The Greek version of some of Asoka'a edicts, found on a bilingual Greek-Aramaic inscription of the third century B.C. at Kandahar (Afghanistan), treats the original with considerable liberty, and the text had been deliberately presented *à la grecque*. The same wish to present the reader with a version in reasonably good Greek style seems also to have guided the Greek translator of the Demotic story of Tefnut (...). [81]

In other words, as early as the 3th-c. B.C. we can find examples of translations wherein the translator, so to speak, keeps an eye on the original and another in those elements that might constitute a "reasonably good" style in the target language.[82]

At the opposite end of the scale, we find translations of the *senatus consulta* and other official documents from the Roman Republic, which followed the word-for-word technique; whereas during the Imperial period we shall find translations from Virgil, made for pedagogic purposes and presented in bilingual rolls, with the Greek and Latin versions in side-by-side columns, also following the literalist model of translation[83].

According to Douglas Robinson, the original Roman ideal of translation was one of "slavish literalism; any liberties the rewriter might be inclined to take were by definition beyond the limits of translation"[84]. This narrow delimitation was first opposed by Marcus Tulius Cicero, who, in *De Oratore* (55 BCE), has his dialogical persona Lucius Crassus describe his own training as an orator; to expand his skills, Crassus makes use of a creative translation of Greek writers:

> Afterwards I resolved (...) to translate freely Greek speeches of the most eminent orators. The result of reading these was that, in rendering into Latin what I had read in Greek, I not only found myself using the best words, and yet quite familiar ones, but also coining by analogy [*exprimerem imitando*] certain words such as would be new to our people, provided only they were appropriate.[85]

Later on, writing about his own translations of Aeschines and Demosthenes in *De optimo genere oratorum* (46 BCE), Cicero offers a commentary that would be widely discussed and repeated over the centuries, and which I quoth in the original Latin, as Cicero's word choice would be taken up several times by later writers:

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[81] Ibid, p. 71.
[82] Ibid, p. 75.
[83] Ibid, p. 75.
[84] ROBINSON, op. cit., p. 15.
[85] Ibid, p. 16.

> nec converti ut interpres, sed ut orator, sententiis isdem et earum formis tanquam figuris, verbis ad nostram consuetudinem aptis. in quibus non verbum pro verbo necesse habui reddere, sed genus omne verborum vimque servavi. nom enim ea me adnumerare lectori putavi oportere, sed tanquam appendere.[86]

In translating the works of two great orators, says Cicero, he did not act as an *interpres*, but as an orator himself. The word *interpres*/translator here is associated with narrowness and literalism, and the act of translation (*conversio*) is given two forms: *conversio ut interpres* (translating as a translator) and *conversio ut orator* (translating as an orator, that is, conveying the same ideas with words "proper" to the target culture)[87].

In other words: translation in some cases demands that the translator be something different from a translator. Horace expressed the same view in an equally famous line from *Ars Poetica* (20 CE) where he encourages writers who seek for a literary reputation to recast traditional materials in new ways: *nec verbo verbum curabis reddere fidus interpres*[88]; or, in E. C. Wickham's translation: "Nor trouble to render word for word with the faithfulness of a translator". To translate a great orator, says Cicero, one must *convertere ut orator*; for Horace, he who acts solely as a word-for-word interpreter will not be able actually to exercise the poetic art. In Horace and Cicero, we find the formulations of a specific ideal of literary translation, one primarily interested in the text's aesthetic effect on the reader. Thus translating could function as a way of constructing poetical authorship[89]. The translator, acting not *merely as a translator – fidus interpres –*, would in a way bring the original to the reader; and this act of bringing something into the poet's language could be seen as a form of authorship. As Brock wrote:

> In very general terms the *sensus de sensu* approach can be seen as bringing the original to the reader, whereas in the *verbum e verbo* translation the original acts, as it were, as Aristotle's unmoved mover, and the psychological effect is to bring the reader to the

[86] "E não os traduzi como um tradutor, mas como um orador, usando os mesmos argumentos, tanto na sua forma quanto nas suas figuras de linguagem, em termos adequados à nossa cultura. Para tanto, não considerei necessário verter palavra por palavra, mas mantive inteiro o gênero das palavras e sua força expressiva. Não julguei que fosse apropriado contabilizar as palavras para o leitor, mas como que sopesá-las." (My translation). Ibid, p. 16

[87] ROBINSON, op. cit., p. 16

[88] "(...) a theme that is familiar can be made your own property so long as you do not waste your time on a hackneyed treatment; nor should you try to render your original word-for-word like a slavish translator, or in imitating another writer plunge yourself into difficulties from which shame, or the rules you have laid down for yourself, prevent you from extricating yourself". BASSNETT, Susan. **Translation studies**. New York: Psychology Press, 2002, p. 49.

[89] BROCK, op. cit., p. 79.

> original. Seen in this light, it is obvious that the translator in antiquity had to make a momentous choice at the very outset. There are several different factors which condition the choice he makes, among which the most important are: the nature of the text he is translating, the relative prestige of the two languages concerned and the extent to which the source language is still widely known. (...) Administrative and legal documents obviously need to convey to the reader the exact meaning of the original. This does not necessarily mean that the word-for-word translation is the most suitable, since the over-literal can be meaningless. [90]

Cicero's and Horace's ideas had followers in the Roman world. For such writers as Pliny the Younger (in his letter to Fuscus Salinator around 85 CE), Quintilian (in the *Institutiones oratoriae*, c. 95 CE), and Aulus Gelius (in *Noctes atticae*, c. 100 CE), translation could work as an "assimilation of a text to the cultural expectations and linguistic norms of the target audience"[91].

The Jewish and Christian ideal, on the other hand, offered a total contrast with the Greco-Roman concept of authorial translation as found in Cicero and Horace. Translations of the Bible and other religious works were solely concerned with the precise rendering of words and statements of the original. When Marius Mercator produced the Latin translation of a work by Nestorius in the 4th-c., he wrote a preface duly distancing himself from Cicero's model: “in quibus verbum de verbo, in quantum fieri potuit, conatus sum translator exprimere, ne prius falsarius magis quam verus postea probatur interpres” [92]. We are now far away from Horace's spirit, who set the *fidus interpres* as the negative example of what a good translator should be; for Mercator, the *verus interpres* is the opposite of a *falsarius*, a falsifier. Boethius, in his commentary of Porphyry’s *Eisagoge* (c. 510 CE), alludes to Horace's expression, but does so ironically, as a defense of literalism: "I fear that I shall commit the fault of the faithful interpreter when I render each word by a word corresponding to it"[93]. A similar irony against Horace was used by John Scotus Erigena in the prologue to his translation of Pseudo-Dionysius the Aeropagite's *De caelesti hierarchia* (mid-9th c.): "If someone should find the text of the aforesaid translation obscure or impenetrable, let him consider me the translator of

[90] Ibid, p. 73.
[91] ROBINSON, op, cit., p. 16.
[92] "As far as I was able, I have tried to translate the work verbum de verbo, lest I subsequently be found a falsifier rather than a true translator.” Apud: BROCK, op. cit., p. 79.
[93] ROBINSON, op. cit., p. 16

this work, not its expositor. Indeed I fear I have incurred the blame of the faithful translator"[94].

There was a larger metaphysical question hovering over the Jewish and Christian translation ideal: a translator might only render the meaning of a work if he fully understood that meaning; and fully understanding the sacred texts would be, in a way, to diminish it. Or, as Brock puts it:

> Given the view, widespread in antiquity, that what can be fully described must in some way be less than the mind that describes it, to translate an inspired text *sensus de sensu* would be to imply that the *sensus* of the impenetrable mysteries of scripture had been fully grasped by the translator (...)[95]

In Saint Jerome, we find a translator apparently poised in a middle ground between the opposing models. In his famous Letter 57 to Pammachius, Jerome coins the expression *sensum de sensu*, analogically with Horace's *verbum e verbo*: "ego enim non solum fateor, sed libera voce profiteor, me in interpretatione graecorum, absque scripturis sanctis, ubi et verborum ordo mysterium est, non verbum e verbo, sed sensum exprimere de sensu"[96].The best way of translating from Greek into Latin, argues Jerome, is *sensus de sensu*; elsewhere he adds that word-for-word translation sounds absurd and compromises the charm of the original work[97]. Translating the Bible, however, is an exception, because in the sacred text "even word order is a mystery". One might argue that the mysterious and ineffable nature of sacred texts should render any kind of translation, even *verbum e verbo*, impossible; and indeed this idea has been expressed by Rabbi Judah b. Ilai in the 2nd c.: "he who translates literally is a falsifier, while he who adds anything (by way of paraphrase) is a blasphemer" [98].

That is an extreme elaboration of the *impossibility of translation* idea, which we shall find in our own time, although dressed in secular clothes. It is important to notice, however, that the religious ideal of translation was based on the assumption that, in a divinely inspired text, the reader must be brought to the original, and not the other

[94] Ibid, ibidem.
[95] BROCK, op. cit., p. 73.
[96] "I not only admit, but freely proclaim that in translation from the Greek– except in the case of Sacred Scripture, where the very order of the words is a mystery– I render not word for word, but sense for sense". VENUTI, Lawrence. **The Translation Studies Reader**. London: Routledge, 2000. p. 23.
[97] VENUTTI, op. cit., p. 24.
[98] BROCK, op. cit., p. 77.

way around[99]. And even if the translator renders the meaning of each word exactly as it appears, the simple act of transferring them from one language into another might be seen as a betrayal in itself. As Iamblichus put it:

> In translation, words do not preserve exactly the same sense: each people has characteristics impossible to transfer from one language to another; thus, even though one can translate these words, they still do not preserve the same force.[100]

One way to cut this Gordian knot, of course, would be to claim that a given translation was *also* divinely inspired, thus turning it, so to speak, into a second-hand original; and this claim has indeed been made in different moments of History. Philo and the Christian Fathers, for instance, claimed the Septuagint was divinely inspired, and the same claim was made by Luther for his own translation of the Bible[101]. From a secular point of view, the *impossibility dilemma* is yet to be found specially when it comes to the translation of poetry and can only be solved through a claim similar to that of second-hand divine inspiration: only a poet can translate a poet, so that a poetic translation can also work as a second-hand original. The idea of second-handedness would later be taken not as a problem, but as a treasure of aesthetic possibilities in Jorge Luis Borges's musings on translation.

2.3 MAKE IT FAMILIAR: THE FRENCH TRADITION AND *LES BELLES INFIDÈLES*

Throughout History, Horace's and Cicero's advices were successively vindicated and forsworn, and the *fidus interpres* was sometimes seen as the opposite of what a translator should be, and sometimes as the only model a true translator should follow. During the Early Middle Ages it was usual for translators to sneer at Horace's own sneering remarks against the *faithful interpreter* and to claim that very title as the

[99] Ibid. p. 75.
[100] IAMBLICHUS. De mysteriis. Apud: BROCK, op. cit., p. 76.
[101] Ibid, ibidem. According to Brock, an earlier example of such a claim was made by an anonymous translator of the works of Imhotep, from Aegyptian into Greek.

model towards which they strove. Literalism's rehabilitation, as already shown, took place within the context of religious translations. But the history of translation theory would take another turn by the end of the Middle Ages and through the Reformation and Renaissance periods; we shall here overview those developments in France and England, as those developments had a direct influence upon the definitions of strangeness and familiarity in translation as I understand them.

By the end of the 13th c., the work of Humanist scholars gave rise to a growing number of translations of texts from Classical Antiquity into the vernacular tongues of Europe[102]. In France, there was a demand for versions of Greek and Latin authors in French; however, between 1477 and 1527, that hunger for the Classics made for "an excess of Latinized translations which did not follow neither the criteria neither the forms of the target language "[103]. The first recorded French treatise on the translator's métier was written as a reaction against that state of affairs[104]. In 1540, Étienne Dolet published his "Manière de bien traduire d'une langue en autre", a defense of reception-centered translation, demanding that translators should focus on the mother tongue of their readership and establishing five rules for the task. As the treatise's title clearly states, Dolet's essay is a normative statement, or what one might call "a deontology of translation"[105]. In that work, Dolet criticized translations centered on the original language or, more specifically, vernacular versions of Latin classics that "Latinized" the French language by imitating the structures of the original text, with results strange to the target readers[106]. Among the elements necessary to what Dolet considered a good translation, I would like to stress the following: there is no need, writes Dolet, to render meaning "mot pour mot", and those who do it show themselves to suffer from "pauvreté et defaut d'esprit"[107], neither is it necessary to respect word order as it is found in the author's writing, and those who think they should start their translation exactly at the same "clausule" found in the original suffer from a "superstition trop grande (diray je besterie, ou ignorance?)"[108].Finally, a good translator should always observe "des

[102] POPPI, Carolina. Século XVII na França: Les Belles Infidèles, Racine e o modelo dos clássicos antigos. **Revista da USP**, n 3, p. 30 Disponível em <.http://www.revistas.usp.br/nonplus/article/view/49033/83597 > Acesso em 18 set 2020
[103]Ibid, ibidem..
[104] FAVERI, Cláudia Borges de. **Antologia Bilíngüe: Clássicos da Teoria da Tradução**. Volume II: Francês-Português. Florianópolis: Núcleo de Tradução UFSC, 2004. p. 10.
[105] Ibid, ibidem..
[106] POPPI, op. cit., p. 31
[107] DOLET, Etiénne. La Manière de Bien Traduire d'une Langue en Autre. In: FAVERI, op. cit., p. 16.
[108] Ibid, p. 17.

nombres oratoires", that is, the harmony of speech in the reader's tongue, "an interlacing and an assemblage of words with such sweetness that not only the soul shall be satisfied, but also the ear shall be totally ravished and never tire of such harmony of language". Without this, writes Dolet, "every composition becomes heavy and unpleasant"[109]. Dolet's defense of the translator's liberty is not, however, without qualifications: in order to achieve that "harmony of language" in the reader's tongue, the translator must have a "perfect understanding" of the author's "meaning and matter":

> Or sache donc qu'il est besoin et nécessaire à tout traducteur d'entendre parfaitement le sens de l'auteur qu'il tourne d'une langue en autre. Et sans cela il ne peut traduire surement et fidêlement[110].

Translating *faithfully*, thus, is one of Dolet's aims, but he does not equal *faithfulness* with *literalism*: indeed, one might infer from his treatise that sticking to such "superstitions" as word order and literal rendering would lead a translator, paradoxically, to *unfaithfulness* towards the original work. Being *faithful*, to Dolet, clearly involves a hermeneutical aspect (understanding the author's "sense et matière") and an aesthetic one (creating a "harmony of language" in the target tongue that will "ravish" the ear and "satisfy" the soul). The largesse of Dolet's *faithfulness* seems indeed to fulfill the very limits of the author's ability to satisfy and ravish; in other words, Dolet advocates such adherence to *meaning* that the translated text, if deemed necessary, should be *more* intelligible than the original. Dolet clearly states that a translation should never be "obscure", not even when the original is so. Actually, a perfect understanding of the author's meaning lets the translator clarify what the original intended to say: "*car par cette intelligence il ne sera jamais obscur en sa traduction, et si l'auteur lequel il traduit est aucunement scabreux, ille pourra rendre facile et du tout intelligible*." Dolet clearly puts *fluency* as a *conditio sine qua non* for any translation to be considered "good", and later translators in France would enthusiastically take up his corollary, as we shall see.

Translation's autonomy and prestige, after briefly dawning on Dolet's treatise, were soon to be attacked by Joachim Du Belay, a poet from the Pléiade, in *La Deffence e illustration de la langue françoyse*, published in 1549. As the title states, Du Belay is interested in the "illustration" of the French language, and that purpose, in his opinion,

[109] Ibid, p. 18.
[110] Ibid, p. 16.

would be best served by learning the Classical languages and reading Ancient authors in the original, rather than trusting the work of translators. Du Belay considers translation as a mere accessory to the learning of eloquence, and a very precarious one at that. In order to acquire knowledge of the "sciences", which "were first treated by the Greeks, and then by the Romans, their imitators", readers might be reasonably served by "faithful" translators"[111]; in other words, those who are "ignorant of foreign tongues" might resort to translations in order to acquire knowledge. However, the use of translations stops at that point: a writer and an orator cannot improve his skills by reading translated works. Metaphors, allegories, comparisons, similes, and other components of style cannot be learned through translations, because "it is impossible to render all of those with the same grace the author used"[112]. Translating is not only insufficient, but downright "pernicious" when it dares to violate the sacred abodes of poetry: in that case, the *traducteur* becomes a *traditeur*[113]. Du Belay condemns not only translations of the Classics, but also of vernacular authors such as Petrarch. Being one of the first recorded statements of *the impossibility of poetic translation*, Du Belay's damning remarks deserve an extensive quotation:

> d'autant que chaque langue a je ne sais quoi propre seulement à elle, dont si vous efforcez exprimer le naïf dans une autre langue, observant la loi de traduire, qui est n' espacer point hors des limites de l' auteur, votre diction sera contrainte, froide et de mauvaise grâce. Et qu'ainsi soit, qu'on me lise un Démosthene et Homere latins, un Cicéron et Virgile français, pour voir s'ils vous engendreront telles affections, voire ainsi qu'un Protée vous transformeront en diverses sortes, comme vous sentez, lisant ces auteurs en leurs langues. Il vous semblera passer de l' ardente montagne d' Aetné sur le froid sommet du Caucase. Et ce que je dis des langues la tine et grecque se doit réciproquement dire de tous les vulgaires, dont j' alléguerai seulement un Pétrarque, duquel j'ose bien dire que, si Homere et Virgile renaissants avaient entrepris de le traduire, ils ne le pourraient rendre avec la même grâce et nalveté qu'il est en son vulgaire toscano. Toutefois, quelques-uns de notre temps ont entrepris de le faire parler français. (...)Mais que dirai-je d' aucuns, vraiment mieux dignes d' être appelés traditeurs que traducteurs ? Vu qu'ils trahissent ceux qu'ils entreprennent exposer, les frustrant de leur gloire, et par même moyen séduisent les lecteurs ignorants,leur montrant le blanc pour le noir; qui, pour acquérir le nom de savants, traduisent à crédit les langues, dont jamais ils n' ont entendu les premiers éléments, comme l'hébraique et la grecque; et encore pour mieux se faire valoir, se prennent aux poetes, geme d'auteurs ~ertes auquel, si je savais ou vou la is traduire, je m' adresserais aussi peu, à

[111] DU BELAY, Joachim. La Deffence e illustration de la langue françoyse. In: FAVERI, op. cit., p. 24.
[112] Idem, ibidem.
[113] Idem, ibidem.

> cause de cette divinité d'invention qu'ils ont plus que les autres, de cette grandeur de style, magnificence de mots, gravité de sentences, audace et variété de figures, et mille autres lumieres de poésie : bref cette énergie, et ne sais quel esprit, qui est en leurs écrits, que les Latins appelleraient genius. Toutes lesquelles choses se peuvent autant exprimer en traduisant, comme un peintre peut représenter l'âme avec le corps de celui qu'il entreprend tirer apres le naturel. (...)O Apollon ! ô Muses! profaner ainsi les sacrées reliques de l' antiquité ! Mais je n' en dirai autre chose. Celui donc qui voudra faire oeuvre digne de prix en son vulgaire, laisse ce labeur de traduire, principalement les poetes, à ceux qui de chose laborieuse et peu profitable, j'ose dire encore inutile, voire pernicieuse à l'accroissement de leur langue, emportent à bon droit plus de molestie que de gloire.[114]

During the same period other Pléiade poets also expressed their demeaning opinions about the translator's work, seen as a minor literary endeavor, incapable of contributing to the improvement of the language[115]. Translating activity decreased in France after 1560 and, in some periods, almost ceased completely[116]. Dolet's ideas, however, found a champion in Jacques Amyot (1513-1593), one of the most celebrated of all French translators, whose works reinstated the search for a "natural" style and rehabilitated translation's reputation as a literary genre despite all obstacles[117]. Fluency, or the "harmony of language" as defended by Dolet, would be enthroned as the most important aspect of the translator's work, during the years between 1625 and 1665, the period known as "Les Belles Infidèles", which saw the activity of translators like Bachet de Méziriac (1581-1638), Guez de Balzac (1597-1654) e Nicolas Perrot d'Ablancourt (1606-1664)[118]. Translators in this period practiced what C. Balliu called "equivalence of effects": modern rules of style and eloquence were used to maintain, or recreate, the aesthetic effect of Classical authors (John Milton uses the word "impressão" to convey a very similar meaning, as we shall see further ahead)[119]. In other words, translators would adapt and recreate the translated works according to the tastes of their readership and the rules of "good taste" current at the time. The name "Les Belles Infidèles" was coined by grammarian and lexicographer Giles Ménage (1612-1693) when writing about d'Ablancourt translations:

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[114] Ibid, p. 28-29.
[115] POPPI, op. cit, p 32.
[116] Ibid, ibidem.
[117] Ibid, ibidem.
[118] Ibid, ibidem.
[119] POPPI, op. cit., p. 34.

> Lors que la version de Lucien de M. d'Ablancourt parut, bien des gens se plaignirent de ce qu'elle n'étoit pas fidèle. Pour moi je l'appelai la belle infidèle, qui étoit le nom que j'avois donné étant jeune à une de mes maîtresses.[120]

As we have seen, French translations had come a long way from the Latinate versions that were dominant by the end of the 15th c. to the far-reaching liberties that characterized "Les Belles Infidèles" in Louis XIV's time – an age "so imbued with its own superiority" that it endeavored "to conform Ancient writers to the fashions of the day"[121]. D'Ablancourt's is a paragon of that age, and his works earned him the title of "chef de file de la traduction libre"[122]. In his translations of Arrian, Lucian, Tacitus, Thucydides and Xenophon, d'Ablancourt's efforts were marked by a constant quest for beauty[123]. On the footsteps of Étienne Dolet, d'Ablancourt attempts to eliminate any form of obscurity from the translated text, always looking for the "clearest" way of expressing ideas[124]. His work is based on the assumption that French is not inferior to Greek and Latin and might, in some cases, achieve a higher perfection than the Classic languages[125]. In his incessant quest for beauty, he crafted his sentences carefully, and, although translating into prose, he made use of poetic rhythms, lacing his paragraphs with Alexandrines, pentameters and octossyllables. Neither of those meters was to be found in the original works, but d'Ablancourt's *unfaithfulness*, in this case, was meant to convey an element present in the Ancient authors, namely, their aesthetic energy. As John Milton puts it:

> O conceito de equivalência entre os tradutores franceses dos séculos XVII e XVIII era muito diferente da nossa interpretação contemporânea do termo. A tradução tinha de proporcionar ao leitor a impressão semelhante à que o original teria suscitado, e a pior maneira de fazê-lo seria através de tradução literal, o que pareceria dissonante e obscuro. Seria melhor fazer mudanças a fim de que a tradução não ferisse os ouvidos e que tudo pudesse ser entendido claramente. Somente fazendo essas mudanças, o tradutor poderia criar essa "impressão" semelhante.[126]

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[120] POPPI, op. cit., p. 34
[121] GUIDÈRE, Mathieu. **Introduction à la traductologie**. Louvain-la-Neuve: De Boéck Supérieur, 2004. p. 86
[122] Ibid, p. 86.
[123] MILTON, op. cit., p. 56
[124] Ibid, ibidem.
[125] Ibid, p. 57.
[126] Ibid, ibidem.

A faithful treason, one might say; or, as Boileu phrased it: "les licences qu'il a prises ne sont-elles pas une forme plus haute de fidelité?"[127] The *traitorous* aspect of d'Ablancourt's translations, however, became proverbial, and, although his works were well received in his own time, he would be heavily criticized after 1654 by La Bruyère, Amelot de la Houssaye and Madame Dacier[128]. Not only does he adapt metaphors and rhythm to his reader's taste; he also "corrects" ambiguities, clarifies what he sees as shortcomings or misunderstandings, and tones down elements that might be regarded as offensive by his ideal audience, that is, the French aristocracy of the 17th c. D'Ablancourt advocated and explained his method in a letter written to his patron, Monsieur Conrart, counselor and secretary to the King, published as an introduction to his partial translation of Lucian's dialogues in 1664[129]. Foreseeing the criticisms that his works might draw, the translator resorts to the example of Ancient authors themselves: d'Ablancourt claims to have translated Lucian in the same fashion as Terence translated Menander, and as Cicero translated Panetius, Demosthenes and Aeschines. Instead of adhering to the words or even to the thoughts of an author, d'Ablancourt claims to be following his "finality" (*son but*), adapting it "to our ways and our tastes". A translated text should be "pleasant" if it is to be worthy of the original at all; and to be pleasant to modern readers, an ancient text should be changed in some way or another: "Il a donc fallu changer tout cela, pour faire quelque chose d'agrèable; autrement, ce ne serait pas Lucien; et ce qui plait en sa langue, ne serait pas supportable en la nôtre". To justify his way of "arranging things" (*agencer les choses*), d'Ablancourt resorts to a witty simile, comparing translators, or translated texts, with ambassadors that must adapt their clothing to the countries they visit:

> D'ailleurs, comme dans les beaux visages il y a toujours quelque chose qu'on voudrait qu'il n'y fut pas; aussi dans les meilleurs auteurs, il y a des endroits qu'il faut toucher ou éclaircir, particulierement quand les choses ne sont faites que pour plaire; car alors on ne peut souffrir le moindre défaut: et pour peu qu' on manque de délicatesse, au lieu de divertir on ennuye. Je ne m'attache donc pas toujours aux paroles ni aux pensées de cet auteur; et demeurant dans son but, j' agence les choses à notre air et à notre façon. Les divers temps veulent non seulement des paroles, mais des pensées différentes; et les ambassadeurs ont

[127] Ibid, p. 72. Footnote.
[128] GUIDÈRE, op. cit., p. 86
[129] FAVERI, op. cit. p. 48.

> coutume de s'habiller à la mode du pays ou l'on les envoye, de peur d'être ridicules à ceux à qui ils tâchent de plaire.[130]

As we have seen, both Cicero and Horace dismissed the Latin word for "translator" (*interpres*); similarly, d'Ablancourt avows his work might not be properly called a translation, but something better than it: "cela n'est pas proprement de la traduction; mais cela vaut mieux que la traduction (...) mais il n'importe du nom, pourvu que nous avons la chose". However, other than the elegance of style, how did the translator "touched" and "clarified" the original text? Firstly, he recreated Lucian's jokes: because "witticisms and jest" are diverse in all languages, such passages do not bear a "regular translation" – a statement with which I do concur, as it will become clear in Chapter 3. Other liberties taken by d'Ablancourt, and which were meant to avoid *horrifying* his readers, are certain to horrify modern scholars. D'Ablancourt proudly states, for instance to have "cleared" all references to homosexuality: "Toutes les comparaisons tirées de l'amour, parlent de celui des garçons, qui n'était pas étrange aux moeurs de la Grece, et qui font horreur aux nôtres". He avows, also, to have culled Lucian's references to Homer's verses and to "old fables", as well as his "outdated comparisons". Why? Because, whereas Lucian's readers would readily understand those passages and take them as "gallantries", French readers in the 17th-c. might consider such an abundance of Classic quotations as an example of "pedantry", not of scholarship[131].

Although I do not concur with many of d'Ablancourt's solutions, I find some valuable points in his meditation. Translators of pre-Modern literature in general will fatefully be met by that same challenge: cultural references change, and the aesthetic effect of a given passage might be utterly lost to Modern readers; indeed, the more literally one translates certain passages, the less aesthetically intelligible they are likely to be. My own solutions to this conundrum shall be minutely explained in Chapter 3.

2.4 JOHN DRYDEN AND THE ENGLISH TRADITION

Since the Middle Ages, translation had been an important part of the English literary tradition and helped to establish the foundations of English literature. By the end of the 14th c., Geoffrey Chaucer penned important translations like those of *Le Roman de*

[130] Ibid, p. 54.
[131] Ibid, ibidem.

la Rose (or parts of it) and Boethius' *De Consolatione Philosophiae*[132]. Chaucer's translations served to introduce several themes and styles from continental literature into English, like the *ballade française*, Boccaccio's romance and the Flemish fabliau[133]. In the beginning of the 15th c., Chaucer's admirer and literary follower, John Lydgate, translated Guido delle Colonne's *Historia Destructionis Troiae*, whereas William Caxton, the first English printer, produced an English version of Raoul le Fevre's *Recoeil des Histoires de Troyes*[134]. Caxton's translation was the first book printed in English (1473), and he would go on to publish an "enormous output" of books, including English versions of French and Latin stories and a revised version of Chaucer; his last published translation (1490) was *Eneydos*, a translation of Virgil's Aeneid based on an intermediate French version[135]. During the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Period, the translator's work was made difficult by the shortage of books: the Clerk's library, in Chaucer's Tales, was considered a large collection, although it was made up of 20 volumes. Even after Caxton's introduction of the press, books remained rare, and there were no public libraries or collections available to scholars[136].

However, as the 16th c. progressed, the middle classes became wealthier and the demand for translations increased[137]. The Tudor and early Stuart periods saw the emergence of several important translations, like Gavin Douglas'*Aeneid* (1525), Sir Thomas Hobby's *The Booke of the Court*; Sir Thomas North's *Plutarch's Lives* (1579); George Chapman's translations of Homer (beginning in 1598); and John Florio's Montaigne (1603). These works had an enormous impact on English literature: suffice to say that North's *Plutarch* was the immediate source to William Shakespeare's Roman plays – *Julius Caesar*, *Anthony and Cleopatra*, *Titus Andronicus* and *Coriolanus*[138]. In Ezra Pound's opinion, this period represented the golden age of English and Scottish translation[139]; whereas T. S. Eliot wrote that more felicity was to be found in those works than in the translations of any period and any time[140]. According to Warren Boutcher, however,

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[132] MILTON, op. cit., p. 17.
[133] Ibid, ibidem.
[134] ELLIS, Roger. The Middle Ages. In: FRANCE, op. cit., p. 44
[135] Ibid. p. 39
[136] MILTON, op. cit., p. 18.
[137] Ibid, ibidem.
[138] Ibid. p. 19.
[139] Ibid. p. 20
[140] BOUTCHER, Warren. The Renaissance. In: FRANCE, op. cit. p. 46

> if we read these works as 'translations' in the modern sense, they will inevitably disappoint, because good modern translations will always be found to be more faithful, more fluent, more sensitive to literary texture. What, though, if we read Renaissance translations as 'original' works, by authors who happen to be translating? Such reading may be warranted: the conditions for translation practice in this period were radically different from modern ones. Renaissance translators read and anatomized texts from the point of view of their training in rhetoric, a form of literary sensitivity very different in emphasis from that of 20th c. translators (...).[141]

The weight of rhetoric is to be found in the first theoretical commentaries on the translator's task written in English, by the end of the 16th c. George Chapman's prefaces to his own translations of Homer foreshadow some of the topics that would be more extensively discussed in Dryden's age. In the foreword to his first translation of Homer, *Seven Bookes of the Iliad* (1598), Chapman states that translators should fully understand the rhetorical spirit of the original in order to recreate it in the most appropriate way in the target tongue:

> The worth of a skillful translator is to observethe figures and formes of speech proposed in his author, his true sence of height, and to adorne them with figures and formes of oration fitted to the originall in the same tongue to which they were translated.[142]

In another preface, written in 1611, Chapman rejects literal translations, which he calls "pedantical" and "absurd", and at the same time attempts to distance himself from "paraphrasical and faulty" renderings[143]. Interestingly, Chapman uses the word "paraphrase" to signify what Dryden would later call "imitation". However, as d'Ablancourt wrote, "*il n'importe du nom, pourvu que nous avons la chose*": in Chapman's commentaries we may discern the quest for a "middle-ground" that would be later taken up, with rebooted terminology, by Dryden.

The next phase in the history of English tradition, which John Milton calls Augustan Age and Venutti calls the Neoclassicism and Enlightenment period, stretches from the second half of the 17th c. to the end of the 18th c., and sees the emergence of several theoretical commentaries that reshaped the old debate between *sensus de sensu*

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[141] Ibid, p. 46
[142] NOVALIS. Apud MILTON, op. cit. p. 44. Footnote.
[143] CHAPMAN, George. To the Reader. In: Homer. **Homer's Iliad**. Cambridge: Modern Research Humanities Association, 2017, p. 21.

and *verbum e verbo* translations. During that period, fluency became the norm in English translations, and several strategies were used to naturalize foreign texts and make them perfectly readable and enjoyable – in other words, to make the strange familiar. English translators of that period were following two important determinants: Horace's defense of sense for sense translations and the naturalizing strategies that were in use among French translators at least since Jacques Amyot[144]. As Venuti puts it:

> This period witnessed the decisive emergence of fluency as the most prevalent strategy for rendering foreign poetry and prose, both ancient and modern, Translators aimed for a stylistic refinement that usually involved a significant rewriting of the foreign text, but that at the same time worked to mask this rewriting. They achieved and extraordinary readability, an ease and transparency that produced the illusion of original composition. And their achievement is all more remarkable because this illusion was secured not only in plain prose, but in a most artificial poetic form: the heroic couplet.
> Which is to say that the overriding project in translation at this time was to make the foreign recognizably, even splendidly English. Translators enacted a subtle inscription of the foreign text with distinctively English literary canons, making it serve distinctively English cultural and political agendas. Translation strategies were rarely wedded to a programme for preserving the foreignness of the foreign text.
> The general freedom of the translating indicates that the audience included two large segments: educated readers who were familiar with the foreign texts as well as versions in other modern languages and who were therefore capable of appreciating the ingenuity of a translator's domesticating choices; and readers who lacked training in languages and literatures and who therefore appreciated the translations as English-language poems.[145]

Paramount to the establishment of this "age of familiarity" in English translation was a group of Royalist *hommes de lettres* exiled from England during the Commonwealth period (1649-1660), after the deposition of King Charles I[146]. The group, which included Sir John Denham, Abraham Cowley, Sir Richard Fanshawe, Sir Edward Sherburne and Thomas Stanley, lived in Paris with the Caroline court, forming a literary circle, until the return of King Charles II to England[147]. Their sojourn in France, therefore, overlaps with the *Belles Infidèles* period, and their theoretical musings can be

[144] VENUTI, Lawrence. Neoclassicism and Enlightenment. In: FRANCE, op. cit., p. 55.
[145] Ibid, ibidem.
[146] MILTON, op. cit., p. 21
[147] VENUTTI, op. cit., p. 55.

easily related to d'Ablancourt's commentaries and practice. In Cowley's Preface to his translation of the *Pindaric Odes*, published in 1656, again we find a translator searching for a better name to what he is doing. Cicero, as we have seen, refused the name of *interpres*; d'Ablancourt stated that his works were "more valuable than a translation"; following on their footsteps, Cowley wishes for "Something Better" than the "Name Translator". Cowley's witty and daring Preface deserves a lengthy quotation:

> If a man should undertake to translate Pindar word for word, it would be thought that one Madman had translated another; as may appear, when a person who understands not the Original reads the verbal Traduction of him into Latin Prose, then which nothing seems more Raving. And, sure, Rhyme, without the addition of Wit, and the Spirit of Poetry would but make it ten times more Distracted then it is in Prose. We must consider in Pindar the great difference of time betwixt his age and ours, which changes, as in Pictures, at least the Colours of Poetry, the no less difference betwixt the Religions and Customs of our Countreys, and a thousand particularities of places, persons, and manners, which do but confusedly appear to our eyes at so great a distance. And lastly, (which were enough alone for my purpose) we must consider that our Ears are strangers to the Musick of his Numbers, which sometimes (especially in Songs and Odes) almost without anything else, makes an excellent Poet; for though the Grammarians and Criticks have labored to reduce his Verses into regular feet and measures (as they have also those of the Greek and Latine Comedies) yet in effect they are little better than Prose to our Ears. And I would gladly know what applause our best pieces of English Poesie could expect from a Frenchman or Italian, if converted faithfully, and word for word, into French or Italian Prose. And when we have considered all this, we must needs confess, that after all these losses sustained by Pindar, all we can add to him by our wit or invention (not deserting still his subject) is not like to make him a Richer man than he was in his own Countrey. This is in some measure to be applyed to all Translations; and the not observing of it, is the cause that all which ever I yet saw, are so much inferior to their Originals. The like happens too in Pictures, from the same root of exact Imitation; which being a vile and unworthy kinde of Servitude, is incapable of producing anything good or noble. (...) It does not at all trouble me that the Grammarians perhaps will not suffer this libertine way of rendering foreign Authors, to be called Translation; for I am not so much enamoured of the Name Translator, as not to wish rather to be Something Better, though it want yet a Name. I speak not so much all this, in defence of my manner of Translating or Imitating (or what other Title they please) the two ensuing Odes of Pindar; for that would not

> deserve half these words, as by this occasion to rectify the opinion of divers men upon this matter.[148]

Cowley's reference to "Grammarians" that "laboured" to reduce Pindar's verses to "regular feet and measures" is an evidence of the disciplinary division between grammar and rhetoric, "that shaped Western definitions of translation from Antiquity to the Middle Ages"[149]. An emphasis on grammar would mean a close adherence to the original text and its foreignness; English translators in the early modern period avoided this "linguistic correctness" and favored rhetorical effects[150]. Rejecting the "Servitude" of grammatical literalism, translators like Cowley attempted to bridge the time and culture gap between them and antiquity by adding what they could, in terms of wit and invention, "without deserting their subject". They were therefore "theorizing the aesthetic autonomy of the translated text"[151].

For those who have attempted to translate poetry from different ages and cultures, Cowley's statement is a fascinating, if controversial, one. His short preface summarizes several of the greatest problems attached to this daring kind of literary enterprise. Cowley points out – correctly, in my opinion – that the damage done by literalist translation is much greater in poetry than in prose. This damage – or *losses*, as Cowley puts it – stems from the "difference of times", that makes elements familiar to Pindar's readers appear "but confusedly" to the translator's audience. Not only religions and customs change, but the "Music of his Numbers"[152] – i.e., the rhythm of his verses – has also become "stranger" to our ears. According to Cowley, translators who try to reproduce the Ancient feet and measures make poetry sound like prose. Cowley, of course, does nothing of the sort: he translates Pindar into the most English of poetic forms, the rhymed couplet, thus making his translation readily recognizable as poetry and making the "stranger" natural or familiar. Interestingly, Cowley adds that "sometimes" the "Music of the Numbers" makes an excellent poet "almost without anything else". Cowley is clearly stating that poetic form, and not the content (or meaning) of a poem, might be at the core of poetic excellence, at least *sometimes*. Thus, although Cowley and d'Ablancourt both side with "libertine" translations, there is a significant difference

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[148] COWLEY, Abraham. **The Poems of Abraham Cowley. vol. II**. C. Wittingham: Chiswick. s. d., p. 99.
[149] VENUTI, op. cit., p. 56
[150] Ibid, ibidem.
[151] Ibid., ibidem.
[152] COWLEY, op, cit., p. 99.

between them. D'Ablancourt worries about meaning, so much so that he endeavors to make the "sense" even more intelligible than it was in the original text. Cowley on the other hand seems to suggest that, "sometimes", form is what really matters. In other words, when translating poetry, not even *sensus de sensu* translation is enough: one should look for "Something Better"; something that Cowley calls "Imitating". D'Ablancourt advocated an adherence to the author's "finality" (*son but*), and claimed to have left the authors' opinions untouched (*Je dirai seulement que je lui ai laissé ses opinions toutes entieres*[153]), whereas Cowley finds it sufficient not to desert Pindar's "subject". Thus, the defense of *sensus de sensu* translation, which might be said to have peaked in d'Ablancourt's commentaries, is superseded in Cowley's. To translate meaning by meaning is not enough; the "Spirit of Poetry" demands the addition of wit and a music that is not "stranger" to the modern Ear. And yet, even in Cowley's radical stance on the translator's liberty, there is something that should not be deserted; something that Cowley, in a typical cavalier way, calls "subject". That is rather vague, of course, and stretches the translator's freedom so much that he must now be called an imitator; but even in "Imitating" there remains a sense of negotiation: something must be added, because something was fatally lost.

John Denham, Cowley's companion in exile, also stresses the difference between prose and poetry translations, in the Preface to his rendering of the second book of the *Aeneid*, published as *The Destruction of Troy* (1656). In this text, Denham states that pretending to be a "*Fidus Interpres*" is a "vulgar err" when one is translating poetry; literalism is more appropriate to "matters of Fact or Faith", whereas the translator of poetry should not "translate Language into Language, but Poesy into Poesy; and Poesy is of so subtle a spirit, that in pouring out of one Language into another, it will all evaporate; and if a new spirit be not added in the transfusion, there will remain nothing but a *caput mortuum*." Like Cowley, Denham writes that the translator is warranted in "adding" something to that which he translates: in Cowley's case, it is "wit and invention" and the "Spirit of Poetry"; in Denham's, "a new spirit". Without such an addition, according to Cowley, the Copy will be "much inferior" to its Original, and poetry will become prose; and, according to Denham, nothing will be left but a dead head, or a

[153] D'ABLANCOURT, Nicolas Perrot. Lettre à Monsieur Conrart Conseiller et Sécrétaire du Roi (1664). In: FAVERI, Cláudia Borges de. **Antologia Bilíngüe: Clássicos da Teoria da Tradução**. Volume II: Francês-Português. Florianópolis: Núcleo de Tradução UFSC, 2004, p. 54

worthless remain. According to Cowley, adding something new is a way of compensating for all the losses sustained by the original; Denham presents a similar idea, reasoning that, if sometimes he gives Virgil more eloquence than the author originally had, this should be seen as a compensation for all the other instances wherein he failed to speak as fully as the Roman did. Once again, negotiating losses and additions is an emerging procedure at the heart of the business: the translator must add something of his own because a complete a "transfusion" between languages is impossible:

> Where my expressions are not so full as his, either our Language, or my Art were defective (but I rather suspect myself); but where mine are fuller than his, they are but the impressions which the often reading of him, hath left upon my thoughts; so that if they are not his own conceptions, they are at least the results of them; and if (being conscious of making him speak worse than he did in almost every line) I err in endeavoring sometimes to make him speak better; I hope it will be judged an error on the right hand, and such a one as may deserve pardon, if not imitation.[154]

In *The Destruction of Troy*, Denham used the English couplet and resorted to "current standard English, with minimal Latinate and archaic forms, treating the Latin text freely enough to address and English cultural and political situation", seeking to naturalize what was inherently anachronistic[155]. The intention of breaching the time gap through aesthetic familiarity becomes clear in another much quoted passage from his Preface: "If Virgil must needs speak English, it were fit he should speak not only as a man of this Nation, but as a man of this Age"[156]. Denham's ideal readership was the Royalist segment of aristocracy, and his translation did speak to them in an intelligible way: "the architectural features of Priam's palace bear a strong resemblance to Whitehall, and the excerpt ends at Priam's decapitation, eerily evoking the execution of Charles I"[157].

In the commentaries by d'Ablancourt, Denham and Cowley –specially in the later – the old debate between *sensus de sensu* and *verbum e verbo* might be said to have peaked and then been extrapolated: whereas d'Ablancourt and Denham advocated the naturalization of Ancient, foreign authors, making them speak as men of their own

[154] MILTON, op. cit., p. 46. Footnote
[155] VENUTI, op. cit., p. 55
[156] Ibid, ibidem.
[157] Ibid, ibidem.

nations, Cowley went as far as to state that translating the meaning is not enough. The old debate, in a way, seems to have been thrown out of balance; and the famous theory of John Dryden can be seen as an attempt to regain a middle stance.

John Dryden was probably the most influential figure in English literature in the second half of the 17th c., and the fact that "a poet of his stature should have a consuming interest in translation shows not only that he held it in high esteem, but that it proved instrumental in defining literary authorship"[158]. Among his non-dramatic poetry, more than two thirds of Dryden's published works consist of translations[159]. The first and most famous elaboration of Dryden's theory is to be found in the Preface to his translation of *Ovid's Epistles*, published in 1680. Although the text prefaces a prose rendition, Dryden discusses in it the problems of poetic translation, addressing topics that had been touched by d'Ablancourt, Denham and Cowley – with direct references to the last two. According to Dryden, all translation may be reduced to "three heads": Metaphrase, Paraphrase and Imitation. The first two are terms taken from the rhetorical tradition and derived from Quintilianus and Philo Judaeus[160]. In the Renaissance, "metaphrase" was used to signify the rewording of a classical text one word at a time, whereas "paraphrase" meant a rewording that focused on the sense of an entire sentence[161]. Dryden relates Metaphrase to literalism, and Paraphrase to meaning-centered translation, whereas Imitation is placed outside the limits of translation – although Dryden concedes that, in some extreme cases, there is no other option than to "Imitate".

Metaphrase, writes Dryden, consists in "turning an Author word by word, and Line by Line, from one language into another". *Line by Line* is an important addition: bearing in mind that poetic translation is a major topic in this Preface, the mention to "lines" here might indicate that Dryden considers the translation of a poem *line by line* as a form of literalism. This, indeed, is what Ben Jonson did while translating Horace's *Ars Poetica*. Ben Jonson's translation was published in 1640 and has been included in several editions of Horace's works, like the first and second editions of Brome's *The Poems of Horace* in 1666 and 1671; in the 1680's edition, however, Jonson's translation was replaced by a more "libertine" rendering by S. Pordage[162].

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[158] VENUTI, op. cit., p. 57.
[159] Ibid, ibidem.
[160] Ibid, ibidem.
[161] Ibid, ibidem.
[162] DRYDEN, John. **The Preface to *Ovid's Epistles* (1680)**. Traduction et édition: Marie-Alice Belle, Université de Montréal. Le Traducter tradui. Textes théoriques sur la traduction. Disponível em: https://ttt.hypotheses.org/159. Acesso em 20 de fevereiro de 2019, p I. Footnote.

Jonson's translation was condemned by Dryden as too literalist – and, at this point, as we consider Dryden's rebuke of Metaphrase, it is important to keep in mind the religious preference for *verbum de verbo* translation. As a matter of fact, the "Verbal Copyer" – as Dryden calls the *fidus interpres*– is compared to a religious fanatic: "Too faithfully [to translate] is indeed pedantic: this is a faith like that which proceeds from Superstition, blind and zealous". According to Venuti, Dryden's reference to "Superstition" suggests the fanaticism of the radical Protestant sects that proliferated during the Civil War. For Dryden, the *fidus interpre*s' zealous blindness is specially damaging when he endeavors to translate metrified, rhymed poetry, because the translator

> is to consider at the same time the thought of his Author, and his words, and to find out the Counterpart to each in another Language: and besides this he is to confine himself to the compass of Numbers, and the Slavery of Rhime. 'Tis much like dancing on Ropes with fetter'd Leggs: A man may shun a fall by using Caution, but the gracefulness of Motion is not to be expected: and when we have said the best of it, 'tis but a foolish Task; for no sober man would put himself into a danger for the Applause of scaping without breaking his neck.[163]

This impressive passage vividly summarizes one of the greatest challenges (although some would call it an ordeal) faced by translators of metrified poetry: which aspect of the original text shall be sacrificed, in order to instill life into the whole? Again, we are faced with the need to negotiate losses and additions, as we have seen in Cowley and Denham. Shall we stick to the Author's "thought", to his "words", or to the "Numbers" and "Rhyme" of his verse? Trying to do all those things at the same time is an excess of Caution that compromises the "gracefulness of Motion": thus, a powerful poem might be rendered weak, or even unintelligible, by way of literal translation. Here we meet again the insufficiency of traditional wording when it comes to poetic or creative translation: how can the *fidus interpres* be considered *fidus* (faithful) at all, if that which made the poem fit for translation in the first place (that is, its literary power) is lost in the process? Dryden also suggests that a strict adherence to word meaning might obscure the general sense of the poem:"We see Ben Jonson could not avoid obscurity in his literal Translation of Horace, attempted in the same compass of Lines"; i. e., Jonson not only translated word by word but kept the same number of verse lines found in the original.

[163] Ibid, p. III.

The result, points Dryden not without irony, is that same obscurity condemned by none other than Horace in a famous verse from the *Ars Poetica* itself: *Brevis esse laboro, obscuro fio*. My own solution to the problem described by Dryden in the above passage shall be extensively discussed in Chapters 2 and 3.

The second "head" of translation, writes Dryden, is Paraphrase, or "Translation with Latitude", that kind of rendering "where the author is kept in view by the Translator, so as never to be lost, but his words are not so strictly follow'd as his sense, and that too is admitted to be amplyfied, but not alter'd". *Keeping the author in view* is a phrase that resorts to an old image: that of the translator following or racing with the author, a commonplace metaphor to the work of translation that can be found in Seneca's *Epistulae Morales*:

> Numquid ergo non postea quam esse desierat inventus est? Numquid non opinio eius enituit? Hoc Metrodorus quoque in quadam epistula confitetur, se et Epicurum non satis enotuisse; sed post se et Epicurum magnum paratumque nomen habituros qui voluissent per eadem ire vestigia.[164]

Also very important is Dryden's qualification that "sense" is admitted to be "amplyfied, but not altered". In my opinion, that short passage warrants the interpretation that Dryden's Paraphrase is not exactly the same thing as *sensus de sensu* translation. For how can sense be amplified without being altered? In order to make full *sense* of Dryden's statement, we must concede that the original meaning of a text might be preserved, in relation to the time and place where it was written, and yet acquire new resonances in the translation's context: in order for the author's dead voice to resound in the present, new possibilities of meaning must be *read into* its original sense, without destroying it. We shall come back to this apparent paradox, which lies at the core of my own translation method, in the following chapters.

As an example of Paraphrase, Dryden mentions Edmund Waller's translation of the fourth book of the Aeneid, published as *The Passion of Dido for Aeneas*, in 1658[165]. However, the "Latitude" of Paraphrase is not an unlimited one; indeed, too much liberty might push the translator outside the boundaries of his métier. At the opposite end from Metaphrase, Dryden places Imitation "where the Translator (if now he has not lost

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[164] SENECA. **Epistles, Volume I**: Epistles 1-65. Translated by Richard M. Gummere. Loeb Classical Library 75. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1917, p. 16.
[165] DRYDEN, op. cit.. p. II.

that Name) assumes the liberty not only to vary from the words and sense, but to forsake them both as he sees occasion: and taking only some general hints from the Original, to run division on the ground-work as he pleases". *Run division on the ground-work* is a musical metaphor, meaning *to perform variations on a theme*. Dryden resorts to a comparison between translation and music to deduce a negative rule: the translator should not act as a musician who improvises upon the theme he is executing. Instead, he should act like a painter: "when a Painter copies from the life, I suppose he has no privilege to alter Features, and Lineaments, under the pretense that his Picture will look better". After Dryden, the pictorial and musical parallels would become commonplace in translation discourse; in 1729, for instance, Katherine Philips wrote about her own translation of Corneille: "I think a translation ought not to be used as Musicians do a Ground with all the Liberty to Descant, but as Painters when they copy..."[166]

Dryden further defines Imitation as

> an Endeavour of a later Poet to write like one who has written before him on the same Subject: that is, not to Translate his words, or to be Confined to his Sense, but only to set him as a Pattern, and to write, as he supposes, what that Author would have done, had he lived in our Age and in our Country.

In this passage, Dryden may be said to criticize an *excess* of naturalization in the theories advocated by Denham and Cowley. Those two "wits", he writes, were responsible for contriving this

> new way of turning Authors into our Tongue (...). As they were Friends, I suppose they Communicated their thoughts on this Subject to each other, and therefore their reasons for it are little different: though the practice of one is much more moderate.[167]

The "more moderate" one is clearly Denham, although Dryden goes on to say that not even Cowley followed the notion of Imitation exactly as he has exposed it: "[f]or in the Pindarick Odes, the Customs and Ceremonies of Ancient Greece are still preserved". More than Denham's and Cowley's practice, it is their theory that Dryden opposes, as it might serve as a false guide to less talented poets:

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[166] Katherine Philips. *Letters of Orinda to Poliarchus*, XIX (c. 1663, published 1729). Apud: DRYDEN, op. cit., p. IV. Footnote.
[167] Ibid, ibidem.

> I know not what mischief may arise hereafter from the Example of such an Innovation, when writers of unequal parts to him shall imitate so bold an undertaking; to add and to diminish as they please.[168]

Dryden grants that Imitation might be the only way of rendering an author like Pindar,

> generally known to be a dark writer, to want Connexion (I mean as to our understanding), to soar out of sight and leave his Reader at a Gaze (...) A Genius so Elevated and unconfined as Mr. Cowley's was but necessary to make Pindar speak English, and that was to be performed by no other way than Imitation.[169]

However, if the same method were to be applied to "regularly intelligible" authors like Virgil and Ovid, Imitation would cease to be translation and become "almost the creation of another hand". In that case, Imitation is the best way for a translator "to show himself, but the greatest wrong that can be done to the Memory and Reputation of the dead". After defining the three "heads", Dryden again stresses his preference for the middle ground. "Imitation and verbal Version are in my Opinion the two Extremes, which ought to be avoided: and therefore when I have propos'd the mean betwixt them, it will be seen how far his Argument will reach." In Dryden's final defense of Paraphrase as the most appropriate "head" of Translation, the poet once again places "sense" at the center of the translator's work; but now, instead of "amplifying" it, Dryden advocates that it be presented in a different "dress", so as not to lose is "Luster" (remember d'Ablancourt's metaphor about the clothing ambassadors should use when visiting foreign countries). The "Latitude" afforded to translation in its paraphrastic head, then, can be interpreted as: 1) an amplifying of meaning, without alteration; and 2) the same meaning newly "dressed" in different Words and Lines (i.e., a different verse scheme than the original's).

> But since every Language is so full of its own proprieties, that what is Beautiful in one is often Barbarous, nay sometimes Nonsense in another, it would be unreasonable to limit a Translator to the narrow compass of his Author's words: 'tis enough if he choose out some Expression which does not vitiate

[168] Ibid, ibidem.
[169] Ibid, ibidem.

> the Sense. I suppose he may stretch his Chain to such a Latitude, but by innovation of thoughts, methinks he breaks it. By this means the Spirit of an Author may be transfused, and yet not lost (...) for Thought, if it be translated truly, cannot be lost in another Language, but the words that convey it to our apprehension (which are the Image and Ornament of that thought) may be so ill chosen as to make it appear in an unhandsome dress, and rob it of its native Luster. There is therefore a Liberty to be allowed for the Expression, neither is it necessary that Words and Lines should be confined to the measure of their Original. The sense of an Author, generally speaking, is to be sacred and inviolable. If the Fancy of Ovid be luxuriant, 'tis his Character ought to be so, and if I retrench it, he is no longer Ovid. [170]

Dryden was not the first to recommend a middle ground between literal translation and what he called Imitation. In his *Interpretatio Linguarum* (1559) Lawrence Humphrey calls word-for-word translation "rudior et crassior" (rougher and coarser), while opposing it to a similarly extreme way of translating, which he styles "liberior et solutior", "nimium sibi pemittit licentiae", and, finally, advising a "via media", or middle way[171].

Few years after condemning Imitation, Dryden seems to have steered away from his own rules[172]. At least, that's what Dryden himself suggests in the preface to *Sylvae*, a collection of translated poems by Horace, Virgil, Lucretius and Theocritus, published in 1685, five years after *Ovid's Letters*:

> I have many times exceeded my commission; for I have both added and omitted, and even sometimes very boldly made such expositions of my authors, as no Dutch commentators will forgive me. Perhaps, in such passages I have thought that I discovered some beauty yet undiscovered by these pedants which none but a poet could have found.[173]

In *Sylvae*'s Preface, sense is no longer "sacred and inviolable"[174]. Writing about his translations of Virgil, Dryden expands on his earlier idea about "amplifying" the original sense and avows to have written new "thoughts" into the translated text, but goes on to qualify:

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[170] Ibid, ibidem.
[171] Ibid, ibidem.
[172] MILTON, op. cit., p. 28
[173] Ibid, p. 47
[174] Ibid, p. 29

> Where I have taken away some of their expressions and cut them shorter, it may be possible that on this consideration, that what was beautiful in the Greek or Latin, wou'd not appear so shining in the English: and where I have enlarg'd them, I desire the false Criticks wou'd not always think these thoughts are wholly mine, but that either they are secretly in the Poet, or may be fairly deduc'd from him... or at least, if both these considerations should fail, that my own is of a piece with his, and that if he were living, and an Englishman, they are such, as he wou'd probably have written.[175]

It's almost as if Dryden has finally come to terms with Denham: after rejecting his colleague's idea about making Ancient authors speak as men of "this Nation" and "this Age", Dryden now tells us he has done exactly that. There is a great difference, however, between Dryden's and Denham's translations. According to Venutti,

> In his expansions and compressions of foreign texts, he [Dryden] refined the heroic couplet, making it more pointed and balanced than Denham's; he introduced prosodic innovations to improve fluency, such as triplets, where rhyme and syntax propelled the verse and underscored the meaning; and he constructed a more artificial diction, latinate and periphrastic.[176]

In his translation of the *Aeneid,* Dryden balanced the familiarity granted by the English couplet with translation choices that stressed the foreignness of the translated text, thus representing an accomplished example of the balance between strangeness and familiarity in translation. That can be seen in the opening verses of Dryden's *Aeneid*:

> ARMS, and the man I sing, who, forc'd by fate,
> And haughty Juno's unrelenting hate,
> Expell'd and exil'd, left the Trojan shore.
> Long labors, both by sea and land, he bore,
> And in the doubtful war, before he won
> The Latian realm, and built the destin'd town;
> His banish'd gods restor'd to rites divine,
> And settled sure succession in his line,
> From whence the race of Alban fathers come,

[175] Ibid, p. 48
[176] VENUTI, op. cit., p. 57

And the long glories of majestic Rome. 10

Dryden's first gesture is a naturalizing one: he breaks Virgil's seven initial lines into ten verses, forming five English rhymed couplets. The addition of rhyme might be seen as the strongest movement towards familiarity, and the rendition of meaning is not made line by line, but spread throughout the stanza. The dislocation of meaning serves the rhyming scheme. Consider Virgil's verses:

Arma uirumque cano, Troiae qui primus ab oris 1
Italiam, Fato profugus, Lauiniaque uenit
litora, multum ille et terris iactatus et alto
ui superum saeuae memorem Iunonis ob iram,
multa quoque er bello passus, dum conderet urbem, 5
inferretque deos Latio, genus unde Latinum
Albanique patres, atque altae moenia Romae.[177]

In Virgil's original, June's wrath is only mentioned on line 7, but Dryden places it in the second line of his translation, so the goddess' "hate" can rhyme with "fate", on line one. Dryden even creates a new verse, *And settled sure succession in his line*, which might be seen (quite loosely!) as an amplification of "genus unde Latinum", "wherefore came the Latin people". But "line" rhymes with "divine", and – one might add – saying that Aeneas "settled sure succession in his line" is not contrary to the idea that the Latin "genus" stems from him. Was sense altered? Or was it amplified? Certainly we are no longer in the pure realms of Paraphrase. And yet, side by side with this naturalizing strategy, Dryden beacons to the stranger and the foreign – and he does so right at the beginning. By that I mean the Latinate opening of line 1: "ARMS, and the man I sing", which distorts English syntax and bears even a visual resemblance to Virgil's "Arma virumque cano". The seemingly opposing strategies are combined into a seamless verbal flow: an accomplished poet, Dryden here grants us the impression of original composition, but does so combining familiarity and strangeness, instead of simply turning Virgil into a speaker of the English Parliament.

[177] VIRGÍLIO. **Eneida**. São Paulo: Editora 34, 2014, p. 72

One of Dryden's last published works was *Fables Ancient and Modern* (1700), where he updates Chaucer, adapting and modernizing *The Knight's Tale*, *The Nun's Priest's Tale*, *The Wife of Bath's Tale*, and the Parson's portrait from the *General Prologue*[178]. Here we find a much more lenient Dryden, almost Cowley-like in his assertion of the translator's liberty: he cut and added where he found it necessary, not only omitting what he saw as Chaucer's excesses but adding new ideas as he found fit. Dryden goes as far as to wish that some future poet should do the same updating on his own works, granted that they lived enough in posterity to demand adaptation:

> But there are more great Wits, beside Chaucer, whose Fault is their Excess of Conceits, and those ill sorted. An Author is not to write all he can, but only all he ought. Having observ'd this Redundancy in Chaucer, (as it is an easy Matter for a Man of ordinary Parts to find a Fault in one of greater) I have not tied myself to a Literal Translation; but have often omitted what I judg'd unnecessary, or not of Dignity enough to appear in the Company of better Thoughts. I have presum'd farther in some Places, and added somewhat of my own where I thought my Author was deficient, and had not given his Thoughts their true Lustre, for want of Words in the Beginning of our Language. And to this I was the more embolden'd, because (if I may be permitted to say it of my self) I found I had a Soul congenial to his, and that I had been conversant in the same Studies. Another Poet, in another Age, may take the same Liberty with my Writings; if at least they live long enough to deserve Correction.[179]

According to Dryden, his modernization of Chaucer's Tales was meant "to perpetuate his memory or at least refresh it, amongst my countrymen"[180]. Actually, Dryden's adaptation did more than that: *Fables, Modern and Ancient* played an important role in popularizing Chaucer in the United States of America[181]. In **American Chaucer**, Candace Barrington writes that

> [b]ased on on library and bookseller records, Dryden's version of Chaucer was more widely dispersed in early-nineteenth-century America than any edition of Chaucer's work, whether in modern or medieval English. It is through Dryden's Fables that Chaucer

[178] BARRINGTON, Candace. **American Chaucers**. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007, p. 7.
[179] DRYDEN, John. **Fables, Ancient and Modern.** London: 1700. p. 2. Disponível em: <https://instruct.uwo.ca/english/234e/site/supplmts/Preface%20to%20the%20Fables.pdf > Acesso em 18 mai 2020
[180] MILTON, op. cit., p. 48. Footnote.
[181] BARRINGTON, op. cit., p. 8.

> seems to first enter American homes and finds, rather surreptitiously, a female readership (...). [182]

Interestingly, at least in one occasion Dryden has been referred to as the author, and not the translator, of the fables adapted from Chaucer. In 1804, Scottish polymath John Aikin published an overview of English poetry, aimed at female readers, which became immensely popular: **Aikin's Letter to a Young Lady, on a Course of English Poetry**[183]. Aikin's work was first published in London, then reprinted in the United States in 1806. In his appraisal of English literature, Aikin passes over Chaucer, calling him an author of a "rude and tasteless age". Yet, when Aikin gets to Dryden's poetry, he does comment the Chaucerian works translated in the *Fables* – but treats them as a piece originally written by Dryden, so the unadvised reader might not even notice that those tales were actually translations, and might be led to think they sprung "solely from Dryden's poetic genius"[184]. According to Aikin, *The Knight's Tale* affords

> much entertainment from the richness of the scenery and variety of adventures; and as a study in the poetical art, few pieces in the English language deserve more attention. Dryden was versed in the learning of the school, and was fond on all occasions of pouring forth his knowledge upon abstruse and speculative points. You will therefore find, intermixed with the description and sentiment proper to the story, many allusions relative to astronomy, theology, metaphysics, and other branches of philosophy, which perhaps you will think tedious. But in proportion as you have acquired a taste for poetry, you will dwell with delight and admiration upon his creations of the fancy, some of which are equally bold in the conception, and vivid in the representation. The temples of Venus and Mars are draughts of this kind, finely contrasted. . . .The purely narrative part of the tale flows easy and copious; and though protracted with great variety of circumstance, keeps up the interest to the very conclusion.[185]

Surely the "easy and copious" flow of the "purely narrative part" of the **Fables** has to do with Dryden's ability to provide the *impression of original composition*, but it is quite telling that Aikin attributes to Dryden elements that are obviously Chaucerian – namely, all the allusions to "astronomy, theology, metaphysics, and other

[182] Ibid, ibidem.
[183] Ibid, ibidem.
[184] Ibid. p. 9.
[185] Ibid, ibidem.

branches of philosophy", whose presence in the *Fables* are not due to Dryden's "learning of the school", but to Chaucer's own scholarship. According to Barrington,

> [o]nly if young American women read Dryden closely and Aikin carefully would they know they were reading translations based on Chaucer. This subterranean arrival into America through Dryden and Aikin anticipates the mixed messages that American audiences repeatedly receive about Chaucer: important yet vulgar, needing polishing ere he shine.[186]

Thus, both in Dryden's theory and practice as a poetic translator, we see a regular oscillation between the extremes of strangeness and familiarity; he attempts to find a middle ground, but such ground is slippery, and constantly makes the poet look for new solutions to the endless dilemmas of translation[187]. In his work as a translator, we might see him taking several different stances, from a strict adherence to Paraphrase in *Ovid's Letters* to a freer transfusion or adaptation of words and meaning in *Fables*. In his most famous work as a translator, the *Aeneid*, we find Dryden opting for a different sort of balance, not exactly a middle ground between literalism and libertinism, but rather a combination, or a negotiation, of both. That's the path I followed, as we shall see in Chapter 2.

In Dryden we find the need to develop different terms, and different metaphors, to the translator's work. Since Cicero and Horatio, there seems to be an idea that "to say that I translate is not enough". Likewise, Haroldo de Campos in his many writings on the art of translation has endeavored to find the most appropriate *name* for what a creative translator does.

> Nessas sucessivas abordagens do problema, o próprio conceito de tradução poética foi sendo submetido a uma progressiva reelaboração neológica. Desde a ideia inicial de recriação, até a cunhagem de termos como transcriação, reimaginação (caso da poesia chinesa) transtextualização, ou – já com timbre metaforicamente provocativo – transparadisação (transluminação) e transluciferação, para dar conta, respectivamente, das operações praticadas com “Seis cantos do Paradiso de Dante” e com as duas cenas finais do “Segundo Fausto” (Deus e o Diabo no Fausto de Goethe). Essa cadeia de neologismos exprimia, desde logo, uma insatisfação com a ideia “naturalizada” de tradução, ligada aos pressupostos ideológicos de restituição da verdade (fidelidade) e

[186] Ibid, p. 9
[187] MILTON, op. cit., p. 20.

> literalidade (subserviência da tradução a um presumido "significado transcendental" do original), – ideia que subjaz a definições usuais, mais "neutras" (tradução "literal"), ou mais pejorativas (tradução "servil"), da operação tradutora.[188]

What interests me in Dryden's threefold approach is his idea of Translation as a negotiation between opposing principles and the idea of Latitude applied to the translating act as "an allowable margin of freedom or variation". My opinion is that what sets the "Latitude", or the "margin of variation", in a Translation is the very aesthetic project that grounds it.

2.5 SCHLEIEMEICHER, BENJAMIN AND THE QUEST FOR FOREIGNESS IN TRANSLATION

Earlier in this Chapter, we have seen how the French theories of *Les Belles Infidèles* relate to the English tradition, especially Dryden. *Les Belles Infidèles* represent extreme libertine translation, although even d'Ablancourt has qualified that liberty somewhat, by advocating an adherence to the author's finality. In the English tradition, Denham and Cowley are closer to the French model, whereas Dryden tried to find a *via media* between the "beautiful infidelity" of such a model and the "Servitude" of literalist translation. In the following pages, I shall overview some examples from the German tradition, from the end of the 18th c. to the beginning of the 19th c., whose theories are opposed to the French theory of fluency and naturalization.

Among translated works that have contributed to the development of German literature, we might place Martin Luther's translation of the *Bible* (1530), Cristoph Wieland's rendition of Shakespeare (1762-1766) and Johan Heinrich Voss's translations of the **Odissey** (1781) and the **Iliad** (1793)[189]. Different translating strategies are present in those works; Wieland rendered Shakespeare in prose, whereas Voss turned Homer into hexameters[190]. Between the end of the 18th c. and the beginning of the 19th c., translation was held in such high regard in Germany that Novalis (1772-1801) himself placed it above other forms of literary work:

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[188] CAMPOS, Haroldo de. **Da tradução como criação e como crítica**. Belo Horizonte: FALE/UFMG, 2011, p. 50.
[189] MILTON, op. cit. p. 61
[190] Ibid, ibidem.

> Traduz-se por verdadeiro amor ao belo e pela literatura da nação. Traduzir é produzir literatura, assim como escrever a própria obra de alguém - e é mais difícil, mais raro.[191]

German theorists and commentators in the Romantic age have advocated a sort of translation that is much closer to the *verbum e verbo* paradigm: according to their view, translators should follow, as faithfully as possible, the syntactic and morphological forms of the original[192]. Sometimes, one might find in their meditations an anti-French tone. Novalis considered all French translations, and even English translations that resembled the French model, like Pope's **Iliad**, as "transvestites"[193], whereas A. W. Schlegel writes that

> só um ex-francês poderia, indiferentemente, polir a moeda a ponto de fazer desaparecer, em descrições ou traduções, a ferrugem nobre, para que ele simplesmente pudesse mostrar ao mundo uma moeda brilhante com maior gratificação pessoal.[194]

In June 24, 1813, Friedrich Schleiermacher gave a lecture at the Royal Academy of Sciences in Berlin. The essay read by Schleiermacher later would be published in **Friedrich Schleiermacher's sämmtliche Werke** (1938) as *Über die verschiedenen Methoden des Übersetzens*[195]. Schleiermacher essay would become one of the most influential texts on translation theory. Rich in linguistic considerations and historical analysis, Schleiermacher's essay touches several far-reaching themes, as the dualism of language and identity, the dichotomy between individuality and universality in the consideration of human languages, and the relation between the Self and the Other[196]. To Schleiermacher, translation is a phenomenon much broader than the transfusion of meaning between two languages. We translate inside our own language, when two dialects get into contact; we translate when people from different social backgrounds must reach an understanding; and we translate even when we must express our ideas in our own language, to others or to ourselves:

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[191] NOVALIS, apud MILTON, op. cit., p. 63.
[192] MILTON, op. cit., p. 71
[193] Ibid. p. 28.
[194] Ibid. p. 63.
[195] SCHLEIERMACHER, Friedrich. *Über die verschiedenen Methoden des Übersetzens*. In: HEIDEMAN, Werner (org.). **Antologia Bilíngüe:** Clássicos da Teoria da Tradução. Vol. I: Alemão-Português**.** Florianópolis, UFSC, 2010, p. 39
[196] Ibid, p. 12.

> O fato, que um discurso em uma língua seja traduzido em uma outra, apresenta-se a nós sob as mais variadas formas por toda a parte. Por um lado, desse modo podem entrar em contato homens geograficamente muito afastados, e podem ser transpostas em uma língua obras de uma outra extinta já há muitos séculos; por outro, não precisamos sair do domínio de uma língua para encontrar o mesmo fenômeno. Pois, não apenas os dialetos dos diferentes ramos de um povo e os diferentes desenvolvimentos de uma mesma língua ou dialeto, em diferentes séculos, são já em um sentido estrito diferentes linguagens, e que não raro necessitam de uma completa interpretação entre si; até mesmo contemporâneos não separados pelo dialeto, mas de diferentes classes sociais, que estejam pouco unidos pelas relações, distanciam-se em sua formação, seguidamente apenas podem se compreender por uma semelhante mediação. Sim, não somos nós frequentemente obrigados a previamente traduzir a fala de um outro que é de nossa mesma classe, mas de sensibilidade e ânimo diferentes? A saber, quando nós sentimos que as mesmas palavras em nossa boca teriam um sentido inteiramente diferente ou, ao menos, um conteúdo aqui mais forte, ali mais fraco, que na dele e que, se quiséssemos expressar do nosso jeito o mesmo que ele disse, nos serviríamos de palavras e locuções completamente diferentes. Na medida em que determinamos mais precisamente este sentimento, trazendo-o ao pensamento, parece que traduzimos.As nossas próprias palavras, às vezes, temos que traduzir após algum tempo, se quisermos assimilá-las apropriadamente outra vez. [197]

However, Schleiermacher's main interest in this essay is translation between two languages[198]. To him, there are only two paths that a "true translator" could follow in the endeavor of bringing together an author and a reader, separated by their languages, and to provide the later with the enjoyment and the correct and full comprehension of the former. First, writes Schleiermacher, there is that kind of translation that leaves the reader in peace and brings the author to him: in other words, translations that aim at fluency in the target language. In the second mode of translation, the author is left in peace and the reader is brought to him; i.e., the target language is instilled with the foreign forms. Both paths are completely different, states Schleiermacher and the translator should choose either one or another – and follow the chosen path with utmost strictness, "for any mixture produces necessarily a very unsatisfying result and it is to be feared that the

[197] Ibid, p. 40.
[198] Ibid, p. 41.

encounter between author and reader might fail completely"[199]. At this point, I would like to stress Schleiermacher *either/or*: his condemnation of any balance or combination of both methods is absolute. Such *mestizo* method of translation is precisely what I attempted to achieve with **Contos da Cantuária**, as shall be seen.

Initially, Schleiermacher seems to consider both methods as equally appropriate, as long they are not combined; but further ahead in his essay, he clearly places his preference on the side of translations that *bring the reader to the author*. To understand fully Schleiermacher's theory, one should keep in mind that true translation, to him, should be an encounter between reader and author. The translator should find the best way to propitiate such meeting. Is it really possible to bring the author to the reader, creating the impression that the text was originally written in the target tongue (German, in this particular case)? Although Schleiermacher places this genre of rendition within the boundaries of translation (*überzetsen*), he treats it with skepticism. Naturalizing translations might be said to be an attempt to make "a Latin author speak as he would have spoken and written to German readers, if he were German", and to that end the translator places the author among the German readers and makes him their fellow creature[200]. By presenting the foreign work as the author would have written it if he were German, a translation of this kind

> dificilmente poderia ter outro critério de perfeição que não fosse o de poder assegurar que, se os leitores alemães em conjunto se deixassem transformar em conhecedores e contemporâneos do autor, a obra mesma teria chegado a ser para eles exatamente o mesmo que é agora a tradução, ao haver-se transformado o autor em alemão. Seguem este método, evidentemente, quantos utilizam a fórmula de que se deve traduzir um autor como ele mesmo haveria escrito em alemão.[201]

This endeavor, however, is doomed to fail, writes Schleiermacher, because there is an identity between thought and expression: it is impossible to separate an individual from his native tongue and expect him to have the same thoughts, in a different language[202]. Therefore, a translator can never know for sure what twists and turns the

[199] Ibid, p. 59
[200] Ibid, ibidem.
[201] Ibid, ibidem.
[202] Ibid, ibidem.

author's thought would have taken, and how he would have expressed those thoughts, if the author had been originally conditioned to think in a different language.[203]

> Mais ainda, pode-se dizer que a meta de traduzir tal como o autor mesmo teria escrito originalmente na língua da tradução não é apenas inatingível, senão que também é nula e vã em si mesma; pois, quem reconhece a força modeladora da língua e como ela se identifica com a singularidade do povo, tem que confessar que precisamente nos mais destacados é onde mais contribui a língua em configurar todo o seu saber e também a possibilidade de o expor, que, portanto, ninguém está unido a sua língua apenas mecânica e externamente como que por correias, e com a facilidade com que se solta uma parelha e atrela outra, também um pensamento alguém poderia à vontade atrelar a uma outra língua, senão que cada um produz originalmente apenas em sua língua materna e, portanto, nem sequer pode colocar-se a questão de como haveria escrito suas obras em outra língua.[204]

Bringing the reader to the author, however, follows a different logic: the translator in this case endeavors not to write as the author would have written in German, but to recreate, in German, the same impression that the *translator himself* had when reading the original work in the foreign language[205]. The translator, then, attempts to *imitate* his own understanding of the original tongue. However, not all understandings of a foreign language can be imitated correctly. Imagine – writes Schleiermacher – an individual whose knowledge of a foreign culture and language is so perfect that they become "vitally and ideologically" natural to him; or someone for whom all languages are equivalent and seem perfectly fit to his thoughts and actions; for this kind of person, the value of translation would be equal to zero[206].

> Com efeito, como em sua compreensão de obras estrangeiras já não se dá o menor influxo da língua materna e a consciência de sua compreensão não lhes chega de nenhum modo nesta língua, senão que a adquirem direta e espontaneamente na do original, tampouco sentem a menor incomensurabilidade entre seu pensamento e a língua em que lêem. Por isso, nenhuma tradução pode alcançar nem expor a compreensão que eles obtêm.[207]

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[203] Ibid, p. 79.
[204] Ibid, p. 81
[205] Ibid, p. 59
[206] Ibid p. 63
[207] Ibid, ibidem.

In other words, the translator should only attempt to imitate the impression of a foreign work upon someone who, albeit versed in the foreign language, still perceives it as foreign; someone for whom the sense of strangeness and otherness of a foreign work is not lost; someone for whom the difference between the source tongue and the target tongue is always kept in view:

> A tradução se ordena, pois, a um estado que se acha a meio caminho entre estes dois e o tradutor tem que se colocar como meta proporcionar ao seu leitor uma imagem e um prazer semelhantes aos que a leitura da obra na língua original busca o homem culto, a quem, no melhor sentido dessas palavras, costumamos chamar aficionado e entendido, que conhece suficientemente a língua estrangeira sem que deixe de lhe parecer estranha e já não necessita, como os alunos, repensar na língua materna cada parte antes de compreender o todo, mas, inclusive quando mais sem travas desfruta das belezas de uma obra, siga notando sempre a diferença entre a língua em que está escrita e a sua língua materna. [208]

The best way to do that, writes Schleiermacher, is to follow as closely as possible the twists and turns of the original, giving the readers the impression of facing something exotic inside their own language[209]. When the translator attempts to bring the author to the reader, the target language "has nothing to fear". The translator will follow the same rules that command original writings in that language, aiming at a style that will be perceived as natural and agile, so that the reader will never be threatened by toil and fatigue, but simply enjoy a text that might have been written by a "fellow creature"[210]. Schleiermacher's ideal translator, however, should renounce to all that; indeed, if strictly followed, Schleiermacher's preferred method could bring forth translations so difficult to read that some might find it easier to study the foreign language and read the original. To Schleiermacher, however, that circumstance would not be a failure, but a peculiar species of victory:

> Quem não deseja apresentar sempre sua língua materna com a beleza mais castiça que possa se dar em cada gênero? Quem não prefere engendrar filhos que mostrem genuinamente a linhagem paterna, ao invés de mestiços? Quem se aplicará com gosto a executar em público movimentos menos soltos e elegantes do que

[208] Ibid, p. 63
[209] Ibid, p. 69
[210] Ibid, p. 77

> sem dúvida poderia e, pelo menos às vezes, parecer rude e travado, a fim de parecer ao leitor bastante estranho para que este não perca de vista as circunstâncias? Quem admitirá de boa vontade que o considerem torpe, enquanto se esforça por conservar frente à língua estranha toda a proximidade que tolera à própria, e que se lhe censure como aos pais que entregam seus filhos a treinadores, porque, em vez de exercitar a sua língua materna em uma ginástica apropriada, trata de acostumá-la a contorções estranhas e anti-naturais? Quem, afinal, permitirá de bom grado que precisamente os mais entendidos e os melhores mestres lhe dediquem o sorriso mais compassivo e digam que não entenderiam seu trabalhoso e precipitado alemão sem recorrer ao latim e ao grego?[211]

By the end of his essay, Schleiermacher expresses the view – also present in other commentators – that "true translation" is the natural vocation of the German people, whereas other nations – specially the French! – cannot claim to have translated anything at all. Germany, muses Schleiermacher, has a natural openness towards the strange and the Other, and therefore the German language is destined to become the repository of all treasuries of science and art:

> Os antigos, evidentemente, traduziram pouco naquele sentido estrito, e também a maioria dos povos modernos, intimidados pelas dificuldades da verdadeira tradução, contentamse em geral com a imitação e a paráfrase. Quem pretenderá afirmar que alguma vez se traduziu algo para o francês seja das línguas antigas seja das germânicas? Mas, nós alemães, por mais atenção que se dê a este conselho, não o seguiríamos. Uma necessidade interna, na qual se expressa claramente uma vocação peculiar de nosso povo, nos impulsionou em massa para a tradução; não podemos retroceder e temos que seguir adiante. Do mesmo modo que, por acaso tivesse sido preciso trazer e cultivar aqui muitas plantas estrangeiras para que nosso solo se fizesse mais rico e fecundo, e nosso clima mais agradável e suave, assim também sentimos que nossa língua, porque nós mesmos, em razão do pesadume nórdico, a movimentamos pouco, apenas pode florescer e desenvolver-se plenamente sua própria força por meio dos mais variados contatos com o estrangeiro. E com isto vem coincidir, sem dúvida, o fato de que nosso povo, por sua atenção ao estrangeiro e por sua natureza mediadora, parece estar destinado a reunir em sua língua, junto com os próprios, todos os tesouros da ciência e da arte alheios, como em um grande conjunto histórico que se guarda no centro e coração da Europa para que, com a ajuda de nossa língua, qualquer um possa gozar, com a pureza e perfeição possível a um estranho, a beleza produzida pelos

[211] Ibid, p. 71

> tempos mais diversos. Esta parece ser, com efeito, a verdadeira finalidade histórica da tradução em grande escala, tal como se pratica entre nós.[212]

Schleiermacher and Dryden use different terminologies, but a connection can be established between their theories. According to Milton, Schleiermacher's foreignizing method of translation can be compared to Dryden's metaphrase, for the dissonant elements that the German advocates are precisely what the English poet condemns. Similarly, a translator who purports to bring the author to the reader will be forced to take several liberties in order to accomplish a pleasant translation, therefore his work belongs into what Dryden called paraphrase[213]. To Dryden, metaphrase is a kind of servitude, an endeavor unworthy a true poet, whereas Schleiermacher wishes translators to renounce any claim to aesthetic excellence within the literary norms of their own language and find a different kind of sublimity, piously accepting ugliness and abstruse ungraciousness as a necessary element in the task of imbuing one's language with the disquieting balm of otherness[214].

My own stance in this debate is that metaphrase is not the only path to strangeness, and that the *impression of original composition* is no impediment to bringing forth the Otherness within one's own language. The sense of foreignness that Schleiermacher advocates can be achieved even when the reader has the impression that the translation is an original work. Indeed, a careful combination of strangeness and familiarity can be more effectively disquieting than outright obscurity.

Walter Benjamin's seminal essay *The Translator's Task*, probably the most famous theoretic piece on translation in the 20th c., reworks many of Schleiermacher's ideas – although Benjamin, different from his predecessor, is not at all concerned with the translation's receiver: "No poem is meant for the reader, no picture for the beholder, no symphony for the audience". There is no point, argues Benjamin, for a translation to transmit the original's "message": meaning is unessential, and a bad translation is precisely an "inexact transmission of an inessential content"[215]. Benjamin's statement that translations should translate the form of the original, and not its content, would be later picked up by Haroldo de Campos in his own elaboration of the concept of transcreation;

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[212] Ibid, p. 98-99.
[213] MILTON, op. cit., p. 71
[214] Ibid, ibidem.
[215] BENJAMIN, Walter. The Translators Task (Translation). In: RENDALL, Steven. **TTR: traduction, terminologie, redaction**, vol. 10. n 2, 1997, p. 152.

at this point, however, I intend to point out how Benjamin deals with the topic of strangeness and familiarity in his essay. At the heart of Benjamin's text lies the idea that all languages are separated and yet connected, for all of them point in the same direction: pure language. That happens, writes Benjamin, because words in different languages have the same intention, but not the same "mode":

> Whereas all the particular elements of different languages – words, sentences, structures – are mutually exclusive, these languages complement each other in their intentions. To gain a precise understanding of this law of the philosophy of language, it is necessary to distinguish, within intention, the intended object from the mode of its intention. In "Brot" and "pain", the intended object is the same, but the mode of intention differs. It is because of their modes of intention that the two words signify something different to a German and to a Frenchman, that they are not regarded as interchangeable, and in fact seek to exclude one another; however, with respect to their intended object, taken absolutely, they signify one and the same thing. (...) In the individual, uncomplemented languages, the intended object is never encountered in relative independence, for instance in individual words or sentences, but is rather caught up in constant transformation, until it is able to emerge as pure language from the harmony of all these modes of intention. Until then it remains hidden in the various languages.[216]

To Benjamin, the aim of translation is the most intimate relationship among languages; the hidden relationship cannot be revealed or produced, but represented. However, how is the translator to represent this familiarity between languages? Why, he must do so, precisely, by marking out their mutual foreignness. By showing that languages are separated from each other, translation also shows all of them pointing to the same end, which is unattainable in History. Pure language has a messianic, cabalistic sense, just as "translatability" is understood by Benjamin not in exclusive connection to human beings, who might fail to respond to a work's translatability, but as a predicate that references to "a place where this demand would find a response, that is, a reference to a thought in the mind of God"[217]. Stressing the distance between languages is a way of representing them as fragments from the same whole:

> Just as fragments of a vessel, in order to be fitted together, must correspond to each other in the tiniest details but need not

[216] BENJAMIN, op. cit., p. 157
[217] Ibid, p. 152

> resemble each other, so translation, instead of making itself resemble the meaning of the original, must lovingly, and in detail, fashion in its own language a counterpart to the original's mode of intention, in order to make both of them recognizable as fragments of a vessel, as fragments of a greater language. For that very reason translation must in large measure turn its attention away from trying to communicate something, away from meaning; the original is essential to translation only insofar as it has already relieved the translator and his work of the burden and organization of what is communicated.[218]

The best way to achieve that goal, writes Benjamin, is to convey the syntax of the original word-for-word, as the word, and not the sentence, is the original element of translation[219]. Thus, quoting Rudolf Panwitz, Benjamin advocates that, instead of *germanizing* Indic or Greek, translation must *indicize* and *hellenize* German, allowing one's own language to be powerfully moved by the influx of the foreign tongue. Benjamin's stance is not a simple option for literalness over freedom, however; indeed, as Benjamin himself puts it, what he advocates is that literalness and freedom be united "as language and revelation must be united in the text"; but such freedom is freedom from the communication of meaning and must take the form of an interlinear translation[220]. The translator must also be delivered from the barriers of his own language, in order to point out its kinship with all foreign languages:

> (...) all communication, all meaning, and all intention arrive at a level where they are destined to be extinguished. And it is in fact on the basis of them that freedom in translation acquires a new and higher justification. Freedom does not gain its standing from the communication's meaning; it is precisely truth's task to emancipate freedom from meaning. Rather, freedom demonstrates in the translation's own language what it can contribute to the service of pure language. To set free in his own language the pure language spellbound in the foreign language, to liberate the language imprisoned in the work by rewriting it, is the translator's task. To this end he breaks through the rotten barriers of his own language (...)[221]

[218] Ibid, p. 161
[219] Ibid, p. 162
[220] Ibid, p. 165
[221] BENJAMIN, op. cit., p. 163

2.6 BALANCING STRANGENESS AND FAMILIARITY: CONSTRUCTING TRANSLATIONAL VERISIMILITUDE

As we have seen, Dryden and *Les Belles Infidèles* intended to make the foreign text familiar to the target readers, although Dryden, in his search for a *via media*, negotiated between latinizing the English language and anglicizing the Ancient text. Schleiermacher decreed that the best kind of translation is that which imitates the sense of foreignness felt by an educated non-native speaker when reading a work in a foreign language which he commands and yet does not sound totally natural in his ears. Benjamin reiterates some of Schleiermacher's ideas, but his cabalistic interest for pure language adds an element that I would like to stress once again: the sense of strangeness represented by translation points to the kinship of languages; showing the distance that separates them is a way of illuminating the possibility of their final encounter. In other words, *strangeness serves familiarity*.

When Haroldo de Campos, in *Da transcriação: poética e semiótica da operação tradutora,* compares his own theories to those of Benjamin, he makes a straight connection between his own concept of *transcriação* and Benjamin's idea about the translator's task. According to Campos, that which Benjamin calls the true finality of translation ("a expressão da mais íntima relação recíproca entre as línguas") can only be envisaged through transcreation (transcriação), understood as "uma redoação das formas significantes em convergência e tendendo à mútua complementação"[222]. Campos goes on to re-read Benjamin in an "operational" way, a re-reading that aims at divesting Benjamin's theory from its "sacral aura"[223]. Taking the conceptual game in *The Translator's Task* as a form of irony, Campos endeavors to locate a pragmatic physics within its rabbinical metaphysics, replacing Benjamin's messianic pure language for a "semiotic universal form", which can be actualized in different ways in each language and in each poem[224]. The unveiling of that semiotic form – operationally, not theologically – is then understood as the first instance in Campo's poetic transposition, or transcreation (Benjamin's *Umdichtung*)[225]. By de-sacralizing Benjamin's theory and

[222] CAMPOS, op. cit., p. 23
[223] Ibid, p. 25
[224] Ibid, p. 26
[225] Ibid, ibidem.

taking some of its aspects as a form of conceptual irony, Campos re-intreprets its central idea on the relationship between translation and pure language without adhering to Benjamin's advocation of literalism – which would, of course, render impossible Campos's own theory of transcreation.

The "transcreator", according to Campos, locates a semiotic stratum within a poem and *de-babelizes* it, that is to say, de-constructs it meta-linguistically, and then goes on to construct the translated text in parallel to the original. Campos calls that gesture a "reconvergência das divergências": Benjamin's idealized redemption of all languages within pure language, but now seen as a provisory operation happening within History, superseding the need of a messianic end[226]. Benjamin connects a work's translatability to the "value and dignity of its language": "(t)he higher the work's constitution, the more it remains translatable, in the very fleetingness of its contact with its meaning"[227]. Similarly, for Campos, a poem's *difficulty*, which might endow it with the appearance of something untranslatable, is precisely what makes it more apt to be creatively re-created:

> Então, para nós, tradução de textos criativos será sempre recriação, ou criação paralela, autônoma porém recíproca. Quanto mais inçado de dificuldades esse texto, mais recriável, mais sedutor enquanto possibilidade aberta de recriação. Numa tradução dessa natureza, não se traduz apenas o significado, traduz-se o próprio signo, ou seja, sua fisicalidade, sua materialidade mesma (propriedades sonoras, de imagética visual, enfim tudo aquilo que forma, segundo Charles Morris, a iconicidade do signo estético, entendido por "signo icônico" aquele "que é de certa maneira similar àquilo que ele denota"). O significado, o parâmetro semântico, será apenas e tão-somente a baliza demarcatória do lugar da empresa recriadora. Está-se pois no avesso da chamada tradução literal.[228]

The interplay of strangeness and familiarity can be read into the very core of Campos' theory of transcreation, as creative transposition first works out the disclosure of a stratum *common* to *different* languages, and then constructs a parallel text that is *autonomous*, but *reciprocal*, in relation to the original. The relation between strangeness and familiarity can also be found in Campos' commentaries on the works of pre-romantic Brazilian translator Manuel Odorico Mendes (1799-1864). According to Campos,

[226] Ibid, ibidem.
[227] Ibid, ibidem.
[228] Ibid, p. 34

Mendes was the first Brazilian to develop a coherent theory of translation – although Campos grants that his predecessor's practice was not *always* up to his own aesthetic project. Campos praises Mendes' idea of accommodating Homer's and Virgil's hexameters into Portuguese decassílabos, in his translations of the **Iliad**, the **Odyssey** and the **Aeneid**; and also Mendes strategy of making Portuguese equally or even more concise than Greek and Latin, by creating new, composite words to summarize the Homeric epithets. Just as Dryden introduced subtle references to Milton and Shakespeare in his own **Aeneid**, so did Odorico Mendes introduce even whole verses from Camões, Filinto Elísio and other vernacular writers into his translations of the classics.

On the one hand, Mendes' can be said to naturalize the text, or *make it familiar*, by choosing the staple meter of heroic poetry in Portuguese, the *decassílabo*, and interpolating passages from Portuguese poets into Homer and Virgil. On the other hand, he can be said to foreignize his own language, or *make it strange*, by contracting the syntax and creating new words, in other to mimic Latin and Greek. Mendes's *hellenizes* and *latinizes* Portuguese, but at the same time *lusitanizes* or even *brazilianizes* the Classics. According to Campos, Odorico Mendes

> (t)inha a teima do termo justo, seja para a reprodução de um matiz da água do mar, seja para a nomeação de uma peça de armadura. Suas notas aos cantos traduzidos dão uma ideia de seu cuidado em apanhar a vivência do texto homérico, para depois transpô-lo em português, dentro das coordenadas estéticas que elegera (...)[229]

In at least one occasion, the search for the translational *mot juste* would lead Mendes to the choice of a word with strong regional connotations. That is what happens in *Livro V*, when he chooses the word *jangada* to name Ulysses' boat:

> Cesse o pranto, infeliz, não te consuma
> Parte, consinto. Abate a bronze troncos
> De alto soalho ajeita ampla jangada.
> Em que o sombrio páramo atravesses:
> De pão de hei de prover e de água e vinho,
> De agasalhada roupas; auras favônias

[229] Ibid, p. 39.

> Te levarão seguro à terra cara,
> Se esta for dos Supremos a vontade,
> Que em saber e juízo me superam".
> E arrepiado, o herói: "Que teces, deusas?
> Numa jangada queres tu que eu tente
> As vagas horrendíssimas, difíceis
> Às mesmas de iguais bordos naus altivas,
> Do Etéreo aos sopros a exultar afeitas?
> Não farei tal, solene se não juras
> Que nenhum dano, ó deusa, me aparelhas.[230]

The *Caldas Aulete* dictionary gives three meanings to *jangada* – being the third one exclusively Brazilian:

> s. f. || armação feita de madeira e tábuas de um navio. para recolher a gente e o mais que se pode salvar em ocasião de naufrágio; balsa. || Construção em forma de grade de madeira, que é uma espécie de barco de transporte, sobre que multas vezes se assenta tabuado e se levanta um mastro com sua vela: Mandou fazer certas *jangadas* para passar nelas sua gente à ilha porquanto não tinha outros navios em que a passasse. (Castanheda. Hist. da índia , III, c. 16, p. 45, ed. rol.) || (Bras.) Embarcação dos pescadores nordestinos, de construção semelhante à anterior, mas feita em geral de cinco paus roliços, dois *bordos*, dois *meios* e o do centro ou *mimbura*, e com um mastro ou *boré*.

What interests me here – and what Haroldo de Campos stresses in his commentaries – is that, when Odorico Mendes chose the word *jangada*, he was avowedly thinking of the Brazilian acceptation. That is what the translator explains in one of the longest side-notes to his **Odisséia**:

> É notável que a descrição da jangada, assim aqui como mais adiante, case inteiramente com o que vemos hoje em dia. As que andam nas ondas de muitas províncias do Brasil têm o mesmo soalho de que fala Homero, com um banco alto onde os jangadeiros atam os cabos da vela. Este soalho ou tablado é um como tombadilho, mas não comparável aos dos navios; e eu o

[230] HOMERO. **Odisséia.** Tradução de Manuel Odorico Mendes. São Paulo: Ars Poetica, 1996, p. 128-129

> chamara *jirau*, nome da língua geral dos povos indígenas para significar o objeto, se não temesse a pecha de querer acaboclar a linguagem de Homero. Pobre tradutor do poeta, já me vi metido em uma jangada na costa do Ceará, a qual saía ao mar pela primeira vez e tinha uma vela descompassada; virou-se, e tive de perder entre as vagas chapéu, sapatos e meias: foi este um dos grandes perigos em que me tenho achado. A ninfa Ino certamente não me acudiu nem me emprestou a cintura da salvação, como fez a Ulisses; mas outra jangada, maior e melhor, veio em socorro nosso, e levou-me de pés descalços à bordo do brigue português *Aurora*, que me transportou ao Maranhão. Os velhos gostam de memorar as suas aventuras.[231]

Odorico Mendes' meditation on his own word-choice is a fascinating one. The origins of this lengthy note lie in the remarkable ("notável") realization that Ulysses' boat fits the description of the vessels used by fishermen in the Brazilian Nordeste. Odorico, however, resists the temptation of using the outright vernacular *jirau*, and opts for *jangada*, which can be read *as both Brazilian a non-Brazilian* (the word is rooted in the Malay *c^{h}anggā^{d}am* and the sanscript *sángga^{d}*)[232]. Therein lies one of the great challenges faced by creative translators: in the process of adapting a foreign work to one's own reality and culture, sometimes an excess of naturalization can produce, paradoxically, an excessive oddity. *O jirau de Ulisses* would have broken the text's balance by being *too much Brazilian*, whereas *o barco* or *a balsa de Ulisses* would make for an unremarkable verbal artifact, too vague and unspecific. Choosing *jangada*, Odorico Mendes takes a familiar word and *makes it slightly strange* by placing it under Odysseus's feet. The Brazilian Northeastern *jangada* is hellenized, but, in the very process of its hellenizing, the surrounding textual area is brazilianized: the Goddess' voice, the chopped tree trunks, Odysseus' reply, the shadowy depths of the sea and even the will of the Gods. The operation works both ways and a new linguistic territory is created: one in which *a jangada de Ulisses* is perfectly truth-like and aesthetically assertive. The *impression of original composition* has been reached, for sure, but it is an impression that strikes us as both familiar and strange. A sort of balance has been reached. That balance is what I shall call henceforth *translational verisimilitude*.

In *The Translator's Task*, Benjamin states that works of art have a life, and that the word "life" here should be taken with completely unmetaphorical objectivity: for

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[231] HOMERO, op. cit. p. 128
[232] HOUAISS, Antônio. **Dicionário Houaiss da Língua Portuguesa**. Rio de Janeiro: Objetiva, 2001.

life should not be attributed to organic corporeality alone, but to "everything that has a history"[233]. Reading Benjamin with Ricoeur's philosophy of translation in mind, one might say that the history of a work of art can be understood as a constant interplay between Otherness and Identity, for that which lives is constantly changing, and yet mysteriously remains the same. In the passage below, Benjamin treats translations as a renewed unfolding of the original's life, an unfolding that owes its existence to the very continuity of that life, which Benjamin calls "fame":

> The history of great works of art knows about their descent from their sources, their shaping in the age of the artists, and the periods of their basically eternal continuing life in later generations. Where it appears, the latter is called fame. Translations that are more than transmissions of a message are produced when a work, in its continuing life, has reached the age of its fame. Hence they do not so much serve the work's fame (as bad translators customarily claim) as owe their existence to it. In them the original's life achieves its constantly renewed, latest and most comprehensive unfolding. [234]

In my opinion, activating the interplay between strangeness and familiarity, in the relation between translation and original, and between the translated text and its readers, is a way of setting in motion the possibility of life that is always in potency within a great work of art, in the sense given above by Benjamin: life as an attribute of that which has a history. What lives has to change, for what does not change has no history; and as long as the self is *othered* in time, as long as the work becomes another while remaining the same, art's life is re-affirmed. The translator is no traitor when he makes the text a stranger to itself; on the contrary, he contributes to the renewal of the text's life as a creature of History.

Where I drift apart from Benjamin is in his adherence to line by line translation. The movement towards strangeness, which makes the translated text change and therefore live, can be accomplished in divers ways, and a measure of familiarity can contribute to this motion towards otherness: for, when we simultaneously recognize an artifact and know it to be alien to us, strangeness is transferred to ourselves, and the Self

[233] BENJAMIN, op. cit., p. 153
[234] BENJAMIN, op. cit., p. 154

meets the Other in a more intimate way than would happen in the realms of utter strangeness, impenetrable by any glimpse of identity. In my own method of translation, therefore, one might say that not only *strangeness serves familiarity*, but also *that familiarity serves strangeness*.

And thus we come back to Ricoeur's concept of linguistic hospitality, a twofold gesture, where we both welcome the stranger into our house, and dress our own words in the stranger's clothes. Linguistic hospitality, as stated earlier, calls us to forgo the idea of absolute translation as a perfect replica of the original; thus the translator renounces to omnipotence[235], but he can also be said to finally deliver himself from the servitude denounced by Cicero and Dryden. A translation is not the original; it might be said to be its unfolding, but an unfolding pregnant with its own possibilities of "life" as a work of art. The autonomy of translated texts is a consequence of the realization that the Other can be encountered, but not domesticated or reduced; for, in the very act of appropriating it, we ourselves are *othered*:

> [Linguistic hospitality] asks us to respect the fact that the semantic and syntactic fields of two languages are not the same, or exactly reducible the one to the other. Connotations, contexts and cultural characteristics will always exceed any slide rule of neat equations between tongues. (...) Translation is always *after Babel*. It is forever compelled to acknowledge the finite limits of language, the multiplicity of different tongues. To function authentically, therefore, the translator must renounce the dream of a return to some adamantine logos of pure correspondences. The attempt to retrieve a prelapsarian paradise of timeless signs is futile. (...) Words exist in time and space, and thus have a history of meanings which alter and evolve. All translation involves some aspect of dialogue between self and stranger. Dialogue means just that, *dia-legein*, welcoming the difference. (...) Both in its normal role as a transfer of meaning from one language to another and in its more specific role as a transfer of understanding between different members of the same linguistic community, translation entails an exposure to strangeness. We are dealing with both an alterity residing outside the home language and an alterity residing within it.[236]

[235] RICOEUR, op. cit., p. xvii.
[236] KEARNEY, op. cit., p. xviii

For Ricoeur, there is no possibility of self-understanding without the mediation of signs, symbols, narratives and texts: the question of human identity is never solved by a sovereign and solitary self, but demands a journey that takes the self through the vast fields of alterity and them brings it back home. The best way to selfhood is through otherness; and that journey is epitomized by translation[237].

From Ricoeur's linguistic hospitality, we can now come down to my own concept of translational verisimilitude, which ties the problem of strangeness and familiarity to the general question of verisimilitude in literature – what Roland Barthes called *l'effect du réel*. Verisimilitude or verisimilitude has been a topic of literary debate since Aristotle's *Poetics*. For Aristotle, "não é ofício do poeta narrar o que aconteceu; é, sim, o de representar o que poderia acontecer, quer dizer: o que é possível segundo a verossimilhança e a necessidade"[238], thus, "[o] impossível persuasivo é preferível ao possível não-persuasivo"[239]. If History deals with truth, Poetry deals with that which is truth-like; and verisimilitude is the quality of that which resembles truth – or, according to Lygia Militz da Costa, that which is made "probable" (*provável*) by the artistic concatenation of causes and effects[240]. Upon commenting of Aristotle's *Poetics*, Luiz da Costa Lima, in *Estruturalismo e teoria da literatura*, unfolded the concept of verisimilitude into two modes: *verossimilhança externa* (external verisimilitude) and *verossimilhança interna* (inner verisimilitude). The first level connects the text to its own external references in space and time, whereas the second refers to the structural organization of the text's verbal material[241]; in other words, inner verisimilitude is the quality of a text where all parts seem to belong to the same aesthetic whole and are tied together by an impression of inner coherence[242]. According to Lygia Militz da Costa, inner verisimilitude is the fundamental criterion in the effective establishment of mimesis in Aristotle's **Poetics**:

> a verossimilhança situa a mímese nas fronteiras ilimitadas do "possível": 1) o "possível", e não verdadeiro, como objeto temático da mímese; 2) o "possível", lógico, causal e necessário,

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[237] Ibid, p. xix.
[238] ARISTÓTELES. **Poética**. São Paulo: Abril Cultural, 1984, p. 43.
[239] COSTA, Lygia Militz da. **A poética de Aristóteles: Mímese e verossimilhança**. São Paulo: Ática, 2011, p. 43.
[240] Ibid, ibidem.
[241] Ibid, p. 54.
[242] AMARAL, Ana Carolina Bianco. De um mundo dos possíveis: as atuações da verossimilhança na teoria da literatura fantástica. **Revista Investigações**, v. 28, nº 1, Janeiro/2015, p. 6.

> como modo de arranjo interno, solidário, das ações do mito (...)[243].

By translational verisimilitude, I mean the impression that all parts of a translation belong to the same whole, and that this whole is commanded by an aesthetic rationale; that effect is achieved by balancing the elements of strangeness and familiarity, simultaneously making the strange familiar, and the familiar strange. In order to make my own concept of translational verisimilitude clearer, I would like to recall some of Costa Lima's considerations on literary mimesis. When Aristotle states the superiority of poetry over History, writes Lima, the Greek philosopher is implicitly stressing the power of mimesis, which presupposes two ways of reflecting human praxis: on the one side, the description of events that marked "the social face of time"; on the other side, "poetical mythos"[244]. Mimesis, however, has been subjected to a "deforming tradition" that associates it with imitation and mirroring[245]: in the 16th c., for instance, humanists have translated "mimesis" as *imitatio*, thus effacing the element of *difference* that Lima identifies in the Classic usage of the word. According to Lima, mimesis was characterized by the conjunction of two "semas": similarity and difference towards the referent, "simultaneously actualized by the performer of mimesis"[246]. Therefore mimesis can be initially understood as a relation between similarity and difference toward physis, wherein the second term – difference – receives a secondary treatment; but Lima also thinks it possible to make a reverse reading, stressing the "difference" element; thus, the estrangement (ostranenie) described by e Russian formalists points to an "acknowledgement of difference, although still within a reading that privileges the syntagmatic element"[247]. Translational verisimilitude might also be understood as a relation between similarity and difference – a twofold relation: similarity and difference towards the "original" and also towards the target language's cultural and linguistic context. That relation stems from the aesthetic rationale and creates its own signification.

The idea of translational verisimilitude lies at the root, of my translation of **The Canterbury Tales**. In **Contos da Cantuária**, I aimed at making Chaucer readable, but not perfunctorily Brazilian. From the start, I kept in mind that I was translating

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[243] COSTA, op. cit., p. 100.
[244] COSTA LIMA, Luiz. **Mímesis e Modernidade**: Formas das Sombras. Rio de Janeiro: Graal, 1980, p. 229
[245] Ibid, ibidem.
[246] Ibid, p. 230
[247] Ibid, p. 231.

fiction; I had to create a believable fictional universe, in which the reader could dive in and experience what Coleridge describes as a "momentary suspension of disbelief." Bringing Chaucer closer to non-expert readers, therefore, didn't mean neutralizing the strangeness of the **Tales**. I neither intended to water the **Tales** down, nor make them hermetical. I wanted readers to feel the Other in the Self, and the Self in the Other. I did not want the readers to feel they were reading a story set in Brazil because that would represent a rupture in verisimilitude. My intention was not to subdue Chaucer's medieval strangeness; on the contrary, I wanted, so to speak, to "medievalize" some portions of Brazilian culture, and, at the same time, brazilianize some elements of the European Middle Ages, thus creating a fictional world in which the two spheres (Chaucer's world and my own) would contaminate and transform each other, creating something new. Thus, my approach to translation can be seen as a form of world-building: translation presents its own world, a linguistically built world, where the Self and the Other not only meet, but reshape each other. Neither take the reader to the author, neither take the author to the reader: instead, take reader and author to the translation's world. In **Contos da Cantuária**, I endeavored to reach that balance between strangeness and familiarity through several procedures, among which the most important ones shall be discussed in the next Chapter: the blending of regionalist and universal registers, of scholarly and popular sources, which informed rhyme, meter, and vocabulary choices.

2.7 TRADUTTORE, TRADITTORE: BUT WAS NOT TREASON A MATTER OF DATES?

The translational strategies described in Chapter 2 and 3 stem from one momentous decision, taken at the onset with my work with Chaucer's masterpiece: I did not want to make a translation that would interest only the expert medievalist or the literary historian; I wanted to create a work of art that could resonate broadly and deeply within my own culture, reaching non-expert readers as well as trained scholars. In other words, I was aiming at *fluency* and *readability*, two concepts that have been much maligned by translation theorists. Before proceeding, I would like to tackle some of the criticisms against "fluent" translations in general and therefore justify my decision to make Chaucer's poem readable to my audience.

As we have seen in prior pages, Lawrence Venutti remarked that Augustan translators aimed at making the foreign "recognizable, even splendidly English".[248] From a certain point of view, one might argue that my translation is indeed an example of domestication or appropriation: after all, as we shall see on the following pages, I have indeed endeavored *to make the foreign recognizable, and even splendidly Brazilian*, and have not only tried *to produce the illusion of original composition*, but have actually worked on the assumption that a poetic translation *must be* an original composition by its own merit, if it wants to be rightfully called "poetic" at all.

A powerful criticism of appropriating and naturalizing translations can also be found in Antoine Berman's **Tradução e a Letra, ou o Albergue do Longínquo**[249]. According to Berman, translation in the West has been characterized by three main elements – ethnocentrism, hypertextuality and Platonism[250].

> Etnocêntrico significará aqui: que traz tudo à sua própria cultura, às suas normas e valores, e considera o que se encontra fora dela — o Estrangeiro — como negativo ou, no máximo, bom para ser anexado, adaptado, para aumentar a riqueza desta cultura. (...) Hipertextual remete a qualquer texto gerado por imitação, paródia, pastiche, adaptação, plágio, ou qualquer outra espécie de transformação formal, a partir de um outro texto já existente. Foi um poeta francês do século XVIII, Colardeau (Apud Van Der Meerschen, 1986: 68), quem deu a mais ingênua e a mais marcante definição da tradução etnocêntrica: Se há algum mérito em traduzir, só pode ser de aperfeiçoar, se possível, seu original, de embelezá-lo, de apropriar-se dele, de lhe dar um ar nacional e de naturalizar, de certa forma, esta planta estrangeira. [251]

According to Berman, ethnocentric translation originated in Rome. The massive translation of Greek texts, writes Berman, was the basis of Roman culture, and that translating enterprise took the form of a systematic "annexation" of text, forms and terms, all of which were Latinized, in a process that Berman likens to pillaging[252]. Berman condemns the "syncretism" of the Roman tradition, whose "theorists" were Cicero and

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[248] VENUTTI, Lawrence. Neoclassicism and Enlightenment. in: FRANCE, Peter (ed.). **The Oxford Guide to Literature in English Translation**. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000. p. 55.
249 BERMAN, Antoine. **A Tradução e a Letra, ou o Albergue do Longínquo**. 2.ª ed. Florianópolis: PGET/UFSC, 2013.
[250] BERMAN, op. cit.. p. 21
[251] Ibid, p. 40.
[252] Ibid, p.42 and 43.

Horace[253]. That “annexing” tradition would engender an “impressive” amount of translations throughout the centuries, *Les Belles Infidèles* being one of the most extreme examples, but not the only, neither the last one[254]. According to Berman, it is to ethnocentric and hypertextual translation – i.e. to most translations made in the West – that the adage “traduttore traditore” is rightly applied[255].

One of the relatively few translators that Berman praises in his book is Vladimir Nabokov – another famous critic of readability as a translation element, and a quite formidable one at that. In the 1963 Foreword to his translation of Aleksandr Puchkin's **Eugene Oneguin**, Nabokov defends his "literalist" method of translation against what he derisively calls "stylishness":

> I have always been amused by the stereotyped compliment that a reviewer pays the author of a "new translation". He says: "It reads smoothly". In other words, the hack who has never read the original, and does not know its language, praises an imitation as readable because easy platitudes have replaced in it the intricacies of which he is unaware. "Readable" indeed! A schoolboy's boner mocks the ancient masterpiece less than does its commercial poetization, and it is when the translator sets out to render the "spirit", and not the mere sense of the text, that he begins to traduce his author.[256]

First, it should be noted that Nabokov in a way rearranges the old debate with new vocabulary. Whereas *sensus de sensu* is generally regarded as the opposite of literal translations, Nabokov links literalness to the rendering of “mere sense”. Why, the conundrum is only superficially confusing. By “mere sense”, Nabokov refers to the meaning of each word, or the meaning of each statement, whereas “spirit” – as it becomes clear further ahead in his Foreword – is the relationship between meaning and form[257]. Nabokov demands translators to forget all about form and translate only the meaning (of each word, of each sentence). Trying to render spirit, instead of sense, is the mark of unfaithful translators; and the only way to render sense, Nabokov goes on, is to sacrifice "to completeness of meaning every formal element”[258]. Therefore, Nabokov is on the side

[253] Ibid, p. 42
[254] Ibid, p. 39.
[255] Ibid, p. 39.
[256] NABOKOV, Vladimir. Foreword. In: PUSHKIN, Aleksandr. **Eugene Oneguin**. New Jersey: Princeton University Press. 1990, p. ix.
[257] Ibid, ibidem.
[258] NABOKOV, op. cit., p. x.

of literalness as the only way to translate a text without betraying it, opposing any attempt to recreate form in the target tongue.

How should a translation such as **Contos da Cantuária** be defended against the hypothetical accusation of *traducing*, instead of translating, its author? For not only have I tried to translate or recreate form; I have also endeavored to make it in a readable way. Am I not, by doing so, sacrificing what Nabokov calls "sense"? The answer, for me, is very clear: it is my firm belief that, in a poetic work, or in a prose work that is equivalent to poetry in terms of complexity, form is indeed part of the artistic meaning and, therefore, "spirit" is part of sense.

As a practical illustration of how this idea operates within a text, I will borrow an example from Amorim de Carvalho's **Tratado de Versificação Portuguesa**[259]. In the chapter *A Rima*, Carvalho argues:

> Por si só, a rima tem efeito ou empresta efeito de sugestão estética. Estes versos de Fernando Pessoa, já cansados à força de serem citados:
>
> *Valeu a pena? Tudo vale a pena*
> *se a alma não é pequena.*
>
> o que têm de especialmente aliciante é o efeito da rima. Sem ela, por exemplo:
>
> *Tudo vale o sacrifício*
> *se a alma não é pequena;*
>
> ou:
>
> *Tudo vale a pena*
> *quando a alma é grande*
>
> perderia tanto a força sugestiva quanto ganharia, precisamente, a ideia oposta que fosse rimada por um poeta de tão negador pessimismo como o do Eclesiastes, da "vaidade das vaidades":
>
> *Para uma alma sôfrega e pequena,*
> *Tudo lhe vale apena.*[260]

If formal elements, like rhyme and rhythm, are part of "sense", then a complete sacrifice of form is indeed a sure way of *not* translating its meaning; or of translating a

[259] CARVALHO, Amorim. **Tratado de Versificação Portuguesa**. Lisboa:Portugália, 1965, p. 77.
[260] CARVALHO, op. cit. p. 78.

specific part of meaning, at the same time sacrificing everything else. The aforesaid shouldn't be taken, of course, as an attack on free-verse translations. Indeed, Ezra Pound's translations of the classics in free-verse, as in *Homage to Sextus Propertius*, were essential to the establishment of the translation philosophy that I now spouse: as a translator I *experiment* in metre and in rhymed verse, just as Pound did in blank verses sometimes with no obvious metre at all. In my opinion, therefore, it is perfectly possible to translate effectively a rhymed poem in unrhymed verse or even in prose, as long as the absence of a given formal element is compensated by another in the target tongue. What I oppose here is not any specific way of translating, but the illusion that sacrificing form is a way of being faithful to the original's sense.

When the word "faithfulness" comes into any discussion on literary translation, it's impossible not to remember the closing paragraphs of Borges' classic essay *Las versiones homéricas*. In that text, originally published in **Otras Inquisiciones**, Borges discusses several translations of the same excerpt from the **Odyssey** into English: Buckley's version has a sober literality; Butcher's and Lang's also seem literal, but in a more "archaizing" way; Cowper's is "Miltonic" and "innocuous"; Pope's is full of "speech and spectacle" and magnifies every detail in a "luxuriant dialect" similar to Góngora's poetic diction; Chapman's is also grand and fiery, but more "lyrical" than rhetorical; and Butler's, finally, "shows a resolve to avoid all visual opportunities and to solve Homer's text in a series of serene statements". Thanks to his "opportune ignorance of the Greek language", the **Odyssey** is for Borges "an international library of works in prose and verse"; in other words, he considers and analyzes each fragment *as an original composition*. As for the relative faithfulness of each version, this is what Borges has to say, in one of the most quotable paragraphs ever written on the art of translation:

> ¿Cuál de esas muchas traducciones es fiel?, querrá saber tal vez mi lector. Repito que ninguna o que todas. Si la fidelidad tiene que ser a las imaginaciones de Homero, a los irrecuperables hombres y días que él se representó, ninguna puede serlo para nosotros; todas, para un griego del siglo diez. Si a los propósitos que tuvo, cualquiera de las muchas que trascribí, salvo las literales, que sacan toda su virtud del contraste con hábitos presentes. No es imposible que la versión calmosa de Butler sea la más fiel.[261]

[261] BORGES, Jorge Luis. **Obras Completas**. Buenos Aires: Emecé, 1954, p. 112.

Borgesian irony is at full play here, of course; but to each rhetorical tirade, there is attached a discernible truth - *discernible*, I mean, in relation to the actual practice of translation. *From where we stand*, no version can be fully faithful to Homer's imaginations and "the men and days" he depicted, for all those things are - according to Borges - lost to us. On the other hand, *for an Ancient Greek*, who might have known what kinds of "days and men" Homer was singing about, and who might have shared some of Homer's imaginings, any version might be faithful - in the same way that a far-off, fuzzy recollection might guard some resemblance to the real thing. Treason, therefore, as Alexandre Dumas once put it, is a matter of dates.

When it comes to Homer's *intentions*, the most literal version is the least likely to have any trace of the aforementioned faithfulness: they seem literal to us, because we contrast them to our own modern world; if retranslated into Greek, they might seem exotic to a contemporary of Homer. There are too many *ifs* and *mights* here, of course, but such is the lay of the land when it comes to Borges' literary philosophy: the most elegantly curvaceous circumlocution often bends around a rather pragmatic idea. In this case, what Borges means is maybe what many translators know from practice: if we accept the idea that meaning and sense can be rendered in some way from one language to another, still absolute faithfulness would be logically impossible, even in seemingly literal translations; *relative faithfulness*, or *negotiated faithfulness*, however, is always possible and might come in a variety of ways. Borges' favorite version is clearly that of Pope - the same translation that caused Richard Bentley to remark: "a very pretty poem, Mr. Pope, but you must not call it Homer"[262]. A likely Borgesian retort to that might be: it depends on how luxuriant and magnificent Homer's "speech and spectacle" seemed to the Greeks of the 10th c. B.C.

In other words, *sometimes form must be sacrificed in other to be saved, and meaning must be altered to be effectively rendered*.

In **El factor Borges**, Alan Pauls shows how Borges' ideas about translation are connected to Borges' literary obsessions in general. According to Pauls, Borges' fiction abounds in "subaltern characters" – such as translators, interpreters, annotators, librarians...– who follow on the steps of "more luminous characters". Pierre Menard is the greatest example of that type of "parasite-writer"[263]. A central dimension in Borges' works is the situation in which a writer comes "too late" into the literary History – that is,

[262] ALEXANDER, Michael. Ezra Pound as translator. **Translation and Literature**, vol. 6, no. 1, 1997.
[263] Ibid, p. 25.

a writer writing "in second hand", reading, introducing or writing about another writer, who is then presented as the original[264]. In Borges' literary politics, "the original is always the other"[265]. Translating, then, could be seen as the culmination of a parasite structure: there is an author who is an artist, and a translator who is a sub-artist; there is a work and a language seen as "original", and another work and another language seen as secondary[266]. However, although Borges seems to celebrate and relish the parasite structure, what he is actually doing – as a fiction writer, as an essayist, and also as a translator – is to disturb or even to abolish that same structure. Borges, adds Pauls, had grown up completely bilingual, as Spanish and English were given the same status within his family. Borges' bilingual childhood engendered and "expatriate writer", who did not belong in any of the languages he grew up with[267]. The effacement of the difference between mother tongue and second tongue may have influenced Borges' depiction of translation: for Borges' translators – the translators in his own stories, but also the translators he read and admired – were "disrespectful", "arbitrary", 'impertinent", putting into question the terms of the parasite structure – who is the original, and who is the copy? – as well as the pertinence of the very structure[268].

> Borges define una verdadera ética de la subordinación en esa galería de criaturas anónimas, centinelas que custodian día y noche vidas, destinos y sentidos ajenos, condenados a una fidelidad esclava o, en el mejor de los casos, al milagro de una traición redentora. (...) Aboliendo distinciones y jerarquías (lengua materna / lengua de cultura, original / versión, lengua primera / lengua segunda), la experiencia del bilingüismo despeja en Borges el camino para la formación de una nueva especie de parásitos: traductores infieles, comentaristas que distraen, prologuistas digresivos, anotadores olvidadizos, antólogos arrogantes. No es que dejen de vampirizar el organismo al que viven adheridos; más bien llevan la vampirización hasta sus últimas consecuencias, hasta que, embriagados de sangre ajena, traicionan la condición de su especie y producen algo nuevo.[269]

When the hierarchy between original and copy is abolished, what was once seen as treason becomes a form of redemption and the possibility of creating something new – also, translation can then be seen as an original composition, but an original whose

[264] PAULS, Alan. **El factor Borges.** Barcelona: Editorial Anagrama, 2007, p. 105.
[265] Ibid, ibidem.
[266] Ibid, p. 106.
[267] Ibid, ibidem.
[268] Ibid, p. 107.
[269] Ibid, p. 106-107.

existence “feeds” as a vampire on the blood of another composition. We shall come back to the idea of translation as a form of “vampirización” in Chapter 4.

As for the idea of appropriation or domestication, and how it relates to my own work as a translator, I couldn't express it better than Peter France in his essay on *Translation Studies and Translation Criticism*. Commenting on the notion that a translation can be party to the appropriation of cultures within a colonial or imperialistic order, he argues:

> Clearly, in such political judgments, it all depends on who is translating whom. A domesticating policy may be condemned when practiced by colonizers, but a similarly target-oriented policy may, from a similar political standpoint, be advocated as an act of resistance by less powerful cultures, when they appropriate for their own use the culture of the powerful. Such, roughly speaking, is the notion of "cannibalism" advocated by certain South American translators, and related in its turn to Derridean notions of translation as transformation (...).
> It would be too crude, however, to line such inventive theoretical explorations on either side of a simple adequacy/acceptability divide. The critique of colonialist assimilation is a different thing from the notion of respect to the other, and the advocates of a strong, "cannibalistic" translation practice are not saying the same thing as 18th-c. champions of fluency. The issues raised here go beyond the search for criteria for the evaluation of translations; they hint rather at the possibility of positive "rewriting" practices in which neither fluency nor accuracy are any longer the writer's or the reader's concern.[270]

So, if we are to pursue France’s reasoning, treason would seem to be not only a matter of dates, but also a matter of places. However, even if we are thinking outside the frame of a colonial power structure, I agree with France when he writes that any translation, even the most “respectful”, is a kind of appropriation, and refusing to *appropriate* in any away is therefore tantamount to giving up translation altogether [271]. If all translations appropriate, the central question shifts from the fluency/accuracy divide unto a different set of decision making questions: what to translate; how to change, appropriate or rework what is being translated; what *kind* of relationships to establish, openly or not, with the originating text and the literary tradition of the target culture; and, consequently, what sort of effect to pursue over the target readership.

There is still another point to be made about the idea of appropriation. As it is generally understood, the act of culturally appropriating a text is associated with *bringing it to the reader*, and, therefore, reducing or annihilating its strangeness, its foreignness. In

[270] FRANCE, Peter. Translation Studies and Translation Criticism. in: FRANCE, op. cit., p. 10.
[271] Ibid, p. 9-10.

other words, the act of creating a form of readability within a translation is often associated with the establishment of an *absolute familiarity* and with the erasure of all traces of Otherness within the text. As we have already seen on Chapter I, however, I don't think it must always be the case. When Dryden and *les Belles Infidèles* omit sexual and moral details in order to offer a less scandalous reading hour to their public, or when they make Alexander more thoughtful or Greek generals more chivalrous than Plutarch and Tacitus had made them, they are indeed sacrificing Otherness for the sake of unperturbed, self-righteous readability. It does not follow, however, that every form of *readability* must perforce be reducible to *a complete absence of foreignness*, or *an absolute familiarity*. *On the one hand,* one might argue that much has happened and much has changed in the literary world since the days when readers carried "their snuff-boxes and wrote tragedies in five acts ", as Borges once put it[272]: Freud's reflections on the unconscious and the *Uncheimliche*; Poe's now canonical short stories that plunge the reader into the alienating character of all human experience; the aesthetic musings of Borges himself on the shifting nature of originality, aesthetic perceptions and cultural identities - together with the works of many other thinkers and artists, have made it impossible to write creatively or think critically without the notion *that the Other is in the Self, and the Self is in the Other*. On the other hand, one might also argue that some element of foreignness is, and has always been present in the "aesthetic fact", even when that presence is not openly admitted as such.

Therefore, we might now qualify the statement that *I intended to make the Tales splendidly Brazilian*. For, reversely and simultaneously, *I also intended to make Brazil splendidly Chaucerian*. On the following pages, I shall explain how I endeavored to effect this *quid pro quod*.

[272] BORGES, Jorge Luis. Los traductores de las mil y una noches. In BORGES, op. cit.. p. 101.

3. "CONTOS DA CANTUÁRIA": THE METHOD

3.1 CHAUCER'S WORLD AND WORK: A BRIEF INTRODUCTION

Geoffrey Chaucer was born in the early 1340s in a well-to-do family of vintners and civil servants that lived for several generations in Ipswich[273]. Chaucer's paternal grandparents settled in London, and his father, John Chaucer, besides working as a prosperous wine merchant, also served King Edward III as deputy chief butler[274]. Because Geoffrey Chaucer had a long career in the civil service, much of his life can be traced in the records of his offices[275]. In 1357, he was appointed to the household of Elizabeth, Countess of Ulster, and her husband Prince Lionel, where he probably served as a page in his early teens[276]. It appears Chaucer followed Lionel to France, during King Edward's military campaign in that country, in 1359-60. He was captured by the French near Reims and held some months in captivity, but the king himself contributed £16 to his ransom, and he was released[277]. In 1366, he married rather advantageously to Philippa de Roet, damoiselle of the queen and sister of Katherine Swynford – who would become mistress and, eventually, second wife to John of Gaunt, one of the richest and most influent men in England[278]. In 1367, Chaucer is first recorded as a member of the royal household: he was listed as a *valettus* to King Edward III and later as an *esquier*[279]. In that capacity, he would be required to travel through England and occasionally overseas on the king's business, sometimes performing military service[280].

Chaucer remained in the royal household until 1374 and, during this period, he may have been studying Law in the Inns of Court, as a 1598 edition of his works mentions an Inner Temple record of Chaucer being fined 12 shillings for "beatinge a Franciscane Fryer" in Fleet Street[281]. Chaucer's first major poem was written during his time in the royal household: in 1368 he wrote **The Book of the Duchess**, an elegy for the

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[273] CROW, Martin M.; LELAND, Virginia E. Chaucer's Life. in: BENSON, Larry (ed.). **The Riverside Chaucer**. Michigan: Houghton Mifflin, 1986, p. XV.
[274] STROHM, Paul. The Social and Literary Scene in England. in: BOITANI, Peter; MANN, Jill (eds.). **The Cambridge Companion to Chaucer**. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003, p.1.
[275] CROW; LELAND, op. cit., p. XV.
[276] STROHM, op. cit., p. 1.
[277] CROW; LELAND, op. cit., p. XVII.
[278] STROHM, op, cit. p. 2.
[279] STROHM, op, cit. p. 3.
[280] CROW; LELAND, op. cit., p. XVIII
[281] Ibid, ibidem.

recently-deceased Blanche, Duchess of Lancaster and first wife to John of Gaunt. Some years later (1374), John of Gaunt granted a life annuity to Chaucer and his wife, "in consideration of the services rendered by Chaucer to the grantor", and by Philippa "to the grantor's late mother and his consort"[282].

In Chaucer's time, nobles and clerics traveled widely across Europe, using French in matters of power and administration, and Latin in matters of the Church[283]. The French used in London and in the court was the "international" variety, while people elsewhere in England used a dialect of French, called Anglo-Norman[284]. Chaucer not only drew deeply from the powerful production of medieval writing in French, but also participated in a continental literary culture strongly influenced by French works[285]. One of the most famous literary works written in French in the Middle Ages was *Le Roman de la Rose*, a book on "the Art of Love" ("l'art d'Amors")[286], which recounts the vision of a Lover/Dreamer who wanders across the Garden of Delights meeting the images of vices such as Hate and Sadness, but also personifications of Beauté, Largesse and Courtoisie. He tries to pick the mysterious Rose from the Fountain of Narcissus, but is wounded by the God of Love[287]. Chaucer rendered the first part of the *Roman* into English – the initial section written by Guillaume de Loire[288] –, but it remains uncertain if the surviving Middle English translation is partly or wholly Chaucer's work. I any case, the "polylingual" nature of England's society in the 14th-c. might explain Chaucer's lifelong infatuation with the very idea of translation. As Barrington notes:

> If we turn back to fourteenth-century London, it makes perfect sense why translation so intrigued him. The messy linguistic situation in late medieval England forms the backdrop to Chaucer's own orientation. In simple terms, fourteenth-century England was trilingual, with forms of English, French, and Latin cohabiting the island and exerting exclusive authority in different domains: French dominated the courts of law and politics; Latin the church and schools; and English the private arenas of everyday life. A trilingual writer such as Chaucer would have moved among these various spheres, using the right language as necessary. But these simple terms and simple tripartite divisions

[282] Ibid, ibidem.
[283] BOITANI; MANN, op. cit., p. 21.
[284] Ibid, ibidem.
[285] Ibid, p. 20.
[286] Ibid, p. 30.
[287] Ibid, ibidem..
[288] Ibid, p. 25.

> may be too simple (...). In late medieval England, the linguistic boundaries among the languages – especially between the two vernaculars, French and English – were much fuzzier than our simple model suggests. More likely, vernacular bilinguals moved effortlessly between English and French, constantly blurring the borderlines; then or now, classifying a word or locution as "French or "English" could be a vain pursuit. (...) In Chaucer's lifetime, England was a polylingual stew, with words from one language infusing other languages. Translation would have been a natural state for him. [289]

Also during his years in the royal household, Chaucer made several journeys abroad, including a commission in Italy in 1372-1373, to negotiate on the king's behalf with the doge of Genoa[290]. According to Chaucer's expense account, he also visited Florence while treating of the affairs of the king[291]. As Petrarch and Boccaccio were then living in that region, Chaucer may have met them[292]. He also may have heard a lot about Dante, who had died in exile fifty years earlier, but whose memory was now celebrated in Florence. In 1373, thanks to the energetic lobby of Boccaccio, Florentine civic authorities allowed a commemoration of the poet they had exiled seventy years before. That commemoration took the form of a series of lectures delivered by Boccaccio at the Church of Santo Stefano di Badia some months after Chaucer returned to England[293]. During his visit to Italy, Chaucer quite possibly heard about all those developments, and may also have obtained manuscripts of Dante's, Boccaccio's and Petrarch's works[294]. Chaucer would return to Italy in 1378 to make secret negotiations with Bernabò Visconti, lord of Milan[295]. It's possible that Chaucer already spoke Italian before his first visit, as many Italian merchants lived with their families in London – some in Vintry Ward, where Chaucer's parents had a property[296].

In the year following his journey to Italy, Chaucer left the royal precincts and took the post of controller of customs in London, thanks to the king's appointment. He performed his duties with "unremitting labor and diligence" while also pursuing his

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[289] BARRINGTON, op. cit., p. 3-4.
[290] CROW; LELAND, op. cit., p. XIX.
[291] Ibid, ibidem.
[292] Ibid, ibidem.
[293] BOITANI, Peter. MANN, Jill (ed.). Op. cit. p. 39.
[294] CROW; LELAND, op. cit., p. XIX.
[295] CROW; LELAND, op. cit. p. XXI.
[296] Ibid, p. XV.

literary interests[297]. In **The House of Fame** (written around 1378-80), the Eagle chides the poet for withdrawing from worldly affairs into the joys of reading:

> For when thy labour doon al ys,
> And hast mad alle thy rekenynges,
> In stede of reste and newe thynges,
> Thou goost hom to thy hous anoon,
> And, also domb as any stoon,
> Thou sittest at another book
> Tyl fully daswed ys thy look . . . (652–8)

During his years as controller of customs, Chaucer is believed to have being writing not only **The House of Fame** but also two other major poems, **The Parliament of Fowls** and **Troilus and Cryseide**, and parts of **The Legend of Good Women**. Even in that very busy period in his life, he also managed to translate the **Consolation of Philosophy** of Boethius[298]. A formidable reader, capable of memorizing much of what he read, Chaucer became a scholar in several sciences of his age, such as astronomy and medicine. Among Ancient writers, he apparently had a preference for Virgil, Statius, Seneca, Cicero and Ovid, whose **Metamorphoses** was Chaucer's favorite classical source[299].

Chaucer earned new posts and assignments after the accession of Richard II in 1377 – he served as justice of peace and as a member of the 1386 parliament. Tensions arose between Richard and the Lancastrians – John of Gaunt's son, Henry, took part in a coalition of aristocrats that challenged Richard's power from 1386 to 1389. Yet, Chaucer managed to remain in good terms with both sides[300]. During that period, however, he partly withdrew from his activities in London, and had leisure enough to work on several parts of **The Canterbury Tales**, including **The General Prologue**[301]. Later he was appointed "clerk of the king's works" by Richard, who also granted him an annuity of twenty marks. In 1399, John of Gaunt's son supplanted Richard II and rose to the throne as Henry IV. The new king confirmed Richard's annuity to Chaucer and added another of

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[297] Ibid, p. XX.
[298] Ibid, p. XXI.
[299] Ibid, p. XVII.
[300] STROHM, op. cit., p. 4.
[301] CROW; LELAND, op. cit., p. XXIV.

his own. Thus, Chaucer's career in the civil service successfully bridged the reigns of three monarchs, surviving violent factional outbursts[302].

In 1399, Chaucer took a lease of a house near the Lady Chapel Church in Westminster Abbey, where he lived until his death. As a tenant of the Abbey and a member of the parish, he had the right to be buried there. His tomb in Westminster has an inscription giving the date of his death as 25 October 1400. At that time, Chaucer was not yet considered "the father" of English poetry, so no one could have imagined that his tomb would start the lasting tradition of Poet's Corner[303].

It's not known when Chaucer begun writing **The Canterbury Tales**. The composition certainly extended over many years, and some of the Tales were written before Chaucer had the idea of creating a coherent whole of short narratives[304]. **The Knight's Tale** is considered the earliest part of the book. At some point in the 1380s, Chaucer had the idea of using a pilgrimage as the framework for his stories. In Chaucer's time, the framework device was already well-known, being used by John Gower in **Confessio Amantis** (completed in 1390) and by Boccaccio in the **Decameron**[305]. Although there is no evidence that Chaucer read the **Decameron**, he certainly knew and admired some of Boccaccio's works, and might have taken some suggestions from the **Decameron** indirectly[306]. There are, however, great differences between Boccaccio's and Chaucer's use of the framework device. In the **Decameron**, a group of wealthy ladies and gentlemen journey through the Italian countryside, attended by their servants, in order to escape the plague, and amuse themselves telling stories. Although there is a lot of variety in the stories themselves, they are all told by aristocrats of the same age and position. Chaucer's pilgrims, on the other hand, are a "sondry folk", coming from widely varied social levels, with different occupations and backgrounds. They are gathered by chance at the Tabard inn, in Southwark, and their Host, Harry Bailly, suggests that each pilgrim tell a tale on their way to Canterbury, and two additional tales on their way back. Bailly will accompany the pilgrims in order to judge their tales, and the winner shall be granted a banquet at the Tabard, at the expenses of all the others. As they tell their tales, the pilgrims squabble, contend, interrupt each other, comment on what has already been told,

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[302] STROHM, op. cit., p. 4.
[303] CROW; LELAND, op. cit., p. XXVI.
[304] BENSON, Larry (ed.). **The Riverside Chaucer**. Houghton Mifflin: Michigan, 1986, p. 3.
[305] Ibid, ibidem.
[306] Ibid, p. 3-4.

trade insults, take offence, and counter offensive stories with equally outrageous ones. Some of the tales match the tellers' temper, while always keeping an element of surprise, and others shoot in totally different directions[307]. Chaucer himself, as one of the pilgrims, retells the tales he listened, endeavoring to make each word "cosyn to the deede", and therefore wandering through a wide range of accents, from courteous to rascally, from sensuous to holly, and also from colloquial to scholarly. All that is presented with "coherence and verisimilitude" by Chaucer's dramatic and verbal craftsmanship, turning the pilgrimage to Canterbury into "a metaphor for the world":

> In the manner of the best late medieval art, he presents his metaphor with such a palpably concrete representation of actuality that it seems to come alive. Much of this lifelike quality is due to Chaucer's eye for authenticating detail and his ear for the rhythms of colloquial speech, but, even more, it is the product of his dramatic method. Chaucer pretends merely to report what he sees and hears; he is content to let his characters speak for themselves, and when he does tell a tale in his own person, he does so as their equal, merely another teller.

Chaucer never finished his masterpiece: what we know as The **Canterbury Tales** is a series of ten fragments, each containing a varying number of tales and narrative links. Modern editions differ in the way they arrange the tales, as there is no evidence of the order in which they were intended to be read[308].

Before we proceed, some considerations should be made about Chaucer's language and also his use of poetical forms.

3.2 CHAUCER'S LANGUAGE AND VERSE: ANOTHER BRIEF INTRODUCTION

At least six centuries before Chaucer's time, the English language was already used by writers in verse and prose[309]. Although Old English had substantial regional variations, Late West Saxon became the generally accepted written language over most of

[307] Ibid, p. 4.
[308] Ibid, p. 5.
[309] BENSON, op. cit., p. XXIX.

England by the end of the 10th-c. After the Norman Conquest, Norman French became the dominant language and written English fell gradually out of use, a situation that lasted for many generations[310].

Yet, the Normans and the English had to communicate somehow, so new French vocabulary was introduced into Old English, and the English grammar gradually became simplified as the Normans struggled with it. Latin was also an important language in the Middle Ages: it was used for some government business, for education and during religious worship in church[311]. After the Norman Conquest, London became the great commercial center of England, while Westminster was the seat of political power and courts of law. People from all over England, especially the east and central midlands, were attracted to London, bringing their own dialects. When written English revived in the 12th-c., authors used their own regional variations and there was no dominant type of language[312]. Gradually, the inflow of migrants to London created a distinct dialect associated with the capital, but there was still great language variation within the country in Chaucer's time, even in administrative documents from the city of London, and people from the North might find the Londoner dialect incomprehensible. During the 14th-c., many writers, such a John Gower, still wrote in French or Latin, although English was increasingly used in all spheres of life[313].

Geoffrey Chaucer wrote his works in the East Midland dialect spoken in London and Westminster, where he lead his life as businessman and courtier. Although the status of English had changed, it was still generally regarded as a low status language. Besides being a great innovator in verse technique and introducing a considerable number of words and phrases, many of French origin, Chaucer proved that English could be used to write poetry with the same elegance and power that were to be found in the works of Dante, Petrarch and Boccaccio[314].

England’s polylingual stew was also, in a certain sense, a poetical melting pot. In Chaucer's time, there were two different verse traditions in England. One branch developed from Old English and was rooted in Germanic tradition; it consisted of lines connected by alliterations on stressed syllables, normally without rhymes. The second

[310] Ibid, ibidem.
[311] Ibid, ibidem.
[312] Ibid, ibidem.
[313] Ibid, p. XXIX e XXX.
[314] Ibid, p. XXX.

branch was imitated from French and Latin, and developed in England from the 12th-c. onwards; it consisted on lines with a certain number of syllables, linked by rhymes in the final sounds, and ordered in couplets or bigger groups[315]. Before the 14th-c., the more common kind of rhymed verse used in England was a line that might be generally called an octosyllable, although in practice there was a variation between seven and ten syllables. In the form it was used by French writers of that period, this kind of verse was determined exclusively by the number of syllables, but when the octossylable was imitated in England, light syllables generally alternated with stressed ones, thus creating a line characterized by four stresses or four beats – the probable reason for that change being that syllable stress is more prominent in English than in French[316]. This verse form appears in English from the early 13th-c. onwards in many famous poems and was used by Chaucer in **The Book of the Duchess** and **The House of Fame**. Chaucer's innovation in verse technique, however, is associated with another kind of line: a longer verse with five, instead of four stresses, alternated with light syllables, which before his time had appeared only in a few anonymous poems. The line with five stresses was thus not invented by Chaucer, but no other known author had used it so extensively before. Later called iambic pentameter, this meter might have been influenced by the French *décasyllabe* and the Italian *undecasilabo*, both of which have a similar length to that of Chaucer's, although the Italian type (like its Portuguese derivation, the *decassílabo*) is freer in rhythm[317].

As to the rhyme schemes, Chaucer organized his characteristic line in different stanza-forms through his writing career. In **The Parliament of Fowls** and **Troilus and Chryseide**, the iambic pentameters are organized in seven-line stanzas later called *rime royal*, in an ABABBCC rhyming scheme; the same stanza type appears in the tales told by the Man of Law, the Clerk, the Second Nun and the Prioress. In The Monk's Tale, the five-beat line appears in a stanza of eight verses with an ABABBCBC rhyming-scheme. In **The Legend of Good Women**, Chaucer arranged his five-beat lines in rhyming couplets, or riding rhyme, a form that would be used throughout most of **The Canterbury Tales**[318]. Although rhyming couplets of four-stress lines existed since the early 13th-c., no example of couplets in iambic pentameter has been found prior to

[315] Ibid, p. XLII-XLIII.
[316] Ibid, P. XLIII.
[317] Ibid, ibidem.
[318] Ibid, ibidem.

Chaucer. It's possible that this specific combination of meter and rhyming scheme be his own invention; in any case, as far as we know, the form later know as heroic couplet is to be found for the first time in Chaucer's work[319]. Later it would become the most characteristic verse type in epic and narrative poetry, made especially famous in the works of John Dryden and Alexander Pope.

From what has been said so far, it is clear that Chaucer was immensely interested in form. Nor was his formal creativity limited to line length, stresses and stanza arrangements. His use of rhyme was also very sophisticated, careful and versatile. Although Chaucer clearly knew the alliterative form (as can be seen in parts of The Knight's Tale, for instance), alliteration was never central to his works, whereas all his poems are rhymed. In Chaucer's time, as we have seen, word pronunciation varied immensely even within the same regions; the poet took advantage of this fact, choosing his rhymes among several optional variants. Consider, for example, the verb *to die*. Sometimes Chaucer writes it as *dye*, causing it to rhyme with words such as *olye*; in other parts, it is written as *deye* and rhymes with *weye*. *To please* in Middle English is *liste* and rhymes with *wiste*; but Chaucer also uses the variant *leste*, typical of the southeast of England, rhyming it with *beste*.[320]

Pronunciation is also important to understand the rhythm in Chaucer's verse. The most striking difference in pronunciation between Modern English and Middle English, as spoken in Chaucer's time, has to do with the sounds of vowels. Long vowels did not become diphthongs in English until after Chaucer's lifetime, so the pronunciation of vowels in Chaucer's manuscripts was similar to the value they would have in French, Italian, Spanish or, say, Portuguese. Also, a contemporary of Chaucer's in Southern England would pronounce many consonants that have since become mute, such as the initial *g*, *k* and *w* in *gnawen*, *knight*, *writen*. The letter *l* before consonants was also sounded, as in *half* and *folk*. The letter *r* was sounded in all positions and was probably trilled. The spelling *gh*, now mute, represented a sound similar to that of *ch* in German *ich* and *Bach* and in Scottish *loch*, so *knight* was pronounced as /knixt/, *light* as /lixt/ and *night* as /nixt/. Also, there were long and short consonants, and that distinction was

[319] Ibid, ibidem.
[320] Ibid p. XXXV.

maintained in Chaucer's rhymes. Thus, *sone* (son) rhymes with the verb *wone*, as both have a short *n*; but *sonne* (sun) rhymes with *yronne* and *bigonne*, all with the longer *nn*.[321]

Differences are also to be found in the position of the main stress on a word when comparing Middle and Modern English pronunciations. In Chaucer's time many words of French origin were still pronounced with the stress on the later syllables, such as *licour*, which was accented on the second syllable and had a long *u* (the same sound represented by *ou* in French), and therefore rhymed with *flour*. *Servyse* is also stressed on the second syllable, therefore rhyming with *arise*, where the letter *i* still had continental value. Also important to understanding Chaucerian rhythm is the number of syllables, which may often differ from that in later pronunciation. The suffix *-cio(u)n*, for instance, regularly forms two syllables, with the stress falling on one of the two last syllables. Thus, *nacioun* has three syllables, *congregacioun* has five, and both rhyme with *toun* (town). Another example of words that used to rhyme in Chaucer's time, but no longer do so, is that of *remembraunce/chaunce* (remembrance/chance), as *remembraunce* might be accented on the third syllable, although sometimes the stress fell on the first one. Something similar might also occur with "native" words, that is, those originated from Old English, such as those ending in *-nesse* - like *bisynesse*, which rhymes with *gesse*. Words ending in *-ly* were also stressed on the last syllable, so sobrely (soberly) rhymes with *courtepy*.[322]

One of the most pervasive differences between Modern and Middle English, and one which has special importance in the consideration of poetic rhythm, is the unstressed final *e* that still exists in many words, but has lost its sound – as in *Rome*, for instance, which had two syllables. In Chaucer's English, this final *e* was always pronounced, and, although it was never stressed, it had an important role in establishing rhythm. In many cases, the neutral vowel appeared at the end of words that have afterwards lost it, such as *yonge* (young) and *sonne* (sun). Sometimes, the *e* might work as an inflection, indicating case, mood, tense, and so on. In other cases, it was an integral part of the word deriving from a previous form in Old English or Old French[323]. Thus, in *yonge*, as it appears in the Tales (line 7), the *e* marks the definite form of the adjective, whereas in *sonne* it is part of the noun, deriving from the Old English *sunne*. Both *yonge* and *sonne* have two syllables,

[321] Ibid, p. XXXIV.
[322] Ibid, p. XXXIV.
[323] Ibid, p. XXXII-XXXIII.

and the same can be said about the word *croppes* (crops). Thus, the verse “The tendre croppes, and the yonge sonne” is an iambic pentameter, whereas a literal rendition to Modern English would produce an octossylable: “The tender crops, and the young sun”. Also, in the 14th-c. the ending *-ed* was pronounced as a separate syllable, as in *perced* and *bathed*[324].

Bearing in mind what has been said in the previous paragraphs; now consider the four initial verses of The General Prologue:

> Whan that Aprill with his shoures soote
> The droghte of March hath perced to the roote,
> And bathed every veyne in swich licour
> Of which vertu engendred is the flour (...)

In many cases, the final *e* merges with the next word, as long as it begins with a vowel (a movement identical to *sinalefa* in Portuguese metrics). Therefore line 2 would be read as:

> The / drogh /teof/ March / hath / per / ced / to / the / roo / te,

with the stressed syllables underlined. Also, *soote* (sweet) rhymes with *roote* (root), and *licour* (liquour) with *flour* (flower), none of which happens with the Modern English equivalents. In some cases, unstressed *e* might be slurred or elided within a word, such as *overeste* (pronounced *ovrest*).[325]

We have now enough information to consider how the iambic rhythm works in Chaucer's versification. A regular line would contain five stresses, each one preceded by a light syllable. Thus, a "perfect" iambic pentameter would begin with a light syllable and end with a stressed syllable in the tenth position. Other accents would fall on the second, fourth, sixth, and eight syllables. Here, consider two examples of regular iambic pentameters, from The General Prologue:

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[324] Ibid, ibidem.
[325] Ibid, p. XXXV.

Bifel that in that seson on a day,
In Southwerk at the Tabard as I lay (1. 19-20)

However, not all verses in the **Tales** are regular iambic pentameters. The first verse in The General Prologue, for instance, is a "headless" line, i.e., there's no light syllable before the first stress:

Whan / that / A / prill / with / his / shou / res / soo / te

The same happens with this line from further ahead in the Prologue:

Twenty bookes, clad in blak or reed (1.294)

In other cases, the order of stressed and light syllables is inverted, as in "Redy to wenden on my pilgrimage" (1.21). *Pilgrimage,* a word of French origin, was stressed on the first and third syllables, whereas in Modern English the stress falls only on the first one. Thus, in Chaucer's time, that line would be accented on syllables 1, 3, 4, 8 and 10.[326]

As a longer illustration of how Chaucerian rhythm works, consider the following passage from The General Prologue (1.285-308). Metrical stresses are underlined; unstressed *e* and *ed* appear in bold when pronounced; when *e* is elided or merges with the following vowel, it is highlighted in italic.

A Clerk ther was of Oxenford also,
That unto logyk hadd**e**long*e*ygo.
As leen**e**was his hors as is a rak**e**,
And he nas nat right fat, I undertak**e**,
But look**ed**holw*e*, and therto sobrely,

[326] Ibid, p. XLIV.

Ful thredbarewas his overestecourtepy,
For hehaddegeten hym yet no benefice,
Ne was so worldly for to have office,
For hym was levereha*v*eat his beddesheed
Twenty bookes, clad in blak or reed,
OfAristotleand his philosophie,
Than robes riche, or fithele, or gay sautrie.
But al be that he was a philosophre,
Yet haddehe but litel gold in cofre;
But al that hemyght of his freendeshente,
On bookes and on lernyngehe it spente,
And bisily gan for the soules preye
Of hem that yaf hym wherwith to scoleye.
Of studietook he moostcureand moostheede.
Noght o word spak he moore than was neede,
And thatwas seyd in formeand reverence:
And short and quyk and ful of hy sentence.
Sowyngein moral vertu was his speche,
And gladly woldehe lerneand gladly teche.[327]

In this very characteristic passage, even irregular verses have accents on the 6th and 10th syllables, such as "Of studie took he moost cure and moost heede". This line is not a regular verse because two stressed syllables (*moost* and *moost*) are followed by two other stressed syllables (*cure* and *heede*); and yet, the iambic model is kept in mind by the accents on the 2th, 6th, and 10th syllable. Even the "headless" line "Twenty bookes clad in blak or reede" would fall into that same pattern if read with a pause before the first syllable. In "But al that he myght of his freendes hente", another irregular verse, the stresses fall on the 2nd, the 4th, the 5th, the 8th and the 10th syllables. All considered, the passage shows a pattern of accents on even syllables, even if the stress does not fall always on the same positions throughout the stanza[328].

[327] CHAUCER, 1996, op. cit., p. 15.
[328] BENSON, op. cit.. p. XLIV, XLV

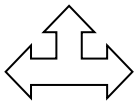
3.3 *REGIO, URBS* AND *ORBS*: THE RESOURCE TO COLLOQUIALISM AND REGIONALIST LANGUAGE

My search for translational verisimilitude, as already stated, took the form of a linguistic world-building, where choices pertaining vocabulary and poetical form were taken according to a specific aesthetic rationale, namely, the balance of strangeness and familiarity. Initially, it can be said that the search for a strange familiarity or a familiar strangeness in my translation takes the form of an oscillation between scholarly and popular sources, references and vocabulary. That first axis, scholarly versus popular, is clearly identifiable in my translation of The Wife of Bath's Prologue, in which Biblical and Classical references are interwoven with colloquialisms (see Chapter 3). However, the initial contrast between the scholarly and the popular can be seen from a different angle. The scholarly sources I chose connect my translation to the European origins of the language – **Os Lusíadas**, by Camões, and the Portuguese chivalric romances are some of the works from which I selected words and ideas – whereas my choices of colloquial vocabulary feed on the peculiarities of South American Portuguese. All the colloquialisms I used throughout my translation are either specifically Brazilian or used in some part of Brazil. To those two set of oppositions (scholarly versus popular; European versus South American) we might add yet a third one: national versus regional. Whereas some of the colloquialisms I used are *lato sensu* Brazilian, others pertain to specific regions within the country. Overall, I avoided citified slang and picked colloquial expressions which, while widely used, are not too recent or too associated with contemporary lifestyles. We might, therefore, classify my word choices in two groups:

Group A	**Group B**
Scholarly	**Popular**
European	**South American / Brazilian**

Within Group B, there is yet another division:

Brazilian sources and references

National  **Regional**

However, it should be noted that neither side of the strangeness versus familiarity divide, as I envisioned it, is completely reducible to any of the Groups and Subgroups above. In my translation, the strange and the familiar emerge precisely from the text's constant movement across linguistic borders. In **Contos da Cantuária**, I endeavored to create, from the unexpected vicinity or collusion of different universes, a truth-like linguistic world, in which all opposing registers (popular, scholarly, European, South American, national and regional) would act upon each other and secretly carry readers into a fictional and poetic sphere of its own.

Initially, we might say that familiarity, for Brazilian readers, emerges from the aesthetic choices categorized under Group B. Naturally, Brazilian colloquialisms and regional dialects are in some way closer to the Brazilian readers than the Medieval and Renaissance sources. However, those same colloquialisms and regional expressions are invested with an aura of strangeness when placed within a medieval poem. Thus, through the *ars combinatoria*, that which could seem familiar, or at least geographically close, becomes strange. Reversely, scholarly European sources and references might be seen as strange, or at least geographically remote, but at the same time such remoteness is to be expected in the translation of a medieval poem from England. Thus, the strange becomes familiar. A mutual contamination occurs between that which is specifically Brazilian and that which is specifically European – just like Odorico's use of the word "jangada" hellenizes a particle of Brazilian Portuguese and brazilianizes the verbal surroundings. I call this aesthetic gesture a form of "transculturação" or "acriollamiento", as I will explain by the end of this subchapter.

The decision to avoid modern, citified slang was meant, precisely, to prevent an excessive familiarity, for that would compromise the translation's equilibrium. I did not want Chaucer to sound as a modern Brazilian city-dweller: that would destroy the **Contos**' verisimilitude and prevent them from working as fiction. What I was aiming at was to create that truth-like effect described by Coleridge in his *Biographia Literaria*: "a semblance of truth sufficient to procure for these shadows of imagination that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment, which constitutes poetic faith"[329]. Even when I chose "national" colloquialisms, I avoided words that would be exclusively associated with city-life. Many of the colloquialisms used in O Prólogo da Mulher de Bath – such as

[329] COLERIDGE, Samuel Taylor**. Biographia Literaria**. Disponível em: http://www.english.upenn.edu/~mgamer/Etexts/biographia.html. Acesso em 21 fev 2019.

"mequetrefe", "broxa", "mulherada" – can be heard throughout Brazil, but are not necessarily urban. A rare case of me choosing a word associated with an urban subculture is my translation of Chaucer's ironical self-reference in The General Prologue, in which I use the word "malandro", generally thought to have originated as a description of an specific cultural type from Rio de Janeiro, but now so widespread as to be considered as more "national" than "urban". On the other hand, several of my vocabulary choices were specifically regional and even more specifically rural – "carreiras" for "races" and "guampa" for "horn" are examples of wording inextricably connected to the culture of the Campanha region in Rio Grande do Sul. Other choices were grounded in the culture of different regions of Brazil, and some allude to more than one region. The "regionality" of those choices was mean to work simultaneously as a source of strangeness and familiarity.

As the use of regionalist expressions and allusions are one of the main elements that set my translation apart – especially when it comes to translations of European Classics –, I shall discuss the "regionalist gambit" in further detail. First, however, I shall explain what is meant by the word "regionalist" and trace the specific kinds of regionalism that were most broadly used in the **Contos**.

According to Lígia Chiappini, in *Do beco ao belo: dez teses sobre o regionalismo na literatura,* regionalism has been described as any kind of literature that deals – deliberately or not – with local particularities, such as local habits, beliefs, superstitions, fashions, etc[330]. Such description would entail the existence of rural and urban regionalisms; indeed, any literary work could be seen as regionalist, as all literature expresses, in a more or less mediated way, its own place and time[331]. Historically, however, works labeled as "regionalist" are those that "depict rural regions, therein placing their actions and characters, and endeavoring to express their linguistic particularities"[332], "in opposition to the habits and tastes of city-dwellers, especially dwellers of big cities"[333]. In Brazil, there are several forms of regionalism: for instance, gaúcho regionalism, paulista regionalism, nordestino regionalism and so on[334]. We might also argue, in an apparently – but only apparently – paradoxical turn, that regionalism is a

[330] CHIAPPINI, Lígia. Do beco ao belo: dez teses sobre o regionalismo na literatura. **Estudos Históricos**, Rio de Janeiro, vol. 8, n. 15, 1995, p. 153-159.
[331] Ibid, ibidem.
[332] Ibid, ibidem.
[333] Ibid. p. 153.
[334] Ibid, p. 153.

modern phenomenon and also a universal one[335]. Although some authors suggest a connection between regionalism and the Classic pastoral tradition, Chiappini points out that it was during the 19th c. that regionalist novels emerged: for instance, those of Walter Scott in English, those of George Sand in French, and those of Berthold Auerbach in German[336]. Regionalism can be either programmatic or more or less free of any adhesion to a particular literary movement; i.e., authors can deliberately write within the limits of a specific regionalist movement, or incorporate in their works themes that might be consider regional, or rural, instead of ostensively cosmopolitan and urban[337]. As regionalist fiction emerges in the wake of modernization and urbanization, it is marked by the tension between romantic idyll and realistic representation, gradually endeavoring to make the peasant's voice audible to urban readers[338]. Besides the tension between idyllic and realistic representations, regionalism is also marked by other sets of creative oppositions: nation versus region, orality versus written literature, countryside versus city-centers; and it also fluctuates between a nostalgic vision of the past and the exposure of present miseries[339].

In *A vigência do regionalismo no Brasil*, Luís Augusto Fischer writes that the history of Brazilian literature, since the Second Empire period and across several changes in literary fashion, has seen the production of poems, stories and dramas, some set in the country's economic center (first Rio de Janeiro, and afterwards São Paulo) and some in the provinces, small towns or rural areas[340]. The later have been grouped under the label of "regionalism" – a term that has acquired depreciative connotations after the triumph of paulista Modernism in the 1920's. Mario de Andrade, for instance, called regionalism "a national plague" – an opinion he would later qualify[341]. Antônio Candido, in *Literatura e Subdesenvolvimento*, links the the initial phase of Brazilian regionalism to the "euphoric conscience of a new country" and the "soft awareness of underdevelopment", charging regionalist works with reducing "human problems to the picturesque element". To

[335] Ibid, p. 153-154.
[336] Ibid, p. 156.
[337] Ibid, p. 154.
[338] Ibid, p. 156.
[339] Ibid, ibidem.
[340] FISCHER, Luís Augusto. A vigência do regionalismo no Brasil. **Terceira Margem**, n. 19, ago/dez 2008, Rio de Janeiro, p. 110.
[341] CHIAPPINI. op. cit. p. 154.

Candido, it is only after 1930, approximately, that the "regionalist tendencies" were "sublimated" by social realism [342].

Detractors of regionalist literature in Brazil have often argued that regionalist works are aesthetically and ideologically reactionary. However, as Chiappini pointed, regionalist literature has been the place both of reactionary and progressive writers; besides, regionalist fiction can be seen as a "necessary counterpoint to the modernization of rural areas and cities under capitalism"[343]. Some detractors, when faced with a powerful regionalist writer such as Guimarães Rosa, sometimes try to efface the link between that particular work and regionalism in general, arguing that that particular author has risen from the regional to the universal[344]. That argument either implies that non regionalist literature is "universal" by nature, or that "universality" can be more easily or directly reached through urban themes and forms; in other words, the argument equates *urbs* and *orbs*, opposing both to *regio*. Such an argument is countered by the evidence that many works ostensibly cosmopolitan, modern and urban become eventually "lost to the permanent history of reading"[345].

As expatiating on the history of Brazilian regionalism as a whole would exceed the scope of this work, I will confine myself to sources pertaining to Gaúcho regionalism, relating it to the Gauchoesque literature of the Riverplate countries.

Gauchoesque literature is a phenomenon common to Rio Grande do Sul, Uruguay and Argentina, which emerged in the 18th c. and still bears fruit today. "Gauchoesque" comes from gauchos or gaúchos, a population inhabiting the Southern plains on both banks of the Uruguay River, whose language was a mixture of Portuguese, Spanish, Native American languages and African influences[346]. Until the end of the 18th c., learned poets did not heed this local speech, as literature both in Brazil and the Riverplate region was dominated by neoclassicism[347]. In Brazil, neoclassical mentality became known as Arcadism – a deeply conventional kind of literature, whose pastoral evocations were based on Greek and Latin models[348].

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[342] CANDIDO, Antonio. Literatura e subdesenvolvimento. In: **A educação pela noite & outros ensaios**. São Paulo: Ática, 1989, p. 140-162.
[343] CHAPPINI. op. cit. p. 156.
[344] CHIAPPINI. op. cit. p. 156-157.
[345] CHIAPPINI. op. cit. p. 158.
[346] RAMA, Ángel. El sistema literario de la poesía gauchesca. In: LOIS, Elida, e NUÑEZ, Ángel. **Martín Fierro de José Hernández**: Edición Crítica. ALCA XX. 2001, p. 1050.
[347] FISCHER, Luís Augusto. Apresentação da Tradução de Nico Fagundes. In: HERNÁNDEZ, José. **Martín Fierro**. Editora da Cidade. Porto Alegre, 2001, p. 10-11.
[348] FISCHER. 2001, op. cit. p. 11.

In 1777, however, Father Juan Baltasar Maciel (1727-1788), an important man in ecclesiastical hierarchy and owner of the largest library of his time in Buenos Aires, penned a poem called *Canta un guaso en el estilo rural los triunfos del Excelentísimo Señor Don Pedro de Cevallos*[349]. Don Pedro de Cevallos, viceroy of the Spanish provinces of the Riverplate, was the leader who took Colonia do Sacramento from Portuguese hands. "Guaso" was one of the names given to the pampas' peasants (other terms to designate the ancient gauchos include camilucho, gaudério and mozo amargo). According the dictionary of the Spanish Royal Academy, the term also means "incivil" and, in Chile, it still has the meaning of "a person without manner". In his poem, Maciel, a powerful and learned man, gives the floor to a poor peasant, a cultural type until then deprived of a written literary voice:

> (...) quem vai falar, nas palavras do poema, é um guaso, um sujeito desqualificado desde o ponto de vista urbano, metropolitano, desde o ponto de vista neoclássico que dominava a mentalidade literária do período (...) Aqui começa um diferencial de extraordinário valor, no plano literário mas também no plano político e social: a poesia escrita abre mão de suas elegância européias, classicizantes, para dar voz ao homem simples. E não de longe, como quem olhasse a paisagem dos pobre de binóculo, mas de perto, dando-lhe a palavra, para que em primeira pessoa diga o que pensa, e aproximando a escrita da fala, para ser mais verossímil e convincente.[350]

Maziel was the pioneer in a literary current that gained momentum in the next generation, as the countries in South America became independent (Argentina's independence process began in 1810; Brazil became independent from Portugal in 1822; and Uruguay became the *Estado Oriental* in 1828). Many literati dedicated their quills to the cause of the new countries' autonomy[351]. In Brazil as a whole, the literary representation of Indigenous peoples became a symbol of the new nation, within the context of romanticism. This identitarian character type, however, rarely got to speak for himself or herself. According to Fischer, the "índio" was the subject of the works, not the holder of speech, except for some passages, as the moment when I-Juca Pirama defends himself, or some interventions by Peri or Iracema[352]. Things were quite different in

[349] Ibid, ibidem.
[350] Ibid, p. 12.
[351] Ibid, p. 13.
[352] Ibid, ibidem.

Gauchoesque poetry. From Maziel on, all the important Gauchoesque poets wrote their works as first-person accounts told by a peasant[353].

> Vale insistir: não é pouco este feito, em matéria literária, eis que os poetas de matriz ibérica não dispunham dessa modalidade narrativa como algo já assente. Passar a palavra a um homem simples e iletrado é um gesto de pelo menos duas significações fortes: de um lado, incorpora algo, uma imagem que seja, do homem comum real, ao mundo letrado, que é o mundo do poder; de outro, aproxima a escrita culta da fala inculta.[354]

So it happens in the great classics of Argentinean Gauchoesque poetry: the **Cielitos**, by Bartolomé Hidalgo (1788-1822); the **Santos Vega**, by Hilario Ascasubi; **Fausto**, by Estanislao del Campo; and **Martin Fierro**, by José Hernandez. Although all those works were narrated "in rural style", as Maziel's poem[355], it's important to stress the difference between "gaucho" and "gauchesco": the creators of those literary works were not the same peasants to which the accounts were attributed, but, as Ángel Rama points out in *El sistema de la literatura gauchesca*:

> hombres de la ciudad con niveles educativos muy variados aunque nunca confundibles con los prototípicos de los gauchos de las pampas. Vivieron en pueblos y ciudades del Rio de la Plata desde la revolución de independencia (1810) hasta entrado el siglo XX, y en ellos escribieron su obra poetica en íntimo consorcio con los sucessos historicos de su tiempo.[356]

Jorge Luis Borges, whom Rama quotes praisefully in his essay, made the same observation on different occasions. The quotation below is an excerpt from the Prologo written by Borges and Adolfo Bioy-Casares for their anthology **Poesía Gauchesca**; according to Borges' and Casares' description. Gauchoesque poetry was, for urban audiences in the 19th c., a focal point where strangeness and familiarity converged:

> Es notorio que los "gauchescos" (...) no fueron gauchos; fueron hombres de ciudad, compenetrados, por los trabajos rurales o por el azar de las guerras, con la vida del gaucho. Fue necesaria, pues, para la génesis de la literatura gauchesca, la conjunción de dos

[353] Ibid, p. 13-14.
[354] Ibid, p. 14.
[355] Ibid, p. 11.
[356] RAMA, op. cit., p. 1051.

> estilos vitales: el urbano y el pastoril (...) Éste [o indivíduo urbano] hallaba en el campo **un espetáculo que era lo bastante curioso para ser memorable y lo bastante afín para ser íntimo**. El campo, con sus grandes distancias, con su bárbara ganaderia, con sus elementales peligros, con su sabor homérico, sería en la memoria una experiencia de libertad y de plenitud. [357]

In Rio Grande do Sul, we find a similar situation, albeit not an identical one, as the assimilation of rural dialects into literary speech was slower. Regionalist literature in the Província de São Pedro, later Estado do Rio Grande do Sul, owes a lot to a constellation of oral songs and poems generally called the "cancioneiro" and whose origins may go back to the beginnings of the colonial period[358]. According to Guilhermino César, in **História da Literatura do Rio Grande do Sul**, oral literature in the State is a creation of an initial human group, consisting of Portuguese (mostly Azorean), Spanish, paulista, lagunense, guarani and African elements[359]. The origins of the *cancioneiro*, therefore, are older than the arrival of German and Italian immigrants (in 1824 and 1875 respectively)[360]. The compilation of oral literature begun with Carlos von Koseritz, who collected several anonymous popular poems and published them in the Gazeta de Porto Alegre in 1880. Koseritz's pioneering work was continued by Graciano Azambuja (1887–1905), Alfredo Ferreira Rodrigues (1889–1917), João Cezimbra Jacques (1883 and 1912), Simões Lopes Neto (1910), Apollinário Porto Alegre (1935), Pedro Osório (in 1940), and Augusto Meyer (1952). The most comprehensive compilations of oral poetry in Rio Grande do Sul are **Cancioneiro guasca**, by Simão Lopes Neto, **Cancioneiro da Revolução of 1935**, by Apollinário Porto Alegre, and **Cancioneiro gaúcho**, by Meyer[361]. Formally, many of the collected poems are made up of "quadrinhas", or four-syllable stanzas, and some indicate a strong Lusitanian influence, with themes and even lines transplanted from overseas. Many of the stanzas have seven-syllable lines, with rhymes in the even lines, like the Azorean romances[362]. Despite the European resonance, however, many of the compiled poems are marked by specific local

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[357] BORGES, Jorge Luis, e BIOY CASARES, Adolfo. **Poesia Gauchesca, I.** Buenos Aires: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1955, p. vii

[358] CÉSAR, Guilhermino. **História da Literatura do Rio Grande do Sul**. Porto Alegre: Globo, 1971, p. 44 e 62.

[359] Ibid, p. 43.

[360] Ibid, ibidem.

[361] BERTUSSI, Lisana. **Poesia Gauchesca:** as fontes populares e o romantismo. Caxias do Sul: EDUCS, 2012.p. 24

[362] SANTI, Alvaro. Canto Livre - 30 anos de poesia na Califórnia da Canção Nativa. **Porto & Vírgula**, n° 42. Porto Alegre, Secretaria Municipal da Cultura, jul-set. 2001**,** p.3

vocabulary, and rural life in the Campanha region is one the main themes. In the cancioneiro, even words common to other parts of the country may appear "regionalized", that is, transformed by the geographically localized culture filter, as Liana Bertussi notes in **Poesia Gauchesca: as fontes populares e o romantismo**:

> Quanto ao vocabulário, é enfática a presença dos termos regionais, marcas da fala rio-grandense. É a gradação dessa ocorrência que configurará a força da tendência regionalista nas composições. E o linguajar gauchesco não se limitará às lindes estaduais, adquirindo tonalidades latino-americanas, ao apropriar-se do vocabulário também da Argentina e do Uruguai; são os castelhanismos, muito presentes na poesia do nosso cancioneiro. Há também, nessa literatura popular, uma espécie de reverência pela exploração da oralidade, pelo aproveitamento da fala do povo tal como se apresenta. Ainda, de nuanças ora ufanistas, ora de um realismo cru estará marcada essa linguagem.[363]

Whereas in the Riverplate the "guaso" had been singing since the end of the 18th c., it was only in the second half of the 19th c. that the rural world of the Campanha became a favourite setting for the work of learned poets and fiction writers in Rio Grande do Sul[364]. Paramount in that process was the activity of the Sociedade Partenon Literário in Porto Alegre, a group of poets associated to romanticism who also wrote about the rural world[365]. At the beginning of the 20th c., there was a new outbreak of regionalist literature, generally moving away from the romantic trend and absorbing influences of realism and naturalism. That is the case with **Ruínas Vivas** (1910) and **Taperas** (1911), by Alcydes Maia, in which we find a willingness to depict the marginalization of part of the State's population, triggered by changes in the Campanha's economy[366]. It is, however, in the pages of the poem **Antônio Chimango**, by Ramiro Barcelos (under the pseudonym of Amaro Juvenal), and in **Contos Gauchescos**, by Simões Lopes Neto, that the use of local language reaches the most spectacular level of artistic achievement. We will deal here mainly with **Antônio Chimango**, because it is a work in verse, whose use of language had a direct influence on my translation of Chaucer.

A self-styled satirical "poemeto", written in 1915 as a more or less encrypted invective against the recently elected president of the province, Borges de Medeiros, **Antônio Chimango** is closely connected to the Riverplate Gauchoesque tradition (the

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[363] BERTUSSI, op. cit., p. 14-15.
[364] CARVALHO, Lucio. **A Crise da Representação Rural na Cultura Sul-Rio-Grandense**. Porto Alegre: Editora Fi, 2020, p. 25-26.
[365] CARVALHO, op. cit., p. 28.
[366] Ibid, p.31.

stanza type used by Barcellos is none other than José Hernandez' "sextilha"), but also reworks that tradition, specially through its satirical tone and the adoption of an anti-hero as title character – a circumstance that links Antônio Chimango to the most famous oral sul-rio-grandense oral poem of the 19th c., the **Tatu**[367]. Through a minute process of writing and rewriting, Barcelos managed to create a fascinating artifice of reality by creatively imitating the speech of unlearned people from the Campanha region. As Niel Aquino Casses wrote in a seminal philological essay about Antônio Chimango:

> Amaro Juvenal maneja a linguagem oral dos gaúchos com tal naturalidade, que parece recolher heptassílabos espontâneos da boca do povo e, liberto dos pruridos da erudição, ultrapassando o parnasianismo e o simbolismo da época, produziu o mais original e mais vivo dos poemas satíricos da literatura de língua portuguesa[368].

This impression of verse collected spontaneously "from the mouth of the people" is, of course, the result of a most rigorous literary craftsmanship. Amaro Juvenal does not intend to create a strict copy of reality, but instead builds a sense of realness based in careful verbal choices – in other words, the poet effects a form of linguistic verisimilitude. That effect is essential to the poem, as it consists mostly of an oral account made by a peasant: Lautério, an old farmhand, described as a "mulato", who tells of the decadence of the formerly mighty São Pedro Farm, after the estate falls into the hands of incompetent and sordid Antônio Chimango (a representation of Borges de Medeiros). Juvenal's careful suggestion of orality was one of the models I followed in my translation of Chaucer; therefore, I will present some examples of the poet's crafty verbal choices and how they influenced me. In Stanza 93 of **Antônio Chimango**, we read:

> E o Chimango ali se via
> N'uma égua velha de em pelo,
> Atacando o sinuelo...
> Que era só pra o que servia.

[367] On the relations between Riverplate Gauchoesque poetry and Rio Grande do Sul Gauchoesque poetry, see my essay, *Antônio Chimango, um clássico da campanha*. In: FISCHER, Luís Augusto (ed.). **Antônio Chimango**. 2 volumes. Edição do centenário. Caxias do Sul: Modelo de Nuvem, 2016.

[368] CASSES, Niel Aquino. Alguns aspectos da linguagem gauchesca no Antônio Chimango. In: JUVENAL, Amaro. **Antônio Chimango**: poemeto campestre. Porto Alegre: Globo, Porto Alegre, 1961, (3ª edição refundida).

The idiom “de em pelo”, instead of the grammatically correct “em pelo”, is typical of the Campanha dialect and still in use today – just like “andar de a pé” instead of “andar a pé” and “andar de a cavalo” instead of “andar a cavalo”[369]. A close scrutiny of the manuscripts has shown that the first version of that stanza contained an attempt at phonetic writing:

N'uma egua mansa d'impello (...)[370]

In the final version, the poet kept the peculiar idiom, but spelling it in the most intelligible way possible: that is, to the eyes of a learned reader, the line combines the strangeness of the expression and the familiarity of the spelling, while also preferring allusion to automatic reproduction. As Augusto Meyer wrote in his analysis of the manuscripts of **Antônio Chimango**: “Tudo estava em errar com acêrto, no momento oportuno, dosando de tal modo a oscilação entre norma e desvio de norma, que o 'solecismo' afinal se transmudava em graça e estilo”[371]. Orality is suggested without excesses: the grammatical norm remains visible, preventing the text from becoming obscure; but the digression towards orality stands out, like a strange shadow outlined against the familiar panorama. As I have noted in my essay *Antônio Chimango, um Clássico da Campanha*:

> Aparente ausência de arte, portanto; mas apenas uma arte superior pode dissimular a si mesma de forma tão esperta e escorreita. O exame do manuscrito de *Antônio Chimango* mostra o rigor e a perícia verbal de Ramiro Barcelos ao recriar em versos aparentemente simples os hábitos, a dicção, a antropologia da campanha. A linguagem de *Antônio Chimango* não é uma cópia fotográfica da fala rural: é uma criação artística, sim, mas tão burilada que dá a *impressão* quase fantástica de um falar espontâneo. E o poeta conquistou esse efeito por meio de cortes, reescrituras, emendas, remodelagens... Supremo é o artifício que sabe apagar a si mesmo. O manuscrito mostra grande número de estrofes rasuradas e versos que foram feitos e refeitos com implacável autocrítica, até atingirem a desejada entonação.[372]

[369] Ibid, p. 165.
[370] Ibid, p. 160.
[371] MEYER, Augusto. Ensaio crítico. In: JUVENAL, Amaro, op. cit., p. 30.
[372] BOTELHO, José Francisco. Antônio Chimango, um clássico da campanha. In: FISCHER, Luís Augusto (ed.), 2016, op. cit., p. 178.

Literary works set in the agrarian universe of the Campanha continued to be written in the following decades, throughout the period of the neo-realist novel, from the 1930s to the 1950s, the crisis in the realist narrative from the 1960s to the 1980s, and up to the end of the 20th c.[373], although not all authors used the regional dialect in the same way or with the same pervasiveness – Érico Verissimo, for instance, relied partly on his experience as an author of urban novels to create the vast panorama of sul-rio-grandense history that is **O Tempo e o Vento**. Among the poets that resorted to the gaúcho lingo in the 20th c. to create works of great aesthetic power, one should mention Aureliano Figueiredo Pinto, Aparício da Silva Rillo e Jayme Caetano Braun – authors whose poems became very popular[374], even among social groups with little access to higher education – a circumstance I can attest, as my first contact with Braun's verses took place in circles totally disconnected from the literate world. As for novels, although regionalist literature never stoped being written in Rio Grande do Sul, there has been a drastic decrease since the 1970s, according to Lúcio Carvalho in **A crise da representação rural na literatura sul-rio-grandense**[375]. From the 1970s to the end of the 1980s, interest in the rural world migrated from literature to popular music[376]. The movement known as "nativismo" gave rise to several music and poetry festivals, the most important being the Califórnia da Canção Nativa de Uruguaiana, launched in 1971[377]. Composers of "nativist" songs based their lyrics on the State's popular poetry and also on the Gauchoesque literature of Argentina and Uruguay:

> Do ponto de vista formal, não há dúvida de que concorrem, para a constituição do que hoje poderíamos chamar o "cancioneiro nativista", duas tradições distintas, as quais representam em última análise duas culturas em cuja fronteira não por acaso localiza-se a cidade de Uruguaiana. Uma inclui a Gauchesca Platina, os payadores – depois milongueros – improvisando em desafio ou contando, em décimas, oitavas ou sextilhas, histórias de caráter satírico ou heróico, não raro engajadas nas lutas políticas e militares de seu tempo. Seu representante mais conhecido deste lado da fronteira é o Martín Fierro, de Jose Hernández. Outra é a tradição lírica popular portuguesa, à qual Augusto Meyer demonstrou pertencerem a maior parte das

[373] FISCHER, op. cit., p. 113.
[374] CARVALHO, 2020, op. cit., p. 63.
[375] Ibid, ibidem.
[376] Ibid, ibidem.
[377] SANTI. op. cit., p. 1.

> quadrinhas tidas por aqui como "nativas", e que originou também a produção folclórica autóctone, incluindo nossos populares "cantos da monarquia."[378]

The nativist movement in Rio Grande do Sul has been the site of many convergences between poetry and music. Noel Guarany, for instance, set to music several poems by Aureliano de Figueiredo Pinto[379] and also recorded a famous album with Jayme Caetano Braun[380]. Presently, it is worth mentioning the production of Eron Vaz Matos, a poet, composer and folklorist, whose work was written and published at the margins of the maisntream literary world.

What draw me to Gauchoesque poetry, besides its geographical connection with my place of origin, was its "fronteiriço" or borderline character and its mestizo nature: arising from the warlike proximity of two Iberian empires, oscillating across the mobile frontiers of Prata, incorporating influences from Indigenous and African peoples, it has been a privileged site of negotiation between learned and unlearned, literate and popular. In Gauchoesque poetry, the influence of literate language does not disappear: it is transformed by the contact with the regional lingo, giving rise to something new. Both Borges and Rama – as well as Fischer afterwards – pointed out the novelty aspect in Gauchoesque literature. Borges and Bioy, in the aforementioned Prologo, argue that pastoral life has been a common element to many regions in the American continent, from Montana to Chile, but none of those regions created a literary genre analogous to Gauchoesque poetry[381].

Early on, my quest for a method of linguistic world-building incorporated techniques and devices found in Gauchoesque poetry. In **Cancioneiro Gaúcho**, for instance, we find the following anonymous verses:

> Eu vi o cupido montado
> No seu cavalo picaço,
> De bolas e tirador,
> Faca, rebenque e laço.[382]

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[378] SANTI, op. cit., p. 2.
[379] GUARANY, Noel. **Noel Guarany Canta Aureliano de Figueiredo Pinto**. RGE/Fermata/Premier, 1978
[380] GUARANY, Noel, and BRAUN, Jayme Caetano. **Payador, Pampa y Guitarra**. Independente, 1979.
[381] BORGES; BIOY CASARES, op. cit., p. VII.
[382] BERTUSSI, op. cit., p. 91.

On the passage above, according to Lisana Bertussi, a mythological element linked to classical poetry ("cupid") acquires "popular nuances" by being placed in a poetic flow dominated by words from the Gaúcho dialect, such as "picaço", "bolas", "tirador" and "rebenque". The result is a "happy familiarity between literate and popular"[383]. "And this barbarous-like cupid, frankly adapted to the Gauchoesque universe, far from seeming fake, acquires a legitimate hue of transculturation"[384]. Transculturation, a term coined by Ángel Rama, is defined by Bertussi as "a phenomenon of exchange between the popular and the scholarly, in which the scholarly element, far from imposing itself on the popular, is assimilated and transformed by it"[385].

The same happens on stanza 158 in **Antônio Chimango**, where we read:

> Nisto é que está o busílis,
> Que não depende de ensino:
> Saber tomar um destino
> E não se apertar no apuro,
> Poder guiar-se no escuro
> E nunca perder o tino.

"Busílis" is a scholarly term, but the poet gives it the same status as the surrounding regional and popular words. The hierarchy between literate and popular is eliminated, and all the words on the stanza function as parts of a coherent and specific linguistic flow. Instead of sounding like an invasive element, the scholarly term goes through a process of "acriollamiento".

The same process takes place on several passages of **Antônio Chimango**. Niel Assino Casses notes the presence of several Portuguese archaisms in the poem, such as *alevantar, pinchar, cola, vossa mercê, diabrete, entrouxar, dês que, ermão, guarecer, baldoso, embonecar, regeira, trabusana*[386]. I have witnessed the use of many of such archaisms in the southern rural area of the State. The use of "cola" instead of "rabo", for instance, is still common nowadays. Why, "cola" stems from "coa", a contraction of "cauda", present in the **Demanda do Santo Graal**: "arrestava ua donzela da coa de seu

[383] "convívio feliz do culto com o popular".
[384] BERTUSSI, op, cit., p. 91. "E esse cupido abarbarado, francamente adaptado ao universo gauchesco, longe de parecer postiço, adquire um legítimo matiz de transculturação".
[385] Ibid, ibidem.
[386] JUVENAL, op. cit., p. 188-189.

cavalo"[387]. The locution "dês que", present in **Antônio Chimango** and heard by myself on several occasions, appears in the same work: "dês que fomos em vossa companhia"[388]. Also the use of "donde" instead of "onde" and "em riba" instead of "em cima" are to be found both in Antônio Chimango and in medieval Portuguese literature[389]. Side by side with those Portuguese archaisms, Juvenal's poem contains Platine expressions such as "chô égua" and "cuê pucha"; words of African origin, such as "matungo", "cafua", "mogango", "quilombo", "tangolomango", "fandango"; borrowings from the Quechuan, such as "guasca", ", "guaiaca", "guaxo"; from the Mapuche, like "poncho"; from the Guarany, like "tapera" and "guri"; from the Tupi, like "capim" and "coivara"; etc.[390] All those vocabular choices are treated in the poem as belonging to the same linguistic universe.

In **Contos da Cantuária**, I endeavored to achieve a kind of reverse transculturation: instead of inoculating the scholarly into the popular, I implanted the popular and the regional into a text traditionally considered scholarly; a diffuse and widespread "acriollamiento", through which Chaucer's world could be uttered, and felt, in South American tunes. The term "acriollamiento", as used here, was extracted from Jorge Luis Borges's essay *Sobre The Purple Land*, published in **Otras Inquisiciones**. On the passage in question, Borges is talking about Richard Lamb, protagonist of William Hudson's **The Purple Land**. In Hudson's novel, a young Englishman journeys through the Uruguayan plain, living among the gauchos and experiencing the process of "going native" – according to the 19th-c. English colonial idiom. According to Borges, the novel has two "arguments" or plots:

> El primero, visible: las aventuras del muchacho inglés Richard Lamb en la Banda Oriental. El segundo, íntimo, invisible: el venturoso acriollamiento de Lamb, su conversión gradual a una moralidad cimarrona que recuerda un poco a Rousseau y prevé un poco a Nietzsche[391].

However, as Hudson aficionados know well, Richard Lamb's "acriollamiento" is never completed: he does not become a Gaucho, but a hybrid of Gaucho and Englishman,

[387] JUVENAL, op. cit., p. 189.
[388] JUVENAL, op. cit., p 189.
[389] JUVENAL, op. cit., p. 181.
[390] JUVENAL, op. cit., p. 183-184.
[391] BORGES. Sobre The Purple Land. In: **Otras Inquisiciones.** Buenos Aires: Emecé, 1960, p. 194.

of South American and European. In my translation, I endeavored to create a similar effect. Not to make Chaucer totally Brazilian or South American, but to expose the Contos to a hybridization process working both ways.

Finally, I would like to return to the subject of regionalism's disrepute among Brazilian literary critics – as the gradual debasement of the regional after the 1920s, and especially from the 1960s onwards, has a direct connection to my decision of using regionalist elements in a translation of a classic. In the last decades, according to Lúcio Carvalho, the Brazilian literary system

> acabou por progressivamente remanejar todo o traço regional para o mais longe possível do novo projeto nacionalizante, tornando ainda mais agudo o distanciamento e o conflito entre um Brasil que se demora subdesenvolvido no campo, mas igualmente subdesenvolvido e brutalizado nos grandes centros urbanos[392].

According to Chiappini, the modernization of agricultural techniques, the rural exodus and the development of big urban centers, and of an urban literature attached to them, influenced the general critic opinion about regionalist literature, which came to be seen as obsolete, backward and limited[393]. When Chiappini wrote her essay *Do beco ao belo: dez teses sobre o regionalismo na literatura*, in 1995, regionalism was considered by many influent critics as "an outdated theme" and "an outdated aesthetics"[394].

In Rio Grande do Sul, since the end of the 1980s, most literary works that have reached a wide readership have focused on urban life – with exceptions like the historical novels of Luis Antônio de Assis Brasil, Tabajara Ruas and Alcy Cheuiche, and the short stories of Sergio Faraco[395]. Carvalho talks even of a highbrow interdiction on rural themes, partly based on the claim that regionalist literature has an uncritical stance towards material reality. However, as Carvalho demonstrates in his books, many regionalist authors in Rio Grande do Sul have depicted the economic decadence of the Campanha region and the social problems that ensued – and even in the popular "cancioneiro", one might find passages of "raw realism", as Bertussi pointed out in Poesia Gauchesca and as I have argued about the *Tatu* in my essay **Antônio Chimango, um clássico da Campanha**.

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[392] CARVALHO, 2020, op. cit., p. 61.
[393] CHIAPPINI. op. cit., p. 156.
[394] CHIAPPINI. op. cit., p. 154: "um tema fora de moda", "uma estética fora de moda".
[395] CARVALHO, 2020, op. cit., p. 63.

Yet, the rejection of regionalism never reaches a peaceful conclusion. For, as Carvalho notes,

> é preciso reconhecer que a urbanização brasileira é ainda hoje um projeto incompleto e que, por conta disso, é fácil para qualquer pessoa reconhecer no passado afetivo a presença de alguém que viveu ou pelo menos partiu de alguma reigão rural paa os centros urbanos[396].

From time to time, the tension between regional particularities and the desire for a cosmopolitan universality is reignited[397]. Recently, new authors have endeavored to break the interdiction, seeking new ways to approach the cultural universe of the Brazilian countryside, without falling into the ufanist trap – that strawman often flogged by critics, but seldom found in really important works – and also refusing to accept the attempts at aesthetic erasure that have been taking place since the 1960s. Among those authors, one might mention Rodrigo Ungaretti Tavares, whose novel **Antes que a Terra se Abra** has been described as a "symbiosis" between tradition and modernity, in which "myths survive as agents of globalized capitalism"[398].

Fischer, in turn, links the rejection of regionalism to Brazil's traditional "Unitarianism", a political and social tendency to reject regional differences; according to Fischer, this process was already at work in the 19th c. but gained momentum during the Estado Novo[399]. Another factor in the disparaging of the regional, according to Fischer, is a widespread "urbanolatria" that has its foundations in "the developmental fantasy that swept São Paulo, more than any other part of the country, between the 1920s and the 1980s"[400]. According to Fischer, at least since the triumph of Modernism, the legitimation of literary works in Brazil is linked to the idea that

> (a) a cidade e a totalidade, a cidade grande em particular; (b) a ponta do processo de modernizacao e o que importa, em qualquer nivel (social, economico, politico), a ponta e nao as bordas ou a retaguarda, porque na ponta e que os confl itos se expressariam de modo direto, tornando-se visiveis a pleno; (c) arte e igual a novidade, a vanguarda, arte verdadeira implica conquista de novo territorio tematico, de novo procedimento formal, e toda arte que

[396] Ibid. p. 62.
[397] Ibid, ibidem.
[398] GALERA, Daniel. Apresentação. In: TAVARES, Rodrigo. **Ainda que a terra se abra**. Taverna: Porto Alegre, 2020.
[399] FISCHER, 2008, op. cit., p. 105.
[400] Ibid. p. 116.

> apresentar qualquer aspecto de permanencia rebaixa imediatamente seu valor. (...) A soma desses pressupostos, que, repito, nao estao escritos assim mas sao assim praticados, resulta na equacao que perpetua a visao que temos hoje: cidade grande + modernizacao + vanguarda = arte verdadeira; sem qualquer um desses itens, temos arte velha, irrelevante, desprezivel, merecedora no maximo de uma nota de pe de pagina. A soma desses pressupostos resulta na entronizacao de certo tipo de literatura nao como um estilo, uma variedade, mas como a melhor literatura e, nos casos mais extremos, a unica literatura (a unica arte, nos casos delirantes) válida.[401]

The rejection of regionalism is one of the very reasons behind my decision to incorporate regional sources into Chaucer. As Carvalho observes, Brazilian urbanization is still an incomplete process, and countryside underdevelopment is mirrored by urban underdevelopment. Still according to Carvalho, to many city-dwellers, the countryside subsists as a part of their "emotional past". Thence my claim that, for an important part of the Brazilian readership, backcountry language evokes a ghostly world of the past, a lost universe that, in some shadowy way, still surrounds us and defines us. Therefore, backcountry words feel a bit old-fashioned, but close to us, nevertheless, and familiar in a strange way. To create the idea of a world long gone, but at the same time real and strangely alive, I chose words taken from the culture of rural areas and placed it on dramatic passages of Chaucer's poem.

Besides, just as translation itself can be seen as a form of mourning for what cannot be salvaged – as Ricoeur puts it – so regionalist literature, in a way, can be seen as mourning for that which is inevitably lost in any process of modernization. In **Desenveredando Rosa**, Kathryn Rosenfield writes that Rosa "conceives writing as an immense work of mourning, which historical transformations – and even successful reforms – demand from the collective imaginary". Commenting this very passage, Fischer extends the idea of mourning to

> toda a literatura que se ocupa com o lado perdedor, em qualquer das conjunturas historicas. O lado perdedor: aquele que lida com as experiencias e as materias que em qualquer processo de modernizacao vao fi cando para tras, que vao sendo largadas pelo caminho, como a vida na provincia relativamente a vida metropolitana, como a vida rural, relativamente a urbana do lado vencedor, que e o lado da cidade moderna, do capital, da

[401] Ibid, p. 111.

> concentracao de poder, do Estado, da tecnologia, esta a arte euforica, tantas vezes expressa como vanguarda, por sinal; do lado perdedor, do lado que requer o luto, esta a arte disforica, a arte melancolica, tantas vezes expressa como, desculpe insistir tanto assim, "regionalismo" (...) O que estou tentando dizer, e nao sei se encontrei o jeito adequado, e que muito do que e chamado de regionalismo merece ser lido de modo mais agudo, de tal forma que seus aspectos de trabalho de luto sejam vistos historicamente, como o processamento da perda que a modernizacao acarretou, processamento que nao se opoe a, mas que se complementa dialeticamente com, aquele que a arte urbana ou metropolitana produz.[402]

Elevating the "losing" side to the status of aesthetic source, while translating an English classic – English here understood not only as the language of Empire but also as the language of the World, that is, the language of cosmopolitan culture – was a way to add an element of strangeness to my translation; that same strangeness, however, emerges from the "emotional past" of an important part of my desired readership. This hybridism aimed at creating "a spectacle curious enough to be memorable, yet close enough to feel intimate", to use Borges statement about Gauchoesque literature. Also, by blending the regional with a text generally perceived as universal, I endeavored to continue that work of mourning for what is inevitably lost – in translation as in History. But some forms of mourning can be joyful, or at least tragically joyful, as I shall argue in Chapter 4.

Besides word choice, another very important element in my quest for poetical verisimilitude was the choice of meter and rhyme, which I will discuss on the next pages.

3.4 THE CHOICE OF METER AND RHYME

When I began my translation, I had already decided to procure a balance between strangeness and familiarity; I had also decided to blend regionalist vocabulary with "scholarly" – i.e., European or "cosmopolitan" – words and references. However, my first specific choice was that of meter and rhyme. That's how I begun, in pragmatical terms, my *linguistic world-building*. The strategy of blending strangeness and familiarity, in order to create an effect of *translational verisimilitude*, was used first as a means to match Chaucer's combination of flexibility and rigor, his variety of movement within a

[402] Ibid, p. 114-115

fixed pattern. From the onset, I thought the most appropriate meter to recreate Chaucer's rhythm in Portuguese, *within my specific translation project*, would be the *decassílabo* - although I also knew from the beginning that I would have to use this canonical poetic form with a fresh and innovative spirit at least similar to that which Chaucer inculcated in his own riding rhyme. In order to better explain my choice, let us briefly overview the history of the *decassílabo*.

In primitive Galician-Portuguese poetry, which Amorim de Carvalho calls "Poesia medieval pré-trovadoresca", verses was created to accompany music and song[403]. According to Amorim de Carvalho, metrical verse was defined by two technical elements only: the number of syllables and rhyme, generally the so called *rima vocálica* or *toante* or *incompleta*. The idea of rhythmic accent did not exist, i..e, no attention was paid to the position of stressed and unstressed syllables. It was only between the 12 and 14th c. that accent was gradually introduced in Portuguese poetry, through the influence of Provençal troubadours. One of the first types of accentual verse in Portuguese was the *decassílabo provençal*, consisting of ten poetic syllables, with stresses falling on the 4th and 10th positions, also described as a verse line with an accent on the 7th syllbale[404]. The following example is by D. Afonso Sanches:

> Mais eu, senhor, el mal dia nasci
> (...)
> E non atendo por en galardon[405]

Even so, writes Carvalho, rhythmic accent was not mandatory, because poetry was still meant to be either sung or accompanied by music.

> O predomínio da música e do canto é que teria obstado à sistematização que deveria fixar essas formas como ritmos impondo-se pela simples construção verbal. O ritmo que as palavras, por si só, não dessem, dava-o a dicção cantada do verso, pelo que nem sempre importava a colocação dos acentos.[406]

[403] CARVALHO, 1965, op. cit., p. 141-162.
[404] A Teoria do metro de Fabb & Halle e o Decassílabo Português. p. 154. Cadernos de Estudos Lingüísticos (56.1) – Jan./Jun. 2014.
[405] CARVALHO, op. cit., p. 151.
[406] Ibid, p. 150.

According to Carvalho, it was in only the 16th c. that fixed accents on became one of the main elements in Portuguese verse, a metrical procedure whose introduction has been attributed to Sá de Miranda. Influenced by the Italian *undecasilabo*, he is considered to have introduced in Portuguese poetry the *decassílabo heroico* and the *decassílabo sáfico*, both ten-syllable lines – the former with mandatory accents on the 6th and 10th positions; the later, with accents on the 4th, 8th and 10th. Gradually a new concept of versification emerged: from that point onwards, a "verse" came to be understood as a line with a specific number of syllables and rhythmic accentuation[407].

The origins of the decassílabo in Portuguese have been the object of controversy: besides the decassílabo provençal, one must also mention the sometimes called "decassílabo ibérico", with an accent on the 5th syllable, associated with the Spanish "verso de arte maior"[408]. Be it as it may, it is a fact that, after Sá de Miranda and Camões, "Italian accentuation" has been the preferred form of the decassylable, not only among the Portuguese, but also among Brazilian poets such as Gregório de Matos (17th c.), Cláudio Manuel da Costa (18th c.) and Álvarez de Azevedo (19th c.)[409].

However, even in **Os Lusíadas**, where the author uses the same type of *decassílabo* consistently throughout the poem, non mandatory stresses produce a rhythmic movement that prevents monotony and creates the feeling of patterned variation. On the passage bellow, fixed stresses are underlined and non mandatory stresses are highlighted in bold, including secondary stresses:

As **ar**mas e os varões a**ssi**nalados
Que da ocident**al**praia lusitana
Por **ma**res **nun**ca d'antes **na**vegados
Che**ga**ram **in**da além da **Ta**pobrana
Em **guer**ras e perigos **es**forçados
Mais do que permitia a **for**ça humana
E **en**tre **gen**te remota edificaram
Novo **rei**no, que tanto **su**blimaram.[410]

[407] Ibid, ibidem.
[408] ALVAREZ, Beethoven Barreto.**A Teoria do Metro de Fabb & Halle e o Decassílabo Português**. Caderno de Estudos Linguísticos. (56.1), Campinas, Jan./Jun. 2014. p. 154.
[409] ALVAREZ, p. 155.
[410] CAMÕES, Luís de. **Os Lusíadas**. Nova Fronteira, Rio de Janeiro, 1996, p. 17

The *decassílabo* was the verse type chosen by Odorico Mendes to translate *The Aeneid*, *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*, although, naturally, none of these poems were written in anything like decasyllabic verse. Much has been said about the perceived shortcomings of Odorico's translations: Sílvio Romero referred to them as "monstrosities", written in "macaronic Portuguese"; whereas Antonio Cândido dismissed Odorico's legacy with expressions such as "preciosismo do pior gosto", "pedantismo arqueológico" and "ápice da tolice"[411]. Haroldo de Campos, on the other hand, praised Odorico Mendes as the "patriarca da transcriação":

> O pioneirismo odoriciano no enfoque dos problemas da tradução (tanto na prática desta, como nas notas teóricas que deixou a respeito) só poderá ser devidamente avaliado se pusermos em relevo, como traço marcante de todo seu trabalho no campo, a concepção de um sistema coerente de procedimentos que lhe permitisse helenizar ou latinizar o português, em lugar de neutralizar a diferença dessas línguas originais, rasurando-lhe as arestas sintáticas e lexicais em nossa língua.[412]

As already stated in Chapter 1, Odorico's "Hellenization" or "Latinization" of Portuguese is accompanied by a parallel movement: that of translating Homer and Virgil in *decassílabos*, one of the three most traditional meters of Portuguese poetics until the 19th c. (the other being the *redondilhas maior* and *menor*). Thus, the text's *foreignness* is brought up by adhering – with sometimes shocking formal and rhythmic strictness – to the same meter used by Camões and other Portuguese classics. One might argue that the *decassílabo* was the largest meter available to Odorico at the time; but it seems unlikely that the same radical effect of verbal and syntactic brevity, praised by Haroldo de Campos, could have been achieved in prose or in free verse. Effect, here, is the keyword: the verse meter is familiar, whereas its contents are strange. The adherence to the *native* form makes the influx of the *foreign* text to bend and reshape language. In other words, the lasting power of Odorico's translations lies in its balancing of strangeness and familiarity. The familiar verse form becomes foreign under the semantic pressure of the source text, whereas the text's foreignness must also be reshaped in order to fit the familiar meter. Consider for instance the first eight lines from Odorico's *Odisséia*, where the *familiar* decasyllabic rhythm forcefully creates a sort of synthetic *strangeness*:

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[411] CAMPOS, Haroldo. Odorico Mendes: o patriarca da transcriação. in: HOMERO. **Odisseia**. São Paulo: EDUSP, 2000, p. III.

[412] CAMPOS, 2000, op. cit., p. IV.

Canta, ó Musa, o varão astucioso,
Rasa Ílion santa, errou de clima em clima,
Viu de muitas nações costumes vários.
Mil transes padeceu no equóreo ponto,
Por segurar a vida e aos seus a volta;
Baldo afã! Pereceram, tendo, insanos,
Ao claro Hiperômio os bois comido,
Que não quis, no caminho, alumiá-los.

Manuel Maria Barbosa du Bocage has also used the *decassílabo* form to translate another Latin classic: Ovid's *Metamorphosis*; by chosing the decassílabo to render Virgil's hexameters, Bocage can be said to "denote a search for a stylistic equivalence based on the metrical choice"[413]. However, whereas Odorico, under the spell of his synthetic fever, rendered Homer in *fewer* lines than the original, Bocage opted for the opposite strategy, sometimes *inflecting* the content of a line into two verses, in order to fit a given amount of information into the chosen rhythm. For instance, Ovid's line "Hanc deus et melior litem natura diremit" becomes, in Bocage's translation,

Um Deus, outra mais alta Natureza
à contínua discórdia enfim põe termo (...).

Similarly, these four lines (16-19)

Sic erat instabilis tellus, innabilis unda,
lucis egens aer: nulli sua forma manebat,
obstabatque aliis aliud, quia corpore in uno
frigida pugnabant calidis, umentia siccis (...)[414]

are translated into eight verses:

as águas eram pois inavegáveis,
os ares negros, movediça a terra,

[413] THAMOS, Márcio. **Do Hexâmetro ao Decassílabo Equivalência Estilística Baseada na Materialidade da Expressão**. Scientia Traductionis, n.10, 2011. p. 206.
[414] OVÍDIO. **Metamorfoses**. Trad. Manuel Maria Barbosa du Bocage. Hedra: São Paulo, 2006, p. 38.

forma nenhuma em nenhum corpo havia,
e nelas uma cousa a outra obstava,
que em cada qual dos embriões enormes
pugnavam frio, e quente, húmido e seco (...)[415]

Let us take a closer look at how the process of *verse inflection* works in the translation of lines 16 and 17 from the **Metamorphoses**; for clarity's sake, Bocage's corresponding lines will be referred to as (A), (B), (C). A literal rendering of "Sic erat instabillis tellus, innabilis unda / lucis egens aer: nulli sua forma manebat" might be "Thus the land was unstable, the waves unfit to sail, / the air without light: nothing remained in its own form". The information that "the waves" were "unfit to sail" is found at the end of line 16: "innabilis unda". Bocage turns these two words into a whole verse, in (A): "as águas eram pois inavegáveis". The information that "the land was unstable" is moved to the end of line (B), displacing the half-line "nulli sua forma manebat", which occupied the corresponding position on line 17 and then moves to the next line, becoming an entire new verse, (C). The translation movement is illustrated bellow, with the corresponding pieces of information highlighted in the same colors:

16Sic erat instabilis tellus, innabilis unda,
17lucis egens aer: nulli sua forma manebat

(A)as águas eram pois inavegáveis,
(B)os ares negros, movediça a terra,
(C)forma nenhuma em nenhum corpo havia

As a result of *verse inflection*, Bocage's achieves a readable, fluent translation, without Odorico's characteristic (and sometimes charming) obscurity. When I chose the *decassílabo* as the *main* poetic form to be used in **Contos da Cantuária**, I also decided to absorb elements from both translators mentioned above: Odorico's blend of strangeness and familiarity; and Bocage's readability. My second decision, soon after choosing the main verse form, was to use verse inflection when needed, in order to fit the necessary amount of information into the ten-syllable meter. English words tend to be shorter than their Portuguese equivalents, so it is generally difficult and sometimes

[415] Ibid, p. 39.

impossible, to arrange all the content of an iambic pentameter into a single *decassílabo*. According to Dryden, the same difficulty arises when one translates from Latin into English, as Latin brevity could hardly be matched by any Modern language; in Dryden's words, as we have seen, confining oneself "to the Compass of Numbers" is like "dancing on Ropes with fetter'd Leggs", which compromises the "gracefulness of Motion"[416].

As an example of verse inflection in **Contos da Cantuária**, consider the translation of lines 1195 to 1201 from *The Knight's Tale*. The source text is quoted below:

> Ther saugh I first the derke ymaginyng
> Of Felonye, and al the compassyng;
> The crueel Ire, reed as any gleede;
> The pykepurs, and eek the pale drede;
> The smylere with the knyf under the cloke;
> The shepne brennynge with the blake smoke;
> The tresoun of the mordrynge in the bedde (...)[417]

Firstly, let us translate those six lines to free verse in Modern English:

> There I saw, firstly, the dark imaginings [malicious plotting]
> of Felony, and all that was around it;
> cruel Ire, red as a glowing coal;
> the pickpockets, and also pale Dread;
> the man who smiled while hiding a knife under the cloak;
> the stable burning in black smoke;
> The treason of the murder under the bed (...)

Now, a translation in Portuguese, also in six lines:

> Lá eu vi, primeiro, as negras imaginações [ardis maliciosos]
> da Vilania, e tudo o que a cercava;
> a Ira cruel, rubra feito carvão em brasa;

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[416] DRYDEN, John. **The Preface to *Ovid's Epistles* (1680)**. Traduction et édition: Marie-Alice Belle, Université de Montréal. Le Traducter tradui. Textes théoriques sur la traduction. Disponível em: https://ttt.hypotheses.org/159. Acesso em 20 de fevereiro de 2019.

[417] CHAUCER, 1996, op. cit., p. 71.

os batedores de carteira, e também o pálido Horror [Terror, Medo, Espanto];
o homem que sorri enquanto esconde uma faca sob o manto;
o estábulo ardendo em fumo preto;
a traição do assassinato sob a cama (...)

And, finally, the decassyllabic translation, inflected in eight verses:

E vi sobre as paredes o retrato
Da Vilania, e as teias que compõe
Com suas negras imaginações;
E a Ira eu vi, vermelha como as brasas,
O sorrateiro Roubo, e as vis carcaças
Do pálido Terror, lívido Espanto;
E um homem que sorri, mas sob o manto
Esconde a faca aguda; e o fumo arisco
Da fazenda queimada e dos apriscos;
A Traição, que mata sob a cama (...)[418]

Now, consider the source passage and the final translated stanza, with colored highlights showing how verse inflection rearranged semantic information along the lines:

Ther saugh I firstthe derke ymaginyng
Of Felonye, and al the compassyng;
The crueel Ire, reed as any gleede;
The pykepurs, and eek the pale drede;
The smylere with the knyf under the cloke;
The shepne brennynge with the blake smoke;
The tresoun of the mordrynge in the bedde (...)

(A) E vi sobre as paredes o retrato
(B) Da Vilania, e as teias que compõe
(C) Com suas negras imaginações;
(D) E a Ira eu vi, vermelha como as brasas,

[418] CHAUCER, 2013, op. cit., p. 83

(E) O sorrateiro Roubo, e as vis carcaças
(F) Do pálido Terror, lívido Espanto;
(G) E um homem que sorri, mas sob o manto
(H) Esconde a faca aguda; e o fumo arisco
(I) Da fazenda queimada e dos apriscos;
(J) A Traição, que mata sob a cama (...)

As can be clearly seen on the half stanza above, verse inflection, in this particular case, is facilitated by the riding rhyme form. A couplet can be easily turned into two couplets, and new rhymes can be added, without changing the rhyming scheme. It is also clear that verse inflection affords "latitude", i. e., a measure of creative space where the translator can experiment with different solutions and add his or her particular flavor within the boundaries of the text's "spirit" (here understood as the combination of semantic and aesthetic information). It also allows the translator to avoid abstruse syntactic inversions or inappropriate word-choices while still keeping a metrical line. The rhymes connecting lines (D) and (E), for instance, were only possible by the adding of "e as vis carcaças" at the end of line (D) - there is no semantic equivalent to that expression in the original passage, but it works within boundaries set by the source text and functions as a means to create formal correspondence.

We are now in a position to answer maybe the most important question raised by Nabokov in his Foreword to **Eugene Oneguin**: "can a rhymed poem like *Eugene Oneguin* be truly translated with the retention of its rhymes? The answer, of course, is no. To reproduce the rhymes and yet translate the entire poem literally is mathematically impossible"[419]. Nabokov's solution, as we have already seen, is to "forget all about form", although he admits that "in losing its rhyme the poem loses its bloom, which neither marginal description nor the alchemy of scholium can replace". He then proceeds to explain his idea of a translation's function through an equine metaphor: "Pushkin has likened translators to horses changed at the post houses of civilization. The greatest reward I can think of is that students may use my work as a pony"[420].

The idea that a poem can be "truly translated" by the same process through which it "loses its bloom" is, of course, logically absurd. For it to be true, it would be necessary to consider a poem exclusively as a specific amount of semantic information

[419] NABOKOV, op. cit., p. ix
[420] NABOKOV, op. cit., p. x

contained within a given number of lines; in which case there would be no difference between

> Valeu a pena? Tudo vale a pena
> se a alma não é pequena

and

> Tudo vale o sacrifício se a alma não é pequena.

In one respect, however, Nabokov is not totally far from truth: in some cases, indeed, "to reproduce the rhymes and yet translate the entire poem literally [i. e., reproduce all its semantic information] is mathematically impossible". It is, in fact, mathematically impossible – but only if the translator is set to "reproduce" not only rhymes and the entire semantic information, but all formal aspects as closely as possible, such as line length and line number. By sacrificing some of those elements, the translator might then "reproduce" the others. One might then argue that the result would not be "the same poem"; but the same applies to literal translations, which, in most cases, are not poems at all.

That surely does not mean that literal translations do not have their own value. They certainly do, and Nabokov's **Eugene Oneguin** (despite the translator's nonchalance show of modesty) is much more than a pony. My argument against Nabokov, however, is that a "true translation" is formally possible as long as it is understood as creative transposition. Em *Da transcriação: poética e semiótica da operação tradutora* and *Da tradução como criação e como crítica*, Haroldo de Campos tackles the dogma of poetic untranslatability, as presented by Roman Jakobson and Max Bense. According to Bense,

> [o] total de informação de uma informação estética é em cada caso igual ao total de sua realização [donde], pelo menos em princípio, sua intraduzibilidade [...] Em outra língua, será uma outra informação estética, ainda que seja igual semanticamente. Disto decorre, ademais, que a informação estética não pode ser semanticamente interpretada.[421]

[421] BENSE, Max. Das Existenzproblem der Kuntz. Apud: CAMPOS, Haroldo. **Metalinguagem & outras metas.** São Paulo: Perspectiva, 1992, p. 33.

Jakobson offers and even more extreme elaboration of the untranslatability dogma, but, paradoxically, leaves the door open to a different kind of operation, which he does not call "translation", but "creative transpositon":

> Em poesia, as equações verbais tornam-se princípio constitutivo do texto. As categorias sintáticas e morfológicas, as raízes, os afixos, os fonemas e seus componentes (traços distintivos) – em suma, todos os constituintes do código verbal – são confrontados, justapostos, colocados em relação de contigüidade de acordo com o princípio de similaridade e contraste, e transmitem assim uma significação própria. [...] O trocadilho, ou, para empregar um termo mais erudito, e talvez mais preciso, a paronomásia, reina sobre a arte poética; quer esta dominação seja absoluta ou limitada, a poesia, por definição, é intraduzível. Só é possível a transposição criativa. [422]

Commenting on those passages, Campos observes[423] that the problem of untranslatability refers not only to poetry, but also to prose works that "attribute primatial importance to the treatment of words as objects". As for the translation of such *texts* – Campos's preferred category, instead of the traditional dichotomy between prose and poetry –, it's precisely its impossibility that opens the way to a different kind of operation, *limited, but not determined*, by semantic information:

> Admitida a tese da impossibilidade em princípio da tradução de textos criativos, parece-nos que esta engendra o corolário da possibilidade, também em princípio, da recriação desses textos. Teremos, como quer Bense, em outra língua, uma outra informação estética, autônoma, mas ambas estarão ligadas entre si por uma relação de isomorfia: serão diferentes enquanto linguagem, mas, como os corpos isomorfos, cristalizar-se-ão dentro de um mesmo sistema. (...) Então, para nós, tradução de textos criativos será sempre recriação, ou criação paralela, autônoma porém recíproca. Quanto mais inçado de dificuldades esse texto, mais recriável, mais sedutor enquanto possibilidade aberta de recriação. Numa tradução dessa natureza, não se traduz apenas o significado, traduz-se o próprio signo, ou seja, sua fisicalidade, sua materialidade mesma (propriedades sonoras, de imagética visual, enfim tudo aquilo que forma, segundo Charles Morris, a iconicidade do signo estético, entendido por “signo icônico” aquele “que é de certa maneira similar àquilo que ele

[422] JAKOBSON, Roman. Lingüística e Comunicação. Apud: CAMPOS, 2011, op. cit. p. 20.
[423] CAMPOS, 2011, op. cit., p. 33

> denota"). O significado, o parâmetro semântico, será apenas e tão-somente a baliza demarcatória do lugar da empresa recriadora. Está-se pois no avesso da chamada tradução literal.[424]

Verse inflection, at first sight, might be interpreted as a departure from form. However, when used in order to enable meter and rhyme, it can be seen as a tool in service of isomorphism. As already glimpsed in previous paragraphs, the same can be said about *line lengthening*, a procedure that may be used, for instance, after the translator decides to keep the number of lines in a given passage. Verse inflection works smoothly with blank verse and riding rhyme, but the same cannot be said about more complex rhyme schemes, such as the ABABBCBC structure used by Chaucer in *The Monk's Tale*. There is no way of inflecting verse lines within such a scheme without breaking up the stanzaic form. Thus, I decided to translate *The Monks Tale* into *alexandrinos*, i. e., twelve-syllable verses with a caesura on the sixth position. Consider for example lines 2015 to 2022, shown below, and my translation:

> Loo Sampsoun, which that was annunciat
> By th'angel longe er his nativitee,
> And was to God almyghty consecrat,
> And stood in noblesse whil he myghte see.
> Was nevere swich another as was hee,
> To speke of strengthe, and threwith hardynesse
> But to his wyves toolde he his secree
> Thurgh which he slow hymself for wrecchednesse.[425]

My translation:

> Bem antes de nascer, por santa anunciação,
> O grande herói hebreu foi por um anjo ungido.
> Consagrado por Deus, marcado foi Sansão;
> Nobremente viveu, até que foi traído,
> E um outro chefe igual depois jamais foi visto.
> Tinha uma mente forte e via com clareza,
> Mas por uma mulher perdeu o seu juízo,

[424] CAMPOS, 2011,. op. cit., p. 34.
[425] BENSON, op. cit., p. 242.

Ficou cego de fato - e morre na tristeza.[426]

Both the *decassílabo* and the *dodecassílabo* are identified with canonical literature and highbrow poetry in Portuguese and Brazilian Literature. As my strategy was one of negotiation and balance, I decided to combine these two types of meter with the so-called *rima toante* – a type of rhyme formerly associated with popular poetry and sometimes used in popular songs. Whereas the *rima consoante*, associated with highbrow poetry, matches all sounds after the final stressed syllable, *rima toante* matches only the final stressed vowel in each line and sometimes the vowels that follow it. This type of rhyme was used by the Iberian troubadours in the Middle Ages and by the Spanish in the Golden Century; over time, it was replaced in scholarly poetry by *rima consoante*[427]. This excerpt from **Tratado de metrificação portugueza** by Antonio Feliciano de Castilho, shows how discredited *rima toante* had become in erudite poetry the 19th-c., but also glimpses at how it managed to survive in popular poetry:

> Dos toantes ninguém se serve hoje na Europa, senão os castelhanos; foram eles que em Portugal os introduziram com o uso de sua língua pelo tempo dos Felipes, e a moda, posto que não das mais guapas, sobreviveu ainda muito à sua dominação; pelo reinado de D. João V ainda *discretos* se prestavam em escrever em toantes longos romances sérios, jocosos e joco-sérios, que por via de regra só faziam rir quando menos desejavam.
> Com os *conceitos*, *gongorismos* e *trocadilhos* de palavras, passaram os toantes.
> Da Arcádia para cá, poucos vestígios deles se encontrarão, a não ser pelos serões de aldeia, alguma trova improvisada em descantes dos rústicos; é por isso que nessa matéria só direi quanto baste para que o estudioso de versificação não fique totalmente desconhecendo essa partícula fóssil de sua arte. [428]

Relegated to "rustic songs" and "improvised poetry" in the 19th-c., both in Portugal and in Spain, the *rima toante* relived across the Atlantic in some of the most celebrated works of Gauchoesque Poetry. Consider for instance in the following passage from **Santos Vega**, by Hilario Ascasubi, the use of *rima toante* through the repetition of the vowels *a* and *o*:

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[426] CHAUCER, op. cit., p. 240.
[427] CASTILHO, Antonio Feliciano de. **Tratado de metrificação portugueza**. Lisboa: Casa dos Editores, 1858. p.109.
[428] CASTILHO, op. cit., p.110.C

Qué festejos, que alegría,
en la estancia y en el pago
originó um nascimiento
tan feliz e inesperado!
Corrióluegola noticia
Com la prontitú del rayo,
y a ver al reciénnacido
se descolgó el vecindario,
trayéndole parabienes
al señor don Bejarano,
que a todos los recebía
agradecido y ufano.[429]

As already noted, nativist music in Rio Grande do Sul was influenced by the Lusophone tradition and also by poetry and literature from the Riverplate countries[430]. It should not come as a surprise, then, that the *rima toante* is to be abundantly found in the Gaúcho songbook. Consider for instance the following excerpt from the song *Loco por Chamamé* by Luiz Bastos:

A barca ia rio afora
E uma morena de lá sorriu.
Botou uma flor no **cabelo**
Me atirou um **beijo**
E depois sumiu.
Morena, fique sabendo
Que eu quero mesmo mudar de **vida**.
Já chega de **pantomima**
Co' essas meninas de má **bebida**[431].

Consider also this excerpt from *Filosofia de Gaudério*, one of the greatest classics in the Gaúcho songbook, by Noel Guarany:

E se por peão pobre eu **ando**,

[429] ASCASUBI, Hilario. Santos Vega. In: BORGES; BIOY CASARES, op. cit., p. 319.
[430] SANTI, op. cit.
[431] BASTOS, Luiz. Canção: Louco por Chamamé. In: **As Melhores Canções Gaúchas, vol. 2**. Porto Alegre: USA Discos, s/d.

E se me alegro com meu **canto**,
Meus versos cheirando a **campo**
Faz-me prever sonhador:
Que se eu nasci pra cantor,
Eu hei de morrer **cantando**.[432]

The above examples show not only the presence of *rima toante* in the Gaúcho songbook, but its alternations with *rima consoante*. In the first example, *cabelo/beijo* and *bebida/meninas/pantomima* are *rimas toantes*, whereas *viu/sorriu* is a *rima consoante*. In the second example, *ando/canto/campo* are *toantes*, whereas *sonhador/cantor* is *consoante*. A combination of *rimas consoantes* and *rimas toantes* can also be found in other regional musical traditions in Brazil. Consider, for example, the following extract from *A Morte do Vaqueiro*, by Luiz Gonzaga:

O vaqueiro nordestino
Vive sem ganhar tostão.
O seu nome é esquecido
Nas quebradas do sertão.

There's a *rima toante* connecting "nordestino" and "esquecido", whereas the rhyme between "tostão" and "sertão" is *consoante*. It is worth noticing that, according to Castilho, the combination of the two types of rhyme was not the usual practice among the original users of *rima toante*:

> A rima toante só se empregava em períodos regulares de quatro versos, quer de dez sílabas ou heroicos, quer de sete sílabas ou redondilhos; esta segunda era a mais usual; o primeiro e o terceiro verso eram soltos; os toantes estavam no segundo e no quarto. O canto começando por uma espécie de toante tinha a obrigação de continuar por ela até ao fim (...). Dois consoantes ou rimas perfeitas numa só quadra eram para eles tão defesos quanto o seria para nós uma rima imperfeita. [433]

Cecília Meirelles follows the same pattern in ***Romanceiro da Inconfidência***: througout the several *romances* that form her book, the author uses either the *rima toante*

[432] GUARANY, Noel. Canção: Filosofia Gaudério. In: **Sem Fronteira**. Rio de Janeiro: EMI/Odeon, 1975.

[433] CASTILHO, op. cit., p. 110.

or the *consoante*, never mixing both in the same poem. Consider, as an example, the following excerpt from *Romance I, ou da revelação do ouro*:

> Nos sertões americanos,
> anda um povo desgrenhado:
> gritam pássaros em fuga
> sobre fugitivos riachos;
> desenrolam-se os novelos
> das cobras, sarapintados;
> espreitam, de olhos luzentes,
> os satíricos macacos.
> Súbito, brilha um chão de ouro:
> corre-se -é luz sobre um charco.
>
> A zoeira dos insetos
> cresce, nos vales fechados,
> com o perfume das resinas
> e desse mel delicado
> que se acumula nas flores
> em grãos de veludo e orvalho.
> (Por onde é que andas, ribeiro,
> descoberto por acaso?)
> Grossos pés firmam-se em pedras:
> sob os chapéus desabados,
>
> O olhar galopa no abismo,
> vai revolvendo o planalto;
> descobre os índios desnudos,
> que se escondem, timoratos;
> calcula ventos e chuvas;
> mede os montes, de alto a baixo (...)[434]

My strategy, therefore, was to combine the so called "fossile particle" of Portuguese verse with two of the most prestigious verse forms in the language: the *decassílabo* and the *alexandrino*. Besides the desired combination between scholarly and

[434] MEIRELLES, Cecília. **Romanceiro da Inconfidência**. São Paulo: Círculo do Livro, 1953, p. 10.

popular elements, the use of rima toante afforded a much ampler array of word choices, which, again, prevented painful inversions and the fossilization of verse lines into a far-fetched, impenetrably rigid structure — an occasional side-effect of having to match all vowells and all consonants in every translated rhyme. I used the *rima toante* not like it was used in the Medieval and Renaissance *romances*, but as I found it in the Gauchoesque songbook and in other forms of regional popular music, that is, alternating it with complete or perfect rhyme according to semantic and rhythmic needs. The choice of this "rustic" rhyme, as Castilho put it, serves as a form of preparation for the vocabulary games that will be established througout the translation. In order to bring the Brazilian reader closer to Chaucer's poem, without, however, neutralizing the strangeness of the text, I chose to create a linguistic universe in which Brazilian or South-American culture could be "medievalized" in a thruth-like way or where, inversely, the medieval text could go through a process of *acriollamiento*: so that both spheres contaminate each other, creating something new.

4. TRANSLATION COMMENTARY

4.1 PRÓLOGO GERAL: COMMENTARY

The General Prologue of **The Canterbury Tales** has been praised by a variety of reasons. Many critics describe it as a realistic depiction of the diverse social types in Chaucer's period and an accurate study in individual psychology. Nevil Coghill, for instance, writes:

> Em toda a literatura, não há nada que se assemelhe ao "Prólogo geral" dos *Contos da Cantuária*. É o retrato conciso de toda uma nação: ricos e pobres, nobres e humildes, velhos e jovens, homens e mulheres, religiosos e leigos, eruditos e iletrados, honestos e embusteiros; a terra e o mar, a cidade e o campo; tudo está lá, mas sem excessos nem exageros. Além da assombrosa e nuançada clareza com que são apresentados, o traço mais notável nesses personagens é sua normalidade. Eles são a perpétua progênie de homens e mulheres; agudamente individuais, eles formam, estando juntos, uma companhia.[435]

The General Prologue is the largest part of the intricate frame narrative that describes the pilgrim's journey and interactions, the other parts being the several individual Prologues to each tale. Story-collections were common in the Middle Ages, but no other has such a dynamic and suggestive frame. For one thing, the characters depicted are immensely diverse, something that did not happen in other similar works; besides, they interact in surprising and dramatic ways that sometimes influence the telling of the tales, and that too is a Chaucerian innovation. In the **Decameron**, for instance, the story-tellers are uniformly aristocratic and each one is demanded to tell a tale on an assigned topic. In Chaucer's work, the pilgrims come from a wide range of social strata and their storytelling is subject to sudden interruptions, unexpected debates and changes of direction[436]. All those interactions are set in motion by the magnificent descriptions of the pilgrims in The General Prologue.

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[435] CHAUCER, 1988, op. cit., p. 15.
[436] CHAUCER, 1988, op. cit., p.127

Those descriptions have a timeless quality, but they are also especially impressive if compared to other medieval literary works. The following example, from the **Historia Destructionis Troiae**, by Guido delle Colonne, describing the moment when Paris first saw Helen, has been pointed as a model of portraiture in an influential medieval rhetorical manual:

> He also admired how her even shoulder-blades, by a gentle descent to her flat back, with a depression between them, joined each side gracefully and pleasantly. He admired her arms, which were of proper length to induce the sweetest embraces, while her hands were plump and a little rounded, and the slender tips of her fingers, which were proportionally long, revealed ivory nails.[437]

Chaucer's Prologue offers a huge contrast to such passages. While his descriptions are equally detailed, they are also much more vivid and varied. Not all portraits are complimentary, and sometimes vices and virtues are pointed or suggested in the same stanza, or even in the same couplet.

Chaucer's diversity of tone in The General Prologue is coupled with lively details, both visual and psychological: the Prioress's fine table manners and mispronounced French; the Cook's "mormal", the Miller's wart and the Pardoner's weird complexion. The literary excellence of those portraits has lead many scholars to argue that Chaucer must have had real-life models for his characters[438]. However, how far goes Chaucer's so-called realism? The Knight's exploits contain references to several places where the English have fought during the 13th and 14th centuries, but no single warrior could have fought all the battles attributed to him[439]. As Jill Mann has shown in *Medieval States Satire*, Chaucer's portraits were based on traditional descriptions of different occupations or "states"; however, Chaucer individualizes them by adding details or elusive tips that in most cases are just glimpses, and remain unexplained. When talking about the Man of Law, for instance, Chaucer writes a famous couplet: 'Nowher so bisy a man as he ther nas, / And yet he semed bisier than he was'; literally: Nowhere there was a busier man, and yet he looked busier than he was. These lines, as many others in Chaucer, suggest much more than they actually state: we are never clarified as to how busy the Man of

[437] Guido delle Colonne, Historia Destructionis Troiae, trans. Mary E. Meek (Bloomington, Ind., 1974. In: BOITANI, op. cit., p. 129
[438] BENSON, C. David. The Canterbury Tales: personal drama or experiments in poetic variety? In: BOITANI, op. cit., p. 131.
[439] Ibid, ibidem.

Law really was, or why he needed to look busier than reality. As C. David Benson points out, "Chaucer's most subtle portraits stubbornly avoid final judgment and thus allow a range of interpretation"[440]. There is much to be learnt in terms of historical detail from The General Prologue and other portrait passages in the **Tales**, but Chaucer's mastery is not in giving us a realistic picture of late medieval English life, but in creating "the illusion of life-like individuality"[441] through a series of sophisticated innuendos that are never fully solved. In other words, in literary terms, Chaucer's verisimilitude is more important than Chaucer's realism, and it works through the balance of estate descriptions (familiarity) and well-placed ambiguities (strangeness). Therefore his verse is a privileged space for translation understood as balance, negotiation[442] and linguistic world-building.

My attempt to mix the scholarly and the colloquial, the *regio* and the *urbs* (or, rather, the *orbs*), the down-to-earth and the archaic, in a way that would produce a significant and cohesive (if diverse) whole can be observed from the first lines of the poem. In the Prólogo's opening, as in many other passages, I played with word order to create a symphonic effect, balancing the colloquial and the high-minded, and also poetry and storytelling. In passages that were more markedly narrative, when the fluency of storytelling seemed to me the dominating element, I would chose a syntax that would render the story itself more readable and engaging. However, in more rhetorical or sententious bits, I went to great lengths to respect Chaucer's syntax in order to retain its solemnity.

Consider now the first lines of The General Prologue:

> Whan that Aprille with his shoures soote,
> The droghte of March hath perced to the roote,
> And bathed every veyne in swich licour
> Of which vertu engendred is the flour;
> Whan Zephirus eek with his swete breeth
> Inspired hath in every holt and heeth
> The tendre croppes, and the yonge sonne
> Hath in the Ram his halfe cours y-ronne,

[440] Ibid, p. 131.
[441] Ibid, ibidem.
[442] For the idea of negatiation, see: ECO, Umberto. Interpretar não é traduzir. In: _____. Quase a mesma coisa. Tradução de Eliana Aguiar. Rio de Janeiro: Record, 2007. 458p. (p. 265 – 298), p. 266.

> And smale foweles maken melodye,
> That slepen al the nyght with open ye,
> So priketh hem Nature in hir corages,
> Thanne longen folk to goon on pilgrimages,
> And palmeres for to seken straunge strondes,
> To ferne halwes, kowthe in sondry londes;
> And specially, from every shires ende
> Of Engelond, to Caunterbury they wende,
> The hooly blisful martir for to seke,
> That hem hath holpen whan that they were seeke. [443]
>
> [Prose translation: Quando abril, com as suas doces chuvas, cortou pela raiz toda a aridez de março, banhando os veios com o liquido que pode gerar a flor; quando Zéfiro também, com seu sopro perfumado, instilou vida em tenros brotos, pelos bosques e campinas; quando o sol na juventude percorreu metade de seu curso em Áries; e os passarinhos, ficando a noite inteira de olho aberto, gorjeiam melodiosamente, com os corações espicaçados pela Natureza, – então sentem as pessoas vontade de peregrinar; e os palmeirins, o desejo de buscar plagas estranhas, com santuários distantes, famosos em vários países. E rumam principalmente, de todos os condados da Inglaterra, para a cidade de Cantuária, à procura do bendito e santo mártir que os auxiliara na doença.]

In Brazilian Portuguese, the most natural rendering of the initial lines would be: “Quando Abril com suas doces chuvas trespassou a secura de Maio.” This rendering, however, lacks any rhythm and does not make justice to the suggestive gravity of Chaucer's opening. I might have inverted the line thusly: "Quando as doces chuvas de Abril trespassaram a secura de Maio"; in that case, however,“the showres soote”(*as doces chuvas*) would be the first and main element in the line. But I wanted to keep April as the “first entity” mentioned in the Tales. Here’s my rendition of *The General Prologue* famous beginning:

[443] CHAUCER, 1996, op. cit., p. 3.

Quando o chuvoso Abril em doce aragem
Desfez Março e a secura da estiagem

I kept April as the "first entity" in the line, but I qualified it with the adjective *chuvoso* (rainy). Thus the "showers" were turned into an adjective instead of a noun. But I still had to add the showers' "sweetness" to the line, so I completed it with *"em doce aragem*." So here we have the rain, the sweetness, and April as the first "character". I negotiated with Chaucer's line and found a balance; I left "my mark," but in a way that would preserve an element that I found essential to the original: the gravity, the solemnity of the opening lines, and the hypnotic dominance of April.

Aragem is a very literary choice; the more current word for a "breath of air" would be *brisa*. Nevertheless, it can also be heard in the rural areas of the Southern country. It is widely known that old expressions and archaic vocabulary forms survive in the recesses of Brazilian *interior*; the dialect spoken in Pernambuco and Alagoas, for instance, registered at least until the beginning of the 20th c. the pronunciation of the word *estômago* as *estõmago*, which is closer to the archaic form, *estâmago*[444]. So it happens with *aragem*, and also with *estiagem*, which stems from *estio* – an archaic term for "summer." Both words can be heard in the backcountry, along with the verb *estiar*.

Farther ahead on the same stanza, I translated thusly:

E melodiam pássaros despertos
Que à noite dormem de olhos bem abertos
Conforme a Natureza determina
- É que o tempo chegou das **romarias**.
E lá se vão expertos **palmeirins**
Rumo a terras e altares e confins...

Here, consider the words *romaria* and *palmeirins*. Now, the fourth line in this passage translates Chaucer's "Than longen folk to goon on pilgrimages." The first word that sprung to my mind for "pilgrimages" was *peregrinações*; and, actually, my first version of this passage reads: *"é tempo então das peregrinações."* However, I soon switched to *romaria* – which allowed me to incorporate a reference to Brazil's rich tradition of popular religious beliefs. *Romaria*, on the one hand, is a medieval word,

[444] MARROQUIM, Mario. **A Língua do Nordeste**. São Paulo: Companhia Editora Nacional, 1934, p. 41

dated from the 13th c. according to **Houaiss**, and deriving from Rome, "being that city the center of Christian pilgrimages, a meaning later amplified to all kinds of peregrinations"[445]. On the other hand, it has become closely associated with Brazilian culture, as the popular Catholic pilgrimages that happen throughout the country are referred to as *romarias* and not *peregrinações.* The specific use of the word is attested, for instance, by Câmara Cascudo in **Dicionário do Folclore Brasileiro**. Cascudo defines "romaria" not as the act of going in a pilgrimage, but as the group of pilgrims that performs a religious travel, in order to pray at the tomb of individuals considered as saints or miracle-workers, or to visit churches and sanctuaries[446]. Houaiss defines romaria both as a religious voyage, as the assemblage of people that perform that voyage, and as the religious festivities that take place around churches or sanctuaries. According to Cascudo, the *romaria* tradition was brought to Brazil by the Portuguese, in the colonial period, and all Brazilian states have "places of local predilection for romarias, *orago* celebrations, etc." [447] The most important *romaria* sites, according to Cascudo, are: Nossa Senhora de Nazaré (Belém do Pará), São Francisco de Canindé (Canindé, Ceará), Bom Jesus do Bonfim (Itapagipe, Bahia), Bom Jesus da Lapa (Pirapora, Bahia), Nossa Senhora de Aparecida (São Paulo), Bom Jesus de Pirapora (also in São Paulo). In Juazeiro, Ceará, tens of thousands of people gather anually to pray at the tomb of Padre Cícero Romão Batista; although the Church never canonized Cícero, he is the enduring object of popular veneration, and the popular *romarias* around his tomb are also an economic phenomenon, with the sales of statues, paintings, handmade mementos[448], etc. In Rio Grande do Sul, there are romarias to the tomb of Padre Roque Gonçalves (Missões), to the Church of Nossa Senhora de Caravaggio (Farroupilha), to the church of Santa Rita Cássia (Porto Alegre) and to the Santo Antão sanctuary (Santa Maria)[449]. The romarias are the object of folkloric interets, adds Cascudo, for the variety of elements that converge unto the pilgrimage: dances, chants, foods, apparel, garments, the diverse expressions of religious syncretism, the fulfillment of promises, the delivery of *ex-votos*, almsgiving, and popular assistence to liturgies [450]. A fascinating element in the word *romaria* is that is bridges the time gap, connecting past and present with peculiar vehemence: as Cascudo points out,

[445] HOUAISS, op. cit.. p. 2472.
[446] CASCUDO, Câmara. **Dicionário do Folclore Brasileiro.** São Paulo: Global Editora, 2001, p. 602.
[447] Ibid, ibidem.
[448] ANDRADE, Maria do Carmo. Romarias. **Pesquisa Escolar Online**, Fundação Joaquim Nabuco, Recife. Disponível em: <http://basilio.fundaj.gov.br/pesquisaescolar/>. Acesso em: 6 ago. 2020.
[449] CASCUDO, op. cit., p. 603.
[450] Ibid, p. 602.

original *romarias* to Aparecida were performed on ox-driven carts that stopped at the city limits, and from that point on the pilgrims or *romeiros* would proceed by foot, performing acts of penance, like carrying stones over their heads; later, pilgrims started to arrive by trucks, trains or cars. "Venham de perto ou de muito longe, as romarias mantêm a sua força como manifestação de fé e religiosidade, mobilizando devotos a percorrer distâncias a cavalo ou a pé, se possível, nos mais diversos tipos de veículos: bicicletas, charretes, motos e até ônibus fretados" [451]. Simultaneously very medieval and very Brazilian, *romaria* points to Chaucer's world and also to the reader's world; it's very familiar (as such pilgrimages are still in use today), but also adds a touch of strangeness, precisely because it quietly interweaves a rich Brazilian imagery into an English poem – and not any poem, but one considered fundamental to the origins of English literature.

Now consider the next line*: "*E lá se vão expertos palmeirins*."* My first option was to translate "palmers" as *peregrinos*. However, I wanted to give an exclusive touch of medieval Portugal here, just after the multiple resonance of *romaria*; therefore I chose the word "palmeirins," whose origins lie in the 16th c., but whose resonances are medieval, as it probably derives from **Palmeirín de Olivia**[452], an anonymous chivalric romance published in Salamanca in 1511 and sometimes attributed to Francisco Vásquez[453]. **Palmeirín de Olivia** was one of many works influenced by **Amadis de Gaula**, a chivalric romance published by Garci Rodríguez de Montalvo in Saragoça in 1508, but based on two lost versions whose origins lie in the 14th c[454]. Both the **Palmeirín** and the **Amadis** belong in the genre of "cyclic" chivalric narratives, begun by the prosification of the Matière de Bretagne, which Chrétien de Troyes had first put into verse during the 12th c[455]. **Estoire del Saint Graal**, **Estoire de Merlin**, **Lancelot Du Lac** and **Queste del Saint Graal** are some of the prose romances written during the Middle Ages (between 1215 and 1235) that inspired the chivalric fever in the Iberian Peninsula in the 16th and 17th centuries (**Queste del Saint Graal** was translated as **Demanda do Santo Graal in Portugal**)[456]. **Palmeirín de Olivia** combined elements inherited from previous romances with innovations that would be passed on to future works – for instance, the setting of the action in Constantinople and a love affair between two rival families, a

[451] Ibid, p. 603.
[452] HOUAISS, op. cit., p. 2112.
[453] MONGELLI, Lênia Márcia; MORAES, Francisco. **Palmeirim de Inglaterra**. São Paulo: Ateliê Editorial, 2016, p. 9-10.
[454] Ibid, p. 8.
[455] Ibid, p. 7.
[456] Ibid, p. 8.

motif until then unknown in chivalric literature[457]. **Palmeirín de Olivia** gave rise to several sequels, such as **Primaléon** (1512), sometimes also attributed to Francisco Vásquez, and **Palmeirim de Inglaterra**, written in Portuguese by Francisco de Moraes c. 1544[458]. Moraes's **Palmeirim** transplanted the chivalric genre to Portugal, where four sequels were written between 1587 and 1602[459].

Therefore, those two initial lines resonate deeply with specifically Brazilian and specifically European references, the *regio* and the *orbs*. I endeavored to make those two words seem parts of a coherent verbal universe, instead of sounding alien to each other. I did so by choosing a general narrative style that was neither too scholarly, nor too colloquial, and always readable. Readability here works not as perfunctory domestication, but as a fifth column that brings strangeness into the the grounds of familiarity. Thus the phrase "É que" nods towards colloquialism, whereas the adjective "expertos" nods towards the scholarly. By setting the stage like this, I allowed different dictions to coalesce into the same linguistic flow, therefore bringing the Middle Ages into the Brazilian backcountry, or taking the Brazilian backcountry to the Middle Ages, in my attempt to create a world of seamless fictional verisimilitude.

Now, consider the entire passage, with the *rimas toantes* highlighted in bold:

> Quando o chuvoso abril em doce aragem
> Desfez março e a secura da estiagem,
> Banhando toda a terra no licor
> Que encorpa o caule e redesperta a flor,
> E Zéfiro, num sopro adocic**ado**,
> Reverdeceu os montes, bosques, pr**ados**,
> E o jovem sol, em seu trajeto an**tigo**,
> Já passou do Carneiro do Zo**díaco**,
> E melodiam pássaros despertos,
> Que à noite dormem de olhos bem abertos,
> Conforme a Natureza determ**ina**
> - É que o tempo chegou das roma**rias**.
> E lá se vão expertos palmeirins
> Rumo a terras e altares e confins;
> Da vária terra inglesa, gente vária

[457] Ibid, p. 10.
[458] Ibid, p. 9.
[459] Ibid, p. 9-13.

Põe-se a peregrinar à Cantuária
Onde jaz a sagrada sepultura
Do mártir que lhes deu auxílio e cura.[460]

The use of the *rima toante* in this passage has allowed me to match the words *antigo* and *Zodíaco*, thus creating another level of meaning and a new trope within Chaucer's line. In lines 8 and 9 [(...) and the yonge sonne / Hath in the Ram his halfe cours y-ronne], the sun is "yonge", or young, because the year is only three-months old; but Chaucer then states that it has just passed the constellation of the Ram, a movement performed by the sun every year. This passage frames the pilgrims meeting and journey within the eternal recurrence of the Natural world, and it is essential to remember that in many of Chaucer's tales the disposition of heavenly bodies has a direct influence on human life. The sun's movement through the skies is simultaneously young and very old, and so is the journey set to begin: we are about to meet life-like characters arranged in surprising ways, but the pilgrimage they are about to perform is a reiteration of human condition; it is through Art that this "old daunce" can be made forever green.

Throughout The General Prologue, Chaucer arranges his pilgrims in no clear order or hierarchy; their descriptions vary in lenght and in tone. The longest portrait is the Friar's, with sixty-one lines; the shortest, that of the Cook, with only nine. Some portraits are limited to the outside of a character and an account of his or her occupation and deeds; that's the case with the Knight. The reader is never introduced to his thoughts, but we get a very clear view from his armor and his horse:

But for to tellen yow of his array,
His hors weren goode, but he was nat gay;
Of fustian he wered a gypon
Al bismótered with his habergeon;
For he was late y-come from his viage,
And wente for to doon his pilgrymage. [461]

[Prose translation: Quanto aos bens que ostentava, tinha excelentes cavalos, mas o traje era discreto: o gibão que vestia era de fustão, manchado aqui e ali pela ferrugem da cota de malha.

[460] CHAUCER, 2013, op. cit. p. 23
[461] CHAUCER, 1996, op. cit. p. 7.

Regressara, havia pouco, de mais uma campanha, partindo em peregrinação logo em seguida.]

In the above stanza, Chaucer provides a very specific visual detail about the Knight's clothes. His fustian tunic ("gypoun") was stained by the rust from his coat of mail ("habergeon"); that happens because, after his latest adventure, he joined the pilgrimage without bothering to buy new clothes. A literal translation would be: De fustão era sua túnica, / Toda manchada pela cota de malha. In my translation, I added two details that are not explicit in the original verses, but are semantically appropriate to the spirit of the passage; and in so doing I also managed to find a suitable rhyme:

Das roupas falarei com brevidade:
Melhor era o cavalo que seu traje.
A veste de fustão era manchada
Pelos elos da cota enferrujada.
Pois, cumprida sua última proeza,
Tornou-se peregrino com presteza.[462]

By specifying that the tunic was stained by the rings (*elos*) of the rusty mail (cota *enferrujada*) I created a clear image of the Knight's attire, an image that, albeit not present in the original, can be deduced from the line "Al bismotered with his habergeoun". Besides the description of his clothes and armor, we are also informed that he fought his battles in Russia, Prussia, Lithuania, Spain, Morocco, Egypt and Turkey; and he had never said anything rude to any kind of person (He nevere yet no vileynye ne sayd**e**, /In al his lyf, unto no maner wight).

In other cases, not only a character's appearance, but also his thoughts are described in detail. A good example is the description of the Monk, whose rebellious ideas we get to know in depth[463]. In the stanza below, the Monk himself explains his ideas about religious life to Chaucer the Pilgrim, who answers that "his opinion was good":

The reule of seint Maure or of seint Beneit,

[462] CHAUCER, 2013, op. cit., p. 25.
[463] BOITANI, op. cit., p. 131.

By-cause that it was old and somdel streit,—
This ilke Monk leet olde thynges pace,
And heeld after the newe world the space.
He yaf nat of that text a pulled hen
That seith that hunters ben nat hooly men,
Ne that a monk, whan he is recchelees,
Is likned til a fissh that is waterlees,—
This is to seyn, a monk out of his cloystre.
But thilke text heeld he nat worth an oystre;
And I seyde his opinioun was good.
What sholde he studie and make hymselven wood,
Upon a book in cloystre alwey to poure,
Or swynken with his handes and labóure,
As Austyn bit? How shal the world be served?
Lat Austyn have his swynk to him reserved. [464]

[Prose translation: Considerando antiquadas e algo rigorosas as regras de São Mauro ou de São Bento, esse Monge deixava de lado as velharias e seguia o modo de vida dos novos tempos. Para ele valia menos que uma galinha depenada o tal texto que diz que os caçadores não são homens santos; ou o que compara a um peixe fora da água o monge que vive fora do claustro. Por um texto desses não daria uma ostra. E eu disse que concordava com sua opinião: afinal, para que estudar no mosteiro e ficar louco em cima de algum livro, ou trabalhar com as próprias mãos e mourejar de sol a sol, como ordenou Santo Agostinho? Se fosse assim, quem iria servir ao mundo? Santo Agostinho que vá ele próprio trabalhar!]

In my translation I kept the combination of Chaucer's and the Monk's voice, and turned the information "And I seyde his opinioun was good" into a visual detail, "e eu assentia a tudo" (“and I nodded/acquiesced to all he said”). In the passage below, the *rimas toantes* are highlighted in italic.

[464] CHAUCER, 1996, op. cit. p. 10-11.

Da regra de São Bento já cansou
E também de São Mauro: são tão ve*lhas*!
Tinha fé nas novíssimas id*eias*
E assim vivia - coisas do passado
Não imperavam lá no priorado.
Desprezava esses textos rabugentos
Que com judiciosos escarmentos
Taxavam quem à caça se entre*gava*,
Dizendo ser um peixe fora d'*água*
O monge em tal mundana ocupação.
"Isso tudo não vale um só tostão",
Ele exclamava - e eu assentia a tudo.
Devia acaso enlouquecer no estudo
No claustro, ou recurvado sobre o ancinho
Penar, conforme as regras de Agostinho?
Passar a vida toda na porfia?
Que Agostinho fizesse o que dizia![465]

Although we listen to Chaucer's self-irony repeatedly, he does not restrict himself to a single narrative tone throughout the Prologue. Sometimes the narrative voice is naïve and devout, sometimes shrewd and worldly. While praising the Parson in strictly Christian terms, the narrator seems to endorse the Shipman's dishonesty and murderous behavior towards his passengers:

And certeinly he was a good felawe.
Ful many a draughte of wyn hadde he y-drawe
Fro Burdeux-ward, whil that the chapman sleep.
Of nyce conscience took he no keep.
If that he faught and hadde the hyer hond,
By water he sente hem hoom to every lond.[466]

[Prose translation: Era, sem dúvida, um bom sujeito. Toda vez que voltava de Bordéus, aproveitava as ocasiões em que o mercador dormia para surripiar-lhe parte de seu vinho. Na

[465] CHAUCER, 2013, op. cit. p. 28.
[466] CHAUCER, 1996, op. cit. p. 19.

> verdade, não tinha muitos escrúpulos de consciência: sempre que travava uma batalha, se fosse vencedor, mandava os prisioneiros para casa através das águas.]

The line "And certainly he was a good felawe" establishes a strong humorous tone, as the next verses list the Shipman's crimes. The irony culminates in line 400, "By water he sente hem hoom to every lond", which can be interpreted in two ways: the Shipman sent his prisoners home by embarking them in a different vessel; or he made them "walk the plank" and drown in the sea. In order to bring the tirade home and create a humorous effect on the readers (thus contrasting this passage with the portraits of the Knight and the Parson, for instance), I added the adjectives "gentil, cordato, humano" (kind, affable, humane), as can be seen below:

> E sei que era excelente cavalheiro:
> Vinhos roubara a muito vinhateiro
> Em suas muitas viagens a Bordéus.
> Não é homem lá mui temente aos Céus;
> Na guerra era gentil, cordato, humano:
> Soltava os prisioneiros – no oceano.[467]

In the Prologue's first stanza, the use of a regional-sounding term, *romaria*, was arranged in a way that fits the text's web of meaning and rhythm, performing the reverse *acriollamiento* effect discussed in chapter 2. The same process can be observed in one of The General Prologue's most celebrated passages: the portrait of the Pardoner. The Pardoner is a dishonest but charismatic cleric that sells indulgencies and false relics to the poor and the gullible; he and the Summoner are the two only characters clearly condemned by the narrator on a moral level and the closer we can get to villain figures in the Tales ("rebotalhos humanos" is how Paulo Vizioli called them[468]). The manifestly wicked Pardoner has one of the most engaging descriptions among the company of pilgrims.

> With hym ther rood a gentil Pardoner
> Of Rouncivale, his freend and his compeer,

[467] CHAUCER, 2013, op. cit. p. 35.
[468] CHAUCER, 1988, op. cit., p. 6

That streight was comen fro the court of Rome.
Ful loude he soong, "Com hider, love, to me!"
This Somonour bar to hym a stif burdoun;
Was nevere trompe of half so greet a soun.
This Pardoner hadde heer as yelow as wex,
But smothe it heeng as dooth a strike of flex;
By ounces henge his lokkes that he hadde,
And therwith he his shuldres overspradde.
But thynne it lay, by colpons, oon and oon;
But hood, for jolitee, wered he noon,
For it was trussed up in his walét.
Hym thoughte he rood al of the newe jet;
Dischevelee, save his cappe, he rood al bare.
Swiche glarynge eyen hadde he as an hare.
A vernycle hadde he sowed upon his cappe.
His walet lay biforn hym in his lappe,
Bret-ful of pardoun, comen from Rome al hoot.[469]

[Prose translation: Com ele cavalgava um gentil VENDEDOR DE INDULGÊNCIAS do Hospital de Roncesvalles, seu amigo e compadre, recém-chegado da Santa Sé de Roma. Vinha cantando bem alto: “Meu amor, venha comigo”; e o Oficial Eclesiástico o acompanhava modulando o baixo. Seu canto era duas vezes mais agudo que o som de qualquer trombeta. Esse Vendedor de Indulgências tinha cabelos amarelados cor de cera, que caíam sobre os ombros lisos como feixes de fios de linho, espalhando-se em madeixas finas e bem separadas umas das outras. Por troça, não usava o capuz, preferindo trazê-lo enrolado na sacola enquanto colocava na cabeça apenas um gorrinho, sobre os cabelos soltos. Imaginava assim estar na última moda. Seus olhos arregalados lembravam os de um coelho. Com uma “verônica” costurada no tal gorrinho, trazia à frente, sobre a sela, uma sacola de viagem, recheada de perdões papais ainda quentes do forno.]

[469] CHAUCER, 1996, op. cit. p. 29.

In order to intensify the sinister aspect of the Pardoner's personality, I decided to bring him closer to the reader, thus creating a strange and unsettling familiarity. In translating lines 669 and 670, [With hym ther rood a gentil Pardoner/ Of Rouncivale, his freend and his compeer], I created a verse that does not exist in the original, but which establishes a disturbing proximity between the Brazilian reader and this toxic character, combining two well known Brazilian proverbs: *Ele não é flor que se cheire* and *Eles são farinha do mesmo saco* (He's not a flower you should smell/ They are flour from the same sack). Further ahead on the stanza, I have turned "al hoot" (all hot) into "quentinhas" (the diminutive plural of "quente", hot), thus using another colloquial form common in Brazil. Consider the translated stanza with the *rimas toantes* highlighted in bold.

(i) Com ele viajava o VENDEDOR
(ii) D'INDULGÊNCIAS; garanto que era flor
(iii) Nascida no mesmíssimo can**teiro**.
(iv) De Roma veio faz um mês e m**eio**;
(v) Servia no hospital de Ronces**valles**
(vi) - Cuja reputação vocês bem s**abem**.
(vii) Ia cantando: "Amor, vem para mim"
(viii) (E ao refrão respondia o Beleguim
(ix) Fazendo um estertor e um alar**ido**).
(x) Cabelos amarelos e escorr**idos**
(xi) Caíam-lhe em mechinhas finas, s**oltas**,
(xii) Como se fossem tranças duma m**oça**
(xiii) - Distintas, vistosíssimas mad**eixas**.
(xiv) Não usava capuz sobre a ca**beça**
(xv) E os cabelos dançavam numa roda;
(xvi) Achava assim estar na última moda.
(xvii) Usando apenas gorro, ia fagu**eiro**.
(xviii) Saltado tinha os olhos, como um co**elho**.
(xix) No gorro, uma verônica grud**ada**
(xx) Ostentava, e na bolsa iam guard**adas**
(xxi) As indulgências, pródigas, quent**inhas**
(xxii) Do forno - pois do Vaticano v**inha**.[470]

[470] CHAUCER, 1996, op. cit., p. 43-44.

The semantic information about the Pardoner's background in Roncesvalles was moved from line 670 of the original to line (v) in the excerpt above. Roncesvalles, in this case, was a hospital near Charing Cross, in London, connected to the Roncesvalles Monastery in Navarra, Spain. In the 14th c. it became infamous due to the selling of indulgencies by its members. The reference to Roncesvalles, therefore, would be immediately recognized a mark of dishonesty. This "gossipy" effect was recreated through the addition of line (vi): "Cuja reputação vocês bem sabem", which completes the process of disturbing familiarization between reader and character.

For yet another example of *acriollamiento*, let us return to the character of the Monk, whose rebellion against the monastic rules has to do specially with his love for hunting and horsemanship – two of the many pleasures forbidden by Saint Benedict and Saint Maure. Indeed, one of the first things we learn about the monk is precisely the outdoorsman side of his personality.

> A Monk ther was, a fair for the maistrie,
> An outridere, that lovede venerie;
> A manly man, to been an abbot able.
> Ful many a deyntee hors hadde he in stable;
> And whan he rood, men myghte his brydel heere
> Gynglen in a whistlynge wynd als cleere,
> And eek as loude, as dooth the chapel belle,
> Ther as this lord was kepere of the celle.[471]
>
> [Prose tanslation: E havia um Monge, verdadeiramente modelar, inspetor das propriedades do mosteiro e que amava a caça, um homem másculo, que daria um bom Abade. No estábulo mantinha belos cavalos; e, quando cavalgava, os guizos de seus arreios tilintavam claro e forte no sussurrar da brisa, lembrando o sino da capela onde ele era Prior.]

Further ahead, Chaucer describes the Monk's expensive attire and provides a final detail about his horse's coat:

[471] CHAUCER, Geoffrey, 1996, op. cit., p. 10.

Therfore he was a prikasour aright:
Grehoundes he hadde, as swift as fowel in flight;
Of prikyng and of huntyng for the hare
Was al his lust, for no cost wolde he spare.
I seigh his sleves y-purfiled at the hond
With grys, and that the fyneste of a lond;
And for to festne his hood under his chyn
He hadde of gold y-wroght a curious pyn;
A love-knotte in the gretter ende ther was.
His heed was balled, that shoon as any glas,
And eek his face, as he hadde been enoynt.
He was a lord ful fat and in good poynt;
His eyen stepe, and rollynge in his heed,
That stemed as a forneys of a leed;
His bootes souple, his hors in greet estaat.
Now certeinly he was a fair prelaat.
He was nat pale, as a forpyned goost:
A fat swan loved he best of any roost.
His palfrey was as broun as is a berye.[472]

[Prose translation: Pensando dessa forma, constantemente praticava ele a montaria; seus galgos eram velozes como o vôo das aves; e seu maior prazer, para o qual não poupava despesas, era perseguir a lebre com o seu cavalo. Observei que os punhos de suas mangas orlavam-se de penas gris, as melhores peles desta terra; e que prendia o capuz sob o queixo com uma fivela de ouro artisticamente cinzelada, tendo na extremidade mais larga um nó cego, símbolo do amor. Sua cabeça calva reluzia como espelho; e assim também seu rosto, que até parecia untado. Era um senhor gordo, de muito boa presença. Seus olhos arregalados não paravam de mover-se, iguais às chamas da fornalha debaixo do caldeirão. Os seus sapatos macios, o seu cavalo de raça... tudo mostrava que ele era um grande prelado. De fato, não tinha nada da palidez das almas atormentadas. Um bom cisne gordo era o

[472] CHAUCER, 1996, op. cit., p. 11.

> assado de sua preferência. Seu palafrém era escuro como a framboesa madura.]

The Monk's interest in horses and hunting gave me a lot of material upon which to work. I realized I could easily bedeck him with the qualities of a *gaudério* – a rural type from Southern Brazil that conjoins the ethos of a gentleman, the skills of a cowboy and the loud-spoken vitality of a bon vivant. The *gaudério*, as depicted in the short stories by João Simões Lopes Neto and the novels by ÉricoVerissimo, is an energetic outdoorsman that likes to dress sharply – even if he doesn't have the money to pay for his clothes – and shows, in every aspect of his daily behavior, a mythic, larger-than-life, cavalier kind of self-esteem.

Consider, now, line 168: "Full many a daintee horse had he in stable". In order to stress the Monk's horsemanship and give him the general look (or rather the general sound) of a Southern *gaudério*, I turned this line into three *decassílabos*, and arrayed these verses with words taken from the Gaúcho regional lingo:

> Montava seu cavalo com alarde,
> E tinha outros cavalos, nas **cocheiras**,
> Esplêndidos, velozes nas **carreiras**.[473]

To mount "boastfully" is precisely what a *gaudério* would do when entering a city, a farm or, in the present case, a book. The quintessential literary *gaudério* is Captain Rodrigo, one of the main characters in EricoVerisimo's **O Tempo e o Vento**. The first time we see the Captain, he is riding – quite boastfully! – into the city of Santa Fé, where the main action of the book is set:

> One day he came riding his horse, nobody knew from where, with his chinstrap hat pulledto the nape of his neck, hisgorgeousmanlyhead haughtily raised, with those hawk-like eyes that annoyed and at the same time fascinated people. He was probably thirty something, rode an alazão horse, wore boots with silver spurs and his muscular chest was stuffed into a blue military jacket, with red gullet and metal buttons.[474]

[473] CHAUCER, 2013, op. cit., p.28
[474] VERISSIMO, Erico. **O tempo e o vento. O continente I.** 31ª ed. São Paulo: Globo, 1995a. p. 175. Free translation.

I wanted to convey Rodrigo's sense of suspicious charm to the Monk in the General Prologue; therefore, I presented him as one who "mounts boastfully", organizing all his several traits around this central one. And, of course, the Monk has many "daintee" horses in his stables. In "metropolitan Brazil", the more common term for "stables" would be "estábulos" – that's the word one would most likely find in an English to Portuguese dictionary; I chose, instead, to translate it as *cocheiras*, an old-fashioned word that has survived in the Southern recesses, as attested by Aldyr Garcia Schlee in his **Dicionário da Cultura Pampeana Sul-rio-grandense**:

> **COCHEIRA** (Bras.) S.f. ANT – Lugar, geralmente coberto, onde se guardavam os carros e carroças; e onde dormiam os animais de tiro e de montaria (RG).[475]

Similarly, I preferred the Gauchoesque *carreiras* instead of *corridas*. According to the Vocabulário Sul-Rio-Grandense,

> **Carreira**
> -, s.f. (usado no plural) jôgo usado na província; consiste em fazer correr dois cavalos montados, dos quais é vencedor o que primeiro chega à raia: os cavalos para isso ensinados chamam-se parelheiros. (Coruja)
> (...)
> -, s. f. o mesmo que corrida de cavalos, com a diferença de ser em cancha reta. Quando correm mais de dois cavalos a carreira toma a denominação de califórnia ou penca. (Callage.) [476]

Carreira is a very important word in the Gaúcho dialect, as can be seen by the room afforded to its definition in Schlee's **Dicionário**: almost two entire pages. After defining it as a horse race on a straight track set upon the plains, Schlee provides a long historical note, explaining that such races are among the oldest and most widespread elements of the Pampas culture. "Because the Pampas peasant always depended on horses to execute their rural activities, they naturally placed the competitive use of that animal among their favored forms of entertainment, besides dancing, gambling and drinking"[477]. Historical records of *carreiras* go back to the 18th c., when the first rules were written in

[475] SCHLEE, Aldyr Garcia. **Dicionário da Cultura Pampeana Sul-Rio-Grandense**. Pelotas: Fructos do Paiz, 2019, p. 254.
[476] ROMAGUERA CORREA, J., et al. **Vocabulário Sul-Rio-Grandense**. Porto Alegre: Editora do Globo, 1964, p. 105.
[477] SCHLEE, op. cit., p. 213.

the Buenos Aires Province[478]. During the first half of the 19th c., such horse races were recorded also in Uruguay and Brazil. Initially there were different modalities in each country, but, in due time, a single model came to be dominant throughout the Pampas region[479]. Between four and six parallel tracks are opened on a plain, with a maximum length of 600m; the whole set of tracks is called *cancha reta*. Bets are made, races are ran, and a group of judges decides who the winner is; but "generally, there are protests, disagreements and fights, all very typical of these amusing and rustic activities"[480]. Schlee also adds several popular idioms related to the carreiras tradition, such as *arrepiar carreira* (to give something up), *andar às carreiras* (to act unheedfully), etc.[481] All those resonances seemed to fit perfectly the Monks looks and personality.

Now, let us turn to verse 207, where Chaucer informs us that the Monk's palfrey was "as brown as is a berrye". The naming of horse coats is one of the great treasuries of gaucho dialect: very few people have a full command of this abundant and maddeningly specific nomenclature. A whitish horse is called a *tordilho*; but a whitish horse with faint dark-blue specks is called a *tordilho negro*, whereas a whitish horse with dark-*red* specks is called a *tordilho vinagre*. A horse with white coat but black leather is called *branco*, whereas a horse with white coat and white leather is a *melado*; and so on, *ad infinitum*. To translate line 207, I researched the vast literature of horse coat colors in Southern Brazil and talked to several experts on this tricky subject. If the Monk's horse were of a faint brown shade, I could have called him a *gateado*; if it were dark-brown, I could have called him a *zaino*. However, I wanted it to be *brownish* as a small juicy fruit. After pondering for a long time, I chose the word "alazão" to translate the "berrye" horse coat. *Alazão* is a shade of coat color between brown and red, sometimes described as the color of a dark cherry – and exactly the same color as Captain Rodrigo's horse in **O Tempo e o Vento**. According to **Vocabulário Sul-Rio-Grandense**,

> **Alazão**
> -, adj. pêlo de cavalo arruivado. V. lazão. (Callage.)
> -, adj. e s. vem do árabe: Al Hazan. Sendo palavra já pertencente ao vernáculo, cito-a, entretanto, para mencionar as variedades ocorrentes entre nós. Assim temos as seguintes variações desta pelagem dos eqüinos: A. Bragado, o que tem brancas a barriga ou a verilha. A. Cabos Negros, o que tem os membros e crinas

[478] Ibid, ibidem.
[479] Ibid, ibidem.
[480] Ibid, ibidem.
[481] Ibid, p. 214.

> pretas. (...) A. Requeimado, o que tem uma côr puxando a canela, bem carregada com tons ruivos, chama-se também essa pelagem tostado requeimado. (...) (Moraes.)[482]

So it seemed the perfect kind of horse for the Monk to "mount boastfully" as he enters the **Tales**, complete with jingling bridle and flashy clothes. Consider below the complete translated stanza with *rimas toantes* in bold:

> A afoita cavalgada é seu enc**anto**;
> Velozes como pássaros vo**ando**
> Eram seus cães de caça na flor**esta**
> E a lebre era sua presa predi**leta**.
> Gastava e na gastança era feliz:
> Nas mangas tinha só peliça gris;
> O capuz lhe prendia uma fivela
> Em outro trabalhada, e muito bela,
> Com um signo talhada, o Nó do Amor.
> Tinha polida calva esse senhor
> E até mesmo sua face era lustrosa.
> Robusto, de barriga ponderosa,
> Tinha os olhos vivazes como a chama
> Quando um sopro de vento ao fogo inflama.
> Era um lorde robusto, em bons calç**ados**;
> Era um perfeito e próspero prel**ado**!
> Não tem a palidez de alma punida
> E triste nunca está, se houver comida;
> E seu cavalo escuro é um alazão.[483]

In the Monk's portrait, therefore, I have used three regionalist words: *carreiras*, *cocheiras* and *alazão*. Each of them occurs in a different line and they are separated by a flow of semantic information that points to European Middle Ages. Those words, then, do not work in a vacuum; they contaminate the surrounding words and are in turn contaminated by them. The scholarly vocabulary pertaining to clerical life, scholasticism and medieval *mores* goes through a process of *acriollamiento*; those words

[482] Ibid, p. 16.
[483] CHAUCER, 2013, op. cit., p. 28-29

are no longer what they used to be, for now they belong to a universe where a horse-run is called a *carreira*, and a brown-berry horse is called an *alazão*. Similarly, the words taken from the Gauchoesque dialect are no longer "pure", nor do they point exclusively to a specific time and place. They change, as their context is now different; they become parts and signs of a fictional world, a world made up of language and form, whose relationship with the "text" of reality is no longer deterministic, but creative. We are also far away from the sphere of deterministic translation; we now enter the realm of translation verisimilitude and linguistic world-building, a province in the vast realm of poetry and fiction.

Chaucer excuses the audacity of his portraiture in a famous passage, claiming that 1) he is only telling the truth, and depicting things and people as he saw them; and 2) his "wit is short", and therefore he should not be blamed if his work offends anyone:

But first, I pray yow, of youre curteisy**e**,
That ye narette it nat my vileny**e**,
Thogh that I pleynly speke in this mateer**e**,
To tell**e** yow hir word**e**s and hir cheer**e**,
Ne thogh I speke hir word**e**s propr**e**ly.
For this ye knowen al-so wel as I,
Whoso shal telle a tale after a man,
He moot reherce, as ny as evere he kan,
Everich a word, if it be in his charg**e**,
Al speke he never so rud**e**liche and larg**e**;
Or ellis he moot telle his tale untrew**e**,
Or feyn**e** thyng, or fynd**e** word**e**s new**e**.
He may nat spare, althogh he were his brother;
He moot as wel seye o word as another.
Crist spak hymself ful brode in hooly writ,
And wel ye woot no vileynye is it.
Eek Plato seith, whoso kan hym red**e**,
"The word**e**s moote be cosyn to the ded**e**."
Also I prey yow to foryeve it me,
Al have I nat set folk in hir degree
Heere in this tale, as that they sholde stond**e**;

My wit is short, ye may wel understond**e**.[484]

[Prose translation: Antes, porém, peço-lhes, por gentileza, que não debitem à imoralidade o fato de eu falar com franqueza ao abordar minha matéria, reproduzindo as palavras e as ações dos companheiros exatamente como foram. Vocês sabem tão bem quanto eu que quem conta o conto de outro, se tiver senso de responsabilidade, tem a obrigação de repetir tão fielmente quanto possível todas as suas palavras, ainda que sejam grosseiras e indecentes. Caso contrário, o seu relato não corresponderá à realidade, perdendo-se em ficções e circunlóquios. O autor não deve poupar ninguém, nem mesmo seu irmão; e deve empregar, sem discriminação, todos os termos. O próprio Cristo usou de linguagem franca nas Santas Escrituras; e não me consta que haja ali qualquer imoralidade. Também Platão afirmou, para os que podem lê-lo, que as palavras devem ser gêmeas do ato. Peço-lhes igualmente que me perdoem se, aqui nesta história, nem sempre selecionei pessoas à altura da posição que ocupam. Vocês já devem ter percebido que não sou muito inteligente.]

The line "My wit is short, ye may wel understonde" is, of course, immensely important, because it marks Chaucer himself as an ironic (and even self-ironic) story-teller; also, it contains a direct reference to the reader. This is one of the passages where I decided to make Chaucer's voice sound familiar; therefore, I added a line with the word "malandro", which creates a *mise en abyme*: Chaucer claims not to be a "malandro", but the careful reader will easily understand that his claiming so is, in itself, a form of "malandragem":

Mas antes peço a vós, por gentileza:
Não julgueis minha falta de fineza,
Pois hei de descrever falas e feitos
De maneira veraz e sem rodeios.
Conforme ouvi as frases, eu repito;

[484] CHAUCER, 1996, op. cit., p. 31.

> Convém reproduzir, dito por dito,
> Numa história que envolve tanta gente,
> As coisas como foram, fielmente,
> A grossura das falas respeitando,
> Nenhuma sordidez amenizando;
> Do contrário, a verdade morre, expira,
> E é conto sem sabor, pura mentira.
> E se de meu irmão tratasse um conto,
> Não creiam que eu daria algum desconto.
> Até Jesus falava com franqueza,
> Portanto, ser veraz não é vileza.
> E também exigia o bom Platão
> Que o Real fosse irmão da Narração.
> Tampouco vos zangueis se eu ouso mais
> Ao misturar as classes sociais.
> Não me julgueis malandro, boa gente:
> É que eu não sou lá muito inteligente.[485]

Chaucer's wit and literary skill does impress us with the idea that his words "be cosyne to the deede", although his claim about his own lack of intelligence is clearly disingenuous ("malandro")[486]. The following definition of “malandro” was extracted from **Dicionário Houaiss**:

> malandro adj. s. m. (1881 cf. CA[1]) **1** que ou aquele que não trabalha, que emprega recursos engenhosos para sobreviver; vadio **2** que ou aquele que leva a vida em diversões e prazeres **3** que ou aquele que tem preguiça; mandrião, indolente **4** que ou aquele que furta, que vive fora da lei; ladrão, gatuno, marginal **5** B que ou aquele que e sagaz, arguto **5.1** B que ou aquele que se vale de astúcia enganosa; finório; espertalhão **6** B que ou aquele que simboliza certo personagem-tipo carioca das classes sociais menos favorecidas, no sXIX ligado à capoeiragem e à valentice, e no sXX dado geralmente como um boêmio sensual, de reconhecida lábia e modo peculiar de se vestir, mover, falar, etc.[487]

[485] CHAUCER, 2013, op. cit., p. 45.
[486] BOITANI, op. cit., p. 131
[487] HOUAISS, op. cit., p. 1817. Specially: 2. he who lives among pleasure and amusements (...) 5 Brazilianism: he who profits from deceitful cunning; an artful dodger; a smart guy 6 Brazilianism: someone

"Malandro", of course, serves several functions in the quoted line. As the above definition shows, its meaning in Portuguese at large is negative: a vagabond, one that survives through "ingenious resources"; an idle vagrant; an indolent, good-for-nothing hedonist; or even a thief and a bandit. However, there are also a set of definitions that are specific to Brazil. In Brazil, a "malandro" is still "deceitful" through their "cunning", but the word has also a less negative acceptation, as it also means "sagacious" and "quick-witted". Finally, it signifies a specific cultural type, associated with the lower classes of Rio de Janeiro, and "generally seen as a sensuous bohemian" recognizedly endowed with "lábia", or "power of persuasion". This is one of the passages in my translation where a single word points to several directions at the same time. "Malandro" can be understood in its general meaning, but also in one of its specific Brazilian acceptations. If the word meant exclusively "a certain low class carioca character", I would not have used it: the important thing, here, is that "malandro" can have a very specific cultural meaning in Brazil, but also a wider meaning within the Portuguese language in general. The same logic, then, used by Odorico Mendes when choosing the word "jangada" instead of "barca" or "jirau". "Barca" would be too bland, not "memorable"[488]; "jirau" would be too close, too familiar. "Jangada", however, has a general, "universal" meaning, and also a specifically Brazilian one. So does "malandro". It should also be noted that, in its stricter Brazilian acceptation (6), "malandro" is associated with Rio de Janeiro, the former capital, still imbued with a strong aura of centrality in Brazilian culture. The word choice here, therefore, is not "regionalist", but is still recognizably "national", and respects the decision to incorporate echoes from different parts of the country and not only the South.

4.2 THE KNIGHT'S TALE: COMMENTARY

Medieval romance is a difficult genre to define. Most readers of English literature associate it with the Matière de Bretagne, or the Arthurian Cycle. More broadly, a romance might be understood as a story about "a knight who engages in perilous

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who symbolizes a typical character of Rio de Janeiro's lower classes in the 19th c. (...) a sensuous bohemian, known for their guile and power of persuasion (...).

[488] CHAUCER, 1988.

adventures, riding out and frequently fighting, sometimes to win or defend a lady, sometimes to defeat enemies of the realm, and sometimes for no evident reason at all"[489]. Critics and scholars generally use the term "romance" when referring to four Chaucerian stories: The Knight's Tale, The Squire's Tale, The Wife of Bath's Tale, The Franklin's Tale and Chaucer's Tale of Sir Thopas. None of them, however, is a typical romance: in one way or another, all steer away from the stereotypes. It is true that Chaucer also plays with the boundaries of the comedic genre, as we shall see further ahead in this chapter; however, it has also been suggested that the author felt more at home with the fabliau and the saint's life than with the knightly romance, the very genre regarded as most characteristic of his period[490]. And yet, it can also be argued that Chaucer's divergence from typical romance adds a touch of mesmerizing strangeness to these five tales, all of which can be counted, from a poetic and narrative point of view, among the best he wrote.

The Knight's Tale has its source in Giovanni Boccaccio's *Teseida delle Nozze d'Emilia*, also known simply as *Teseida*, which claims to be not a romance, but an epic. Boccaccio's poem is set in twelve books, like the epics of antiquity, and the author openly declares his ambition to be the first vernacular poet in Italy to sing of feats of arms in a manner worthy of Virgil or Statius (*Teseida* xii, 84). The two first books deal with Theseus campaigns against the Amazons and Creon, ruler of Thebes; but all the remaining books concern the rivalry between Arcita and Palamon, two Theban brothers who are imprisoned by Theseus and fall in love with the same lady: Emilia, sister of Theseus' queen, Hypolita. Chaucer, who always seems a bit impatient with military matters, cuts most of the fighting out. Theseus' campaigns are briefly summarized, and most of the tale deals with the struggles of Arcite and Palamon for Emilia's love. From all the epic machinery in Boccaccio's poem, Chaucer retains only the brothers' duel in Book II and the "listes" (knightly tournament) in Book IV.

The Knight's Tale lacks many of the typical elements of a medieval romance. There is no "riding out", no "perilous adventures", and obviously no reference to the Arthurian Cycle. In one aspect, however, the tale can be seen as properly romantic: the central place therein reserved for individual considerations, especially the desire for honor and for happiness in love.

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[489] BOITANI, op. cit., p. 143
[490] Ibid, ibidem.

> Literary historians sometimes associate the rise of romance in the twelfth century with the increased interest manifested at that time in individual experience. (...) In this respect, Palamon and Arcite may be accounted typical romance heroes. Although the *Knight's Tale* is not, likes many of Chaucer's works, dominated by a female character, it is the two young knights' love for Emily which exclusively preoccupies their minds, once they have glimpsed her from their prison window. From that moment on, they are lovers and nothing else, in the best romantic tradition. Their love turns them instantly from sworn brothers into sworn rivals; and it is for love that they fight each other, first in the grove and then at the great tournament.[491]

The brother's romantic struggle does not happen in a vacuum, but is set within a political dimension, represented by King Theseus and his court in Athens. It is he who orders the great tournament, as a means to put an end to the quarrel and decide Emily's marital future; as a sometimes stern arbitrator, he represents society's attempts to order and accommodate the inescapable realities of human passion[492]. And there is still a larger, cosmological context to this romantic adventure: the classical gods themselves, who ultimately decide the fate of the young lovers. In The Franklin's Tale, the pagan gods are also invoked, but apparently yield no real power. In The Knight's Tale, though, the final decision lays in Olympic hands. Arcite prays to Mars, and Palamon prays to Venus; both gods desire to give victory to their own favorites. The solution is engineered by the "pale" and "cold" Saturnus. Arcite had asked to win the tournament, while Palamon asked to marry Emily. Saturnus then gives victory in combat to Arcite, but soon after kills him in what looks like a freak accident, leaving Emily free to marry Palamon. In other words, Arcite was given what he asked for, but not what he wanted; while Palamon's victory is tainted with the death of his brother. Like the ancient oracle, the gods have once more fooled mortals in a way reminiscent of Fernando Pessoa's line: "Os deuses vendem quando dão" (The gods sell what they give).

Saturn's gambit is a shadowy, disturbing solution that raises many disquieting issues about the Nature of the world and of human existence. Theseus addresses those issues in his final speech, where he expounds a set of metaphysical ideas whose source is not in Boccaccio, but in Boethius: transitory things, such as human life, have their origin in the "First Mover" or First Cause, which only remains unchangeable; death and pain should thus be accepted as a necessary reality in the sublunary world, subjected as it is to

[491] Ibid, p. 154.
[492] Ibid, p. 154.

the eternal change of destruction and rebirth. The Knight's Tale has then a deep philosophical dimension, matched only by The Franklin's Tale among the Chaucerian romances. "What chiefly interests Chaucer, however, is not so much the philosophical ideas themselves as the way human beings select and adopt them according to mood or occasion"[493].Those bits of Boethian philosophy expounded by Theseus serve to justify Emily's marriage to Palamon and thus provide the tale with a coherent, believable denouement. *The Knight's Tale* has an apparently happy ending, as it's customary with romances; but the "perfect joy" of Emily and Palamon's marriage is overshadowed by Arcite's final words in his deathbed:

> What is this world? What asketh men to have?
> Now with his love, now in his colde grave
> Allone, withouten any compaignye.[494]
>
> [Prose translation: O que é este mundo? O que pode um homem pedir? Num momento está com sua amada, noutro está na tumba fria, sozinho e sem companhia.]
>
> Que pode um pobre homem neste mundo?
> Do amor à tumba vai-se num segundo,
> À solitária e gélida vigília.

Being the first story in the book, The Knight's Tale was the natural, proper space for me to further develop and set in motion my strategies of translational verisimilitude through linguistic world-building already laid out in The General Prologue. It was clear to me from the beginning that the blending of scholarly and colloquial/regional language should be balanced according to the context of each tale. In my translation of The Knight's Tale, the linguistic background is built with archaic sounding words, carefully chosen from Medieval, Renaissance and Classicist sources. Consider, for example, the following verses, extracted from **Os Lusíadas**; from Odorico Mendes' translations of the **Aeneid** and the **Odyssey**; and from Francisco de Moraes **Palmeirim de Inglaterra**:

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[493] Ibid, p. 157.
[494] CHAUCER, 1996, op. cit. p. 94.

> Vêm **arneses** e peitos reluzentes,
> Malhas finas e lâminas seguras (Canto I, estrofe 67)
>
> Escala e primeiro entra a porta aberta
> Que fogo e **frechas** mil terão coberta (Livro X, estrofe 63)
>
> Em ostro e ouro o **palafrém** cosido (Eneida Brasileira, Livro IV)
>
> **Paços** lhe erguera, e de Ítaca ele a gente
> Família e bens à Argólida passava (Odisséia, versos 141-142)
>
> Por esses, vos darei um Nuno **fero**,
> Que fez ao Rei e ao Reino um tal serviço (Lusíadas, Canto I, estrofe 12)
>
> Estava levantada sobre os pés, o collo alto, a composiçã do rosto tã vivo, a **catadura** tã espantosa e medonha, que conhecendo a por obra ateficial, criava temor em quem a via.[495]

The words highlighted in bold were interwoven in my translation of the following passage, describing the morrow of the tournament in Athens:

> And on the morwe, whan that day gan sprynge,
> Of hors and harneys noyse and claterynge
> Ther was in hostelryes al aboute,
> And to the paleys rood ther many a route
> Of lordes upon steedes and palfreys.
> Ther maystow seen devisynge of harneys
> So unkouth and so riche, and wroght so weel
> Of goldsmythrye, of browdynge, and of steel;
> The sheeldes brighte, testeres, and trappures,
> Gold-hewen helmes, coats of mail, cote-armures;
> Lordes in parementz on hir courseres,
> Knyghtes of retenue, and eek squieres
> Nailynge the speres, and helmes bokelynge;

[495] MORAES, Francisco de. **Cronica de Palmeirim de Inglaterra**. Lisboa: Officina de Simão Thadeo Ferreira, Anno MDCCLXXXI. p. 261.

Giggynge of sheeldes, with layneres lacynge –
There as nede is they weren no thyng ydel;
The fomy steedes on the golden brydel
Gnawynge, and faste the armurers also
With fyle and hamer prikynge to and fro;
Yemen on foote, and communes many oon
With shorte staves, thikke as they may goon;
Pypes, trompes, nakers, clariounes,
That in the bataille blowen blody sounes;
The paleys ful of peple up and doun,
Heere thre, ther ten, holdynge hir questioun,
Dyvynynge of thise Thebane knyghtes two.
Somme seyden thus, somme seyde "it shal be so";
Somme helden with hym with the blake berd,
Somme with the balled, somme with the thikke herd;
Somme seyde he looked grymme, and he wolde fighte:
"He hath a sparth of twenty pound of wighte."
Thus was the halle ful of divynynge,
Longe after that the sonne gan to sprynge.[496]

[Prose translation: Na manhã seguinte, assim que o dia raiou, em toda parte nas hospedarias começaram osrumores e os ruídos de cavalos e de arneses; e bandos de fidalgos, montados em corcéis epalafréns, cavalgavam rumo ao palácio. Podia-se observar a preparação de armaduras raras e ricas, com minuciosos lavores de ourivesaria, com bordados e com aço; de escudos reluzentes, viseiras, mantas para os ginetes, capacetes de ouro, couraças e cotas brasonadas. Havia senhores paramentados sobre as suas montadas, cavaleiros de escolta, e escudeiros, fixando as pontas dos chuços com pregos, afivelando os elmos, prendendo as correias dos escudos... Ninguém estava à toa. Os corcéis espumejantes de suor mordiam os bridões de ouro; os armeiros esporeavam paracá e para lá, martelo e lima em punho; criados a pé e aldeões com varas curtas aglomeravam-se nas ruas; ouviam-

[496] CHAUCER, 1996, op. cit. p. 85.

> se flautas, trompas, trombetas e clarins, que sopram sons sangrentos nas batalhas. O palácio estava apinhado de gente indo e vindo, duas pessoas aqui, três ali, debatendo,tentando prever a sorte dos dois cavaleiros tebanos. Uns diziam isto, outros aquilo; uns davam razão ao homem de barba negra, outros ao calvo, outros ao hirsuto; alguns apostavam no lidadorde olhar feroz e que sabia lutar, outros naquele com um machado de guerra que pesava vintelibras. Assim ressoava o salão com as adivinhações, muito tempo depois que o sol nascera.]

My translation:

> Nem bem desperta o sol, fenece a lua,
> No lusco-fusco ecoam pelas ruas
> Ruídos dos **arneses** e cavalos;
> Rutilam os **petrechos** dos fidalgos
> Empina-se no ar fino um **palafrém**,
> Das estalagens saem, logo vêm,
> E num garboso trote vão-se ao paço.
> E ali veríeis reluzir em aço,
> Ou no lavor de ourives, em detalhes,
> Nas armaduras ricas mil entalhes;
> Dourados mantos cobrem os corcéis;
> Cintilam as viseiras e os broquéis.
> Nos pátios, **vide a lide** de escudeiros
> Os elmos ajustando aos cavaleiros,
> Pregando bem as pontas sobre os chuços,
> E prendendo as correias nos escudos.
> Urge a manhã, em plena agitação:
> Corcéis espumam, mordem o bridão;
> Armeiros correm, gritam, vão às pressas
> Dar fio a facas, lâminas e **frechas**;
> Nas ruas aldeões, servos, criados,
> Portando varas, vão por todo lado,
> Clarins levando, trompas, instrumentos
> Para dar som ao festival sangrento.

> E vai-se enchendo o **paço** na manhã,
> De faladora gente cortesã,
> Especulando sobre os contendores.
> Apostas soam pelos corredores:
> "Prefiro aquele herói de barba escura";
> "O calvo tem mais **fera catadura**";
> "Prefiro esse de hirsuta cabeleira";
> "Mas é daquele a acha mais certeira".
> Assim a corte inteira debatia
> Enquanto sobe o sol e aclara o dia.[497]

Another example can be taken from my translation of the following passage, describing the moment when Theseus comes across the duel between Arcite and Palamon in the woods:

> And whan this duc was come unto the launde,
> Under the sonne he looketh, and anon
> He was war of Arcite and Palamon,
> That foughten breme as it were bores two.
> The brighte swerdes wenten to and fro
> So hidously that with the leeste strook
> It semed as it wolde felle an ook.[498]
>
> [Prose translation: Quando, porém, o duque chegou ao local e lançou ao redor os olhos, protegidos por uma das mãos contra o sol, imediatamente se deu conta da presença de Arcita e Palamon, lutando ferozmente como dois javalis. Para frente e para trás moviam-se as espadas luzentes, tão assustadoras que o menor golpe parecia capaz de derrubar um carvalho.]

Instead of translating literally the line "That foughten breme as it were bores two", I used this verse to introduce another word taken from Odorico Mendes' **Eneida**:

> No âmago isto fermenta, e a deusa à pátria
> De austros **furentes**, de chuveiros prenhe,

[497] CHAUCER, 2013, op. cit., p. 98-99.
[498] CHAUCER, 1996, op. cit., p. 77.

À Eólia parte. (Eneida Brazileira, Livro I, versos 63-65)

Visual passages such as Theseus' meeting of the dueling brothers tend to create a feeling of immediacy upon the reader; adding the archaic-sounding word "furente" was a means to create a *mise en abyme* in which the visual impact revolves around the unfamiliar word-choice, simultaneously blending and contrasting present and past:

> O Duque, que das sombras emergia,
> A peleja depara tão bravia
> Entre os tebanos príncipes furentes;
> E fulguravam lâminas luzentes,
> Horrendas a brilhar, raios de fogo;
> Resplende sob o sol, feroz, o jogo. [499]

Once the scholarly background was set, I then endeavored to distort this textual surface with the interweaving of regional vocabulary. One example is the passage where Chaucer describes the sun-rising over the forests around Athens:

> The bisy larke, messager of day,
> Salueth in hir song the morwe gray,
> And firy Phebus riseth up so bright
> That al the orient laugheth of the light,
> And with his stremes dryeth in the greves
> The silver dropes hangynge on the leves.[500]

[Prose translation: A irrequieta cotovia, a mensageira do sol, saudara a manhã cinzenta com sua alegrecanção; e tão fúlgido se erguera o flamejante Febo, que o oriente todo sorria com sua luz,enquanto seus raios secavam as argênteas gotinhas que pendiam das folhas.]

The usual translation for “lark” in Portuguese would be *cotovia*: it means the European lark, the same bird mistaken for a nightingale in **Romeo and Juliet**, Act 3,

[499] CHAUCER, 2013, op. cit., p. 74
[500] CHAUCER, 1996, op. cit. p. 59.

Scene 5. Instead of *cotovia*, however, I chose the word *calhandra.* It means both a kind of lark from Southern Europe and a species of thrush found all over Brazil. In this second sense, *calhandra* is part of the regional dialect of Rio Grande do Sul. According to *Caldas Aulete*: "calandra [2] S. f. (zool.) espécie de cotovia (Melanocorypha calandra), que habita a região meridional da Europa". Whereas, according to the **Vocábulário Sul-Rio-Grandense**:

> Calandra
> -, s. calhandra (*Minus modulator*). Pássaro canoro que vive somente nos campos. Além de seu canto próprio, imita o som de outros pássaros. Dificilmente vive em cativeiro, não obstante gostar da proximidade das casas, principalmente de frequentar os varais onde se expõe a carne para charque, para comer a carne assim conservada. Em Taquari lhe dão o nome de sabiá-da-praia, inexplicavelmente, pois não habita tais paragens. (Moraes.)[501]

And this is how Schlee defines *calhandra* or *calandra*:

> CALANDRA (BRAS) S.f. - Pássaro canoro da família Mimidae (Mimus saturninus modulator), também chamado de sabiá-da-praia e sabiá-do-campo, de plumagem cinzenta e branca, cauda comprida, e que frequenta as coxilhas da campanha, sendo capaz de reproduzir a voz de outros passarinhos.[502]

Thus, the word *calhandra* means something similar to the lark, but also another bird that exists only in Brazil: it is a kind of semantical bridge, a multitudinous bird, one bird that is many birds, simultaneously a very South-American bird and an exclusively European one, and therefore a point of confluence of the strange and the familiar. This is how worked it into the stanza:

> Mensageira do dia, eis a **calhandra**
> Irrequieta, saudando a manhã branda;
> Nos ares sobe Febo resplendente
> E a luz faz rir em fogo todo o Oriente;
> Nas ramas incidindo o doce raio

[501] ROMAGUERA CORREA, op. cit., p. 85.
[502] SCHLEE, op. cit. p. 187.

Resseca sobre as folhas vago orvalho. [503]

Another example of vocabular *acriollamiento* can be found in Theseus' instructions to the knights on the incoming tournament, read by the king's herald in the public square of Athens:

> No man therfore, up peyne of los of lyf,
> No maner shot, ne polax, ne short knyf
> Into the lystes sende or thider brynge;
> Ne short swerd, for to stoke with poynt bitynge,
> No man ne drawe, ne bere it by his syde.
> Ne no man shal unto his felawe ryde
> But o cours with a sharpe ygrounde spere;
> Foyne, if hym list, on foote, hymself to were.[504]
>
> [Prose translation: Assim sendo, ninguém, sob pena de morte, deverá mandar ou trazer para a liça armas de arremesso, achas de guerra ou punhais; ninguém deverá sacar, ou portar à cintura, espadas curtas, que podem matar com as pontas fendentes; e ninguém deverá fazer, com a aguda lança em riste, mais que uma investida a cavalo contra o adversário, – podendo, porém, desmontado, arremeter contra ele quantas vezes quiser, com vistas a defender-se.]

The horsely subject of lines 2549-2550 gave me room to introduce one of the most widespread regionalisms in Southern Brazilian dialect: the verb *apear*, in its non reflexive form, as a synonym to "desmontar". As Roque Callage points out in the **Vocabulário Sul-Rio-Grandense**:

> Apear
> -, v. descer, desmontar; apear-se do cavalo; apear-se da diligência. É têrmo muito usual. (CALLAGE)[505]

[503] CHAUCER, 2013, op. cit., p. 68.
[504] CHAUCER, 1996, op. cit., p. 87.
[505] ROMAGUERA CORREA, op. cit., p. 27. “A very usual term”.

As I had done with *calhandra*, so did I work this verb into Chaucer's line, not in a manner that would make it stand out and turn the rest of the stanza into a pantomime, but rather putting the words into a mutual dance, making the opposing vocabulary choices to contaminate and nuance each other, thus creating something new. In order to achieve the right sort of balance, I was careful never to use more than one regional idiom within the same line, just as I did while translating the Monk's portrait in The General Prologue. Thus, the participle "apeados" is *medievalized*, blending into the stanza, just as the surrounding medieval setting and vocabulary goes through a process of *acriollamiento* by contamination and proximity. Word choice then comes out as a way of constructing fictional believability.

> Que ninguém ouse então - a pena é a morte -
> Trazer dardos à liça, armas de corte,
> Achas de guerra, facas ou adaga;
> Fendente espada curta ninguém traga,
> À cinta, e uma só vez, de lança em riste,
> Ataque-se o rival, e se persiste
> A luta, então que lutem **apeados**.[506]

Something else should be said about the way I endeavored to recreate formal elements from Chaucer's verses. Let us now consider the tournament scene, where Chaucer resorts to the alliterative verse that was the standard form of verse in English poetry until the 11th c., remaining important until the 14th c. and declining under the influence of the French syllabic verse[507]. The following passage is an example of the "alliterative revival" that took place in the Middle English period, combining alliterative verse with a stanzaic pattern and rhymes[508].

> The heraudes lefte hir prikyng up and doun;;
> Now ryngen trompes loude and clarioun.
> Ther is namoore to seyn, but west and est
> In goon the speres ful sadly in arrest;

[506] CHAUCER, 2013, op. cit., p.99
[507] BENSON, op. cit. p. VIII.
[508] Ibid, ibidem.

In gooth the sharpe **spo**re into the **sy**de.
Ther seen men who kan juste and who kan ryde;
Ther **shy**veren **shaf**tes upon **sheel**des thikke;
He feeleth thurgh the herte-spoon the prikke.
Up **spryn**gen **sper**es twenty foot on highte;
Out goon the **swer**des as the **sil**ver brighte;
The helmes they tohewen and toshrede
Out **brest** the **blood** with **stier**ne **stre**mes rede;
With **mygh**ty **ma**ces the **bo**nes they to**bres**te.
He **thurgh** the **thik**keste of the **throng** gan **thres**te;
Ther **stom**blen **stee**des **stron**ge, and doun gooth al (...)[509]

[Prose translation: Os arautos param de cavalgar para cima e para baixo; vibra o clangor das trompas eclarins; a leste e a oeste prendem-se as lanças em riste sob os braços; ferem os flancos as esporas pontiagudas. Então é que se vê quem luta e quem cavalga, enquanto o chuço se espedaça contra o espesso escudo. Um aqui sente o pontaço debaixo do coração, acolá saltam as hastes à altura de vinte pés; sacam aqui espadas fulgurantes como prata, que aos elmos logo talham e estraçalham; além escorre o sangue em horrendos rios vermelhos, e os ossos quebram-se aos golpes das grossas clavas. Este se atira onde o combate é mais aceso, os fortes corcéis tropeçam e tudo vem abaixo; aquele rola como bola sob os pés.]

Recreating Chaucer's alliterations in this passage posed an interesting challenge. Alliterative verse in medieval English poetry was characterized by the repetition of sounds on the stressed syllables, and not necessarily on the first syllable of each word. In Portuguese poetry, although alliteration can happen on different syllabic positions, the repetition of sounds has always been more usual at the beginning of each word, even when the initial syllable is unstressed[510]. In his **Dicionário de Termos Literários**, Massaud Moisés offers two examples of alliterative verse in Portuguese: a

[509] CHAUCER, 1996, op. cit., p. 88-89.
[510] MOISÉS, Massaud. **Dicionário de Termos Literários**. São Paulo: Cultrix, 2004, p. 17.

famous stanza from Cruz e Souza's *Violões que Choram* and the acrostic dedicated by Álvaro de Brito Pestana to D. Fernando in the 16th c. As can be seen bellow, both poems resort to alliteration on the initial syllable of each word, either stressed or unstressed.

Vozes veladas, veludosas vozes,
Volúpias dos violões, vozes veladas,
Vagam nos velhos vórtices velozes
Dos ventos, vivas, vãs, vulcanizadas.
(Cruz e Souza). [511]

Forte, fiel, façanhoso,
Fazendo feitos famosos,
Florescente, frutuoso,
Fundando fins frutuosos,
Fama, fé fortalecendo,
Famosamente floresce,
Fidalguias favorece,
Francas franquezas firmando.
(Álvaro de Brito Pestana)[512]

At first sight, two alternatives presented themselves as I endeavored to translate the passage in question from **The Canterbury Tales**. I could either opt for a foreignizing strategy, alliterating *à la anglaise*, exclusively on the stressed syllables of each word; or I could resort to a familiarizing strategy, using the main type of Portuguese alliteration, exclusively on the initial syllables of each word. In the end, this passage became a privileged space for me to apply my personal strategy of balancing familiarity and strangeness within a frame of translational verisimilitude. I not only used both kinds of alliteration, but also combined them within some lines, as can be seen below:

O grito dos heraldos chega ao fim;
Ver**be**ram as trom**be**tas, mil clarins;
A **les**te, oeste, as **lan**ças **lon**gas vão

[511] Ibid, ibidem.
[512] Ibid, ibidem.

Bem sob os **bra**ços presas, e o **bri**dão
Esplende, e a **es**pora o flanco **es**peta acesa;
Quem luta e quem cavalga com destreza
É **cha**ma e brilha e o **chu**ço arranha ao aço
Do **es**cudo **es**pesso, e as hastes vão no **es**paço
Possantes e as es**pa**das são qual **pra**ta,
E ao **pei**to a **pon**ta **rom**pe e a lança **ras**ga,
E o **fer**ro **ful**ge, e este elmo está fendido,
E em **ru**bro **rio** hor**ren**do e desabrido
Es**cor**re o sangue e as **cla**vas **que**bram ossos,
A**fun**dam **fa**ces **fe**ras nos destroços,
Corcéis **cri**nudos **cae**m - **tom**ba **tu**do![513]

An individual analysis of some lines will make my strategy clearer.

"Ver**be**ram as trom**be**tas, mil clarins": In Portuguese, this line might not look immediately alliterative, as there is no repetition of sounds at the beginning of the words. It follows the pattern of standard alliterations in Middle English, nonetheless. The same happens on the line "E em **ru**bro **rio** hor**ren**do e desabrido".

"A **les**te, oeste, as **lan**ças **lon**gas vão": This line works both as an standard alliteration in Middle English and as a mainstream alliteration in Portugese, as the stressed syllables are the initial ones. The same happens in the line "**Bem** sob os **bra**ços presas, e o **bri**dão"

"**Es**plende, e a **es**pora o flanco **es**peta acesa": In this line, both types of alliteration are at work. The repetition of *es*[514] happens at the beginning of each word, whereas the repetition of *p* happens exclusively on each stressed syllable.

"**Po**ssantes e as es**pa**das são qual **pra**ta": In this line, the same sound, p, appears on the first, unstressed syllable of *Possante*; on the stressed, middle syllable of *espadas*; and on the first, stressed syllable of *prata*. A similar blending occurs in the lines "E o **fer**ro **ful**ge, e este elmo está **fen**dido".

Once more, poetic form emerges as the creative space where the competing drives of strangeness and familiarity clash, merge and create the New out of the Old.

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[513] CHAUCER, 2013, op. cit. p. 101

[514] "A base da aliteração é sempre um fonema consonântico, mas não se exclui a hipótese de fonema vocálico." MOISÉS, op. cit., p. 17. “The basis of alliteration is a consonantal phonem, but the possibility of a vocalic phonem is not excluded”.

4.3 THE MILLER'S TALE: COMMENTARY

Although comic elements are to be found in The General Prologue, the story told by the Miller is the first example of comedy, understood as a specific genre, in *The Canterbury Tales*. It is also one of the most accomplished stories Chaucer ever wrote - and the fact the Chaucer placed it immediately after the highly romantic Knight's Tale is by no means a coincidence, as we shall see.

There are six comedy stories in **The Canterbury Tales** - if we exclude the comic passages not only in The General Prologue, but also in the individual prologues and other texts linking the different stories. The strictly comic tales are those of the Miller, the Reeve, the Shipman, the Merchant, the Friar, and the Summoner; there is yet the fragment of a seventh story, The Cook's Tale, which was left unfinished but clearly belongs to the genre[515]. While Chaucerian romance introduces us to "olde stories" (Knight's Tale, 859), Chaucerian comedy is set in Chaucer's present, like a report on everyday life. The place is not Ancient Greece, like in The Knight's Tale, neither a magic landscape of wizardry and chivalry, such as The Franklin's and The Squire's Tale. It is the "common world" of English towns – or, if it is set elsewhere, some place that could be easily recognized as homely and familiar. The Miller's and Reeve's tales are set in or around Oxford and Cambridge, two university towns, so as to portrait with apparent impartiality the deeds and misdeeds of students. The Summoner's story is set in Yorkshire; the Cook's, in London; the Friar's, in an unnamed but quite typical English village. The Shipman's Tale is set in Saint Denis, France, but the place and the people are described in terms very familiar to Chaucer's audience. The exception is the setting of The Merchant's Tale, in Pavia, Lombardy, a more far-off and exotic location; in this respect and in others, this tale is proclaimed to be "different", as we shall discuss later[516].

Beside the time and place of the setting, Chaucerian comedy has also a distinctive narrative tone, and asks the reader to make some very specific assumptions. In the romance tales, the audience must accept, for the purposes of the story, that human existence is made meaningful by a set of noble ideals. In the religious tales, worldly life is shown to be insignificant in relation to eternal life, and thus, paradoxically, human existence is validated and given significance. Chaucerian comedy sets aside all these

[515] BOITANI, op. cit., p. 160
[516] Ibid, p. 160-161

ideals and principles. In those stories, no values are more important than surviving and satisfying one's appetites, and those characters who temporarily believe otherwise are soon taught a hard lesson. While classical comedy, as defined by Jonson, Molière, Bergson and Meredith[517], is socially normative, making "vice and folly" seem ridiculous, Chaucer's comic tales do not display clear moral norms and, in many cases, the narrator himself seems to be morally ambiguous[518]. That can be clearly seen in The Miller's Tale, for instance, when the narrator describes Alison – young wife of the soon-to-be-cuckolded carpenter. The narrator's voice seems to conform to the lubricous thoughts of Nicholas, the Oxford student who wants to bed her:

> Hir mouth was sweete as bragot or the meeth,
> Or hoord of apples leyd in hey or heeth.
> Wynsynge she was, as is a joly colt,
> Long as a mast, and upright as a bolt.
> A brooch she baar upon hir lowe coler,
> As brood as is the boos of a bokeler.
> Hir shoes were laced on hir legges hye.
> She was a prymerole, a piggesnye,
> For any lord to leggen in his bedde,
> Or yet for any good yeman to wedde.[519]

> [Prose translation: Sua boca era gostosa como cerveja doce ou hidromel, ou como pilha de maçãs por sobre ofeno ou urze. Era irrequieta como um potro brincalhão, comprida como um mastro e reta comouma flecha. Fechava-lhe o decote um broche grande como a protuberância no centro dosescudos. Subiam-lhe pelas pernas as tiras com que atava os seus sapatos. Era uma primavera oucardamina, digna de ser levada para a cama por um fidalgo ou desposada por um rico lavrador.]

[517] Ibid, p. 161
[518] Ibid, ibidem.
[519]CHAUCER, 1996, op. cit. p. 109.

In my translation, "lord" has become "marquês" and "yeman", "burguês", in other to allow the rhyme; also, the "pyggesnye" (cardamima) became a "margarida", to convey to the readers more immediate sensorial information:

> Sua boca era licor de mel ou sidra;
> Doce como maçã recém-colhida,
> Alegre como um potro pelos prados,
> Empertigada e reta como um dardo.
> No peito tinha um broche cor do céu
> Redondo como o adorno de um broquel.
> Subiam dos sapatos longas tiras
> Às pernas: suculenta margarida,
> Apropriada ao leito de um marquês,
> À casa de um vassalo ou de um burguês.[520]

Besides passages as this one, where the narrator seems to relish in the characters' appetites, Chaucerian comedy displays an analytical tone, un-outrageously describing what elsewhere would be taken with scandal, as if the narrator were reviewing the behavior of animals in a zoo, or providing his audience with a "slice-of-life"[521]. Chaucerian comedy tales are considered fabliaux, a term that broadly means comic tales of low life involving trickery and elaborate practical jokes[522]. The term, however, can also be understood in more strict terms, as tales about marriage and sex, and generally involving a husband who is duped by a younger man, who gets to enjoy the sexual favors of his victim's wife. In the stricter sense, Chaucer's fabliaux include the tales told by the Miller, the Reeve, The Merchant, the Shipman and the Cook, while the Summoner's and the Friar's stories fall into a different category.

Fabliaux were widely known in continental Europe, appearing in Boccaccio's **Decameron** and in French collections like the **Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles**. In English, the genre appears much more rarely. Indeed, Chaucer's tales are almost the only examples of English fabliaux *strictu sensu*[523]. As said above, the fabliaux and other comedy tales in Chaucer follow a code of justice that not always coincides with conventional morality.

[520]CHAUCER, 2013, op. cit., p. 121-122
[521] BOITANI, op. cit., p. 161
[522] BOITANI, op. cit., p. 163
[523] BOITANI, op. cit., p. 163.

While greed, hypocrisy and pride are always punished, so are slow-wittedness and prudery; "the injunction is not *be noble*, or *be good*, but *be smart*"[524]. In Chaucer's fabliaux, the heroes and heroines are those generally despised by society: poor students, unfaithful wives, peasants, vagrants and vagabonds; their victims are generally wealthy merchants or bourgeois tradesmen. The genre can be seen as "delightfully subversive, a thumbing of the nose at the dictates of religion, the solid virtues of the citizenry, and the idealistic pretensions of aristocracy and its courtly literature"[525]. However, we should not be lead into making the easy assumption that Chaucer's comedy is more "realistic" than the other tales. The comedy stories in the Tales, fabliaux or otherwise, follow rules, ask the readers to make assumptions and play with the audience's expectations, but do so differently from The Knight's Tale, for instance. Or, as Derek Pearsall wrote:

> (...) 'realism' is not in question, and the narrative assumptions we are asked to make are no more realistic than those we are asked to make in romance. (...)Romance asserts the possibility that men may behave in a noble and self-transcending manner; fabliau declares the certainty that they will always behave like animals. The one portrays men as superhuman, the other portrays them as subhuman. Neither is 'true' or realistic, though we might say that our understanding of what *is* true gains depth from having different slanting lights thrown upon reality, so that beneficial shock, enrichment, invigoration are given to our perception of the world. Romance and fabliau complement one another, and Chaucer encourages us to look at them thus by setting the *Knight's Tale* and the *Miller's Tale* side by side. Each type of story makes a selection of human experience in accord with its own narrative conventions or rules[526].

In The Miller's Tale, Chaucer expands and sophisticates the models he took from Italy and France. The characters are much more developed than their continental counterparts, dialogue is highly elaborate, and vivid descriptions provide a truth-like feeling to the story; also, the plot is so wittingly convolute as to remain surprising and entertaining centuries after the story was written. As I translated this tale, I had to apply several strategies to adapt Chaucerian comedy to a Brazilian audience: I felt I had to sharpen Chaucer's humor to a deeply cutting edge and create verse that readers would consider at least a bit unsettling. By that, I do not mean I wanted to deform Chaucer's

[524] BOITANI, op. cit., p. 161
[525] BENSON, op. cit., p. 8
[526] BOITANI, op. cit., p. 163-164.

sense of humor: what I wanted was to convey its unruliness in other terms. As I translated the tales, I kept in mind Virginia Wolf's words in *The Pastons and Chaucer*: "Much of Chaucer is improper – at least a few lines in each of the Tales – and it gives us as we read it the strange sensation of being naked to the air after being muffled in old clothing". In several parts of my translation, I tried to convey this sensation of sudden nakedness amidst a procession of medieval paraphernalia. First, I wanted to clothe the reader *into* this fictional world, and so I had to produce a vest that would fit my readers and make them feel comfortable; then, I wanted to strip them naked "to the air". Therefore, I was constantly tempted to intensify those "improper" elements: I thought that maybe the things that seemed so improper to Virginia Wolf would not cause the same impression on the audience I had in mind. Most of the times, I realized I didn't need to exaggerate Chaucer's sensuous wit; bringing sexual argot and raunchy situations out of the distant past would be enough to impress the readers, as they probably wouldn't expect the Middle Ages to be so lively. In other cases I felt I had to inflect Chaucer's humor just as I inflected his lines.

Such punctual inflections or magnifications were needed, also, to throw a believable light upon Chaucer's repeated excuses for the naughtiness of his tales. At the end of the Miller's Prologue, Chaucer insists on justifying his "faithfulness" in portraying the low life of some of his characters.

> And therfore every gentil wight I preye,
> For Goddes love, demeth nat that I seye
> Of yvel entente, but for I moot reherce
> Hir tales alle, be they bettre or werse,
> Or elles falsen som of my mateere.
> And therfore, whoso list it nat yheere,
> Turne over the leef and chese another tale;
> For he shal fynde ynowe, grete and smale,
> Of storial thyng that toucheth gentillesse,
> And eek moralitee and hoolynesse
> Blameth nat me if that ye chese amys.
> The Millere is a cherl; ye knowe wel this.
> So was the Reve eek and othere mo,
> And harlotrie they tolden bothe two.

> Avyseth yow, and put me out of blame;
> And eek men shal nat maken ernest of game.[527]
>
> [Prose translation: Por isso, peço às pessoas mais refinadas que, pelo amor de Deus, não atribuam qualquerpropósito maldoso a meu relato; apenas repito os contos de todos eles, bons ou ruins, porquesenão estaria falseando uma parte de minha matéria. Assim sendo, quem não desejar ouvi-la, tudoo que tem a fazer é virar a página e escolher alguma outra narrativa. Há de encontrar diversas,longas e breves, de assuntos históricos concernentes à fidalguia, bem como à moral e à santidade.Se vocês escolherem mal, a culpa não será minha. O Moleiro é um grosseirão, e isso ninguémignora. O mesmo se pode dizer do Feitor, – entre muitos outros mais, – e ambos só sabiam falarde coisas obscenas. Estejam de sobreaviso; depois, não culpem a mim. Além disso, para que levara sério uma simples brincadeira?]

The same I have said about Chaucer's apology in The General Prologue applies to the reiteration above: it is a gambit, a subterfuge to gain the freedom needed to write what he wants, the way he wants. Those passages are more a display of a "queynte" (cunning) disposition than a sincere avowal of awkwardness. All the more reason, then, to provide Chaucer's "japes" (jokes, tricks) with an effective edge of bawdiness in Brazilian Portuguese; otherwise his constant excuses would sound like the trepidations of a prudish man. One of the strategies adopted was to blend colloquial Brazilian words into the weaving of the text, but always in a tactical, calculated way, so as to avoid a linguistic overdose and the loss of verisimilitude. In the passage below, for instance, I decided to translate "harlotrie" as "safadeza", instead of the more formal "obscenidades", creating a contrast with the mannered use of the second-person plural in Chaucer's address to his audience:

> E suplico aos espíritos gentis
> Não crer que meus motivos sejam vis

[527] CHAUCER, 1996, op. cit., p. 106.

Pois repetir eu devo tal e qual
Os contos foram ditos, bem ou mal,
Para que não falseie esta matéria.
Se acaso fordes gente muito séria,
Basta virar as páginas e achar
Outro conto, que mais possa agradar.
Pois aqui tenho histórias o bastante
De gentileza e tom edificante;
Quem mal escolha, a mim não vá culpar.
Já vos disse: o Moleiro é um ser vulgar;
Vulgar era o Feitor, mais outros tantos;
De safadezas falarão, garanto.
Em mim não ponde a culpa. Este é meu rogo:
Que não se leve a sério um simples jogo.[528]

The Miller's Tale deals initially with the courting of Alisson, wife of a hard-working carpenter named John, by Nicholas, a student who rents a room in their house. After depicting Alisson's appearance and personality (she is "restless as colt"), the narrator then describes the moment when she is seduced by the impassioned Nicholas - or maybe the moment when she decides to play along with his game. Alisson's animal vitality is shown as a form of innocence, and when she surrenders her chastity, after a brief show of reluctance, it is as if she were unable to understand why she should restrain her appetites[529]. In this passage, Chaucer uses two bawdy words: "queynte", which in this case means "crotch", and "spille", which might be understood as "to die" but also "to spill (semen)".

Now, sire, and eft, sire, so bifel the cas
That on a day this hende Nicholas
Fil with this yonge wyf to rage and pleye,
Whil that hir housbonde was at Oseneye,
As clerkes ben ful subtile and ful queynte;
And prively he caughte hire by the queynte,

[528] CHAUCER, 2013, op. cit., p. 119
[529] BOITANI, op. cit., p. 166

And seyde, "Ywis, but if ich have my wille,
For deerne love of thee, lemman, I spille."
And heeld hire harde by the haunchebones,
And seyde, "Lemman, love me al atones,
Or I wol dyen, also God me save!"
And she sproong as a colt dooth in the trave,
And with hir heed she wryed faste awey,
And seyde, "I wol nat kisse thee, by my fey![530]

[Prose translation: Então, meu senhor, e meu senhor ali, deu-se o caso que um dia o belo Nicholas começoua rir e a brincar com a jovem esposa, aproveitando-se de que o marido estava fora, em Oseney (os estudantes são muito espertos e sabidos); e nisso, furtivamente, apanhou-a pela boceta, dizendo: “Meu amor, se você não me der o que desejo, esta minha paixão vai me matar.” Em seguida, agarrando-a firme pelos quadris, sussurrou: “Meu bem, venha comigo agora mesmo, senão, – que Deus me ajude, – vou morrer!” Ela, porém, saltou como o potro que está no cercadinho para ser ferrado, e, desviando rapidamente a cabeça, respondeu: “Eu é que não vou beijar você!]

My translation:

Então, meu bom senhor, meus bons senhores,
O esperto Nicolau sofria dores
De tanto desejar a **bonequinha**.
Em Osney o marido estando, um dia,
- Estudantes entendem bem da treta -
Sem aviso, pegou-a da **boceta**
E disse: “Meu amor, se eu não **provar**
Teu suco,de **tesão** vou estourar”.[531]

[530] CHAUCER, 1996, op. cit., p. 109-110.
[531] CHAUCER, 2013, op. cit., p. 122

The words highlighted in bold are tactical colloquialisms worked into the text. By translating "yonge wyf" as "bonequinha", for instance, I gave both Nicholas and the narrator the voice of a cheap womanizer. The verse "And clerkes be ful subtile and ful queynte" provided me with a further opportunity to experiment with sound, meaning and cultural resonances. The word "treta", which I used to convey Nicholas "subtlety", is nowadays regarded as very colloquial in Brazil, but its origins are in the Middle Ages, when it used to signify "destreza no jogo da esgrima para atacar ou derribar o adversário"[532]. Later its meaning was expanded to "artifício, estratagema, manha, astúcia, sutileza, ardil", as in this passage from *A Arte de Furtar*: "De outras tretas usam ainda mais suaves para se fazerem senhores do alheio a título de benefícios fantásticos"[533]. By using this word, then, I aimed again at creating a *mise en abyme* where the colloquial is contained in the scholarly and the scholarly in the colloquial. A similar game occurs in the rendering of "(...) Ywis, but if ich have my wille, / For deerne love of thee, lemman, I spille", which becomes, in my translation: "(...) Meu amor, se eu não provar / Teu suco, de tesão vou estourar". These verses contain a reference to the song *Morena Tropicana*, by Alceu Valença, where a woman's body is compared to a juice:

> Da manga rosa
> Quero gosto e o sumo
> Melão maduro, sapoti, juá
> (...)
> Linda morena
> Fruta de vez temporana
> Caldo de cana caiana
> Vou te desfrutar.[534]

Also, it might come as a surprise to many, bu the word "tesão" is actually "very classic"[535] and originally meant "rijeza, tesura, força de corpo teso e estirado (...) força; intensidade"[536]. In this sense it was used by Filinto Elísio: "Com o desbarato destes

[532] TRETA. In: **Aulete Digital**. Disponível em: http://www.aulete.com.br/treta. Acesso em 30 mar 2019. "Dexterity in fencing/swordsmanship".
[533] Ibid. "Artifice, stratagem, contrivance".
[534] VALENÇA, Alceu. Canção: Tropicana. In: **Cavalo de Pau**. Rio de Janeiro: Estúdio Sigla, 1982.
[535] TESÃO. In: **Aulete Digital**. Disponível em: http://www.aulete.com.br/tes%C3%A3o Acesso em 30 mar 2019
[536] Ibid. "Intensity, strength, momentum".

amainaram no tesão da acometida"; and also by Padre Antônio Vieira in *Sermão pelo bom sucesso das armas de Portugal contra a Holanda*: "[Jó] queixava-se do tesão de suas penas (...)". It was only much later that it acquired its now overriding meaning of "potência, desejo sexual ou estado do pênis em ereção"[537]. According to Houaiss, the word in its acceptation of "lubricity" has been used collloquialy in Brazil, with repercussions in informal writing and in journalism[538].

Another example of a Brazilian colloquialism worked into the text can be found in the "Kiss at the Window" episode, maybe the most famous comic passage in the Tales. In it, the witty lovers Nicholas and Alison play a practical joke on Alison's unwanted suitor, Absalom, who is made to kiss her "in hir hole" instead of kissing her mouth. When Absalom cries out that his beloved's face seems to have grown a beard, Nicholas, who is hidden in Alison's bedroom, can no longer control his laughter. Absalom then learns his lesson and decides to be avenged. Consider the full passage below:

> "Than make thee redy", quod she. "I come anon."
> And unto Nicholas she saide stille,
> "Now hust, and thou shall laughten all the fille."
> This Absolon down set him on his knees
> And said, "I am a lord at all degrees!
> For after this I hope there cometh more.
> Lemman, thy grace! and sweete brid, thine ore!"
> The window she undoth, and that in haste.
> "Have do", quod she, "come off and speed thee faste,
> Lest that our neighebores thee espye."
> This Absolon gan wipe his mouth full drye.
> Derk was the night as pitch or as the cole;
> And at the window out she put hir hole.
> And Absolon, him fill no bet ne wers,
> But with his mouth he kissed hir naked ers -
> Full savourly - ere he were ware of this.
> Aback he stert, and thought it was amiss,

[537] Ibid. "Potency, sexual desire, the state of an erect penis".
[538] HOUAISS, op. cit., p. 2707.

For well he wist a woman hath no beerd.
He felt a thing all rough and long y-herd,
And saide, "Fy, alas, what have I do?
"Tehee", quod she, and clapt the window to.
And Absolon goth forth a sorry pas.
"A berd, a berd!" quod hende Nicholas,
"By Goddes corpus, this goth fair and well!"
This sely Absolon her everydeel,
And on his lip he gan for anger bite,
And to himself he said - "I shall thee quite."[539]

[Prose translation: “Então prepare-se”, disse ela, “que eu já vou.” E cochichou para Nicholas: “Agora presteatenção, que você vai morrer de rir.”Lá fora Absalon ajoelhou-se e murmurou: “Tudo está indo às mil ‘Maravilhas, pois depoisdisso espero que muito mais há de vir. Sua graça, meu amor; e sua mercê, oh meu gentilpassarinho!”Ela abriu a janela sem tardança, dizendo: “Vamos, acabe logo com isso, antes que osvizinhos vejam.” Absalon enxugou os lábios. A noite estava escura como carvão, ou como breu; e ela pôs a bunda para fora da janela. Absalon, que não enxergava nada, deu-lhe, antes que percebesse, um ardoroso beijo bem no cu. Logo pulou para trás, achando que alguma coisa estava errada. Sabia que as mulheres não têm barba; no entanto, sentira uma coisa áspera e cabeluda. Gritou então: “Oh, meu Deus, o que é que eu fiz:?” “Hihihi”, foi a resposta de Alison, batendo-lhe com força a janela na cara. E Absalon foi-se afastando com passos melancólicos. “Uma barba, uma barba!” gargalhava o esperto Nicholas. “Pelo corpo de Deus, essa foi ótima.” O pobre Absalon a tudo escutou, então começou a morder os lábios de raiva e a dizer consigo mesmo: “Você me paga!”]

My translation:

[539] CHAUCER, 1996, op. cit., p. 123.

"Prepara então teus lábios, Absalão".
A Nicolau, bem baixo, disse a esperta:
"Agora vamos rir desse **pateta**".

O sacristão ficou no chão de joelhos,
Pensando: "Eu sou um Lorde de respeito!
Virá, depois do beijo, a coisa toda".
E disse: "**Linda**, vem, dá-me tua boca!"

Ela abriu a janela sem demora,
E disse: "Vamos logo, mãos à obra;
Pode um vizinho achar que és um larápio".
E o sacristão logo enxugou os lábios.
Escura estava a noite; a sombra, funda,
E na janela a moça pôs a bunda.
E o rapaz, com sua boca de alcaçuz,
(Ó destino cruel!) beijou-lhe o cu,
Um ardoroso beijo apaixonado.
Mas pulou para trás. "**Tem algo errado**",
Falou, "pois jamais vi mulher barbuda,
E tua boca é bem áspera e peluda".
Então gritou: "Ó Deus! Que foi que eu fiz?"
E fechou-se a janela em seu nariz;
E a moça riu, e o jovem foi-se triste.
E Nicolau gritou: "Por *Corpus Christi*!
Uma barba! Uma barba! Ai, que **paspalho**!"

E o sacristão ouvindo aquele **esparro**,
De raiva morde a boca, solta pragas,
Murmurando: "Por essa, tu me pagas".[540]

[540] CHAUCER, 2013, op. cit., p. 135-136.

In my translation, the line "Now hust, and thou shall laughten all the fille" (literally, "Now hush, and you shall laugh all you can") becomes "Agora vamos rir desse pateta" (dotard), establishing a *rima toante* with the word "esperta" (smart - feminine) in the previous line. "Esperta" is also a translator's license; in the original, Nicholas, and not Alison, is the one called "hende" (smart). The words "pateta" and "esperta", although having no semantic equivalent in the original, serve here the purpose of setting up the atmosphere of a "Brazilian fabliau", as both can be immediately associated with vernacular leitmotivs of cuckolding and betrayal. "Linda" translates "Lemman" (darling): it is also a colloquial choice, countered by the highbrow verb use in "dá-me tua boca" (instead of the more colloquial "me dá tua boca"). The same contrast is established between the phrase "Ó destino cruel" (O cruel destiny — again, with no semantic equivalent in Chaucer) and the blunt "beijou-lhe o cu"; just as the highly colloquial use of the verb "ter" in "Tem algo errado" contrasts with the scholarly adjective "ardoroso" on the previous line. Finally, the word "esparro" deserves a further commentary. It's a Brazilian word, derived from the *lunfardo* and, therefore, exclusively South American, according to Caldas Aulete:

> esparro[2] (es.par.ro)
> 1. Bras. Gíria. Ação ou resultado de esparrar-se, esparramar-se. ESPARRAME.
> 2. Gabolice.
> [F:. do lunfardo.][541]

All those choices, carefully calculated and counterpointed, aim at leading the reader into the belief that this tale is set neither in Modern Brazil, nor in the European Middle Ages, but in a between-space, where language creates its own fictional reality. The desired effect is brought home in the last stanza. This being the fabliau of fabliaux, Absolon rightly learns his lesson and turns the spell against the sorcerer. Later that same night, he asks for another kiss; Nicholas wants to fool his rival again, and seats his own backside at the window; this time, however, Absolon is armed with a hot iron, which leaves a permanent mark in *hende Nicholas'* soft skin. The Miller sums it up, with a perfect sense of fabliau justice, in lines 664 to 668:

> Thus swived was the carpenteres wif

[541] ESPARRO. In: **Aulete Digital.** Disponível em: http://www.aulete.com.br/esparro. Acesso em 20 fev de 2019. “Magniloquence, swagger, swank”.

> For all his keeping and his jalousye;
> And Absolon hath kist hir nether eye;
> And Nicholas is scalded in the toute.
> This tale is done and God save all the route![542]
>
> [Prose translation: Dessa forma, apesar de toda a vigilância e todo o ciúme, a mulher docarpinteiro foi possuída; e Absalon lhe beijou o olho de baixo; e Nicholas queimou a bunda. E assim chega ao fim esta história, e Deus nos abençoe a todos!]

This is one of the few passages where I incorporate a solution found in Coghill's translation, where we read:

> And Nicholas is branded in the bum
> And God bring all of us to Kingdom Come.[543]

I kept Coghill's reference to the Pater Noster, coupling it with the Brazilian colloquialisms "achar seu macho" and the verb "comer" in one of its informal acceptations:

> E assim a rapariga foi comida,
> - Driblando a vigilância, achou seu macho;
> E Absalão a beijou no olho de baixo,
> E Nicolau ficou de cu moreno.
> E é isto. E vinde a nós o Vosso Reino![544]

Macho here is used not as "male" or "masculine", but in its informal meaning of "homem com quem se tem relações amorosas, geralmente em concubinato: amante, amásio"[545], while "comer" here has its "tabu" meaning of "possuir sexualmente, seduzir

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[542] CHAUCER, 1996, op. cit. p. 126.
[543] CHAUCER, 1996, op. cit., p. 106
[544] CHAUCER, 1996, op. cit., p. 139.
[545] HOUAISS, op. cit, p. 1803. "Men with whom one has relations: lover". Also used in reference to animals.

(alguém)"[546]. All those colloquialisms are framed by "rapariga", a scholarly-sounding word, and the extract from the Pater Noster that closes the Tale.

4.4 THE FRANKLIN'S TALE: COMMENTARY

With The Franklin's Tale, we are back to the world of medieval romance, but in a tone that is rather different from what we have seen in The Knight's Tale. Whereas the Knight's story is inspired by the epic poems of antiquity, the tale told by the Franklin has another source altogether. The narrator himself clearly announces his tale as belonging to a species of romance known as the Breton lay:

> Thise olde gentil Britouns in hir dayes
> Of diverse aventures maden layes,
> Rymeyed in hir firste Briton tonge,
> Whiche layes with hir instrumentz they songe
> Or elles redden hem for hir plesaunce;
> And oon of hem have I in remembraunce,
> Which I shal seyn with good wyl as I kan.[547]
>
> [Prose translation: Em seu tempo, os gentis bretões de outrora faziam poemas sobre fatos diversos,rimados na antiga língua da Bretanha. E cantavam ao som de seus instrumentos esses poemas, ou então os liam para seu entretenimento. A um deles ainda tenho na lembrança, e vou repeti-lo aqui da melhor forma que puder.]

The Breton lay was a form of poetry or song performed by minstrels from Brittany in noble households of France and England, from the 12th c. onwards[548]. The lays themselves were always sung to the harp and expressed the feelings of a given character, such as Tristan; in order to give their audience the necessary information, the minstrels made narrative additions to their songs, explaining the context wherein the lay

[546] HOUAISS, op. cit., p. 769. "Being the active partner in a sexual relation".
[547] CHAUCER, 1996, op. cit., p. 283.
[548] BOITANI, op. cit., p. 151.

should be understood[549]. These accompanying narratives were told in French, and served as inspiration and source to poetess Marie de France, who wrote a collection of twelve romantic versified narratives in England, during the reign of Henry II (1154-89)[550]. It was Marie de France who established the Breton lay tradition in English literature; the favorite themes in that tradition were not feats of arms, but the fairy world and the joys and sorrows of love. Several imitators followed in Marie's steps, including the author of *Sir Orfeo*, a lay written in English Breton, which Chaucer probably knew, although he may not have read Marie de France's works. In any case, this "feminine tradition" of Breton romance seems to have interested Chaucer much more than the knightly deeds that fill the pages of Sir Thomas Malory's **La Morte d'Arthur**[551].

The heart of The Franklin's Tale is its main female character: Dorigen, wife of Averargus, an adventurous knight whose exploits (in the characteristic Chaucerian way) are only briefly summarized. One year after their marriage, Averargus sets off "to seke in armes worshipe and honour" ("to seek in arms worth and honor"), and that's all Chaucer will tell us about the hero's adventures. The heart of The Franklin's Tale lies in Dorigen's feelings, as she awaits the return of her husband from foreign shores[552]. While lamenting Averargus' absence, Dorigen is wooed by the squire Aurelius, "a worshiper of Venus". In a moment of distraction, she playfully promises to grant Aurelius' her favors, as long as he makes all the rocks on the shores of Brittany to disappear. Her intentions, of course, are merely to dodge his advances with elegance; but as this tale is set in the world of fairy, it turns out that her seemingly impossible conditions are actually feasible. Aurelius seeks the help of a magician, who, under the promise of a wealthy payment, does make all the sea-rocks in the Breton coast to vanish. Confronted with the fulfillment of her precondition, Dorigen feels constrained to fulfill her promise. Seeing, however, how wretched she looks at the prospect of betraying her husband, Aurelius proves himself a gentleman and releases the lady from her promise, bringing home the tale's general doctrine, i.e., that "love wol nat been constryned by maistrye" (line 764).

> The behaviour of Aurelius places the refusal of mastery in love in its relation to more general doctrines of 'gentillesse'. Commonly in medieval romance one character finds himself or herself subjected to the will of another by virtue of a vow or promise, and

[549] Ibid, ibidem.
[550] Ibid, ibidem.
[551] Ibid. p. 152
[552] Ibid, ibidem.

> stands to suffer in consequence. Since nobility of soul obliges any romance hero to keep his pledged word, the story will seem all set for a painful conclusion; but this is averted by an answering nobility in the adversary, who waives his rights and releases the hero from his [or her] obligations.[553]

This pattern of nobility or "gentillese" is mirrored by the magician in the tale's denouement: impressed by Dorigen's resolve to honor her promise, even against her will, and also by Aurelius' gentlemanly release of her obligation, the sorcerer also releases the squire from paying the cost of the magic trick:

> ‘But God forbede, for his blisful myght,
> But if a clerk koude doon a gentil dede
> As wel as any of yow, it is no drede!
> Sire, I releesse thee thy thousand pound.’[554](1610–13)

> [Prose translation: "Não queira Deus, por todo seu bendito poder, que um letrado mostre-se incapaz de igualar a fidalguia de vocês dois. Não precisa pagar-me essas mil libras.]

In my translation of The Franklin's Tale, the linguistic background comes straight from **Os Lusíadas**; as an example of word choices, consider the following passages:

> **Merencório** no gesto parecia;
> O forte escudo ao colo pendurado
> Deitando para trás, medonho e irado.
> (Os Lusíadas, Canto I, versos 36-38)

> Sabe que quantas naus esta viagem
> Que tu fazes, fizerem de atrevidas
> Inimiga terão esta **paragem**
> Com ventos e tormentas desmedidas.
> (Os Lusíadas, Canto V, versos 43-46)

[553] Ibid, p. 153.
[554] CHAUCER, 1996, op. cit., p. 311.

The words *merencório* and *paragem*, picked up from Camões, were used in my translation of the following passages from Chaucer:

> The odour of flowers and the freshe sighte
> Wold han made any hearte lighte (...)[555]
>
> [Prose translation: O perfume das flores e a fresca paisagem teriam suavizado qualquer coração.]
>
> My translation:
>
> Tal **paragem**, tão bela e redolente,
> Amaciava as almas, docemente (...)[556]
>
> Ne dorst he not to hir his woe betraye
> Save that paraventure some time at daunces
> Ther yonge folk keepen hir observaunces,
> It may well be he looked on hir face
> In swich a wise as man that asketh grace.[557]
>
> [Prose translation: Tampouco ousava revelar sua dor, exceto talvez algumas vezes durante os bailes, quando os jovens fazem suas confidências; então de tempos em tempos ele a olhava no rosto, à maneira de um homem que suplica por piedade.]
>
> Exceto dessa forma, não dizia
> Jamais a Dorigen como sofria;
> Somente em bailes, onde o galanteio
> É ritual dos jovens, seu desvelo
> Escapava quando ele punha os olhos
> Sobre o rosto da amada, **merencório**(...)[558]

[555] CHAUCER, 1996, op. cit., p. 290.
[556] CHAUCER, 2013, op. cit., p. 508
[557] CHAUCER, 1996, op. cit., p. 291.

Against this background of Camonian language, I added words taken from the regionalist dialect, as I had already done in The Knight's Tale. This strategy is most visible in my translation of the following passage:

> Upon the morrwe, whan that it was day
> To Britain tooke they the righte way,
> Aurelius and this magician beside,
> And been descended ther they wold abide.
> And this was, as this bookes me remembre,
> The colde frosty seson of Decembre.
> Phebus wax old, amd hewed like latoun,
> That in this hote declinacioun
> Shone as the burned gold with stremes brighte.
> But now in Capricorn adown he lighte,
> Where as he shone full pale, I dare well sayn:
> The bitter frostes with the sleet and rain
> Destroyed hath the green in every yerd.
> Janus sit by the fire with double beerd
> And drinketh of his bugle horn the win,
> Bifore him stant brawen of the tusked swin,
> And "Nowel!" cried every lusty man.[559]

> [Prose translation: Na manhã seguinte, tão logo clareou o dia, os dois irmãos, acompanhados pelo mágico, tomaram a estrada para a Bretanha, apeando somente ao chegarem ao destino. Era, como lembraram minhas fontes, o tempo frio e gelado de dezembro. Febo, que, na declinação mais quente, fulgia com luzes brilhantes, qual ouro polido, agora está velho e da cor do latão, pois, afinal, entrou em Capricórnio, onde o antigo fulgor empalidece. As geadas cortantes, com granizo e chuva, destruíram o verde dos jardins. Jano, com barba dupla, sentado ao pé do fogo, de seu

[558] CHAUCER, 2013, op. cit., p. 509
[559] CHAUCER, 1996, op. cit., p. 298.

> chifre recurvo bebe o vinho; um javali é assado à sua frente; todos cantam felizes: “É Natal!”]

My translation:

> Eles partem, nem bem o sol desponta,
> Rumo à Bretagne, na rota menos longa.
> Aurélio, seu irmão e o mestre mago
> Só desmontam após terem chegado
> Onde queriam. Pelo que me lembro
> Dos livros, foi num gélido dezembro:
> Cor de latão, o Sol envelhecia;
> Meses atrás, qual ouro ele luzira,
> Porém, em Capricórnio já chegara
> E pálida e vetusta é a sua cara.
> Geadase granizos fustigantes
> Já mataram as plantas verdejantes;
> Jano, com grande barba bifurcada,
> Em uma longa **guampa** recurvada
> Bebe vinho, sentado junto ao fogo;
> Enquanto um javali tosta no forno;
> E todos cantarolam "É Natal!"[560]

The above stanza is full of imagery associated with the European winter, an idea summed up in the image of the god Janus drinking wine from a "bugle horn”, a "horn of a wild ox for drinking"[561]. In my translation, "bugle horn" is translated as "guampa", instead of "chifre". According to the **Vocabulário Sul-Rio-Grandense**, guampa is a regional idiom used in Rio Grande do Sul, Paraná and São Paulo, whereas the variation "guampo" has been recorded in Minas Gerais, Goiás and Mato Grosso. In Rio Grande do Sul, it is also used to indicate the drinking device (either a cup or a bottle) made out of a horn, used to drink water, milk, rum or maté.

[560] CHAUCER, 2013, op. cit., p. 518
[561] CHAUCER, 1996, op. cit., p. 300. Footnote.

> Guampa
> -, s.f. assim chamam no campo geralmente ao chifre; porém com mais especialidade o chifre preparado à maneira de copo, que os viajantes trazem para beber água em viagem. (CORUJA.)
> -, s.f. chifre, côrno, ponta e especialmente o chifre preparado para servir de copo ou de vasilha para guardar líquidos, como o leite etc. Em viagem é o copo do campeiro, para beber água e às vezes o mate. Nas estâncias, costuma-se tirar o leite em guampas, que são depois penduradas conservando o leite mui fresco. *Etim*. Segundo Zorob. Rodrigues, no Chile dizem guampara. É voc. muito usado nas república platinas.
> (...)
> -, s. côrno, chifre do animal vacum. Sua ponta convenientemente preparada serve de copo para o camponês beber água ou qualquer outro líquido em viagem. O gaúcho conduz a guampa de preferência nos tentos. Há guampas custosamente trabalhadas em outro e prata, apresentando também bizarros trabalhos de esculturas feitos no próprio chifre, trabalhos êsses que são executados a ponta de canivete. (CALLAGE.)
> -, s.f. (R.G. do S., Paraná, S. Paulo) nome dado ao chifre do boi, especialmente quando fôr preparado à guisa de copo: "Então, vens tomar uma guampa?" (J. de Alencar, *O Gaúcho*, t. II) (...)
> - s. chifre, aspa. Diz-se também do utensílio dela preparado para o uso do viajante, destinado a copo de beber água. Há guampas com valores artísticos, ornadas de prata ou de ouro, que fazem parte do arreiamento. O viajante, mesmo montado, desprende êsse objeto da parte dianteira do serigote, onde vem prêsa, por meio de um barbante ou uma tira de couro, e, segurando pela extremidade desta corda, deixa-a cair dentro d'água, apanhando o líquido de que necessita. Guampa torta (têrmo da gíria): valente, destemido, ventana, aspa torta, quebra. (MORAES.)[562]

According to the Real Academia Española, the Spanish word "guampa" stems from the Quechuan *wakkhra*; Houaiss derives it from the mapuche *huampar*[563]. Like many Gauchoesque words, it was initially unknown to European colonizers and emerged from the contact between Spanish, Portuguese and Native American languages[564]. As an example of its use, consider these lines taken from Gauchoesque poem **Antônio Chimango**:

> Principiou a cigana
> Exigindo um candieiro,

[562] ROMAGUERA CORREA, op. cit., p. 236.
[563] HOUAISS, op. cit., p. 1490.
[564] GUAMPA. In.: **Dicionario de la lengua española**. Real Academia Española. Disponível em: https://dle.rae.es/?id=JeonzDM. Acesso em 20 nov 2018.

Um pellego de carneiro
E uma **guampa** d'água fria;
Mas, o que ella mais pedia
É que lhe dessem dinheiro.

Here, the word *guampa* refers to a bottle (instead of a cup) made of an animal horn, and used to store cold water. **Antônio Chimango** is set in the beginnings of the 20th c.; but bottles made of horn can still be found today in rural regions. Drinking (water or alcohol) from a *guampa* is an image that can be easily found in local poetry and modern popular songs, such as *Porteira Afora*, by Eron Vaz Mattos:

Canha e pitanga
São remédios numa guampa.[565]

Old Janus drinking from his guampa amid the rigors of Breton winter represents, in a nutshell, my whole theory of translation. Whatever he is drinking, it does not taste the same as the wine from the "bugle horn"; and yet, quite magically, they are one and the same, transfigured.

4.5 THE SHIPMAN'S TALE: COMMENTARY

Compared to The Miller's Tale, The Shipman's Tale is relatively simple both in plot and in execution. It is also more offbeat: there is no violence and no explicit satirical comment. This led some scholars to view it as Chaucer's earliest fabliau[566]. And, indeed, it is based on an old popular motif: an ingenious and crafty man (in this case, Daun John, the monk) borrows money from a naïve fellow (a merchant from Saint Denis) and uses the money to buy the sexual favors of the lender's wife; he then tells the husband he has given the repayment to his spouse. Thus, both husband and wife are tricked, for the wife must now repay her husband with the wages of her own infidelity[567].

Chaucer, however, enriches this old form with two original additions. Firstly, he crowns the fabliau with a new conclusion. After being tricked by her lover, the wife

[565] MATTOS, Eron Vaz. Canção: Porteira Afora. In: **Canto Ancestral**. Porto Alegre: Gadea Produções, 2012.
[566] BENSON, op. cit., p. 16.
[567] Ibid, ibidem.

proves herself equally tricky: when confronted by the husband about the money she supposedly received from Daun John, she boldly asserts that she will repay her debt in the same coin she exchanged with the monk; in other words, with her body. The wife thus emerges unscathed from the whole experience, clearly viewing both transactions as regular business[568]. Chaucer's second innovation is the use of language. Every conversation is charged with double meanings, and the interchangeability between sex and money is presented in a calculated way, dressed up in decorous tropes and well-crafted innuendos. As Derek Pearsall writes, "throughout no one speaks openly or directly or honestly to anyone else, whether in rage, scorn or desire. Everyone is politely diplomatic, careful not to offend and not to reveal any real purpose or feeling"[569].

While The Miller's and The Reeve's tales have a direct dramatic connection to the pilgrims' journey, The Shipman's Tale is somewhat detached from the frame story. Originally, the tale was possibly meant to be told by the Wife of Bath, but as her personality became more and more complex, the simple equation of sex and money was no longer suitable[570]. Chaucer then assigned the fabliau to the Shipman, "a person well acquainted with merchants and their attitude toward money"[571].

The greatest challenge in translating The Shipman's Tale was to convey in humorous terms the interplay between sexual metaphors about money and monetary metaphors about sex, a movement that coalesces when the wife urges her husband to collect the debt in sex: "I am your wife– score it upon my taille!" This is one of Chaucer's most famous puns, not a double but a triple entendre, for "taille" could mean tale, tail and tally[572]. One way of translating it would be opting for one the three meanings and explain the others away on a footnote. However, "there is nothing duller than explaining a joke", as the saying goes; and the more one has to explain it, the less funny it will become. From this point of view, a footnote could be humor's sepulcher. And here we find a haunting dilemma for all literary translators: semantic fidelity often implies sealing a joke into its tomb and exchanging laughter for philological information.

An interesting point about poetic translation is that some nodes of untranslatability[573] cannot be solved with a single stroke, but demand some sort of previous preparation. To solve the riddle of Chaucer's most famous pun and turn it into an

[568] Ibid, ibidem.
[569] BOITANI, op. cit., p. 171
[570] BENSON, op. cit., p. 16.
[571] Ibid, ibidem.
[572] BARRINGTON, op. cit. p. 2
[573] Ibid, ibidem.

effective tirade in Brazilian Portuguese, I had to inflect the joke's sense into several original verses worked into the text, in different parts of the tale. The purpose of this procedure was to create a web of meaning and innuendos around the central theme of Chaucer's comedy in this particular story: the interchangeability of sex and money. The different sense inflections work as preparatory notes in a comical symphony that reaches its climax in the final exchange between the merchant and his wife. By charging my translation with double entendres that could be immediately grasped by a Brazilian audience, I endeavored to make justice to Chaucer's innovative use of language, which sets apart The Shipman's Tale from other similarly-themed fabliaux. Also, as I translated The Shipman's Tale, I came to realize that the best way to translate a joke is to reinvent it, *ab origine*: I should grasp the joke's essence, so to speak, and find the best way to recreate it in a way that would make modern Brazilian readers *laugh* – because only through laughter could they really understand what Chaucer's wit was all about.

The first movement in that symphony is played through the reiteration of the words *saco/sacos*, which appears in an initial exchange between husband and wife. The merchant has been locked in his room for hours, counting coins and putting them on the respective "bagges" (money-bags), when the wife urges him to leave the money for a while and come to dinner.

> Quod she; "What, sire, how longe wol ye faste?
> How longe tyme wol ye rekene and caste
> Youre sommes, and youre bookes, and youre thynges?
> The devel have part on alle swiche rekenynges!
> Ye have ynough, pardee, of Goddes sonde;
> Com doun to-day, and lat youre bagges stonde.
>
> Ne be ye nat ashamed that daun John
> Shal fasting al this day alenge goon?
> What, lat us heere a messe, and go we dyne."[574]
>
> [Prose translation: "Ora, até quando você quer jejuar? Quanto tempo ainda vai ficar aí, examinando e repassando as suas somas e os seus livros e as suas coisas? Que vão para o diabo todos esses

[574] CHAUCER, 1996, op. cit., p. 149.

> cálculos! Pelos Céus, você já tem bens de Deus em quantidade suficiente; saia daí, e deixe as bolsas de dinheiro em paz. Você não tem vergonhade fazer Dom John jejuar o dia inteiro? Chega, vamos ouvir uma missa e depois vamos comer."]

In my translation, I opted for rendering "bagges" as *sacos*, instead of *bolsas de dinheiro*, thus preparing the ground for the comical inflections that will follow. Here, *saco* seems to signify simply *receptáculo* (a container), but later it further ahead it could also mean "os testículos" (the testicles), an informal, taboo meaning attested by Houaiss[575].

> "Sou eu! Oh, Pedro, quanto tempo ainda
> Mexerás nas moedas, sem comida,
> Refazendo teus cálculos eternos?
> Que o diabo leve as contas aos infernos!
> Deus já te deu fortuna o suficiente;
> Deixa **os sacos** em paz! Ah, francamente,
> Não tens vergonha de deixar Dom João
> Sozinho a jejuar, sem refeição?
> Vamos à missa agora; e então, comer".[576]

I then worked the word *saco* into the husband's reply; this time, the double meaning is clearer. In the original verses 228/229, the merchant complains that "Scarsly amonges twelve tweye shul thryve / Continuelly, lastynge unto oure age", meaning: "Scarcely two out of twenty merchants will thrive continually until a mature age, as I did". The word *saco* now firmly establishes the interplay of sex and money, as it suggests that only a few merchants will get to a given age with their sexual potency intact (consider the translated verses v and vi, in bold).

> "Wyf," quod this man, "litel kanstow devyne
> The curious bisynesse that we have.
> For of us chapmen, also God me save,

[575] HOUAISS, op. cit., p. 2493.
[576] CHAUCER, 2013, op. cit., p. 206

> And by that lord that clepid is Seint Yve,
> Scarsly amonges twelve tweye shul thryve
> Continuelly, lastynge unto oure age.[577]
>
> [Prose translation: “Mulher,” disse o marido, “você nem imagina como o nosso trabalho é complicado. PorDeus e por Santo Ivo, de cada doze mercadores apenas dois conseguem atingir a nossa idade progredindo sem tropeços.]
>
> My translation:
>
> (i) Diz ele: "Tu não podes conceber,
> (ii) Mulher, como é difícil e aflitivo
> (iii) O ofício mercantil, por Santo Ivo!
> (iv) Apenas dois em doze mercadores
> (v)**Conseguem – com tropeços e mil dores –**
> (vi) **Envelhecer com saco recheado.** [578]

Further ahead on the tale, I expand the notion of sex/money interchangeability by working the words *trabalheira* and *transação* into the passage where the wife grants to the monk her sexual favors, in exchange for the hundred francs borrowed from her own husband. Line 318, underlined below, describes the lover's intercourse: "In myrthe al nyght a bisy lif they lede", meaning literally: "In mirth they led a busy life all night". By rendering "bisy lif" as "alegre trabalheira" I endeavored to convey the sense that, for the wife, the night's business was both a money-making enterprise and an opportunity for pleasure. The word *transação* has no equivalent in the original but carries further the interplay of meaning, as it also has sexual connotation in Brazilian Portuguese. According to Houaiss, besides its formal meaning of “commercial dealing”, *transação* could also be a synonym of *transa*, an informal word for “relação amorosa”, “relação sexual”[579].

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[577] CHAUCER, 1996, op. cit., p. 149-150.
[578] CHAUCER, 2013, op. cit., p. 207. Only two in twelve merchants will get to old age with a full sack (bag of money/testicles).
[579] HOUAISS, op. cit., p. 2749. Sexual relations.

The Sonday next the marchant was agon,
To Seint-Denys ycomen is daun John,
With crowne and berd al fressh and newe yshave.
In al the hous ther nas so litel a knave,
Ne no wight elles, that he nas ful fayn

That my lord daun John was come agayn.
And shortly to the point right for to gon,
This faire wyf acorded with daun John
That for thise hundred frankes he sholde al nyght
Have hire in his armes bolt upright;
And this acord parfourned was in dede.

In myrthe al nyght a bisy lyf they lede
Til it was day, that daun John wente his way,
And bad the meynee"Farewel, have good day!"
For noon of hem, ne no wight in the toun,
Hath of daun John right no suspecioun.[580]

[Prose translation: No domingo seguinte à partida do mercador, eis que Dom John retorna a Saint Dénis,com a tonsura e a barba perfumadas e aparadas. Na casa não havia criadinho, nem qualquer outra pessoa, que não se mostrasse satisfeitíssimo com o regresso de meu senhor Dom John. E, para imos direto ao ponto, a bela mulher novamente lhe assegurou que, em troca daqueles cem francos, passaria a noite em seus braços, a disposição. E foi o que, de fato, ela fez. Foi uma agitada noite de alegria, até que finalmente o dia raiou e o monge foi-se embora, dizendo *adeus* e*passar bem* à criadagem (pois ninguém ali, nem na cidade, desconfiava dele)]

My translation:

[580] CHAUCER, 1996, op. cit., p. 152.

A Saint Denis, após uma semana,
O monge volta. A face, lisa, emana
Perfumes, e a tonsura está aparada.
A casa inteira fica entusiasmada
E mesmo o mais modesto dos criados
Se alegra ao ver que havia retornado.
Mas para irmos direto à conclusão
A moça diz: "A tua disposição
Estou". E assim, em troca dos cem francos,
Deixará que ele a monte aos solavancos.
Cumpriu-se o combinado. A noite inteira
Passaram numa alegre **trabalheira**.
Tão logo nasce o sol, o monge parte
E a todos diz "adeus" e "até mais tarde";
Ninguém na casa, em toda a vizinhança
Tivera nem sequer desconfiança
Daquela transação. E à sua abadia
Cavalga o monge enquanto avança o dia. [581]

The words *saco* and *transação* reappear when the monk tells the husband he has given the borrowed money to the merchant's wife. From this passage on, I created an additional level of comical meaning: the audience already knows what is being said, but the merchant does not. The passage thus works as a kind of meta-poetical nod from the monk to the reader.

But nathelees, I took unto oure dame,
Youre wyf, at hom, the same gold ageyn
Upon youre bench; she woot it wel, certeyn,
By certeyn tokenes that I kan hire telle.[582]

[581] CHAUCER, 2013, op. cit., p. 209.
[582] CHAUCER, 1996, op. cit., p. 153.

[Prose translation: A propósito, já que estamos falando nisso, eu já devolvi à senhora nossa, suaestimada esposa, a soma que me emprestou, entregando-a pessoalmente em sua casa e sobre asua escrivaninha. Ela certamente irá confirmar isso; e eu próprio tenho meios para comprová-lo.]

My translation:

Contudo, a tal quantia eu devolvi
À nossa cara dama, em tua mansão.
O saco esvaziei, e a transação
A dama, é claro, pode confirmar-te. [583]

The passage where the merchant confronts his wife is a very ambiguous one. Everything is said in such measured, diplomatic tones that it is impossible to ascertain what's truly meant. In my translation, I endeavored to convey the sense that the merchant *might* indeed know what had truly happened, being inclined to forgive his wife infidelity as long as the payment was equal to the deed; after all, he is shown to be a skilled negotiator. It is also very important to observe that the exchange happens after an initial sex intercourse; in other words, the negotiation takes place not before or after, but during sex. In this passage, I repeat the expression "esvaziar o saco" (empty the sack), firstly coined by the monk, and also add the word "cofre" (money-box), placed here strategically, for reasons that we shall see further on.

Ye sholde han warned me, er I had gon,
That he yow hadde an hundred frankes payed
By redy token; [584]

[Prose translation: "Por Deus, mulher, embora me aborreça dizê-lo, estou um pouco zangado com você! E sabe por que motivo? É

[583] CHAUCER, 2013, op. cit., p. 210. "I emptied my sack (bag of money/testicles) and the lady, most surely, can confirm our transaction (commercial dealings/sexual relations)."
[584] CHAUCER, 1996, op. cit., p. 154.

> porque você criou uma situação um pouco constrangedora entre mim e meu primo Dom John. Antes que eu partisse, você devia ter me dito que ele havia devolvido os cem francos que eu lhe emprestara, e com comprovantes e tudo.]
>
> My translation:
>
> Deverias, querida, ter contado
> Que o monge **esvaziou em ti o saco**.
> **Teu cofre** recebeu bela quantia
> Mas teu marido disso não sabia.
> Levaste esses cem francos por detrás
> Dos panos. Isso, moça, não se faz.[585]

The entire building-up than comes to fulfillment in the wife's response, where she proves to be an even better negotiator than her husband. The word *cofre*, first used by the merchant, now becomes *cofrinho*, which can be also understood as a body-metaphor, bringing together all the tributary flows of meaning into a final, physical release. In popular use, cofrinho could mean "o sulco entre as nádegas; regada, rego"[586].

> For I wol paye yow wel and redily
> Fro day to day, and if so be I faille,
> I am youre wyf; score it upon my taille,
> And I shal paye as soone as ever I may.
> For by my trouthe, I have on myn array,
> And nat on wast, bistowed every deel;
> And for I have bistowed it so weel
> For youre honour, for Goddes sake, I seye,
> As be nat wrooth, but lat us laughe and pleye.
> I shal my joly body have to wedde;

[585] CHAUCER, 2013, op. cit., p. 211. "You should have told me that the monk emptied his sack (bag of money/testicles) with/inside you".
[586] COFRINHO. In: MICHAELIS. Disponível em < http://michaelis.uol.com.br/busca?r=0&f=0&t=0&palavra=cofrinho > Acesso em 12 abr 2019. "The groove between the buttocks".

By God, I wol nat paye yow but abedde!
Forgyve it me, myn owene spouse deere;
Turne hiderward, and maketh bettre cheere.[587]

[Prose translation: Pois bem, sou sua mulher; debite tudo em minha talha/meu rabo. Pouco a pouco irei pagando tudo. Afinal, não joguei fora aqueles francos; gastei-os com roupas, para apresentar-me dignamente, em honra de meu marido. Assim sendo, não fique zangado, pelo amor de Deus! Vamos rir e brincar. Meu belo corpo é meu único penhor, e, por isso, só posso lhe pagar na cama! Oh maridinho querido, pedoe-me; vire-se para cá, e vamos fazer as pazes!]

Sou tua mulher, no meu erário monta;
A mão no meu cofrinho então afunda
E pega – o pagamento em mim abunda.[588]
E assim te pagarei todos os dias...
A prata eu não gastei com porcarias;
Mas com enfeites bons e necessários.
Pois se a mulher tem belos vestuários,
Aumenta a fama e as honras do marido.
Não fiques bravo e vem brincar comigo...
Na cama pagarei a transação,
Pois com meu lindo corpo dou caução
Do que te devo. Cobra com dureza.
Sorri portanto, e chega de brabeza.[589]

The ambiguity of the husband's position is expressed in his final speech: he sees that there is no "remedy", and the "thing may not be amended", so the only thing he does is to ask his wife to "be no more so large". I conveyed this further double entendre

[587] CHAUCER, 1996, op. cit. p. 155.
[588] CHAUCER, 2013, op. cit., p. 212. “So bury your hand in my little money-box (buttocks) and take what you want — there is enough there to pay you off”.
[589] Ibid, Ibidem..

by rhyming the words "liberal" (which means both "financially generous" and "morally loose") with "capital".

> This marchant saugh ther was no remedie,
> And for to chide it nere but folie,
> Sith that the thyng may nat amended be.
> "Now wyf," he seyde, "and I foryeve it thee;
> But, by thy lyf, ne be namoore so large.
> Keep bet thy good, this yeve I thee in charge.[590]
>
> [Prose translation: O mercador viu que não havia remédio, e que seria tolice ficar bravo, pois não tinhacomo alterar a situação. “Mulher,” disse ele, “você está perdoada. Mas, por minha vida, de agora em diante não seja tão liberal assim. Procure cuidar melhor daquilo que me pertence.”]
>
> My translation:
>
> E vendo não haver mais solução
> O comerciante cessa o seu sermão.
> Não tem remédio, o estrago já está feito.
> "Eu te perdoo, então; mas tem respeito!
> Não sejas tão aberta e liberal;
> Nem escancares mais meu capital".[591]

In this tale so rich with word play, the last stroke is given by the Shipman himself. The last lines of the tale carry a wish that the whole company might be fortunate both in (physical) love and business:

> Thus endeth my tale, and God us sende
> Tallyinge ynough unto oure lyves ende.[592]

[590] CHAUCER, 1996, op. cit., p. 156.
[591] CHAUCER, 2013, op. cit., p. 212-213.
[592] Ibid, ibidem.

> [Prose translation: Desse modo, chega ao fim a minha história; e que Deus dê muitas talhas/muitos rabos até o fim de nossas vidas.]

"Tallyinge" means both "tallying" and "tailing". There is a direct relation, therefore, with the wife's previous pun. In my translation, I brought together the words *saco*, *transação* and *cofrinho*, and thus tied up the comical effect built up throughout the whole tale:

> Aos nossos **sacos** Deus dê bons **cofrinhos**,
> E **transações** abundem nos caminhos![593]

4.6 THE MERCHANT'S TALE: COMMENTARY

The Merchant's Tale is one of Chaucer's most accomplished works. Chaucer's language achieves here a rare balance between different styles, in a highly suggestive blend of allusions and connotations that lead scholars to develop very different interpretations as to what the story really means.[594]

Set in Lombardy, the tale deals with an old aristocrat, January, determined to marry a young woman; his chosen bride is May, a maiden of lower birth than his own. The setting and the initial plotline make it similar to The Clerk's Tale, to which it might have been composed as a companion piece – although in many other regards the two stories are very different. The names January and May make reference to winter and springtime in the Northern hemisphere, and the plot revolves around the old motif of the *senex amans* (aged lover): January is confident that his young wife will comply with all his orders and desires, but it is soon shown that winter cannot tame spring. May finds a young lover, Damian, and their love affair is benefitted by January's sudden blindness, making the tale an illustration of the dictum "Love is blind". The most important scene shows the lovers having sex on top of a peer tree, while the blind husband strolls on the

[593] CHAUCER, 2013, op. cit., p. 213. "May God grant our sacks (money-bags/testicles) many good money-boxes (buttocks) and may we find much transaction (sex) along the way".
[594] BENSON, op. cit., p. 12.

garden, unable to see the patent infidelity; the supernatural then intervenes, as the god Pluto, outraged by the whole situation, restores the sight to the cuckolded husband, while the goddess Proserpina comes to the rescue of the unfaithful wife, providing her with all the necessary rhetorical skills to explain away the shocking scene.

In many aspects, The Merchant's Tale follows the lines of a traditional fabliau: the obligatory love triangle, involving a jealous husband, a lusty wife and a young lover; and the act of adultery achieved through trickery. The peer tree episode was common in popular tales, although no exact written source for Chaucer's version has been found; the author might have drawn inspiration from an oral fabliau[595]. In many ways, however, Chaucer breaks the rules of the genre and, in fact, threatens to explode it. According to Larry D. Benson, The Merchants Tale is more romance-like than other similarly-themed fabliaux:

> The style is that of a courtly romance, and the description of January's wedding feast is one of the most ornate in the Tales, laden with apostrophes, elaborate comparisons, and classical and biblical allusions. (...) The tale has more than a trace of the bitterness the Merchant apparently feels at his own recent unwise marriage. Yet the total effect is by no means repulsive, and the description of January's wedding night is one of the great comic scenes in Chaucer.[596]

According to Derek Pearsall, however, the ornate, romantic style is but a decoy to create a violent, corrosive "black comedy", an almost misanthropic attack on the very institution of marriage and an appalling depiction of human sexuality; not only is January a pathetic and physically repellent figure, but even May and Damian seem somewhat morbid. Instead of a lusty young squire, Damian behaves like a "fawning-dog", and May a "dog-trainer"; January's blindness might indeed provoke in the audience a sense of "grudging sympathy", although the general effect is not one of generous acceptance of life's physical and emotional realities, but a universal condemnation of human perversions and feebleness that comes out like a "Swiftian" tour-de-force[597].

> [The] tone is continuous and raised to a high pitch of stridency. The opening account of January's desire to get married drips with contempt for such old fools, and the mock-encomium of marriage

[595] Ibid, ibidem.
[596] BENSON, op. cit., p. 13.
[597] BOITANI, op. cit. p. 172

> is openly sarcastic at times rather than mockingly ironical. The description of the marriage ceremony is cynically reductive (...) Not merely this travesty of marriage, but marriage as such, seems to be sneered at (...)The images of sexual possession (...) give a partly comic effect, but always with an undertone of disgust and repulsion. It is as if someone were telling a dirty story and insisting on going into detail, materializing every innuendo. The effect is shocking and disorientating, for there seems no centre of consciousness that we can draw to except the one that is disgusted and fascinated by sexuality[598].

A lighter fabliau mood is restored by the ending, as May quick-witted stratagem to deceive her husband sets a comic tone devoid of the darker allusions widespread on previous passages. January is convinced that his eyes, and not his wife, are the deceivers, and we are left with the impression that he should indeed enjoy his own illusion, and that happiness "is truly the perpetual possession of being well deceived"[599]; thus the traditional idea of fabliau justice is reinstated, although the disturbing feeling of trespass remains.

In my translation, I endeavored to recreate an ambiguous web of language and meaning that could justify a similar variety of interpretations. The blending of ornate romance-language and coarse sex depictions in Chaucer's text provided me with an especially fertile ground for experimenting with different types of diction, bringing together words from scholarly and popular sources as a way to convey the disquieting, shifting nature of Chaucer's tale.

The oscillation between violent irony and earnest encomium is established from the tale's start, in the narrator's dubious eulogy of matrimony.

> And certeinly, as sooth as God is kyng,
> To take a wyf it is a glorious thyng,
> And namely whan a man is oold and hoor;
> Thanne is a wyf the fruyt of his tresor.
> Thanne sholde he take a yong wyf and a feir,
> On which he myghte engendren hym an heir,
> And lede his lyf in joye and in solas,
> Where as thise bacheleris synge "allas,"

[598] BOITANI, op. cit., p. 172-173
[599] BOITANI, op. cit., p. 174

Whan that they fynden any adversitee
In love, which nys but childyssh vanytee.
And trewely it sit wel to be so,
That bacheleris have often peyne and wo;
On brotel ground they buylde, and brotelnesse
They fynde whan they wene sikernesse.
They lyve but as a bryd or as a beest,
In libertee and under noon arreest,
Ther as a wedded man in his estaat
Lyveth a lyf blisful and ordinaat
Under this yok of mariage ybounde.
Wel may his herte in joy and blisse habounde,
For who kan be so buxom as a wyf?
Who is so trewe, and eek so ententyf
To kepe hym, syk and hool, as is his make?
For wele or wo she wole hym nat forsake;
She nys nat wery hym to love and serve,
Though that he lye bedrede til he sterve.[600]

[Prose translation: De fato, – acreditava ele, – assim como é verdade que Cristo é o nosso rei, é verdade também que o casamento é uma coisa gloriosa, principalmente para um homem velho e decabelos brancos. Aí então a mulher se torna para ele o fruto de seu tesouro. Só que ele precisasaber escolher uma esposa jovem e bonita, para que possa gerar um herdeiro para si e levar a vida no prazer e na alegria, enquanto os solteirões vão cantando *oh, sorte ingrata!* diante das adversidades do amor, essa tolice infantil. E, com efeito, os solteirões bem que merecem essaspenas e sofrimentos constantes, visto que construíram sobre chão arenoso e, por isso, só podem esperar fragilidade em lugar de solidez. Vivem em plena liberdade, como as aves e os animais, sem restrição de espécie alguma, enquanto o homem casado, por sua própria

[600]CHAUCER, 1996, op. cit., p. 249.

> condição, tem uma existência feliz e ordenada, preso ao jugo matrimonial. Assim sendo, ele só poderia mesmo ser recompensado com a alegria e a ventura, pois quem é mais obediente que uma esposa? Quem, mais que a sua companheira, é fiel e atenciosa para com ele, na saúde e na doença? Na felicidade ou na desgraça, ela jamais o abandona; jamais se cansa de amá-lo e de servi-lo, mesmo quando imobilizado em seu leito de moribundo.]

The passage's sarcastic edge is set up in the initial verses (lines 1267-1268): "And namely whan a man is oold and hoor; / Thanne is a wyf the fruyt of his tresor". The ensuing lines maintain a seemingly earnest tone, exprobating bachelors for their loose liberty and pointing the advantages of having a steady, sanctified companion. If it were not for those two lines, the entire passage would read as a true eulogy. My strategy here has been, firstly, to translate the word "tresor" as *erário*, establishing thus an intertextual relation between The Merchant's Tale and The Shipman's Tale: *erário* is the word used by the merchant's wife when negotiating her debt in sexual favors. Throughout the remaining lines, I adopted a high-sounding, priest-like tone, although sometimes trickingly so. For instance, the line "Under this yok of mariage ybounde" ["preso ao jugo matrimonial"] was translated as "Sob um jugo suave e acariciante", thus paving the way for the tale's conclusion, where January is truly yoked by his wife's delusion and definitely bound to a deceiving happiness:

> Tão certo quanto Deus ser pai de todos
> Casar-se é empreendimento grandioso
> - Principalmente, se o homem for grisalho.
> A esposa é fruto então do seu erário;
> E que ela tenha corpo jovem, tenro,
> E que possa engendrar um belo herdeiro
> E que traga à sua vida paz e calma.
> Porém eterna dor aflige a alma
> Dos solteiros, que sofrem por amor
> - Brincadeira infantil e sem valor.
> É justo que os solteiros sofram tanto:
> Pois erguem suas casas sobre o pântano.

Se buscam um amor mais consistente
Perdem o pé e afundam bruscamente.
Vivem livres, mas livres como as feras
E os pássaros, selvagens sobre a terra;
Em mais sereno e em mais ordeiro estado
Vive – em êxtase – o homem que é casado,
Sob um jugo suave e acariciante
Com coração de gozos transbordante.
Pois quem é mais atenta e obediente
Que a esposa? Se o marido está doente
Com ele ficará, pra confortá-lo;
No bem, no mal, está sempre ao seu lado,
Mesmo que a enfermidade o prenda à cama
E o embala, doce, até que a morte o chama. [601]

Further ahead on the tale, we find a stanza that mirrors the passage above. It begins stating that a wife is God's greatest gift and lasts longer than "lands, rents, pasture, or the right to use common land". The stanza closes with the ambiguous lines: "A wyf wol laste, and in thyn hous endure, / Wel lenger than thee list, paraventure", meaning that a wife might even last longer than the husband wishes or expects.

A wyf is Goddes yifte verraily;
Alle othere manere yiftes hardily,
As londes, rentes, pasture, or commune,
Or moebles -- alle been yiftes of Fortune
That passen as a shadwe upon a wal.
But drede nat, if pleynly speke I shal:
A wyf wol laste, and in thyn hous endure,
Wel lenger than thee list, paraventure.[602]

[Prose translation: Uma esposa é, por certo, uma dádiva divina! Tudo o mais que recebemos, como terras, rendas, pastagens,

[601] CHAUCER, 2013, op. cit., p. 441
[602] CHAUCER, 1996, op. cit., p. 250.

> propriedades comuns ou bens móveis, são dádivas da Fortuna, que passam como sombras sobre o muro. Mas não temam! Se posso falar francamente, direi que, ao contrário dessas coisas, uma esposa permanece, durando, muitas vezes, mais do que se esperava.]

In my translation I kept the biblical tone of the initial lines by translating "yifte" as *dádiva*, the word generally used in Brazilian Portuguese when one refers to a gift from God. I then emphasized the stanza's double meaning by translating "But drede nat, if pleynly speke I shal" ("But doubt not, if I shall speak plainly") as "Mas não temam; direi a quem me entende"[603], thus establishing a link with a well-known Brazilian dictum, "Para bom entendedor, meia palavra basta"[604].

> Uma esposa – eis a dádiva divina!
> Pois todas as demais coisas da vida
> - Móveis ou terras, rendas, sinecuras –
> São apenas presentes da Fortuna
> E passam como sombras na parede.
> Mas não temam; direi a quem me entende:
> A esposa dura muito, e é bem provável
> Que dure mais até que o desejável. [605]

The interplay between ornate romance language and bitter satire intensifies in the depiction of the marriage ceremony. The priest 's advice, the mythological and biblical allusions and other elements all combine to create the illusion that, for a moment, we might be back into The Knight's Tale. But then comes one of Chaucer's most biting tirades: better than all other marriages is the union between "tender youth" and "stooping age"; so mirthful is the occasion that no pen could describe it. Chaucer's language here is all the more corrosive because in part it tells the truth: the marriage night is indeed an indescribable joy – to January, the husband. As for May's thoughts on the matter, we are left purposefully in the dark.

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[603] "Fear not, I will tell those who have understanding".
[604] "For he who has good understanding, half a word is enough".
[605] CHAUCER, 2013, op. cit., p. 442

Forth comth the preest, with stole aboute his nekke,
And bad hire be lyk Sarra and Rebekke
In wysdom and in trouthe of mariage;
And seyde his orisons, as is usage,
And croucheth hem, and bad God sholde hem blesse,
And made al siker ynogh with hoolynesse.
Thus been they wedded with solempnitee,
And at the feeste sitteth he and she
With othere worthy folk upon the deys.
Al ful of joye and blisse is the paleys,
And ful of instrumentz and of vitaille,
The mooste deyntevous of al Ytaille.
Biforn hem stoode instrumentz of swich soun
That Orpheus, ne of Thebes Amphioun,
Ne maden nevere swich a melodye.
At every cours thanne cam loud mynstralcye
That nevere tromped Joab for to heere,
Nor he Theodomas, yet half so cleere
At Thebes whan the citee was in doute.

Bacus the wyn hem shynketh al aboute,
And Venus laugheth upon every wight,
For Januarie was bicome hir knight
And wolde bothe assayen his corage
In libertee, and eek in mariage;
And with hire fyrbrond in hire hand aboute
Daunceth biforn the bryde and al the route.
And certeinly, I dar right wel seyn this,
Ymeneus, that god of weddyng is,
Saugh nevere his lyf so myrie a wedded man.
Hoold thou thy pees, thou poete Marcian,
That writest us that ilke weddyng murie
Of hire Philologie and hym Mercurie,

And of the songes that the Muses songe!
To smal is bothe thy penne, and eek thy tonge,
For to descryven of this mariage.
Whan tendre youthe hath wedded stoupyng age,
Ther is swich myrthe that it may nat be writen.
Assayeth it youreself; thanne may ye witen
If that I lye or noon in this matiere.[606]

[Prose translation: O padre então se aproximou, com a estola em volta do pescoço, aconselhou-a a imitar a sabedoria e a fidelidade conjugal de Sara e de Rebeca, rezou as orações de praxe, fez sobre eles o sinal da cruz e rogou a Deus que os abençoasse, sancionando assim a união com o selo da santidade. Concluída a cerimônia solene, ei-los na festa, sentados sobre um estrado na companhia dos convidados mais ilustres. O palácio inteiro transbordava de alegria e felicidade, cheio de música e de iguarias, as mais requintadas da Itália. Tal era a maviosidade dos instrumentos que nem as melodias de Orfeu ou de Anfião de Tebas poderiam superá-la. Cada prato era precedido por nova eclosão dos menestréis, mais alta que a trombeta de Joabe e mais clara que a de Teodomante em Tebas, quando a cidade estava sob a ameaça do assédio. O próprio Baco servia o vinho aos convivas; e Vênus, toda sorrisos porque Janeiro estava para provar no matrimônio o ardor que demonstrara quando livre, dançava diante da noiva e dos comensais com uma tocha acesa na mão. Cale-se agora o poeta Marciano, que nos relata as alegres núpcias de Mercúrio com a sua Filologia e os cantos que as Musas cantaram! Sua pena e sua língua são ambas pequenas demais para retratarem este casamento. Quando a tenra juventude se une à velhice recurva, o júbilo é tão grande que se torna indescritível. Se não me acreditam, façam vocês mesmos a experiência, e saberão se estou ou não dizendo a verdade.]

[606] CHAUCER, 1996, op. cit., p. 261-262.

In my translation, I recreated this violent contrast by using scholarly, high-sounding words in the initial parts of the stanza. Thus I qualified the priest's speech with the word *judicioso*, and translated "vitaille" as *vitualha*, instead of "comida"; whereas the line "And Venus laugheth upon every wight" ("And Venus laughs upon every person") was rendered as "E Vênus, prodigando seus sorrisos". The lines "And wolde bothe assayen his corage / In libertee, and eek in marriage" ("And would test his spirit both / In liberty, and in marriage") was translated as "A Vênus venerara de solteiro, / Libações verterá, sendo casado"). "Judicioso", "prodigando" and "Libações verterá" have no direct equivalent in the original text, but work to create a ceremonial tone of ritual trance[607]. The violent contrast is then established in the translation of "Whan tendre youthe hath wedded stoupying age, / Ther is swich myrthe that it may nat be writen". I turned these two verses into three: "Pois quando a mocidade doce e terna / Casa com a velhice carcomida / A alegria não pode ser descrita". "Carcomida" is a scholarly word, thus the *shifting of sense* precedes the *shifting of language*; sarcasm is introduced in the same high-sounding speech of the previous lines. It is only by the end of the stanza that I switch from scholarly to colloquial speech, when I translate "If that I lye or noon in this matiere" as "Para verem se acaso estou mentindo". I rhymed "mentindo" com "infindo" to stress the riotous coexistence of diverging speeches and competing senses within the same stanza.

Vem o padre coberto pela estola,
E **judicioso** à esposa Maia exorta,
Que seja qual Rebeca e a leal Sara;
As orações perfaz, as bênçãos fala,
Faz o sinal da cruz com gravidade
E à união dos dois dá santidade.

Após o rito matrimonial
Ao solene festim vai o casal,
E ao banquete presidem, nos estrados,
Com muitos importantes convidados,
E muitas delicadas **vitualhas**.

[607] All of it is very high-sounding in Brazilian Portuguese.

E as harpas mais sonoras que há na Itália
Ressoam melodias altas, belas,
Mais do que Orfeu ou Anfião de Tebas
Jamais fizeram. Novas iguarias
Vêm ao som de canções e melodias
De menestréis, mais altas, ressonantes,
Que as trompas de Joá. Teomadante
Não fez nota tão alta nem tão clara
Quando Tebas, em guerra, foi cercada.
E o próprio Baco vai servindo vinho
E Vênus, **prodigando seus sorrisos**:
Pois Januário é seu novo cavaleiro.
A Vênus venerara de solteiro;
Libações verterá, sendo casado.
Em frente à noiva, em frente aos convidados,
Vênus dança, um archote a arder à mão;
Himeneu, deus do enlace e da união,
Jamais viu outro noivo tão contente.

Que Marciano se cale prontamente;
Ele relata as núpcias e alegrias
Entre Mercúrio e sua Filologia
E as canções entoadas pelas Musas;
Mas *este* casamento, e *estas* núpcias
Vão além dos poderes de sua pena!
Pois quando a mocidade doce e tenra
Casa com a velhice carcomida
A alegria não pode ser descrita;
Ah! tentem descrever tal gozo infindo
Para verem se acaso estou mentindo![608]

[608] CHAUCER, 2013, op. cit., p. 454

The cerimony's ornate description is then contrasted with the bedroom scene featuring January and May in their first night as husband and wife. Although the figure of the *senex amans* was common in the fabliau form, Chaucer adds here a strong touch of "lurid physical reality", setting a "comic effect against a background of revulsion"[609]. January's lust is contrasted with May's silence, just as his skin, rough as the "houndyfissh", rubs against May's "tendre face".

> The bryde was broght abedde as stille as stoon;
> And whan the bed was with the preest yblessed,
> Out of the chambre hath every wight hym dressed,
> And Januarie hath faste in armes take
> His fresshe May, his paradys, his make.
> He lulleth hire; he kisseth hire ful ofte;
> With thikke brustles of his berd unsofte,
> Lyk to the skyn of houndfyssh, sharp as brere –
> For he was shave al newe in his manere --
> He rubbeth hire aboute hir tendre face[610]

> [Prose translation: E assim fizeram: beberam os últimos goles, puxaram o cortinado, conduziram a noiva aoleito, – muda como uma pedra, – e, depois que o padre abençoou o tálamo, foram-se todosembora. Janeiro, enfim, pôde apertar nos braços sua Maio primaveril, o seu paraíso, a suacompanheira. Ele a acalentava, ele a beijava sem parar... Esfregava em seu rostinho macio aquela barba de pêlos duros e espetados, que havia aparado a seu modo, eriçada como um espinheiro e áspera como o couro de um cação.]

On this passage I added a line, "Escuro inverno em primavera clara"[611], in order to fill a – shall we say – meteorological gap. The comparison of the old husband with the winter season and of the young wife with springtime would be lost to my

[609] BOITANI, op. cit., p. 173
[610] CHAUCER, 1996, op. cit., p. 264-265.
[611] "Dark winter rubs agains fair spring".

readership, or at least would not be immediately apprehended without a footnote. Therefore I conveyed this meaning on an independent line, strategically placed within their bedtime encounter.

My translation:

> Um derradeiro brinde – e com presteza,
> As cortinas do leito são abertas;
> Lá Maia é conduzida, imóvel, quieta
> Qual rocha; o padre vem, bendiz o leito,
> E todos partem. Logo o cavaleiro
> Abraça a sua moça bem amada,
> **- Escuro inverno em primavera clara... –**
> E a tenra face beija e beija e beija...
> Qual pele de cação ou espinheira
> É o rosto barbeado de Januário.
> Os pelos novos são pontudos, ásperos
> Contra o rosto da moça delicada.[612]

The contrast between ornate, romance language and violent, corrosive comedy is further intensified in a vividly visual *post-coitum* scene. At the dawning of day, after "labouring" all the night, January is shown "full of passion", as a colt, bantering and casting lustful looks to his bride; he also sings in joy, making the "slack skin" in his neck shake, while the young wife looks on, and "only God knows what she thought in her heart". The only glance we are allowed into May's mind is given through a colloquial expression that comes out as highly suggestive after the scholarly allusions in the marriage scene: "She preyseth nat his pleyyng worth a bene", literally, "She rates his playing not worth a bean".

> Thus laboureth he til that the day gan dawe;
> And thanne he taketh a sop in fyn clarree,
> And upright in his bed thanne sitteth he,
> And after that he sang ful loude and cleere,
> And kiste his wyf, and made wantown cheere.

[612] CHAUCER, 2013, op. cit., p. 457

He was al coltissh, ful of ragerye,
And ful of jargon as a flekked pye.
The slakke skyn aboute his nekke shaketh
Whil that he sang, so chaunteth he and craketh.
But God woot what that May thoughte in hir herte,
Whan she hym saugh up sittynge in his sherte,
In his nyght-cappe, and with his nekke lene;
She preyseth nat his pleyyng worth a bene.[613]

[Prose translation: E lá se pôs a trabalhar, até que raiasse o dia. De manhã cedo, após comer um pedaço de pão embebido em vinho, sentou-se ereto na cama e começou a cantar com todas as forças de seus pulmões, voltando-se, de vez em quando, para beijar a noiva e lançar-lhe olhares lascivos. Estava muito fogoso, cheio de paixão; e tagarelava como pega pintalgada. A pele murcha em volta de seu pescoço tremia, de tanto que gritava e se esgoelava ao cantar. Mas só Deus sabe o que Maio estava pensando, ao vê-lo sentado dentro daquele camisolão, com o barrete de dormir na cabeça e com aquele pescocinho fino. Com certeza não estava achando grande coisa o seu "entretenimento".]

Line 1854 presents a classical translation dilemma. The idea of rating something "not worth a bean" might be easily understandable in a literal translation, but that would not convey the same contrast between scholarly and colloquial style. "Ela achava que suas brincadeiras não valiam um grão de feijão" might strike the reader as economically exact, granting that a single bean is manifestly not very valuable and probably has never been, but the language interplay would be lost. I then endeavored to find an idiom in Brazilian Portuguese conveing a sense of "unworthiness" through a food reference. The bean was then replaced by a biscuit, although the exact sense of the statement was inverted: instead of saying that May rated her husband's play not worth a bean, I said she did *not* rate it as a "fine biscuit". "Biscoito fino" is an idiom used in parts of Brazil, meaning something of exquisite quality.

[613] CHAUCER, 1996, op. cit., p. 265.

My translation:

E até o nascer do sol labora então.
Torta molhada em vinho é o desjejum;
Então senta, com ânimo incomum
No leito, e canta e flerta, e beija a moça;
É qual potro voraz, com fome louca,
Com olhares lascivos, safadezas
A lhe encher os pulmões e a sua cabeça.
A pele murcha em volta à sua garganta
Balança e treme enquanto o velho canta.
Mas só Deus sabe o que pensava Maia
Ao vê-lo ali na sua camisa larga
Com touca de dormir, pescoço fino.
A diversão não foi biscoito fino. [614]

Another example of a Brazilian idiom worked into the tale's fabric can be found in my translation of the "peer episode", when January is magically given back his sight and, looking up, sees Damian and May having sex upon a tree branch. The occasional lyricism of The Miller's Tale is totally absent here; the love act is grotesquely summarized by the verb "dresse", meaning "to place, to put, to arrange", and generally used in relation to objects.

Up to the tree he caste his eyen two,
And saugh that Damyan his wyf had dressed
In swich manere it may nat been expressed,
But if I wolde speke uncurteisly;[615]

[Prose translation: A primeira atitude deste, ao receber o milagre, foi voltar-se ansiosamente para a mulher, para ver de novo o objeto constante de seus pensamentos. E para o alto da árvore

[614] CHAUCER, 2013, op. cit., p. 457-458.
[615] CHAUCER, 1996, op. cit., p. 279.

> lançou os dois olhos. O que viu, porém, foi Damião se comportando com ela de uma maneira que não se pode descrever sem se faltar à decência...]
>
> My translation:
>
> Mas quando os olhos ergue à sua mulher,
> Vê que outro está **engatando-a** de tal jeito
> Que, por pudor, nas regras do respeito,
> Não posso descrever em termos finos.[616]

Engatar means literally: 1. to clamp: bind or join with or as with a clamp. 2. to gear, mesh, put in gear. 3. to hook. 4. to couple (railway carriages). 5 to hitch up (horses). I used this verb in order to express January's horror and scandal at the sight of the wild, physical encounter between May and Damian; and I did so with a word that can be also used in relation to objects.

4.7 THE WIFE OF BATH'S PROLOGUE: COMPARISON AND COMMENTARY

I chose The Wife of Bath's Prologue to conclude this Chapter, because it might work as a verifiable example of how my translational strategy affected Brazilian audiences. I shall comment on the Prologue, and not the Tale, as the Prologue contains comical passages wherein I endeavored to create a sense of intimacy between the readers and the translated text. I shall also compare the Wife's Prologue with three other sections of the **Contos** in order to illustrate my negotiation between the strange and the familiar.

As already said in the Introduction, the Wife's Prologue and Tale were adapted into a stage play by Amir Haddad and Maitê Proença in 2018. Proença's account points to a fluctuating balance of strangeness and familiarity on the audiences' reaction. According to Proença, the first response was one of bewilderment, as theater audiences in Brazil are not used to versified comedy – and the play presented itself as a comedy, specially the Prologue section. It took some minutes for the audiences to "adapt" to the

[616] CHAUCER, 2013, op. cit., p. 473.

particular beauty of meter and rhyme, coupled with Chaucer's jest and debauchery. Those "novelties", points Proença, might have been an insurmountable obstacle, but, after a while, theatergoers would forgo the mental "conditioning" they had brought into the theater. "Enchanted" by the text, they would "dive into the unlikely story of that woman and her circumstances". Proença stresses that an "unfettered laughter" was ultimately the main reaction of audiences throughout Brazil[617].

As it might have become clear at this point, Chaucer's humor is one of the areas wherein I endeavored to heighten the familiarity rather than the strangeness effect. Thus, in The Shipman's Tale, I appealed to Brazilian bodily humor in order to throw readers into the Tale's sexual-monetary intrigue. In other moments, I counterbalanced that effect of close intimacy with a corresponding verbal distancing wherein language became "othered". One example, as noted by Theobald[618], is the way I translated the name of "Deeth" (Death) in The Pardoner's Tale. Death in English is usually a masculine noun, whereas in Portuguese it is always feminine[619]. In The Pardoner's Tale, Death is initially described not as a supernatural entity, but as a "thief" and a "traytour": "a privee thief men clepee Deeth", "this false traytour Deeth"[620]. Death's personification is clearly masculine. When three riotous young characters in the Tale decide to avenge all the people slaughtered by Death, one of them swears: "He shal be slayn, he that so many sleeth"[621]. This, therefore, is initially the story of three young men who set out to kill another man, a "traitor" and a "thief". In Paulo Vizioli's prose translation, Death is presented as a female character: "uma tal de Morte, uma ladra sorrateira"[622]; "falsa traidora"[623]; "a Morte"[624]. In my translation, I made a point not only of keeping Death's masculinity – I actually stressed it, by naming the character as "Dom Morte"[625]. Thus I avoided using the definite article, customary in Portuguese, and turned "Morte" into a man's name, by adding a masculine title. "Dom" corresponds to the Middle English "daun" or "dan", "a title of respect", synonymous with "sir, master"[626] and granted to

[617] Communication to the author by the actress Maitê Proença in February 2018.
[618] THEOBALD, op. cit.
[619] Ibid, ibidem.
[620] BENSON, op. cit., p. 199.
[621] Ibid, p. 199.
[622] Ibid, p. 177.
[623] Ibid, p. 178.
[624] Ibid, p. 178.
[625] Sir Death.
[626] Ibid, p. 1211.

several characters in the **Tales**, such as "daun Arcite"[627]. "Deeth" is not so ennobled in Chaucer's text, but I used its corresponding form in Portuguese to stress Death's gender and thus create a sense of physical, almost fleshy uneasiness, as the title also highlights Death's material personification, whereas the definite article – "a Morte" – would turn it into an abstract entity. That decision was in keeping with the Tale's general tone, as it describes a world dominated by a "literalistic materialism", expressed in "the imagining of Death as a person"[628].

A similar decision was taken as I translated The Nun's Priest's Tale, where the rooster Chanticleer is cheated, chased and almost eaten by "daun Russell the fox"[629]. Again, the fox is masculine in Chaucer's tale, whereas the most current translation of "fox" in Portuguese would be "raposa", a feminine noun. Paulo Vizioli renames daun Russell as "Dona Russela, a raposa"[630], whereas I, albeit using the word "raposa" at the character's first appearance[631], later refer to him as "Dom Russell, o raposo"[632]. Another passage where I kept an element of cultural strangeness is the dialogue between the summoner and the Devil in The Friar's Tale. When the summoner asks the Devil if demons, when assuming material form, always make new bodies from the world's elements, the Devil answers:

> (...) we aryse
> With dede bodyes, in ful sondry wise,
> And speke as renably and faire and wel
> As to the Pithonissa dide Samuel. [633]
>
> [Prose translation: Não. Às vezes criamos ilusões, às vezes entramos em corpos mortos, de diversas maneiras, e falamos de forma tão razoável e graciosa quanto Samuel falou com a Pitonisa.]

[627] Ibid, p. 61.
[628] BOITANI, op. cit., p. 203
[629] Ibid, p. 260.
[630] CHAUCER, 1988, op. cit., p. 123.

[632] Chaucer, 2013, op. cit., p. 150.
[633] BENSON, op. cit., p. 125.

The "Pithonissa" is "the Biblical Witch of Endor"[634]. Coghill translates it as Witch of Endor[635], and Paulo Vizioli, as "Feiticeira de Endor"[636]. I decided, however, to keep the Latinate reference (in the Vulgata, the Witch is referred to as "mulierem habentem pythonem") and translated "Pithonissa" as "Pitonisa", again an element of cultural distancing and strangeness:

> Nós criamos visões, ou animamos
> Um corpo morto e como roupa usamos.
> As bocas mortas têm a voz precisa:
> Samuel falou claro à Pitonisa.[637]

I present those examples in order to contrast them with the Wife's Prologue – the section of the **Contos** where I have used informal, colloquial Brazilian Portuguese in the greatest measure. Colloquialisms here are not markedly "regional", however; I decided to imbue the Wife with an earthy, sometimes outrageous language, neither too urban, nor too agrarian, but always gritty and occasionally obscene. In so doing I endeavored to depict her as an outspoken, autonomous woman, whose use of language will not be fenced or tamed. The use of colloquialisms here is a way of stressing the "confessional" element in the Wife's exposition, as her prologue "has the form of a literary confession, a dramatic monologue in which the speaker explains, and often defends, his or her sinful way of life"[638]. In creating the Wife's character, Chaucer might have taken his initial inspiration from the monologue of La Vieille, in the **Roman de la Rose**[639]. La Vieille is an old, embittered prostitute that gives counsel to a younger woman on how to confound men, whereas Alyson – the Wife's name – is "trying to educate misogynists" by subverting the abundant antifeminine literature which, in the second half of the Middle Ages, was used to decry the malevolence of women[640]. Such literature included the Pauline texts and authors such as Jovian and Theofrastus – in her "confession"; Alyson quotes plentifully from those "auctoritees", but twists their texts

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[634] Ibid. p. 125. Footnote.
[635] CHAUCER, 1996, op. cit., p. 299.
[636] CHAUCER, 1988, op. cit., p. 121.
[637] CHAUCER, 2013, op. cit., p. 154.
[638] BENSON, op. cit., p. 11.
[639] Ibid, p. 11.
[640] SLOVER, Judith. A Good Wife Was There of Biside Bath. in_LAMBDIN, Laura, and LAMBDIN, Robert Thomas (ed.). **Chaucer's Pilgrims: An Historical Guide to the Pilgrims in The Canterbury Tales**. Westport: Praeger, 1999, p. 248.

according to her own ends[641]. In a way, she can be seen to embody most of the faults traditionally imputed to women, like wantonness and verbosity, but "her frankness, vigor and good humor render her a zestful and engaging defender of life itself"[642]. With masterful irony, she is "herself the exemplum of the feared autonomous woman, turning patristic and popular misogynistic arguments against the perpetrators of those same arguments and making no apologies for doing so"[643]. Although no details are given about the Wife's education, she shows a deep knowledge of the texts she quotes and uses logic and rhetoric to divert traditional attacks on women against the attackers themselves – the clergy and specially husbands[644]. To convey all those elements, I decided to portray Alice – the Wife's name in my translation – as a master rhetorician, capable of quoting from Roman and Greek authors or from the Fathers of the Church, but also comfortable in using explicit sexual argot. To make the Wife "familiar", I decided to imbue parts of her speech with some of the feminine counseling dispensed by her literary forebear, La Vieille, and also to stress her "infectious optimism" towards life, by underlining her defiance not only against society's restrictions on women, but also against the wreckage of Time and the shadow of Death.

As an example of Alice's mastery of wordplay, consider my translation of the following passage:

> Lo, heere the wise kyng, daun Salomon;
> I trowe he hadde wyves mo than oon.
> As wolde God it leveful were unto me
> To be refresshed half so ofte as he!
> Which yifte of God hadde he for alle his wyvys!
> No man hath swich that in this world alyve is.
> God woot, this noble kyng, as to my wit,
> The firste nyght had many a myrie fit
> With ech of hem, so wel was hym on lyve.
> Yblessed be God that I have wedded fyve!

[641] Ibid. p. 249.
[642] BENSON, op. cit., p. 11.
[643] SLOVER, op. cit., p. 249.
[644] Ibid, ibidem.

At this point, the Wife is elaborating her defense not only of marriage, but also of sexual intercourse. The Wife's arguments for marriage suggest that her attempt at rehabilitating the feminine, against the tradition of antifeminine writing, also involves a rehabilitation of "pleasure, sexuality and the body"[645]. She married for the first time when she was twelve, a circumstance not uncommon in the Middle Ages[646], and when we meet her, she has had a total of five husbands – and is looking for the sixth. For most of the Middle Ages, the only form of Church-approved sex was procreational, but, by the 14th-c., some theologians no longer forbade intercourse between barren partners[647]. At her age, Alyson is no longer fertile, but is still expecting to find a new husband. Her defense of sex in marriage is therefore a cunning one, as she states that the sexual "instruments" exist not only to "purge uryne", but also for "engendrure" (procreation)[648]. Being a widow of five husbands, she clearly has a lot of experience – "Of remedies of, although we are never informed if she had any offspring. Her experience she knew per chaunce, / For she koude of that art the olde daunce"[649]. Experience is her greatest claim to authority, but also her command of language and of logic. Those are the instruments she uses to reverse the traditional injunctions against the bodily senses[650]. In my translation, I stressed her sensuous use of language in order to display her engaging rhetorical skills:

> Por exemplo: o famoso Salomão
> Teve mais de uma esposa em sua mão.
> Mais de uma vez ao dia refrescava
> O corpo a se esfregar na mulherada;
> Bem que eu queria refrescar-me tanto!
> Seu talento era grande, era um espanto!
> Nenhum varão de agora se compara!
> Imagino as potentes estocadas
> Que nas noites de núpcias, Salomão
> Dava em suas noivinhas. Que varão![651]

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[645] MILLER, Mark. **Philosophical Chaucer: Love, Sex, and Agency in The Canterbury Tales**. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004, p. 198.
[646] SLOVER, op. cit., p. 245.
[647] Ibid. p. 246.
[648] BENSON, op. cit., p. 106.
[649] BENSON, op. cit., p. 31
[650] SLOVER, op. cit., p 251.
[651] CHAUCER, 2013, op. cit. p. 170.

While talking on a Biblical subject – Salomon's wives –, Alice uses the word "mulherada", a Brazilian colloquialism[652]. The original text states that no man alive compares to Salomon when it comes to the number of wives, but I slightly twist the meaning of the verse – "Nenhum varão de agora se compara" –, leaving room for the reader to imagine that Alice may be talking about Salomon's sexual potency, an interpretation corroborated by the reiteration of the word "varão" – which could mean both "a man" ("indivíduo do sexo masculino") and "a big stick" ("vara grande")[653]. The first acceptation is highly formal, scholarly, with strong biblical undertones, while the second acceptation is popular, verging on the obscene. The double entendre is a way of underlining the Wife's command of language and her ability to twist meanings according to her will.

Such combinations of Brazilian colloquialisms (some of them deliberately outrageous and aggressive) and scholarly references occurr throughout the Prólogo. Further ahead, still on the topic of Biblical polygamy, the Wife asks:

> What rekketh me thogh folk seye vileynye
> Of shrewed Lameth and his bigamye?

In my translation, I rendered "seye vileynye" as "chia". The verb "chiar" could have the formal meaning of "to hiss, fizzle", but also the informal meaning of "to vociferate, clamor, rage violently, fret, fume, protest loudly" – "bradar iradamente, vociferar, esbravejar" e "queixar-se em voz alta, protestar, reclamar"[654]:

> Que me importa se tanta gente chia
> Contra Lameque e sua bigamia?

Again, the contrast between a very scholarly subject (without the aid of a footnote, most readers would not know who Lamech is) and an immediately recognizable colloquialism ("chiar" is an everyday word in Brazil) creates a third space, where both registers contaminate each other. The extreme familiarity of the Wife's wording serves to suck readers (or listeners) into the world of her speech.

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[652] HOUAISS, op. cit., p. 1976. "Great number of women, womankind, womenfolk".
[653] Ibid, p. 2829.
[654] Ibid, p. 698.

Insisting on the argument that God must have created the sexual organs for other purposes than "to purge urine", the Wife declares that she will use her "instrument" with the same generosity that God showed in making the human body:

> I swich estaat as God hath cleped us
> I wol persevere; I nam nat precius.
> In wyfhod I wol use myn instrument
> As frely as my Makere hath it sent.
> If I be dangerous, God yeve me sorwe![655]

"Precius" means "fussy"; "dangerous" means "grudging"; and "God yeve me sorwe" means "God give me sorrow". In translating this stanza, I used three colloquialisms: "fricote", "fazer-se de difícil" and "Deus me livre". "Fricote" is an informal Brazilianism meaning "willies, jitters" and also "affectation" ("chilique, faniquito histérico"[656], "manha, dengue, luxo"[657]). I combined it with the more formal "fervor", which rhymes with "Criador" (Maker):

> Na minha vocação e nos meus dotes
> Prossigo sem melindres ou fricotes
> Usando livremente e com fervor
> Os órgãos que ganhei do Criador.
> Deus me livre, fazer-me de difícil?

In the 14th-c., an average husband was usually ten years or older than his wife, and most wives survived their husbands[658]. Most widows, however, did not remarry[659]. Alyson marries five different men, in succession – three were "good", and two were "bad". The three "good" husbands were old and rich, and passed all their "land and treasure" to Alyson. She did not need any further "diligence" to win their love, and already had them "wholly in [her] hand", but still she would set them "a-working" every night, just for the fun of it:

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[655] BENSON, op. cit., p. 107.
[656] HOUAISS, op. cit., p. 1392.
[657] FRICOTE. In**: Aulete Digital**. Disponível em: < http://www.aulete.com.br/fricote > Acesso em: 22 mar 2020
[658] SLOVER, op. cit., p. 245-246.
[659] Ibid, p. 247.

> What sholde I taken keep hem for to plese,
> But it were for my profit and myn ese?
> I sette hem so a-werke, by my fey,
> That many a nyght they songen 'Weilawey!'[660]

In the **Contos**, I used the colloquialism "tirar o couro" to translate "sette (...) so a-werke". "Tirar o couro"[661] means both "making someone work hard" and "exploiting someone financially"[662], and also provides a visual, shocking image of excessive love-making (literally, "I skinned them for their hides"). As for "Weilawey", I translated it as "Ai!" which can function as an expression of pain or grief, but also of joy:

> Por que então lhes mostrar mais diligência?
> Foi por prazer e por conveniência
> Que eu lhes tirava o couro – *Mais e mais!*
> Eu dizia, e eles respondiam: *Ai!*[663]

A very important section of the Prologue, as already hinted, deals with the Wife turning antifeminine attacks against their perpetrators. Without indicating exactly which husband she is talking about (it's certainly one of the first three), Alyson describes how she used to ridicule her spouse's misogynistic quotations. She alludes, for instance, to Salomon's Proverbs (XXX - 21-23): "For three things the earth is disquieted, and for four which it cannot bear: for a servant when he reigneth; and a fool when he is filled with meat; for an odious woman when she is married; and a handmaid that is heir to her mistress(...)". Attributing that citation to her husband, Alyson proceeds to berate him:

> O leeve sire shrewe, Jhesu shorte thy lyf!
> Yet prechestow and seyst an hateful wyf
> Yrekened is for oon of thise merschances.[664]

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[660] BENSON, op. cit.. p. 108.
[661] Literally, "to skin (an animal)".
[662] HOUAISS, op. cit., p. 857.
[663] CHAUCER, 2013, op. cit., p. 180.
[664] BENSON, op. cit., p. 110.

"O leeve sire shrewe" is highly ironical, as it combines two positive words (leeve sire) with a negative one (shrewe). Vizioli translates it as "meu ilustre ignorante"[665], while Coghill renders the expression as "My dear sir shrew". While translating that passage, I looked for a very popular, aggressive noun, to be coupled ironically with a complimentary adjective. I chose "mequetrefe", a resoundingly offensive word with controversial origins (it might come from the Spanish "mequetrefe", from the Arabic "môgadref" or even from the English "make-trifles")[666] and with a spacious variety of insulting acceptations: a meddler, a busybody, an eavesdropper, a rascal, a scoundrel, a villain, an impudent wretch, a good-for-nothing, a nobody ("indivíduo intrometido, dado a meter-se no que não é de sua conta; enxerido" e também "indivíduo de caráter duvidoso, patife, mariola, biltre", and "indivíduo sem importância, inútil, insignifcante, borra-botas, joão-ninguém")[667]. I matched that insult with the adjective "ilustre", "illustrious", and added the verse "Que pensador sutil, e tão profundo" [668]to round up Alice's mockery of her husband's claim to scholarship:

> Ilustre mequetrefe, és ignorante!
> Tu dizes que a mulher – vil, enervante –
> É a quarta praga a atormentar o mundo.
> Que pensador sutil, e tão profundo!

Alyson's fourth husband is one of the "bad" ones: a reveler and a womanizer. Alyson tells how she chastised her husband for his infidelity, not by having lovers herself (or so she says), but by acting coquettish and causing him to be jealous all the time. At this point of her account, Alyson has occasion to profess her love for dancing and heavy drinking. Once more turning misogynistic exempla upside-down, she recalls the story of Metellus' wife, as told by Valerius Flaccus (Book VI, c.3, 9)[669]:

> My fourthe housbonde was a revelour –
> This is to seyn, he hadde a paramour –
> And I was yong and ful of ragerye,

[665] Ibid, p. 108.
[666] HOUAISS, op. cit., p. 1896.
[667] Ibid, ibidem.
[668] "What a deep and subtle thinker".
[669] CHAUCER, 1996, op. cit., p. 210. Translator's note.

Stibourn and strong, and joly as a prye.
How koude I daunce to an harpe smale,
An synge, ywis, as any nightyngale,
Whan I had dronke a draughte of sweet wyn!
Metellius, the foule cherl, the swyn,
That with a staf birafte his wyf hir lyf,
For she drank wyn, thogh I hadde been his wyf,
He sholde nat han daunted me fro drynke!
And after wyn on Venus moste I thynke,
For al so siker as colda engendreth hayl,
A likerous mouth moste han a likerous tayl.
In wommen vinolent is no defence –
This knowen lecchours by experience.[670]

In my translation, I again chose several informal or popular expressions, such as "tesão" (for "ragerye") and "espertalhão" (for "lechour"). Originally, the last two lines were merely suggestive of sexual intercourse: "inebriated women have no defense, as lecherous men know by experience". As I have done elsewhere in the **Contos**, here I make Chaucer more explicit than he really was. Again I use the verb "comer"[671] in its sexual acceptation, ending the stanza with a deliberate touch of coarseness. I also added the vocative "minha amiga"[672], which has no equivalent in the original, because at this point I wanted the Wife to impart the salacious intimacy of an older woman counseling a younger one.

Esse quarto marido – um rufião!
Tinha uma amante – e eu cheia de tesão!
Eu era jovem, forte e bem fornida,
Alegre, e mui amiga da bebida.
Com harpas a tocar, de sol a sol,
Cantava linda como um rouxinol,
Após beber uns bons goles de vinho.

[670] BENSON, op. cit. p. 111.
[671] Literally "to eat", with the coarse, colloquial meaning of "having sexual intercourse with".
[672] "my [female] friend"

Metélio, aquele vil, bruto suíno
– Que condenou a pobre esposa à morte
Por ter bebido – fosse eu a consorte
Jamais me afastaria da bebida!
Vinho desperta Vênus, minha amiga.
Se o frio gera granizo, a boca quente
Inflama o corpo e deixa o rabo ardente;
Quando bebe, a mulher fica à mercê
Do espertalhão que queira nos comer.[673]

Tortured by jealousy, the fourth husband is "crucified on his own wood" and dies a bitter death. At his funeral, Alyson sheds only a few tears, as she has already secured a new husband – a young student named Jankin, who had seen only "twenty winters", while Alyson is at least twice older. She marries him barely a month after the funeral of her previous husband. Jankin is the only man she married out of love, but also, as far as we know, the only one to have beaten her. The physical attack happens after Alyson tears a page from one of his books. Jankin had a bounded compendium of antifeminine harangues, and was in the annoying habit of reading passages out loud. In her account of the episode, Alyson berates scholars, from Ovid to Theophrastus, for their insistence on maligning women in general, except for female saints. Scholarly dislike of women, she suggests, is a result of male impotence:

The clerk, whan he is oold, and may noght do
Of Venus werkes worth his olde sho,
Thanne sit he doun, and writ in his dotage
That wommen kan nat kepe hir mariage![674]

Alyson's allusion to erectile dysfunction is euphemistic: the old scholar, in performing the "work of Venus", is not even worthy of his old shoe. Again I opted for turning Alyson's reticence into an open attack, branding the imagined scholar with the

[673] CHAUCER, 2013, op. cit., p. 181. "When a woman drinks, she is at the mercy of any wiseguy who wants to [have sex with] us". The verb "comer" here sound very obscene in Brazilian Portuguese.
[674] BENSON, op. cit., p. 114.

word “broxa”, a Brazilian offensive slang for “a male individual unable to keep an erection”[675].

> Ao ficar velho e broxa, o erudito
> Só vive a resmungar: tais animais,
> - As fêmeas – são lascivas, desleais![676]

Despite his violent outburst, even Jankin is eventually tamed by the Wife, and learns the lesson that is also brought home by the subsequent Tale: that the best marriage is the one in which the woman has the mastery. Alyson’s triumph over all her five husbands is a formidable spectacle of her “infectious optimism” and “vitalistic excess”[677] – a trait she has in common with Shakespeare’s Falstaff, and which resounds in her exclamation: “That I have had my world as in my time”[678], in the stanza below:

> But – Lord Crist! – whan that it remebreth me
> Upon my yowthe, and on my jolitee,
> It tikleth me aboute myn herte roote.
> Unto this day it dooth myn herte boote
> That I have had my world as in my tyme.
> But age, allas, that al wole envenyme,
> Hath me biraft my beautee and my pith.
> Lat go. Farewel! The devel go therwith!
> The flour is goon; ther is namoore to telle;
> The bren, as I best kan, now moste I selle;
> But yet to be right myrie wol I fonde. [679]

In my translation, I endeavored to impart Alice’s exuberant vitalism, her all-encompassing defense of life[680], with all its incongruities and ambiguities, by creating a

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[675] HOUAISS, op. cit., p. 516
[676] CHAUCER, 2013, op. cit., p. 189. “When a scholar gets old and becomes [unable to have an erection], he then lives muttering: those animals, [the females], are wanton and unfaithful”. The word “fêmea” is generally used to refer to a female animal.
[677] BLOOM, Harold. Introduction. in: BLOOM, Harold. **Bloom’s Modern Critical Interpretations**: Geoffrey Chaucer’s The Canterbury Tales. New York: Bloom’s Literary Criticism, 2008, p. 2.
[678] As pointed by Bloom. Ibid, ibidem.
[679] BENSON, op. cit.. p. 111.
[680] BOITANI, op. cit. p. 11.

highly rhetorical line among her obscene profanities – “Fui dona do meu tempo e do meu mundo” – and by adding two verses, “Pois com ardor vivi, provei de tudo; / Conheci todo o bem e o mal na Terra”[681]. I also turned her “flour” metaphor into a trope that could be more easily grasped by my audience – “o mel secou”[682].

Bom Deus! Quando recordo os jovens dias
De minhas aventuras e euforias,
De prazer me estremece o coração!
Agora mesmo sinto a comoção:
Fui dona do meu tempo e do meu mundo;
Pois com ardor vivi, provei de tudo;
Conheci todo o bem e o mal na Terra.
Mas a idade, que a tudo mata e enterra,
Envenenou meu corpo e o meu vigor.
Já não sou bela. Ah, seja como for!
Adeus! E que vá tudo pro diabo!
O mel secou; porém, tenho guardados
Uns truques pra manter minha alegria.

[681] “For I lived with ardour and proved it all; / I knew all the good and the evil on Earth”.
[682] “The honey has dried out”.

5. THE BLOOD IS LIFE: THE TRANSLATOR'S STATUS AND THE METAPHORS OF TRANSLATION

In the first chapter of **A Tradução e a Letra ou o Albergue do Longínquo**, Antoine Berman lists several metaphors used in different moments to signify the act of translating – all of them negative. Cervantes likened the reading of a translated book to the act of looking at a tapestry from the seamy side. Goethe compared translators to matchmakers who describe a "naked beauty" to her prospective husbands. Madame de Staël talked about a music composed for a certain instrument, but performed in a different one, while Nabokov wrote, in a contumelious poem, that translation is the squeak of a parrot, the talk of a monkey, and a profanation of the dead[683].

Such damning metaphors are all linked to the idea that translation is either impossibility or treason, because "meaning" and "letter" are inseparable[684]. This fatalistic approach is even more intense when it comes to poetry: for a poem might be seen specifically as that which cannot be translated, and the very notion of untranslatability has been described as a poetical quality[685]. The Untranslatable, indeed, can be seen not only as a poetical, but also as a (rather paradoxically) universal value. The notion that all languages contain "nodes of untranslatability"[686] has received considerable academic attention in recent years (see, for instance, **Against World Literature: on the Politics of Untranslatability**, by Emily Apter). It has, indeed, given rise to a dictionary, and a very detailed one at that: the **Vocabulaire Européen des Philosophies: Dictionnaire des Intraduisibles**, organized by Barbara Cassin, with about 400 entries, concerning words and phrases from languages such as Hebrew, Russian, Latin, Arabic, Swedish, and Portuguese. Some entries deal with "untranslatable" words individually, such as the Italian *leggiadria*, the Russian *mir* and the Portuguese *saudade*, while others deal with "webs of meaning", trying to decipher their singularities (for instance, the many "senses"

[683] BERMAN, 2013, op. cit., p. 57-59.
[684] Ibid. p. 55.
[685] Ibid, ibidem.
[686] CASSIN, Barbara (org..). **Vocabulaire Européen des Philosophies: Dictionnaire des Intraduisibles**. Le Robert, Le Seuil. 2004, p. XVIII

of the word *sens*). According to Cassin, acknowledging the Untranslatable is acknowledging the plurality of languages and their specific powers of communication:

> L'un des problèmes les plus urgents que pose l'Europe est celui des langues. On peut envisager deux types de solution : choisir une langue dominante, dans laquelle se feront désormais les échanges – un anglo-américain mondialisé; ou bien jouer le maintien de la pluralité, en rendant manifestes à chaque fois le sens et l'intérêt des différences, seule manière de faciliter réellement la communication entre les langues et les cultures.

To Cassin, a node of untranslatability ("noeud d'intraductibilité")[687] is a symptom of the differences of languages, indicating how words and conceptual combinations are not liable to be juxtaposed across linguistic universes[688]: is the English word "mind" the same as the German "Geist" or the French "esprit?; does "pravda" mean justice, or truth?; and should mimesis be translated as representation or imitation?[689] The Untranslatable emerges because the plurality of languages cannot be reduced to the several designations of the same thing; for each designation is a different perspective on that thing and, as such, captures the fleeting vision of an entire world[690]: "Les perspectives sont constitutives de la chose, chaque langue est une vision du monde qui attrape un autre monde dans son filet, qui performe un monde, et le monde commun est moins un point de départ qu'un principe régulateur"[691].

And, yet, those differences can be made intelligible: otherwise, how could they be part of a dictionary?[692] The existence of a dictionary of "untranslatable" words and phrases seems to indicate that the Untranslatable, after all, can be translated – or, at least, paraphrased, which according to Dryden is also a mode of translation[693]. Cassin, in the dictionary's Presentation, suggests that the Untranslatable is not that which cannot be translated at all, but that which is constantly retranslated, without ever achieving a final rendition:

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[687] CASSIN, op. cit., p. XVIII.
[688] CASSIN, op. cit., p. XVII.
[689] Ibid, ibidem.
[690] P. Caussat, La langue source de la nation, Mardaga 1996. Apud: CASSIN, op. cit., p. XX.
[691] CASSIN, op. cit., p. XX.
[692] As pointed out by Gontijo and Gonçalves in: GONTIJO, Guilherme; GONÇALVES, Rodrigo Tadeu. **Algo Infiel**: **Corpo Performance Tradução**. Desterro (Florianópolis): Cultura e Barbárie, 2017, p. 175.
[693] Ibid, ibidem.

> Parler d'intraduisibles n'implique nullement que les termes en question, ou les expressions, les tours syntaxiques et grammaticaux, ne soient pas traduits et ne puissent pas l'être – l'intraduisible, c'est plutôt ce qu'on ne cesse pas de (ne pas) traduire. Mais cela signale que leur traduction, dans une langue ou dans une autre, fait problème, au point de susciter parfois un néologisme ou l'imposition d'un nouveau sens sur un vieux mot (...).

The "Intraiduisible", then, is not necessarily the end or the denial of translation, but rather a circumstance that propitiates its endlessness. It's precisely because translation, understood as a full rendition of meaning (or meaning and form), can never be completely achieved, that translation must go on, and will go on inevitably. Mourning for what was lost, then, is not limited to an unsolvable grief, but might as well become a form of unsolvable joy. A translator's stance on the Untranslatable depends on what their notion of Translatable, or of translation in general, might be. We are again faced with one of the oldest debates – or maybe *the* oldest debate – in the history of translation: namely, the debate about what is, and what is not, a translation.

In *The Limits of Translation*, Douglas Robinson explains how those boundaries have expanded and contracted throughout the centuries in the West. As we have seen, "slavish literalism" was the oldest Roman ideal of translation, opposed by Cicero and Horace[694]. Yet, the idea that any semantic "freedom" should be deemed as "non translation" carried into the Middle Ages[695]. After a momentous expansion of the limits of translation during *Les Belles Infidèles* period, Dryden reorganized and reworded the old debate, pushing "imitation" beyond the boundaries of what a translation should or could be (although he later qualified that opinion)[696]. For Schleiermacher, both paraphrase and imitation are beyond the limits of translation. Drawing a dualism between "taking the author to the reader" and "taking the reader to the author", Schleiermacher points the later as the only true form of translation[697]. This approach can be traced to pre-romantics like Herder, romantics like Goethe and post-romantics like Benjamin[698]. Robinson writes:

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[694] ROBINSON, op. cit., p. 15
[695] ROBINSON, op. cit., p. 16
[696] ROBINSON, op. cit., p. 17.
[697] ROBINSON, op. cit., p. 18.
[698] Ibid, ibidem.

> For these writers the crucial point is not what segment the translator selects for translation - the word, the phrase, the sentence - but the sociocultural tensions the target reader feels, or is intended to feel, between his or her native culture and that of the foreign text. Foreignism, the insistence upon retaining in the translation some feel of the original, remains technically a moderate form of literalism; but rhetorically, ethically, pedagogically, politically, it becomes something quite different, concerned less with protecting the sanctity of a worshipped text, as literalism often has been, and more with opening the target culture up to the transformative influence of the foreign. For the foreignitsts, the limits of translation are social and political: whatever inserts the foreign into the native in beneficially transformative ways is good translation; whatever gives the target culture more of the same, more of what readers are already accustomed to seeing, is bad translation, verging on no translation at all (...)[699].

There is always something arbitrary, however, in all attempts to set definite and unmovable limits to translation. As we have seen in Chapter 1, many translations deemed "naturalizing" – as Dryden's **Aeneid** – have elements of strangeness and, therefore, are not utterly impervious to the influence of the foreign language, whereas translations deemed "foreignizing" – such as Odorico's **Odisséia** – have also naturalizing elements. As a professional translator, faced daily with the unending complexities of the job for almost a decade, I came to understand translation not as a full adhesion to one of those binary poles, but as a form of negotiation between competing tendencies and a form of hospitality amid the perceived separateness of Self and Other. That negotiation must take into account not only matters of meaning and translatability, but also the context in which the translation takes place: just as, in Borges' *Pierre Menard*, the same excerpt from Don Quijote can be seen as bland or prodigious, depending on the contextual web that surrounds it, so a translation must not be judged according to unmovable binary distinctions, but in relation to its own background and its surroundings, to the history of the language and the literature wherein it arises.

A binary view of translation presupposes a state of essential incommunicability of cultures and languages, of separate societies and minds, an idea that hearkens back to territorial nationalism[700]. Writing about the ideas of Schleiermacher

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[699] Ibid, ibidem.

[700] PYM, A. Schleiermacher and the Problem of *Blendlinge*. **Translation and Literature**, v. 4, n.1. Ottawa: Presses de l'Université d'Ottawa, 1997, p. 16

and his followers in translation theory, Anthony Pym stated that the very existence of intercultural communities – such as the Jews, Conversos and Mozarabs who made up the "School of Toledo" in the 12th c. – raises the question of whether "translators really belong in one side or the other"[701]. To Pym – himself a translator – "the existence of such people sets up the very possibility of translation, well prior to any binarism of good or bad strategies"[702]. Pym sees translators as a "community of intermediaries" who wander a "middle ground" and "whose most ethical birth" is "a mixture of cultures"[703].

Other theorists have questioned translation's dualism, preferring to underline its unending complexities and its moveable character. As Robinson writes:

> Above all, modern translation theory tends to insist that the limits of translation are never stable. They are defined pragmatically, in large-scale social and political contexts, and shift as those contexts shift. (...) The gradations between artificial poles like "sense for sense" and "word for word", or "domesticating" and "foreignizing", or even "translation" and "non-translation", are not only potentially but actually infinite. It is only by refusing to look closely and by willfully ignoring this reeling complexity - and convincing the reader to do the same - that the scholar can go on pretending to refer his or her reductive binary categories and the "limits" between them to reality. With the conspicuous exception of the foreignist school, recent translation theorists have been less and less interested in ignoring that complexity. They are as a result increasingly willing to sacrifice definitional purity to a more chaotic, and thus also, they claim, more realistic understanding of translation as theoretically limitless and "limited" only practically, in specific pragmatic situations and for specific pragmatic and often polemical purposes. [704]

To utterly embrace the Untranslatable, to point it as a recurring sign of impossibility and failure, is to assert the complete mutual strangeness of all languages. Utterly to embrace the universality of meaning, on the other hand, is to deny all strangeness, all specificity, and all difference. There may be divers ways to escape the opposition between "a logical universalism that ignores languages" and an "ontological nationalism" that sees languages as essences among which there can be no communication at all. My own stance has been to create a tertiary space, where the strange and the familiar are combined into something new. The newness of creation, or

[701] PYM, op. cit., p. 17
[702] PYM, op. cit., p. 19.
[703] PYM, op. cit., p. 19.
[704] ROBINSON, op. cit., p. 19-20.

"transcriação" as Haroldo de Campos named it, is not a denial of strangeness, but a joyful way of embracing it. One mourns for what was lost, but at the same time one rejoices in mourning: because the loss is a necessary result of the incommensurate richness of languages, and the perceived impossibility of a full transmission of meaning (or meanings) opens the infinite possibility of artistic recreation. If we understand translation as a mechanical transference of sense across language's Acheron, than everything is Untranslatable. If we understand translation as an art form in itself, or as a genre within the literary art, a contextual and combinatory art, whose limits are moveable, according to pragmatic circumstances and specific cultural and social configurations – well, then, everything is Translatable.

As for translation of poetry, I understand it as a form of poetic composition – and one of the main differences between poetic translation and other forms of poetic composition is that translating is harder. As Ivan Junqueira pointed out in *A poesia é traduzível?*:

> À parte o ceticismo de alguns e a boa vontade de outros, a primeira exigência que se deve fazer a um tradutor de poesia é a de que ele seja um poeta, pois somente assim poderá enfrentar os desafios técnicos específicos desse gênero literário, como os do ritmo, da estrutura sintático-verbal, dos esquemas métricos e rímicos, da linguagem metalógica, do jogo de imagens e metáforas e de todos os outros elementos que constituem a retórica poética. (...)Problema também delicado na tradução de poesia é o da literalidade, que não deve ser confundida com aquilo que costumamos definir como tradução isotópica. Se partirmos do princípio de que não há – e não pode haver – traduções estritamente literais, pois não apenas a forma, mas também, e principalmente, o conteúdo são irredutíveis a um traslado literal para outra língua, concluiremos que toda tradução é uma busca de equivalências entre aquilo que escreveu o homo faber no original e aquilo que resgatou o homo ludens em sua tradução, ou seja, aquele que nos serve a poesia "alheia". A rigor e sem exagero, a tradução exige esforço mais extenso e intenso do que a criação propriamente dita, sobretudo quando se trata do traslado de textos poéticos, nos quais, além de todas as especificidades a que já aludimos, resta ainda ao tradutor o desafio de interpretar o pensamento do autor, sem falar nos problemas de atmosfera poética, que é necessário recriar em outra língua, e, intimamente vinculado a esses, o da escolha do vocabulário, pois há palavras que podem suscitar uma sugestão

> poética em determinada língua e em outras não, caso se trate de uma tradução literal.[705]

Junqueira refers to the translator as *homo ludens*, while the author of the original work is the *homo faber*; the *homo ludens* is the one who serves us "the other's poetry", but that task can only be done if the *homo ludens* is also a poet. We are now far away from Nabokov's description of translation as a profanation of the dead; the relation between *homo ludens* and *homo faber* is rather one of collaboration or continuation. The negative metaphors of translation begin to give way when we start to consider the translated poem as an original composition that emanates from another original composition – in a creative, rather than a deterministic way. My notion of translational verisimilitude – understood as a form of linguistic and literary world-building based on the balance between familiarity and strangeness – is an assertion of the translated work both as a translation and as an original composition. Translational verisimilitude does not make the translator "invisible", neither does it efface the very act of translating – instead, it makes the translation visible as a work of art and the translator visible as an artist.

We still have to deal, however, with the weight of translation's metaphors, and look for an image better suited to convey the notions here presented. For the history of translation, like the history of the world, can be seen as the history of a number of metaphors. According to Guilherme Gontijo Flores and Rodrigo Tadeu Gonçalves, the "most terrible" of all translation metaphors is one that does not seem damning at first glance: the image of translation as transportation or conveyance of meaning – wherein meaning is understood as a cargo, "as something that is actually there". Gontijo and Gonçalves prefer to define translation as a form of "shamanism", an activity that brings together different and apparently incommunicable domains:

> Se padecemos de uma doença que não nos permite ver o traduzível, é porque somos vítimas de cristalizações de velhas metáforas. A metáfora da tradução como transporte de sentidos é ainda a mais terrível. Ela nos leva a crer que o que se traduz é algo que está lá, por debaixo das palavras, no domínio do sentido, objetivamente existente, essencialmente presente. Daí as preocupações excessivas com fidelidade e correção, com lealdade, com concretude. Na medida em que percebemos que o sentido é

[705] JUNQUEIRA, Ivan. A poesia é traduzível? **Estudos Avançados**, v.26, n.76 São Paulo, set/dez 2012. Disponível em: < https://www.scielo.br/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S0103-40142012000300002 > Acesso em: 10 dez 2020

> algo de que nos aproximamos via língua, a matéria bruta da linguagem, fica fácil perceber que cada manifestação linguística em perfomance, na crueza bruta de seus significantes, letras ou sons, é única. Essa unicidade, porém, não deve impedir o trânsito de tradições e conteúdos, pois eles circulam. A tradução acaba por se parecer com o xamanismo, que aproxima domínios diferentes, aparentemente incomunicáveis. E essa aproximação acontece nos domínios em que a performance deixa entrever, nos sons, nas letras, o que é próximo, o que é quase, o que é e não é. Daí a tradução.[706]

Conveyance, profanation, collaboration. In those images, there is always something to be taken and guarded, or taken and robbed, or taken and shared, or taken and transfigured. The "taking" here is the issue: it might be seen as wicked and traitorous, or as a professional necessity, or as a crucial activity for the circulation of ideas and traditions. If we, however, consider translation as a form of "shamanism", as the act of bridging what seemed unbridgeable, translation then becomes the art of intermediation, endowed with the intermediary's ethic.

Other translation metaphors and similes have already been seen in Chapter 1: the translator as a race runner who follows the author; the bad translator as a musician who "runs divisions on the ground"; the good translator as a painter who copies reality. The runner, the musician and the painter are all, in some way, secondary and subaltern. Translation is something that *comes after*: that, not even the most triumphant translation eulogist could deny. How, then, can we harmonize those ideas with the notion of translation as an original composition, and the translator as an artist? In order to tie up all those images, bridge the gap of binarism, and offer my own translational working-myth, I will return to the blood metaphors used by Alan Pauls to describe the translational ideas of Jorge Luis Borges.

As we have seen in Chapter 1, Pauls initially describes how Borges' literary work – as a fiction writer, as an essayist, and also as a translator – is deeply rooted in a "parasite vocation" and an "ethics of subordination", manifested in a gallery of parasite characters, "translators, interpreters, annotators of sacred texts, librarians, even the sidekicks of thugs and cuchilleros", all of them "anonymous creatures, sentinels guarding other people's days and nights". The Other is always the original, the one who emanates light; the Self is subordinate and rather obscure. Pierre Menard, Erik Lönnrot, Vincent

[706] GONTIJO. op. cit., p. 175-176.

Moon, Benjamin Otálora – all of them could be seen as "parasite" characters, as the ones who *came after*, as manifestations of a second-hand self. Yes – so translation, too, could be understood as a parasite activity. But what is a parasite? It's not only a creature that feeds on another's body and blood – on another's *being*; a parasite is also a creature that has no movement of its own, a sessile sucker, forever *attached* to the source of its energy and of its life.

The vampire, on the other hand, is quite different. And, while Pauls choses the parasite to set off his meditation on Borgesian poetics of translation, the final and dominant image is — meaningfully — that of the vampire. Just as Spanish and English had the same status in Borges' bilingual childhood, so the parasite structure is questioned and overhauled – or, rather, overthrown from inside. An expatriate writer does not belong in any language, and neither does an intermediate creature belong here or there: it wanders. So does the vampire: a creature that feeds on another's blood, then moves away to the next victim, then comes back, then moves away again. A parasite only feeds, but a vampire has his own businesses to attend – elsewhere, somewhere, everywhere. Borges' translators, as Borges's translations – unruly, pettish, impertinent as they are – make up "a new species of parasite", reversing the hierarchy of original and copy and abolishing seemingly unsurpassable distinctions. While continuing to "vampirize" the organism they adhere to, they get "drunken with blood" and therefore betray their own condition[707].

Although Pauls does not underline the vampire's "moveable" nature, he distinguishes parasites from vampires by stating that the later may create something new. It's worth noticing that, according to the vampire mythology as established by Bram Stocker's **Dracula**, vampires *also give their own blood* to their victims, thus taking them to a threshold-space where life and death are simultaneously suspended. At this point, I would like to play with the image of translators as moving creatures that feed on others' blood, but also give their own blood back.

Not only is blood life, though: blood is also speech. In the 11th Book of the **Odyssey**, Odysseus descends to Hades and performs the Nékia, the "sacrifice to call up the dead"[708]. The sacrifice takes the form of living blood poured unto a hole in the ground, for "the blood of the victims, among other things, works as a material element connecting the world of the living and the world of the dead"[709]. It is only because of the

[707] PAULS, op. cit., p. 107.
[708] CAMPOS, 2000, op. cit., p. 206. Editor's footnote.
[709] Ibid, ibidem.

warm blood brought by the wandering hero that the dead assemble and speak. As speech is restored to the dead, Odysseus can confer with Tiresias and access the image of his own destiny. The passage bellow is an extract of Odorico's **Odisséia**:

Evocados
Os defuntos, as vítimas degolo,
Flui na cova o cruor: do Érebo as almas
Congregavam-se em turmas, noivas, moços,
Melancólicos velhos, virgenzinhas,
Do luto prematuro angustiadas,
Muitos guerreiros em sangrentas armas
De êneas lanças passados; ante a cova,
Num confuso rumor, se atropelavam.
Pálido e em susto, exorto a que esfoladas
Queimem-se as reses pelo bronze troncas;
Voto a Plutão pujante e à seva esposa.
De espada arredo os mortos, que não bebam
Sem que eu tenha o adivinho interrogado. [710]

In my translation of Chaucer's masterpiece, I endeavored to "create something new", but that very act of creation was also an act of continuation: to feed on the work's life – as understood by Benjamin – while also contributing to the renewal of that same life. Thus, if on one hand the translator is the wandering vampire who feeds on another's poetry, they are also the wandering hero that brings the warm blood of living language to the gates of the Underworld, in order to make the dead speak again.

Writing is a destiny, and so is translating. The image of the Self is never complete without the shadow of the Other. By giving my own voice to the dead, by raising the dead's voice through the music of my world, I also endeavored to round up a destiny and to perform a mourning chant: the mourning for the regional world whose words I salvaged, while at the same time salvaging what was lost in translation. Translation has been repeatedly defined as a secondary activity and the translator as a sub-artist; so the regionalist literature wherein I fed has been defined as sub-literature.

[710] Ibid, ibidem.

The alliance of literature's underdogs proved to be a privileged field for literary creation, and for translational recreation, and for a Borgesian effacement of hierarchies: the hierarchy between original and copy, between classic and non classic, between scholarly and popular, between *regio* and *orbs*. No longer binary poles in an endless oposition, but conjoining elements of poetic faith, and of poetic truth.

6. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

My search for a balance between strangeness and familiarity in **Contos da Cantuária** has been a way of dealing with translation's dualisms – not by avoiding or side-stepping them, but by plunging in their perilous conflagration and turning the very shock of conflicting tendencies into creative momentum. If, on the one hand, I endeavored to supersede the oscillation between opposing poles – as "literal" versus "libertine" / "word for word" versus "sensus de senso" –, I did not attempt to skim along the agonistic nature of much of translation theory; instead, I used the fire and the brimstone of Babelic engagement to *make it new.*

Both the act of translating **The Canterbury Tales** and the act of pondering on my own translation are based on the recognition of two urges that visit the translator with the fatal constancy of the Furies, but also with the mellifluous magnetism of the Angel: on the one hand, the impulse to make the source text familiar; on the other, the impulse to make the translation itself strange. That recognition is prior to any theoretical musing and stems from the translating activity itself. At every step, the translator is faced with seemingly antagonistic options: to embrace the literary norms of the target culture, or to stretch them; to easily render the global meaning of a work, or the specific meaning of a sentence, or to deliberately compromise intelligibility by mimicking the foreign syntax, literally translating proverbs and idioms, and so on. It's only a natural assumption, on the translator's part, that those sets of individual decisions must be grouped separately, and justified by opposing theories. However, if we look closer to the texture of the translating process, it becomes clear that every translation is a species of negotiation. In my work as a translator, I decided not to escape from any of the competing tendencies by embracing programmatically the other, but rather to accept the tension created by that competition as a fact of life, and turning Agon into creative energy. By studying my own process of translation, I came to a more complex understanding of the way those seemingly irreconcilable impulses work on the translating ground. I came to see the search for strangeness as twofold: it can emerge in the relation between the translated text and the source text (external estrangement) and also through choices that have to do with the literary norms of the target culture (internal estrangement). Thus, translators might bring up some sort of strangeness within the text even when they are apparently "appropriating" the original or making it familiar. A

strange familiarity and a familiar strangeness thus become the stuff of translational creativity and innovation.

The search for a balance between strangeness and familiarity served as the basis for translational verisimilitude, the impression that all parts of a translation belong to the same whole, and that this whole is commanded by an aesthetic rationale; and also a relation of similarity and difference towards the original and the reader's cultural and linguistic world. That effect is accomplished by a linguistic world-building performed through formal and vocabulary choices throughout **Contos da Cantuária**. One of the most important formal choices has been the coupling of *decassílabos* and *alexandrinos* with *rima toante*, an instance of internal estrangement, as elements familiar within the target culture were combined in an unfamiliar way. Seen by Castilho as a "fossile particle" of Portuguese meter, *rima toante* was coupled with the two most scholarly verse forms in the language. Another formal combination was that of *rima toante* and *rima consoante*, a procedure that I learned from the regionalist songbook. While Medieval and Renaissance *romances* used exclusively the *toantes*, I alternated them with "perfect" rhymes, following the examples of Gauchoesque songs and other kinds of popular music in Brazil. The "rustic" rhyme, crowning the prestigious verse line (be it the *decassílabo* or the *dodecassílabo*) prepares the ground for the linguistic world-building effected by vocabulary choices.

The linguistic world-building in **Contos da Cantuária** can be said to have been accomplished through three interconnected axes: scholarly/popular; European/South American; national/regional. Classical references are interwoven with colloquialisms; European sources such as Camões and the chivalric romance both effect and suffer a mutual transformation as they become intermingled and contaminated by the peculiarities of South American Portuguese; the chosen colloquialisms were either connected to regionalist literature or, in some way, "neutral", in most cases avoiding clearly citified slang. As urban jargon can be seen as essentially modern, its use would create an excessive familiarity and destroy the translation's verisimilitude. The opposition between *regio* and *urbs* thus becomes a correlation between *regio* and *orbs*: as hierarchies are toppled, the *regio* is elevated to the level of the *orbs*, and the *orbs* is regionalized, a process that I call "acriollamiento" or "transculturação". In regionalist works such as **Antônio Chimango**, it is the scholarly word that is inoculated in a regional context; in my translation, regional vocabulary was inoculated within a scholarly organism.

In my translation, the tendencies toward strangeness and familiarity are not reducible to any single group of vocabulary choices. It is the nomadic, hybrid nature of the text that sets in motion the correlation between the two spheres. Thus, the geographically distant European vocabulary can be seen as familiar within the translation of a medieval poem; whereas, in the same context, popular and regional vocabulary, while initially familiar, become strange. While citified slang would compromise the translation's balance, regional choices were used as a twofold source; bringing up both strangeness and familiarity. The cohabitation of different universes creates a new world of language, a seamless realm where fiction and poetry, form and content, are one. That's translational verisimilitude effected through the *ars combinatoria*. I neither took the reader to the author, neither the author to the reader; instead, I took them both to a linguistic universe where Brazilian references are "medievalized", while at the same time "acriollando" Chaucer.

My translation strategy and method stems from my stance on the ancient debate surrounding the Babel myth, which can be seen as a prototype of all translation's dualisms. Should we search or earn for the lost "totality" of language that was shattered by Babel? Or should we celebrate the plurality of languages, thus reversing the curse? Those two stances can be connected to the opposition between Translatability and Untranslatability. The nostalgia or the hope for pre-Babelic totality leads us towards the idea of full or absolute translation, while the celebration of Babel might lead us to the idea of the Untranslatable as the core experience of the translation activity. Libertine and literal translations have a complex relation to the Babel myth and its interpretations. Libertine translations, understood as *sensus de senso*, might be seen as harking back to totality, while at the same time plunging in the peculiarities of the target language, therefore celebrating Babel – on might say – one-sidedly. On the other hand, Benjamin's nostalgia for the *Ursprache* aims at revealing the original unity of all languages by stressing their separateness through literal translation. To Berman, choosing the Untranslatable as a value is one of the ways to avoid traitorous ethnocentric translation.

I my work as a translator, I came to believe that the different approaches to the Babel myth can lead to a creative synthesis when translation is understood as a set of moveable, and indeed always moving, relations between Self and Other. As Ricoeur pointed out, the *confusio linguarum* is described in the original myth as a fact of human

life: that's the way we are, without lamentation or accusation[711]. Translation is then a result of the very nature of language and how language relates to the human experience: the opprobrium sometimes attached to translation (ditto the negative translation metaphors in the last Chapter) loses its grip when we consider translation not as a profanation of something otherwise untouched and unsullied, but as a component of what constitutes language in the first place. Translation as an idea therefore precedes the thing it translates; for that which is translated exists only because of the same *confusio linguarum* that presupposes translation.

As a relationship between Self and Other, translation – as pointed out by Ricoeur – can be seen as a duty towards two masters, the foreign work and the translator's reader; that double service creates the problematic of faithfulness versus betrayal [712]. The idea of "serving two masters" can be found in the daily labor of translation, as, line by line, word by word, translators are faced with the resistance of the source-texts to penetrate the target language, and the target-language's resistance to the arrival of the foreigner. The idea of betrayal emerges from the impossibility of a full, absolute translation, which also brings up the mourning for what cannot be salvaged. But that mourning is turned into a form of happiness when we renounce to the idea of absolute translation and embrace the idea of linguistic hospitality: the pleasure of "dwelling in the other's language" combined with the pleasure of receiving "the foreign word at home, in one's own welcoming house"[713]. Linguistic hospitality allows translators to transcend the double resistance to the translating act: in a process of mutual contamination, the foreign and the familiar not only meet, but inhabit each others' skin. To that twofold labor of mourning happiness or gleeful mourning, I add yet a third dimension: after dwelling in the foreign land and after welcoming the foreigner in my own home, host and guest – both of them travelers across linguistic and cultural borders – wander towards a new realm, a linguistically constructed world that lies in the confluence of *confusio* and totality. Once linguistic pluralism is no longer taken as a curse; and once the encounter with the Other is seen as something that cannot be avoided, but as a necessity; then the partiality of languages ceases to be an obstacle – the Untranslatable –

[711] RICOEUR. op. cit., p. 19.
[712] RICOEUR, op. cit., p. 4. The "two masters" metaphor, according to Ricoeur, was taken from Franz Rosenzweig.
[713] Ibid, p. 10.

and reemerges as the precondition to all communication[714] – and, also, as an occasion to literary creation.

Cassin, in **Dictionnaire des Intraduisibles**, links the acknowledgement of the Untranslatable to an active awareness of linguistic plurality and a way of resisting to the idea of a "globalized Anglo-American language" as the dominant language in Europe, by making constantly manifest the sense and the interests of linguistic differences. Thus, bearing in mind the untranslatable element in all languages is a way to celebrate their uniqueness; one might say, then, that considering the Untranslatable is coming to terms with Babel. I also endeavored to celebrate Babel, instead of mourning it; but my celebration takes in both Translatability and Untranslatability, viewing both not as mutually exclusive poles, but as different angles, or different ways of gazing at the same phenomenon. In my opinion, it is in the relation between Translatable and Untranslatable that the possibility of creative translation emerges. In that regard, let us recall a very significant passage of Haroldo de Campos' writings on "transcreation": to Campos, the translation of creative texts is always a form of re-creation or parallel creation, "autonomous, but reciprocal"; and the more difficult is a text, the more pregnant with creative possibilities to translators[715]. If a full translation were possible, then the translating act would be an undisputable science; but the fact that two brilliant translators would never produce exactly the same translation, even if espousing the same translational theories and using the same tools (such dictionaries and philological sources), illuminates the impossibility of translational absolutism. On the other hand, the very fact that translations exist, that seemingly untranslatable texts and words are indeed translated in one way or another, points to the fact that nothing is completely untranslatable. Because nothing is neither completely translatable nor completely untranslatable, creation is made possible, and translation can be seen as an art.

Campos also pointed that, in a transcreation, the "semantic parameter" is only a "boundary stone" marking the site of the "re-creating enterprise"[716]. Latitude, as Dryden put it, is a necessity in a creative translation: and I interpret Dryden's Latitude as the artistic room to recreate form and to resonate meaning. If we understand the translation of a Classic not only as a relationship between Self and Other, but also between present and past, then the work of the translator as a Poet becomes the blood that

[714] JERVOLINO, op. cit., p. xv.
[715] CAMPOS, 1992, op. cit. p. 34
[716] Ibid, ibidem.

gives the Other's work a continuous life in the culture: thus, translational verisimilitude, linguistic world-building and the balance between strangeness and familiarity are also a means to make Chaucer's work speak to us, to our world, hic et nunc. Re-creating Chaucer with the aid of the regionalist songbook and literature is not an innocent gesture. It has to do with what Fischer calls the preservation of "culturodiversidade": "assim como se deve preservar a biodiversidade de sitios organizados pela natureza em seu curso, o que implica intervir no processo darwinista puro e simples de forma a manter testemunhos do passado em meio ao presente, assim também se deve preservar as culturas regionais"[717]. My thesis, at the end of the day, is a defense of the dignity of translation, of its ability to speak, Janus-like, towards the past and the present, and even towards the future; for the flight of the Angel of History is always a path of destruction and we are not always graced with the gift of salvaging all that should be preserved; but neither are we condemn to mourn exclusively. We can chant, too, and, as others chanted before us, we can translate.

[717] FISCHER, 2008, op. cit., p. 117

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