

POUNDHAROLDIAN HUBRIS: TRANSLIGHTING THE ART OF POETRY

José Molina

University of Massachusetts/Dartmouth

Resumo: O ensaio estabelece relações entre a teoria da tradução poética de Ezra Pound e a de Haroldo de Campos, historiando sua arte tradutória e apontando seus avanços. Destaca, nas traduções de Haroldo de poesia clássica ou moderna, a produção de um novo critério sobre como deveriam chegar ao presente do leitor. Como tradutor-crítico, Haroldo de Campos é considerado o paradigma do tradutor de poesia delineado por Pound.

Palavras-chave: Teoria da tradução poética; prática tradutória em poesia; Ezra Pound; Haroldo de Campos.

Introduction

Much has been written about the translation labors Haroldo de Campos undertook throughout his lifetime. At the beginning of the twentieth century in Portugal, Fernando Pessoa created and personified the four most important Portuguese poets of that period and beyond. In the second part of the twentieth century in Brazil, Haroldo created a repertoire of translated poems founding a criterion or idea of what serious poetry should be. Even though many of the poems he translated already existed in earlier Portuguese versions, his vision enabled a new perspective on poetry. His aim at the beginning of his career as a poetry translator was not to create masks to craft his poetic voice, like the American poet Ezra Pound had done. He used the

materiality of the poem, its iconicity, and virtually carved into Portuguese to shape the foreign body of the translated text into this language.

The double nature of translation, critical and creative at the same time, revealed to Haroldo a new perspective in the literature written in Portuguese. This outstanding mode of literary production approached world poetry from the vantage point of Portuguese, viewed not only as a recipient language but as a mechanism consciously deployed to (re)elaborate a tradition. This specific concern to rescue and revitalize, at the same time, poetry from different traditions and epochs, was Pound's original task when claiming his famous slogan: *Make it New!*

Haroldo demonstrated his loyalty to the great American master in following Pound's spirit of renovation. However, fidelity to the text is the point where he falls apart from Pound. Haroldo did not introduce his voice when translating; instead, he allowed tradition to speak through the permeation of different poetic styles and eras. His translations shed light onto some of the most intricate troubles of poetic translation. He found solutions to these questions and generously offered his wisdom to his readers by taking them step by step through the translation process. In this sense he was a great pedagogue, an aspect that connects him directly to Pound's ambitious cultural agenda. The American poet's commitment to the moral basis of culture is well known, a concern that is found in many of his writings including *The Cantos*. For Haroldo, however, his insights about culture, or cultures, are attached to the literary phenomenon.

It is important to mention that Pound had to face, according to Lawrence Venuti, a canon in the English letters that paid little attention to foreign literature and for the most part confined the practice of translation to classical texts. The American poet broke into this arena demanding attention to "different" traditions and foreignizing the concept of poetry itself via translation. By contrast, Haroldo's translations did not struggle with an established poetic heritage but with a newly envisioned, forward-looking tradition that was being created in Brazil since the *Semana da Arte Moderna* in 1922.

The Odyssey: From Engineering le mot juste to Translation as an Epic

One of the many sins Haroldo was accused of as a translator by his critics was that his method only applied to fragments or small pieces of poetry. Since the establishment of the concrete-poetry group Noigandres in 1952 (by Haroldo, his brother Augusto, and Décio Pignatari), its collective strategy was to display the mastery of the poets the members of the group were emulating as innovators in the art of poetry. Once they consolidated their *paideuma*,¹ the concrete poets needed to make visible and available the material body of their literary corpus. They translated, for the first time in Portuguese, 22 fragments of James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* in 1962. The following publication was a book on the French poet Stéphane Mallarmé, with poems selected and translated by Augusto de Campos, a creative triple translation of the famous poem "L'après-midi d'un faune" by Décio Pignatari and, in closing, the highly anticipated translation of "Un coup des dés jamais n'abolira le hasard" by Haroldo. The *paideuma* cycle closed with the selection and translation of poems of Vladimir Maiakovski and Ezra Pound.

Following their initial enterprise of collaborative translation, Haroldo and Augusto published a book of Provençal troubadour poetry. Afterwards, they invited Boris Schnaiderman, a professor of Graduate Studies of Translation at the Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina, to work with them on an anthology of Russian poetry. These translations took place after the official dismantling of the Concrete Poetry Movement in 1965.

In the late 1960s and 1970s, Haroldo's work focused on essays and journal articles about translation and poetry that he later published in the volumes *Metalinguagem* (1967), *A Arte no Horizonte do Provável* (1969) and *A Operação do Texto* (1977). These texts show in depth detailed word engineering from the translation of a wide diversity of poetry pieces like Hoelderlin's translation of Sofocles, Edgar Allan Poe's "The Philosophy of Composition",

“L’infinito” of Giacomo Leopardi, Basho’s haicais, Kurt Schwitters texts from the series “MERZ,” and Pindar’s “Pythian Odes”, among many others.

In 1981, he published *Deus e o Diabo no Fausto de Goethe*, a milestone in his poetic career that shaped and defined his subsequent work as a poet, critic and translator. The format of Haroldo’s book on Goethe’s *Faust* set the style of his later studies. The title derives from the film directed by Glauber Rocha, *Deus e o Diabo na Terra do Sol* (1964), and therefore incorporates Goethe in a tradition that looks at the same time back and forward in history and territory, moving outside Brazil and deeply into the country’s interior. Haroldo’s translation of the two final scenes of the *Faust Part Two* was published together with his three essays about the play, the play’s modernity and its translation into Portuguese. *Deus e o Diabo no Fausto de Goethe* became the ninth book released by the publishing house Perspectiva as part of the collection Signos, founded and directed by Haroldo.

During his sojourn as a visiting professor at the University of Texas in 1981, Haroldo finished the translation of the poem “Blanco” by the Mexican poet Octavio Paz. In 1986, the book *Transblanco* was published; it included the translation along with commentaries and correspondence between Haroldo and Paz. “Blanco” cannot be considered a long poem, but it is a piece of poetry of considerable extension. The poem had been conceived, as Paz openly declared, under the influence of Mallarmé’s “Un coup des dés” and Tibetan philosophies. It seems that this experience stimulated Haroldo to concentrate his later translations on full poems and, increasingly, on long poems as well.

In 1991 Haroldo published *Quhélet/O-que-sabe*, a Portuguese translation of the Ecclesiastes directly from the Hebrew, and two years later his version of the Japanese play *Hagoromo de Zeami*, a work of Noh theatre formerly translated and adapted into English by Ezra Pound.

Haroldo’s interest in long poems did not necessarily interfere with his earlier projects of word engineering and translations of the struggling

fragment. In 1994 he published *MHNIS – A ira de Aquiles*, the first book of the *Iliad*. Four years later appeared *Pedra e Luz na Poesia de Dante*, a book that was being prepared since 1975. This work incorporates Haroldo's translation of six cantos of "Paradise" and the "Rime petrose," together with a brief selection of Italian sonnetists, which Haroldo called "O Dolce Stil Nuovo: Bossa-Nova no Duecento".

1999 saw the publication of *Os nomes e os navios*, the second book of the *Iliad*. In this book Haroldo sets his translation next to an earlier translation by Odorico Mendes and the original text in Greek. In the same year he publishes *O Arco-Íris Branco*, a book of essays and translations organized by languages or, as the book itself classified them, domains: German, French, Spanish and Chinese. The German section includes texts on Goethe, Hegel, Arno Holz, Christian Morgenstern, August Stramm, Bertolt Brecht and Kafka, and incorporates also an essay about the problems of translation in Goethe's *Faust*, "Problemas de Tradução no Fausto de Goethe," where Haroldo speaks of his translation work and traces his career, providing a very specific itinerary:

Não foi um itinerário sem premissas, sem mapeamento prévio do caminho: antes de arriscar-me a essa meta zenital, passei pelos estágios preparatórios do "Lance de Dados" de Mallarmé (que recriei em português em 1972) e ascendi por Seis Cantos do *Paraíso* de Dante (1978). Da "transparadização" à "transluciferação". (55).

This mapping of the strict avant-garde poet's trajectory displays a route through a contingency of the tradition absorbing crucial periods of the work of Dante, Goethe and Mallarmé. The experience of the Mallarmean *néant*, followed by the *ascesis* of Dante's *Paradiso*, evolved into a solid resolution to Haroldo's quest about translation: the satanic or luciferan aura of translation found in Goethe's *Faust*. It is as if the promise of the "modern" installed by the appearance of the poem "Un coup des dés" needed to shed its light on the past and not only toward the future, the same dynamic Walter Benjamin sees when observing the *Angelus Novus*:

There is a picture by Klee called *Angelus Novus*. It shows an angel who seems about to move away from something he stares at. His eyes are wide, his mouth is open, his wings are spread. This is how the angel of history must look. His face is turned toward the past. Where a chain of events appears before *us*, *he* sees one single catastrophe, which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it at his feet. The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from paradise and has got caught in his wings; it is so strong that the angel can no longer close them. This storm drives him irresistibly into the future, to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows toward the sky. What we call progress is *this* storm (392).

Haroldo redefines this tragic image with a constructive impulse. The pile of debris will become the basis for a new awakening, one that represents from a different angle, not the smashed original, but the origin that leaves traces or spurs as Derrida liked to call them. This interpretation would also echo Pound's famous definition of translation:

The translation of a poem having any depth ends by being one of two things: Either it is the expression of the translator, virtually a new poem, or it is as it were a photograph, as exact as possible, of one side of the statue (qtd. in Venuti 187).

A question to be raised later on in this essay is the idea of parricide that was many times referred to in Campos' writings on translation. In this context, Gonzalo Aguilar's interpretation of Concrete Poetry as an avant-garde movement looking to the past brings light to the discussion:

Mas essa reação dos vanguardistas ante aquilo que herdaram não se baseou em uma "destruição do passado" (paradigma que erroneamente os definiu), mas sim em uma série de discriminações que lhes permitiam renovar esse legado, a partir dos interesses do presente. A discriminação decisiva foi liberar o passado das tradições dominantes, com seu peso homogeneizador e sua cumplicidade com o poder (40).

This is exactly the point where critics questioned Haroldo about his engagement with the avant-garde and his obvious preference for the tradition. His answer was that all the great poetry of any period is in essence vanguardist in its time. Once having defined his relationship with tradition, he was ready to embrace a master enterprise: the translation of the *Iliad*.

Critical Fortune: Haroldo's Metaphorical Digestion

The body of critical literature on Haroldo's theory of translation is fortunately increasing rapidly. However, not many critics have paid attention to the figure of Ezra Pound who is mentioned several times in Haroldo's commentaries on poetry and translation. Parallels and correspondences between these two poets-translators-critics converge in ways that have not yet been deeply analyzed.

In her essay "Liberating Calibans. Readings of Antropofagia and Haroldo de Campos' Poetics of Transcreation," Else Ribeiro Pires Vieira briefly summarizes Pound's quest for translation:

With Pound, translation is seen as criticism, insofar as it attempts theoretically to anticipate creation, it chooses, it eliminates repetitions, it organizes knowledge in such a way that the next generation may find only the still living part. Pound's well known "Make it new" is thus recast by de Campos as the revitalization of the past via translation (105).

Translation is criticism for Pound and Campos, but the conceptualization of this task takes very different shapes for both poets. One of the emphases on translation projected by Campos is in fact very well described by Vieira in her essay: the digestive metaphor. Taking as her point of departure, the "Manifesto Antropófago" of Oswald de Andrade, Vieira explains how this cultural metaphor is portrayed by Campos as a response to the idea of the "noble savage": as an actually "bad savage", a cannibal who devours white people. This transformation is revealed in literature and inscribed, according to Vieira, as a "difference in tradition" (105) because of the double nature of the process of translation where the foreign is domesticated and the Portuguese is foreignized. Once again, as Aguilar describes it, this is made possible by discriminating the specific part of the past to be consumed and digested. The transformation operates via tradition, recovering elements from different poetic texts written in Portuguese and embodying or reshaping the foreign text, e.g. the Bible, the *Iliad*, or Dante's *Paradise*, into this language.

The process is defined by Campos as “plagiotropy” in his book *Deus e o Diabo no Fausto de Goethe*, when he is reflecting about Goethe’s license to borrow from the Bible and from Shakespeare, and specifically in the latter case, the song of the gravediggers from *Hamlet*. This example leads the Brazilian poet to Pound’s maxim: “great poets pile up all the things they can claim, borrow or steal from their forerunners and contemporaries and light their own light at the top of the mountain” (qtd. in Vieira 107). From this perspective, Haroldo reaches a solid definition: “translation is a *persona* through whom tradition speaks” (107). Haroldo’s observation evokes Benjamin’s commentary on translation in his essay “The Task of the Translator”, where the writer describes the respective roles of the poet and the translator as two separate and, in fact, opposite spheres: “The intention of the poet is spontaneous, primary, graphic; that of the translator is derivative, ultimate, ideational” (77). Haroldo’s effort to conceal both discrete tasks in a common destiny yields a new metaphor to confront Benjamin’s “angelical” allegory of translation, Haroldo’s “transluciferation”. Vieira describes this transformation:

If Benjamin casts the translator’s task in an angelical light, that of liberating the pure language, de Campos highlights the satanic import of it, for “every translation that refuses submissively to serve a content, which refuses the tyranny of a pre-ordered *Logos*, breaks with the metaphysical closure of presence (as Derrida would say)”, is “a satanic enterprise”. (109).

It is important to observe, beyond the angelical-satanic opposition, that the goal of translation would remain to liberate the pure language; as Benjamin stated it, “A real translation is transparent; it does not cover the original, does not block its light, but allows the pure language, as though reinforced by its own medium, to shine upon the original all the more fully” (79). For Haroldo, the translation points to an origin, just as the original text points to the same origin, and on this basis an egalitarian, or democratic, relationship between the text and its translation is proposed.

This postulate also casts away the monological hierarchy from the past to the present by installing a “parricidal dis-memory” (109), that, according to Campos, intends to obliterate the original text. Vieira expresses her emphasis on this concept as translated by her into English:

[M]y own anthropophagic hyphenation of “dis-memory”, as I rendered “desmemória” into English, highlights the dual positionality of de Campos’ vanguardist theory of translation in relation to tradition: a hyphen that both separates and unites inasmuch as “dis-memory” speaks of a translation project which unleashes the epistemological challenge of discontinuity but reunites threads into a new fabric; a translation project which murders the father, means in his absence yet reveres him by creating a continued existence for him in a different corporeality (97).

Vieira understands the parallelism of translation in terms of the “corporeality” proposed by Haroldo. Furthermore, she manufactures her own parallel receptacle in English for the concept of “desmemória” in Portuguese. And it is in this subtle understanding of translation that Haroldo’s authentic contribution to the art of poetry translation lies: only through the language’s “corporeality” it is possible to create a parody as Campos defined it, the “parallel canto” of the original. Ines Oseki-Déprés illustrates this idea in her essay “Make it New”.

Comparing Haroldo’s and Pound’s translations of the *Canzone* of Guido Cavalcanti, Oseki-Déprés observes that Pound’s translation follows the inner structure of the original: “As inovações poundianas concernem ao vocabulário e à sintaxe (construções elípticas) mais do que a prosódia, apesar dos primeiros influírem nesta última” (216). Haroldo’s translation deconstructs or disassembles the original to produce a new metric closer to contemporary poetics. Oseki-Déprés comments on this method:

Haroldo de Campos dispõe os versos de maneira particular, dividindo o decassílabo em versos breves, suprime, como Pound, os travessões da versão italiana e cria uma respiração diferente, com “brancos”, sem pontuação. O poema aparece em sua essência, lapidar (218).

Haroldo's challenging operation could seem radical in view of the conventional criteria for scholarly translation, but it is actually an extension of a creative technique of criticism introduced by Pound. Before Pound there was no other poet who embraced translation and the incorporation of the foreign as a strategy to understand the mechanisms through which poetry works. Enid Starkie's comment on Charles Baudelaire's critical embrace of Edgar Allan Poe helps elucidate the significance of Pound's contribution: "Baudelaire's article on Poe, which appeared in 1852, was the first in any foreign language to be published on the American and it marks an important date in comparative literature studies" (215). Baudelaire's intuitive understanding of Poe's spirit led the French poet to translate "The Raven" despite his rudimentary skills in English. The translation of the poem proved to Baudelaire that his original intuition was correct and he subsequently wrote an article on Poe's style that became a classic piece of creative criticism through translation. Starkie's comment grasps the core significance of this "modern" apparatus of the art of poetry: the art of translation as criticism is relatively new.

Translation history could probably be traced to the first poem ever written but translation as criticism is a different mode, which began to be intentionally practiced by authors in the twentieth century. The relative innovation Pound brought to translation studies is clearly a mark of his university education and academy should be grateful to this modern explorer-scholar who defied the barriers separating languages as he followed what can be called a "poetic episteme". Haroldo's career as a critic-translator evolves from Pound's role model to articulate scientific methods to study and compare poetry. The Brazilian poet's approach to the academy proved to be enduring and fruitful, bringing him many visiting appointments at universities all over the world.

Translation as criticism, as stated before by Vieira, must be carefully observed because not every poet that translates is affirming a creative way of criticism in this sense. For example, the poet-critic-translator Octavio

Paz did not frame his practice of translation within the impetus of discovery (or “Make it New”, as Pound would say): his translations of Fernando Pessoa, William Carlos Williams, and Mallarmé’s sonnets were motivated by the relevance of these authors to contemporary poetry. Paz’ translations from Oriental languages, which he did not know, relied on existing translations into French and English to produce a version in Spanish. This method differs from Pound and Haroldo’s because it does not consider a revision, or study, of the text in its original language. Paz was an enthusiastic advocate and connoisseur of the French and Spanish cultures, while his translations from the Portuguese and English did not have a profound impact on his affinities, i.e., he did not claim transformational effects analogous to those Pound and Haroldo were chasing. Paz was simply not interested in the evaluation of a poetics that did not intersect with his established criterion, inclined to a Eurocentric point of view. A good example to support this affirmation is the interest of the Mexican poet in translating poems by Pessoa coupled with his lack of interest toward Brazilian letters.

This is exactly the place where the (im)prudent and risky ambition of Pound’s reading of the ideograms come into the scene. The idea to explore different systems of languages was not to lead to becoming an expert on those languages but to obtain references to understand how aesthetic elements were used in order to incorporate them when translating into English. The same idea caught Haroldo’s attention since the publication of his famous essay “Da tradução como criação e como crítica”, in which he quotes Albrecht Fabri’s ideas on aesthetic information. To summarize briefly, Fabri stated that in literary texts there is no meaning behind the structure because the structure is its own meaning. The idea of translation would seem an impossible intervention into this perfect structure of the piece of literary art, just as a painting or a sculpture could not be translated either. Therefore, Haroldo proposed for translation the creation of a parallel work, one that is able to re-present the original. He

displayed first the idea of translation as an isomorphic (*isos* from the Greek “equal”) work, i.e., a piece of work that was “identical” to its form. Later, the concept moved forward into the paramorphic (*para* from the Greek “beside”), restating the idea of a “parallel” construction but always stressing the autonomy of the transcreation. This echoes the comments of Laszlo Géfin when describing Pound’s relation to the ideograms:

The method [ideogrammic] may also be called *paratactic*, from the Greek verb παρατάσσω, to place beside one another. Parataxis is the opposite of hypotaxis, from υποτάσσω, to arrange under, which signifies a dependent construction or relation of parts with connectives (xii).

The idea, according to Haroldo, was to see the original as the translation of the transcreation, a radical enterprise but consistent according to each text to become transcreated. Vieira collects some of the terms Haroldo coined in the process:

Translation as “verse making”, “reinvention”, a “project of recreation” (in the 1960s), “translumination” and “transparadisation” (stemming from his translation of Dante), as “transtextualization”, as “transcreation”, as “transluciferation” (stemming from his translation of Goethe’s *Faust*), as “transhelenization” (as from his translation of the *Iliad* of Homer), as “poetic reorchestration” (from his rendering of the Hebrew Bible into Brazilian Portuguese), as “reimagination” (from his transcreation of classical Chinese poetry into Portuguese) are but some of the neologisms coined by Haroldo de Campos that offer a vanguardist poetics of translation as textual revitalization while pointing to the Anthropophagic dimension of feeding on the very text he is translating to derive his metalanguage (96-97).

From Make It New to Make It Now

Since the beginning of his career as a translator of poetry, Ezra Pound became a polemic figure. His enthusiasm for poetry pushed his efforts beyond his own skills; this titanic enterprise was only one step into a greater ambition, to become the man who knew the most about poetry. However, the risk of the enterprise proved to be unique, as J. P. Sullivan affirms in his book *Ezra Pound and Sextus Propertius*:

It is worth stressing that it is in no small measure due to Pound's own critical theories that we see translation as an art in this way: that we can extricate ourselves from the naïve view of what translation is – the reproduction in one's own language of the exact sense and the set number of poetic qualities of the original, whatever they are, or the reproduction in mind of the present-day reader of the effect the original had upon its audience. The object of such aims is a chimera. *Traduttore traditore* – all translation is compromise (21).

To render a general look over Pound's translations that were published as books, the following need to be listed: *Sonnets and Ballads of Guido Cavalcanti* and the poem "The Seafarer", published in *Ripostes* (1912), *Cathay* (1915), *Homage to Sextus Propertius* (1919), *Dialogues of Fontenelle* (1917), Rémy de Gourmont's *The Natural Philosophy of Love* (1922), Edouard Estouniè's *The Call of the Road* (1923), the Confucian texts, the *Ta Hio* (1928), later translated again and published as the *Great Digest* in 1945, *The Unwobbling Pivot* (1947), *The Analects* (1951) and *The Classic Anthology Defined by Confucius* (1954), *Love Poems of Ancient Egypt* and *Women of Trachis* (1962).

It is important to observe the impact of the Oriental culture on Pound's evolution as a translator and, in particular, to mention here the manuscript of Ernest Fenollosa that Pound received in 1914 and edited and published in 1919 as *The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry*. This essay was essential not only to Pound's self-development but to modern poetry in general. The merits of the comprehension of the ideogram by Fenollosa and Pound lie in their ability to distinguish the pictographic etymology that evolved into an elaborate symbolic representation. This reveals the rapport that certain traditions of Chinese poetry kept with painting. Furthermore, this essay opened a material perspective for considering an aspect of Oriental languages that, by that time, linguists insisted on disregarding and looked at as a mere grammatical representation of the meaning.

Pound's motives to incur into the interpretation of the ideogram were usually obscure to the critics. Most of them considered it only an extravagance of a modernist poet. Only few have recognized the intention

of the American poet in his approach to understanding different languages, including those of the arts, as his writings on music, painting and sculpture revealed. The intuition of a semiotic era led Pound to believe that everything is language, hence everything can be read. Marjorie Perloff also refers to this intuition in *The Dance of the Intellect*:

... Pound seems to be anticipating current semiotic theory, which regards the transformation, indeed often the disappearance, of particular genres and conventions as aspects of the inevitable literary change that occurs when the codifications that govern their production break down. (14)

Even Pound's closest friends were skeptical of this perspective, as T. S. Eliot's words demonstrated when he called Pound "the inventor of Chinese poetry for our time" (qtd. in Géfin 12). This invention that for many was seen as a distortion is also a quality on which Sullivan remarks:

Propertius *required* Pound's reinterpretation (and even distortion) to bring him within our own frame of reference as a poet. And that frame of reference had also to be reinterpreted and distorted to come to terms with Propertius (the technical originality of the *Homage* is obvious). All this was what G. S. Fraser called "a correlation of two variables." The critical irrelevance therefore of Pound's rage against academic scholars and of the rage of academics against Pound is clear. In Fraser's words: "Academic scholars are able to get an objective view of a text by dissociating it as far as possible from their own contemporary sensibility, which is what the poetic critic and translator [...] dare not do". (22).

The mutual rage shared by Pound and the academy has interesting motivations. A polemic spirit was raised and cultivated by all avant-garde movements. Pound portrayed in many of his books, such as *ABC of Reading*, *Guide to Kulchur* and *Make it New!*, a figure to contrast with his own *formamentis*, the academic. He made the academics the best example of all that was contrary to his method: "Ignorant men of genius are constantly rediscovering 'laws' of art which the academics had mislaid or hidden" (14). On the other hand, the academics were always skeptical of Pound's ambivalent attitude: scientific but bohemian, specific with regard to cases and vague as to the results.

Fenollosa's essay is a good example to observe the many difficulties imposed by the reviewers on any material published by Pound. Géfin comments that Fenollosa's manuscript may have had a better reception if it had been released by another editor. The irony of this comment refers to the obstacles raised by Pound's critics and to the fact that, according to Géfin, Pound's editorial work was in some cases just too drastic.

The evolution of translation as criticism cannot be traced as a clear and straight path of thought. On the contrary, it is a lineage that evolved from many contradictions and the empirical method of trial and error. As Géfin demonstrates, Fenollosa's insights about the ideograms are correct for the most part, but there are visibly numerous misinterpretations:

He is right in that the most ancient Chinese characters were pictograms and metaphoric ideograms. But he does not recognize the fact that to carry the ideogrammic mode *ad infinitum* would have required an inordinate amount of ingenuity and at the same time would have increased the possibility of confusion. He refuses to acknowledge the fact that the introduction of the phonetic compounds was a necessary step in the evolution of the Chinese writing. [...] With this discovery the creation of new characters at will was made possible. The sinologue's second objection is also valid: Chinese writers and readers are ordinarily unaware of the metaphoric "overtones" undeniably present in pictograms and ideograms, and such a reading of phonetic compounds is quite impossible. Many of the errors in Fenollosa's and Pound's translations from the Chinese are the result of such "ideogrammic reading". (24).

Géfin also demonstrates how the interpretation of the ideogram was different for both Pound and Fenollosa. The so-called ideogrammic method, which Pound later transformed in a *forma mentis*, derived from different intuitions for the sinologist and for the poet:

For when Pound praised and commended the unique importance of Fenollosa's insights as "the basis of a new aesthetic", he meant something else – what he in the early thirties began to call the ideogrammic method. He even denied that Fenollosa had explicitly defined the method in his essay, and allowed only that the ideogrammic method was "seriously indicated in Ernest Fenollosa's *The Chinese Written Character*, there dealt with narratively rather than formulated as a method *to be used*" (Pound's emphasis) (27).

Despite all the misreadings of Fenollosa's essay, its relevance for modern poetry is highlighted by Géfin and Steven Yao. Géfin's thesis is that Fenollosa's manuscript, as edited by Pound, triggered what he calls an "ideogrammic tradition" or the tradition of "poets-archeologists" (3), like William Carlos Williams, Charles Olson, Robert Creeley, Gary Snyder, Louis Zukofsky, Charles Reznikoff, George Oppen, Robert Duncan and Allen Ginsberg. As he also notes, the ideogrammic method was already latent in Pound's early writings, like the Imagist and Vorticist manifestoes:

The method of the ideogram, then, is implicit in the early works of romance in the discussion of the "luminous detail" in the series of essays "I Gather the Limbs of Osiris" and in the theory of "language beyond metaphor" in the *Spirit of Romance*. The latter, Pound's first published prose work, is also important because it foreshadows several important points which Pound elaborated after reading the Fenollosa essay on the Chinese character and after his more exact formulations of the "image" and the "vortex". (6).

In addition, but observing a different period, Yao proposes as well that the ideogrammic method influenced Pound's acquaintances, like William Butler Yeats, Hilda Doolittle, James Joyce and the sculptor Gaudier Brzeska, all before the publication of the *Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry*.

The ideogrammic method is adapted to different strategies in Pound's writings. For Perloff, the juxtaposition of the archaic with the vernacular and literary discourse observed in Pound's poems defined his particular poetic style, which was not confined to his poetry: "'Canto-structure,' that is to say, came to refer to poetic writing in general – whether the text in question was an actual canto, a manifesto, a critical essay, or a personal letter" (ix). Yao makes a similar observation when he refers to Pound's method of translation, mixing rhythms and tones from the English literary canon. Sullivan also speaks of the hybrid compound of voices found in the *Homage to Sextus Propertius*. This *forma mentis*, in Pound's own words,

is the legacy Haroldo de Campos embraced in his work as a poet-translator. The poets in the ideogrammic tradition may have adapted the pivotal *Chinese Written Character* for their own poetics, but Haroldo reestablishes the ideogrammic *raison d'être* into a new kind of literary performance. He was able to reincarnate the hubris as a hyper-Poundian strategy.

Hubris or hybris, from the Greek *ὕβρις*, according to the Encyclopaedia Britannica is employed “in classical Greek ethical and religious thought [to mean] overweening presumption suggesting impious disregard of the limits governing human action in an orderly universe.” It is also “the sin to which the great and gifted are most susceptible, and in Greek tragedy it is usually the hero’s tragic flaw”. This is the kind of extreme pride that affected Achilles and Oedipus and also what, according to Dante’s verses, overpowers Odysseus to undertake his ultimate adventure of crossing Hercules’ columns: “Per voler veder/ traspasó il segno”. It is important to observe here that both Pound and Haroldo have been compared to Odysseus by Yao and Eduardo Milán, respectively. The hubris is the spirit that compels these two great poets to trespass the languages and times in their pursuit of poetry.

Haroldo defined his hyper-Poundian strategy in the introduction to the book *Hagoromo de Zeami*, a Japanese Noh theater play formerly translated by Pound:

... procurei adotar uma outra estratégia (que eu poderia definir, enquanto radicalização do método, como hiperpoundiana). Assim, em vez de um mero substitutivo esteticamente vacilante, pelo qual o tradutor “fiel”, à medida que o produz, vai-se apressurando em pedir desculpas quanto ao resultado, dispus-me a configurar um texto poeticamente eficaz, minuciosamente trabalhado, autônomo como obra de arte verbal, dentro dos recursos da língua portuguesa, extremados, quando necessário, para responder ao impacto do original (17).

The ideogrammic *forma mentis* not only influenced Haroldo’s translation methods. It became also present in the structure of his poem *Galáxias*. As Géfin explains with regard to the composition of *The Cantos*,

The Cantos, and all ideogrammic long poems, are “formless” if “form” denotes nothing but a logical assemblage of data, rationally structured and transitionally executed. But if we allow that *The Cantos* work out a new kind of form based on the juxtaposition of particulars and their various recombinations, then the poem most certainly has form. If “form” is not equated with “story line”, then, again, *The Cantos* have a most clearly demonstrable form: it is composed of interconnected and mutually affective “units of design” working toward synthesis and revelation (43).

This ideogrammic form is evident when analyzing *Galáxias*. However, for the Brazilian poet this poem derives also from his translation of the *Faust Part Two*. It is during his research for this project that Haroldo found Christoph Martin Wieland’s opinion of the piece as a “genial Barock Tragödie” or, as Goethe refers to it in a letter to Johann Peter Eckermann, “Klassik-romantisch Phantasmagorie” (qtd. in Campos 124). The combination of distant styles such as the Baroque, Romantic and Classic, extracted from Calderon de la Barca’s theater plays, Goethe’s famous trip to Italy and the early German Romanticism, incorporated in the *Faust Part Two*, stimulated Haroldo to explore in depth the “neo-barroco” style. The style was not new to his poetic; in fact, his first book, *Ciropédia ou A Educação do Príncipe*, was referred to by his brother Augusto, in his introduction to the volume *Melhores Poemas*, as “a realização de um ‘concreto-barroco’” (qtd. in Campos 9). Luiz Costa Lima also observes the influence of the Baroque in *Galáxias* (in his essay “Arabesques in *Galáxias*”), but he refers it directly to the Spanish Baroque, in particular to Luis de Góngora.

In 1977, Haroldo organized and published a book dedicated to the ideogram, *Ideograma. Lógica Poesia Linguagem*. This book contains the famous essay by Fenollosa translated into Portuguese, among other texts by Sergei Eisenstein, Chang Tung-Sun, Yu-Kuang Chu and S. I. Hakayawa. In his introductory essay Haroldo establishes a dense analysis of the kinship between Ferdinand de Saussure’s late writings about the anagrams and Fenollosa’s ideogram. The third edition of this book, in 1994, included a new preface, “Fenollosa Revisitado”, where Haroldo comments on the

recent studies about the *Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry*, like the essay “Characters That Represent, Reflect and Translate Culture – in the Context of the Revolution in Modern Art” by the Japanese scholar Shutaro Mukai. From this essay, Haroldo quotes the following passage:

Foi Ernest Fenollosa quem primeiro viu na qualidade gráfica, portadora de sentido, do *kanji* – em comparação com os sistemas ocidentais de escrita – a energia da língua original. Sua intuição e capacidade de visão no ensaio sobre o caráter chinês como instrumento para a poesia dá-nos, a nós japoneses, que trabalhamos com o *kanji* na vida cotidiana, muito o que pensar (qtd. in Campos 18).

The subjacent ideogrammic structure in *The Cantos* is comparable to the neo-baroque structure found in the *Galáxias*. Both poems juxtapose languages, history, politics and poetry from many periods, but many intentional and stylistic differences maintain them apart from each other. Pound’s *forma mentis*, extracted from *The Chinese Character as a Medium for Poetry*, is organically revitalized in Haroldo’s *Deus e o Diabo no Fausto de Goethe* and the many other essays he dedicated to this work. Both poetics, triggered through translation processes, could be seen as paratactic strategies to create and understand the art of poetry.

Conclusion

The rough path of learning proposed by Ezra Pound through the ideogrammic logic became superbly condensed in a sentence from his essay “A visiting card”: “In our intellectual life – or ‘struggle’, if you prefer it – we need facts that illuminate like a flash of lightning, and authors who set their subjects in a steady light” (327).

The evidence, sometimes, is so obvious that it seems unnecessary to provide any further explanation. It is possible also to claim the lack of an objective instrument, or process, to make poetic intuitions coherent. The notion of the *Zeitgeist* seems just too general

to validate some kinds of affinities, like the mysterious influence of Poe on Baudelaire, the correspondence between Pound and Fenollosa, or the comprehension shown by Haroldo toward the less popular of Goethe's plays (*Faust Part Two* holds a long history of rejection among translators). And amid these interrogations comes Dante to illuminate, from the canto XVII of the *Inferno*, those particular relationships: "il punto a cui tutti li tempi son presenti". Poetry makes possible the coexistence of times and languages.

The evidence that seems most clear along this essay is that poetry speaks poetry. Moreover, poetry can be taught as a second language, the language that abolishes the differences and reestablishes the essences. The most valuable lesson on translation from the "Ezuversity" (expression coined by James Laughlin to represent Pound's house in Rapallo as a university for young poets) is that the translator who intends to translate poems should learn first to speak poetry.

The poet's rudimentary methods of translation, like Baudelaire's, have evolved and, more importantly, have allowed poetic intuitions to become scientific. Pound thrives extraordinarily when demonstrating that poetry is not different from any other object of scientific study. Haroldo de Campos represents the paradigm of poetry translator envisioned by Pound. Moreover, his thought does not dissociate one activity from the other, as his writings demonstrate. On the double dynamic displayed by what Vieira terms the "digestive metaphor", Haroldo constructs with his translations a lineage of great poetry for the Brazilian letters and the permeation of these texts yields for him his own poetic style.

The history of poetic translation could be seen as a series of distortions and mistranslations. Despite the many affinities shared by Haroldo and Pound, these do not interfere to suppress their uniqueness. Even the similarities of their poetics – "neo-baroque" and "ideogrammic" – render tribute to the past and situate them among Dante, Mallarmé, Goethe, Homer and all the great plagiarists who can "Make it New!"

NOTES

¹ Pound borrowed the concept of *paideuma* from the writings of the anthropologist Leo Frobenius: "Paideuma means the mental formation, the inherited habits of thought, the conditionings, aptitudes of a given race or time" (284). The consciously adopted *paideuma* of the Brazilian concrete poets was based on the most innovative poetic proposals from the avant-garde: Mallarmé, Joyce, Cummings and Pound.

Works Cited

AGUILAR, Gonzalo. *Poesia concreta brasileira: as vanguardas na encruzilhada modernista*. São Paulo: EDUSP, 2005.

BENJAMIN, Walter. *Selected writings. Volume 4. 1938-1940*. Cambridge-London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003.

BERNSTEIN, Michael André. *The tale of the tribe: Ezra Pound and the modern verse epics*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1980.

BESSA, Antonio Sergio; Odile Cisneros (Eds). *Novas: selected writings of Haroldo de Campos*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2007.

CAMPOS, Haroldo de. *A arte no horizonte do provável*. São Paulo: Editora Perspectiva, 1969.

_____. *A operação do texto*. São Paulo: Editora Perspectiva, 1978.

_____. *Deus e o diabo no Fausto de Goethe*. São Paulo: Editora Perspectiva, 1981.

_____. Com Augusto de Campos e Décio Pignatari. *Cantares de Ezra Pound*. São Paulo: Editora Hucitec, 1993.

_____. *Hagoromo de Zeami*. São Paulo: Estação Liberdade, 1994.

_____. Com Augusto de Campos e Décio Pignatari. *Mallarmé*. São Paulo: Editora Perspectiva, 2002.

_____. *Melhores poemas*. São Paulo: Global Editora, 1992.

_____. *Metalinguagem & outras metas*. São Paulo: Editora Perspectiva, 1982.

_____. Com Augusto de Campos. *Panorama de Finnegans Wake de James Joyce*.

São Paulo: Comissão Estadual de Literatura, 1962.

_____. Com Augusto de Campos. *Poemas de Maiakovski*. Rio de Janeiro: Tempo Brasileiro, 1967.

_____. Com Augusto de Campos e Boris Schnaiderman. *Poesia Russa moderna*. São Paulo: Editora Perspectiva, 2001.

_____. *O arco-íris branco*. Rio de Janeiro: Imago Ed. 1997.

_____. Interview. *Ocidente / Oriente*. Nov. 1997. September 2002.

<http://www.revistazunai.com.br/entrevistas/haroldo_de_campos.htm>.

_____. *Qohélet (Eclesiastes)*. São Paulo: Editora Perspectiva, 1990.

_____. Com Octávio Paz. *Transblanco*. Rio de Janeiro: Editora Guanabara, 1985.

_____. Com Augusto de Campos e Décio Pignatari. *Têoria da poesia concreta*. São Paulo: Edições Invenção, 1965.

CASTELLÕES DE OLIVEIRA, Maria Clara. O tradutor Haroldo de Campos e a (des) leitura da tradição. *Literatura em perspectiva*. Evando Nascimento et al. Org. Juiz de Fora: Universidade Federal de Juiz de Fora, 2003.

DAVIE, Donald. *Ezra Pound: Poet as Sculptor*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964.

DERRIDA, Jacques. *Spurs: Nietzsche's styles = Eperons: les styles de Nietzsche*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979.

GÉFIN, Laszlo. *Ideogram. History of a Poetic Method*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1982.

"hubris." Encyclopædia Britannica. 2007. Encyclopædia Britannica Online. 3 Nov. 2007. <<http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-9041378>>.

JACKSON, K. David ed. *Haroldo de Campos: A Dialogue with the Brazilian Concrete Poet*. Oxford: Centre for Brazilian Studies, University of Oxford, 2005.

KEENE, Donald. *Anthology of Japanese Literature, Earliest Era to Mid-Nineteenth Century*. New York: Grove Press, 1955.

MILÁN, Eduardo. *El nombre es otro*. México: Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, 1997.

_____. El Odisseo Brasileiro: Haroldo de Campos. *Justificación Material: ensayos de poesía latinoamericana*. México: Universidad del Distrito Federal, 2004.

MOTTA, Leda Tenorio da. *Céu acima: para um "tombeau" de Haroldo de Campos*. São Paulo: Editora Perspectiva, 2005.

MONTEIRO DE CASTRO PEREIRA, Cristina. Transcrição: a tradução em jogo. *CIEFIL*. 27 Agosto, 2004. <<http://www.filologia.org.br/viiicnlf/anais/caderno06-15.html>>.

PERLOFF, Marjorie. Ezra Pound and 'The Prose Tradition in Verse'. In: _____. *The Futurist Moment. Avant-Garde, Avant-Guerre, and the Language of Rupture*. Chicago-London: The University of Chicago Press, 1986.

_____. *The Dance of the Intellect: Studies in the Poetry of the Pound Tradition*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985.

_____. The Invention of Concrete Prose: Haroldo de Campos's *Galaxias* and After. In: _____. *Differentials: Poetry, Poetics, Pedagogy*. Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 2004.

POUND, Ezra. *ABC of reading*. New York: New Directions, 1989.

_____. *Make it new*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1935.

_____. *Selected Prose 1909-1960*. New York: New Directions, 1990.

_____. *Translations*. New York: New Directions, 1995.

RIBEIRO PIRES VIEIRA, Else. Liberating Calibans: readings of *Antropofagia* and Haroldo de Campos' Poetics on Transcription. *Post-Colonial Translation: Theory and Practice*. Susan Bassnet and Harry Trivedi ed. New York: Routledge, 2005.

SCHULER, Donald. Um lance de nadas na épica de Haroldo. Home page. 1998. <<http://www.schulers.com>>.

SCHULTE, Rainer; John Biguenet (Eds). *Theories of Translation: An Anthology of Essays from Dryden to Derrida*. Chicago-London: University of Chicago Press, 1992.

STARKIE, Enid. *Baudelaire*. New York: New Directions, 1958.

SULLIVAN, J. P. *Ezra Pound and Sextus Propertius*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1964.

VENUTI, Lawrence. *The Translator's Invisibility: A History on Translation*. London-New York: Routledge, 1995.

VIEIRA, Brunno. Contribuições de Haroldo de Campos para um programa tradutório de latino-portugues. *Terra roxa e outras terras – Revista de Estudos Literários*. V. 7, 2006.
<<http://www.uel.br/cch/pos/letras/terraroixa>>.

YAO, Steven G. *Translation and the Languages of Modernism: Gender, Politics, Language*. New York: Palgrave McMillan, 2002.

Article received on 24/07/2008. Accepted on 21/11/2008.