

JOURNEYS HOME: TRANSCREATING CELIA DE FRÉINE`S POETRY INTO PORTUGUESE

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ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on the “transcreation process” employed by Brazilian poet Gisele Giandoni Wolkoff to translate some of Celia De Fréine`s poems into Portuguese for the well-received bilingual publication called *Poem-ing Beyond Borders: ten contemporary Irish and Portuguese women poets* (2011). The general objective of this paper is to analyze how Wolkoff`s use of translation as “transcreation” does more than transposing literal terms, as she considers translating possibilities for new meaning effects. Within this context of poetics of resistance and counterculture, the Irish feminist Celia de Fréine seems to portray an already existing struggle with symbolic and semiotic transposition in her poetic writings due to her divided Irish belongings (North and South, woman-wife-mother-friend). The specific object tackled in this paper is whether and how Wolkoff transposed the feminine and feminist subjectivity present in De Fréine`s poems into Portuguese for the aforementioned collection. The “transcreation” theory employed by Wolkoff goes back to Ezra Pound and the Campos` brothers, as it seeks to justify its unconventional choices in the Lusophone atmosphere where it was initially published.

KEYWORDS: Translation. Transcreation. Concretist Movement. Irish Poetry. Celia De Fréine.

RESUMO

Este artigo foca no “processo de transcrição” empregado pela poeta brasileira Gisele Giandoni Wolkoff ao traduzir poemas de Celia De Fréine`s à Língua Portuguesa para a bem recebida publicação bilíngüe intitulada *Poem-ando Além Fronteiras: dez poetas contemporâneas Irlandesas e Portuguesas* (2011). O objetivo geral deste artigo é analisar como o uso que faz Wolkoff da tradução como “transcrição” é mais que transposição literal de termos, ao mesmo tempo em que considera possibilidades tradutórias para novos efeitos de significação. Dentro deste contexto de poéticas de resistência e contracultura, a feminista Irlandesa Celia De Fréine parece já enfrentar dilemas na transposição simbólica e semiótica de seus próprios escritos poéticos devido a suas divididas raízes Irlandesas (Norte e Sul, mulher-esposa-mãe-amiga). O objetivo específico deste artigo é analisar se e como Wolkoff transpôs para o português a subjetividade feminina e feminista presente nos poemas de De Fréine traduzidos para a coletânea mencionada. A teoria da “transcrição” empregada por Wolkoff remonta a Ezra Pound e aos irmãos Campos ao procurar justificar suas escolhas não-convencionais na atmosfera Lusofônica onde foi inicialmente publicada.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Tradução. Transcrição. Movimento Concretista. Poesia Irlandesa. Celia De Fréine.

1. Transcreation And *The Concretist Movement*

To translate is to criticize, as Pound did better than anyone else. It is one of the best forms of criticism. Or, at least, the only truly creative act when it—the translation act—is creative². (CAMPOS, A. 1988)

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² “[. . .] a tradução é crítica, como viu Pound melhor que ninguém. Uma das melhores formas de crítica. Ou pelo menos a única verdadeiramente criativa, quando ela - a tradução - é criativa.”

The feminist and transcreational point of view employed by Wolkoff (2011) in the translation/transposition of Celia De Fréine's Irish poetry into Portuguese finds resonance with the theories of the Campos brothers Haroldo and Augusto—the founders of the “Concretist Movement” in the 1950's in Brazil. The brothers viewed poetic translation as re-creation, or a parallel construction that is more concerned with the structure and the visual aspects of the poem than with its semantic and literal rhymes. For the Campos brothers, translation of poetry was only possible through recreation, corroborating with Jakobson in that: “poetry, by definition, is untranslatable. It is only possible through creative transposition” (VENUTI, 2000, p. 118). The “innocence” of earlier translation movements within a parallel paradigm of subjection to the original language was shattered by the Campos brothers in the “Concretist Movement,” which claimed creativity and co-authorship. The thought of the translator as an “appropriator,” or as a “thief” is tempting. Nevertheless, the freedom for the “afterness” of poetry is what constitutes a cultural manifestation of endemic paradigmatic systems, being transcreation one of the most prominent ones. For Haroldo de Campos, it is only possible to translate by recreation. By re-creating, the translator plays the role of the author, and, in spite of having a tablatore to be literally followed, the translator can decide to interpret it in a new, creative way, exercising the synchronicity of the aesthetic light both author and translator pursue. Since 1962, Haroldo de Campos has been a pioneer in presenting a movement that views the word in poetry materially, as objects. In the “Concretist Movement,” the most important aspect of the poem is the logos, or the image it contains. More than a mere “innovation” in translation trends (as editorial marketing might suggest), “transcreation” perpetuates the Pound ideal: *make it new*—an important approach for the translation of poetry since the historical publication of *The Cantos* in 1917. As a consequence, “transcreation” seeks unique cultural elements that allow this “creative transposition” in, at least, two important ways: a change of content, and/or a change of context. Those elements intrinsic not only in poetry, but in any to-be-translated written text, include ideas, puns, cultural references, layout preferences, imagery, coloring, and connotation. To put it bluntly, “transcreation” is a creative, flexible, and an artistic approach to a translation service that contemplates “the intention of the message” contained in the text, adapting it to editorial, cultural, and audience needs. By “message,” I do not mean a text should have one, or at least only one; neither did the Campos brothers. What happens is that the “actual translation,” that is, the word for word decoding approach, may be changed, rearranged, or even recreated in order to sustain the point of view the translator “caught or interpreted” from the main text. To go even further, it can rearrange the words to twist or create certain desired effect on a given audience, context, or culture. Therefore, to “transcreate” means translation and creation of meaning at the same time. For this process to take place, both the translator's background

knowledge and cultural schemata are activated, thus providing the final product with a touch of significant personal residue, or influence, not necessarily characterizing a biased approach.

For Haroldo de Campos, Décio Pignatari and Augusto de Campos, “transcreation” in poetry does not allow the submission of a word in the original text to its weaker choice in the target language. This would be the same as admitting the “impossibility of poetic translation,” as shall be seen below in the analysis of the poems “Hope” and “No Man’s Land.” Augusto de Campos affirms that the endeavor of translation is:

[. . .] a way to give back to the community the knowledge I acquired, making available achievements kept away from the conviviality of the majority, because of the language and the difficulty of the text, but that in my view constitute basic nourishment for the renewal of the human experience³. (CAMPOS, A. 1982)

The “renewal of the human experience” comes from the various artistic manifestations in the arts. Contemporary literary studies contribute to this renewal by sharing the views of poets from around the world, as does *Poem-ing...* with the poetry of Celia de Fréine. With the publication of *Poem-ing...*, a new horizon of feminist and feminine voices were served in a broader feast, as it were, spreading poetry worldwide, as well as contributing to the enrichment of local culture both in Portugal and in Brazil. There are flaws, of course, as nothing can literally be translated, but the intent was noble, and the results showed there was cultural acceptance and identification. Brazilians are mistakenly branded with a stereotypical notion of their “emotion and rather impulsive nature.” However, in transcreation, emotion or the intrinsic look is just as important as the linguistic or cultural elements. The desire to share and give back to the community that same knowledge constitutes the panorama where a successful transcreation act abides.

To achieve the goal of “personalizing the message” to a certain end, Wolkoff sought to keep the balance between meaning and form, with enough freedom to go deeper in meaning, and to make things as personal and informative as she saw fit. To translate/transcreate Celia De Fréine’s poetry (originally written in English) with a Lusophone audience in mind (readers in Portugal and Brazil), Wolkoff drew from her experience as a poet herself who lives and works in both countries.

1.1 SUBJECTIVITY IN WOMEN’S VOICE

³ “[. . .] uma forma de devolver à coletividade os conhecimentos que adquiri, tornando acessíveis realizações afastadas do convívio da maioria, pelo idioma e pela dificuldade do texto, mas que a meu ver constituem alimento básico para a renovação da experiência humana.”

The subjectivity with which De Fréine has composed her poems “Ode,” “Hope,” “No Man’s Land,” “Bag,” and “Dear Friend” is sustained in the particularities of some lyricism that is best associated to women’s voices and the diasporic figure which is constantly reenacting the fragmented subject. Celia de Fréine is a poet, playwright and screenwriter who writes in Irish and English. She was born in Newtownards, County Down and moved to Dublin as a child. Retaining strong links with Northern Ireland, she spent most of her summers with her extended family in Donaghadee. She now divides her time between Dublin and Connemara. She has published six collections of poetry so far, and won the Patrick Kavanagh Award, the British Comparative Literature Association Translation Award and the Gradam Litríochta Chló Iar-Chonnachta⁴.

As the task of translating De Fréine’s poetry was being carried out, Wolkoff worked as a “host” for the “original” author, buying her a ticket to ride through vaster territories and borderlands. By “host” I mean the translator sought to introduce and present the work of another author with the autonomy to make amends for the target audience, in this case, the Lusophone. For what it seems, De Fréine’s poetry does not matter because of its geographical, enunciative point of departure, but rather from the cultural distance that it keeps from patriarchy in opposition to its proximity to a genuine lyricism. In this sense, the role of the marginal element in De Fréine’s poetry could not be dismissed during translation. Regarding this marginal element, Treber asserts that:

We need to discern the specific periphery of a specific center since the restrictions normal/abnormal, typical/atypical, right/wrong are enforced within the margin too. Even among rigid master narratives one can find the means for resistance, and it is within those flexible sites that the potential exists for authority to be challenged, weakened, or destroyed. (2007, p.11)

Challenging authority gives way to the subversion of power through the use of language. The latter, once the instrument for the construction of the Empire (here, understood as all central movements of power), finds in peripheral poetry, and in the manipulation of native rhythms, another realm of imagination that destabilizes the word. This destabilization of the word through poetry denotes an appropriation of the margins for cultural expression of the self, which by its turn, also endangers the non-mainstream resistance to foment the culture of individual liberalism. Though it is a real possibility that the margin can become liberal enough to acquire power toward emancipation, that may not exactly mean the marginalized individualism will mutate into hegemonic characteristics. What once was rejected, ignored, or even unappreciated by the hegemonic center of power and cultural dominance can now be the center of the counterculture movement. Nevertheless, with De Fréine we see that by resisting the hegemonic language of westernized cultural dominance her poetry makes an important contribution to a growing counter-

⁴ Web. Nov. 6. 2014 <<http://www.celiadefreine.com/biography.htm>>.

hegemonic conscience, being bold in criticizing political control, denouncing cruelty and abuse, and playing with language. As a feminist, her positioning before the patriarchal imposition, as well as her enunciating departure from a peripheral location, endow her with the power to cause a rupture in the grammatical, male universe that circumscribes language. Already a liberating experience for her in Irish and English contexts, providing her readers with personal and representative perspectives, universal themes were addressed with a subjectivity that was peculiar to minority articulated movements.

2. Transcreating

I will now proceed with the analysis of 5 of the translated poems for the mentioned collection, exploring how Wolkoff's contemplation of new meanings and structures were given way through transcreation. Although all poems may have posted many similar aspects concerning the difficulty of the task, I will choose some particularities for each one, such as transcreation of the sense of intimacy, of sound, of belonging, of subjectivity, and of genre.

2.1 Transcreation Of The Sense Of Intimacy

I begin the analysis with the poem "Ode." This poem brought Wolkoff the challenge to translate/create the intimacy of De Fréine's almost-confidential tone:

Ode

No need to ask – I'll write you a sonnet,
or a torrey canyon, if you'd prefer –
only don't talk of leaving this planet.

I could attempt a sestina, or set
about a rondel – which would be harder –
no need to ask. I'll write you a sonnet.

If that's what you want, I'll compose one yet –
give me time and I'll pull it together –
only don't talk of leaving this planet.

Perhaps a waka or a triolet –
then again, a haiku would be shorter . . .
no need to ask – I'll write you a sonnet.

I'll do it tomorrow – for definite –
first thing, as soon as breakfast is over,
only don't talk of leaving this planet.

I'll take out a page in case I forget –
what could be more thrilling, and cause a stir –

Ode

Não precisa me pedir – eu te escrevo um soneto,
ou um petrolífero cargueiro, se preferires –
só não fala em deixar este planeta.

Eu poderia tentar uma sestina ou adentrar-
me num rondel – que seria bem mais difícil –
não precisa pedir. Eu te escrevo um soneto.

Se é o que tu queres, eu ainda irei compor um –
dá-me tempo e eu junto isso tudo –
só não fala em deixar este planeta.

Talvez uma waka ou um triolé-
daí, de novo, um haiku seria mais breve . . .
não precisa pedir – eu te escrevo um soneto.

Farei isso amanhã – com certeza –
de cara, tão logo o café da manhã termine,
só não fala em deixar este planeta.

Eu vou arrancar uma página, caso eu esqueça –
o que poderia ser mais instigante ou causar rebuliço –

no need to ask. I'll write you a sonnet,
Only don't talk of leaving this planet.

não precisa pedir. Eu te escrevo um soneto,
só não fala em deixar este planeta.

The epistolary hue the poem “Ode” resembles, for instance, called for the use of “Tu,” which in the Luso Portuguese language denotes proximity, complicity, and familiarity. The last lines of every stanza seem to reveal in the speaker a certain willingness to forfeit, to serve, and to be subject. “Only don't talk of leaving this planet,” and “[. . .] no need to ask. / I'll write you a sonnet,” would have had a different outcome of imagery had the pronoun “você” been used instead of “tu”. Thus, “só não fale em deixar este planeta, and “Eu *lhe* escrevo um poema,” would give it a “less friendly” response, as it were, a professionalism between two parties (as amongst Spanish speakers in Spain, and the use of “usted”), and the concession would have been granted as an agreement rather than a supplication. This complicity is also shown in the use of “me” in the first line: “não precisa me pedir.” That means the favor is personal, the relation is concise, and though the choice was not repeated in the next lines, it was enough to set the beat of the motif, particularly, because of the more musical choice of the pronoun “me” preceding the verb, which is a rather Brazilian usage, instead of “não precisa pedir-me,” in Lusophone Portuguese. The mixture of choices ranging from more Brazilian Portuguese, in the case of the music of the sounds (as in the pronoun use) and, at times, more Lusophone Portuguese, in the case of the pronoun “tu” to indicate proximity in De Fréine’s lyricism can probably account for the warm welcome of the volume’s publication in Portugal, as it contemplates different, linguistic varieties in one single occasion, thus signaling multiculturalism and diversity.

2.2 Transcreation Of Sound

In the poem “Hope,” the need for a transcreation tool seems to be more demanding:

OPE

At last I discover a small boat to store hope in, one
that welcomes me on board and steers me on my
journey,
its glass bottom a screen through which I glimpse
the fish and the crustaceans and the people who live
on the ocean bed, but before I can listen to their tittle-
tattle, or ask them to sing a sea shanty to
accompany
us, the Bora rises on the far side of the reef.

Pounded by waves, I watch the autumn
ease, I could have enjoyed, slink off beyond
the horizon. The leaf of every plant is torn
to shreds, all attempts at rowing pummeled
to smithereens, as the boat and its single passenger
are flung onto stony soil where we come
to rest, battered, broken, without any cargo.

ESPERANÇA

Por fim descubro um pequeno barco onde posso guardar a
esperança, um
que me dá às boas vindas no embarque e me guia em minha
jornada,
o seu fundo de vidro, uma tela através da qual vejo
os peixes e os crustáceos e as pessoas que habitam
o leito oceânico, mas antes que eu consiga ouvir os seus
chuás-
chuás, ou lhes pedir que entoem uma canção de bordo que
nos acompanhe, o Bora se levanta no lado distante do recife.

Represada pelas ondas, observo a facilidade
do outono, que eu poderia ter curtido, escapulindo para além
do horizonte. A folha de cada planta está partida
em fragmentos, todas as tentativas de remar abatidas
aos estilhaços, conforme o barco e a sua única passageira
são arremessados ao solo pedregoso para onde viemos
descansar, derrocados, despedaçados, sem qualquer

bagagem.

In this poem, De Fréine made use of figures of speech to represent the movements of water. It is a poem about a boat that represents a place where the speaker can store hope and that “steers [her] on [her] journey.” In the first stanza, there is an imagery of the glass bottom of the boat as a screen that allows seeing underneath, and into the ocean. Down there, the “people who live on the ocean bed” make interesting “noises” as they try to communicate. All that can be heard is their “tittle-tattle,” a made up term to denote someone whose voice travels through water. Like water bubbles, the effect of this act of speech might be a metaphor for either De Fréine’s voice coming out of the periphery into the surface of the dominant language or the frontier barrier she herself faced with her Irish and English cultural legacy. Speculations apart, what concerns this term in this analysis is the task of transcreating the idea of a voice through water. Here the translation’s option was for the “chuás-chuás,” a well-known Brazilian onomatopoeia for the movements of water, especially those of a waterfall. Though some of the alliteration aspects in “s” were recreated in the sentence “os peixes e os crustáceos e as pessoas que habitam / o leito oceânico, mas antes que eu consiga ouvir os seus chuás-/chuás,” there might still be a discontinuity in the echoing the term suggests. For this critic, perhaps another onomatopoeia could be used instead: “glup-glup.” The sound of these words could easily be taken for the bursting of a bubble, and for the struggle of sound to move out across a water surface. The line continues with “or asks them to sing a sea shanty to accompany us.” Shanty, from the French *chanter*, means to sing. Yet this word is usually associated with the music sailors sing along their rhythmic work. Here again, the rhythm of the water is music that helps the formation of imagery. To “sing a sea shanty” became “entoem uma canção de bordo.” Though a seeming deviation of the wordplay “cantem uma canção de marinheiros,” the choice for “de bordo” recovers the idea of voices being echoed while on the boat trip, but at the same time, that are coming out of the ocean bed. This is rather interesting because the speaker says she is not alone, since the sea shanty is to “accompany us.” The image the translator sees in the line influences directly the transcreation process. Understanding “us” in the poem as the speaker and her hope, the term choice “de bordo” gets a more rewarding effect than if sea shanty were understood as the speaker and “the fish and the crustaceans.” This last option would allow “canção de marinheiros” a role just as resounding, except for the sound to compose musicality.

2.3 Transcreation Of Belonging

By relocating the subject of the poetic persona in the translation of the poem “No Man’s Land,” Wolkoff seems to have carried out the odyssey of transcreation by putting out the walls of language, and breaking up theoretical barriers. The poem is about the issue of the land of Slovenia, as well as a remembrance of the poet’s childhood in Ireland when she had to cross the frontier or border control to visit her relatives. The poem was written before the fall of Sterling, so that the ending has a different meaning today when people cross that frontier to buy cheaper groceries in Slovenia:

NO MAN’S LAND

Why the no man’s land, between the borders
of these two countries, a place where footsteps
are measured by the space between two stamps?

Could it be that whoever decides on
boundaries has noticed that pebbles wobble
from side to side, blades of grass bend

a certain way according to the whim of the wind
and that birds have been known to carry
twigs and pieces of earth from one country to the other?

Have they not heard of that island where the border has
disappeared, where its people are no longer brigands
of each crossing, lovers of what they are forbidden?

TERRA DE NINGUÉM

Por que a terra de ninguém, entre as fronteiras
destes dois países, é um lugar onde as pegadas
são medidas pelo espaço entre dois selos?

Pode ser porque seja quem for que decida
sobre limites reparou que as pedras ziguezagueiam
de um lado a outro, que as folhas de grama arqueiam-se

de uma certa maneira, ao capricho do vento
e que os pássaros são conhecidos por carregarem
galhos e pedaços de terra de um país a outro?

Será que eles não souberam daquela ilha cuja fronteira
desapareceu, e onde o seu povo não mais salteia
a cada travessia, amante do que lhe é proibido?

The enunciating space from which De Fréine speaks may point out towards the North and the South of Ireland. It is also possible a conjecture that alludes to Ireland and England, or that may be allusive to that space between two languages that calls for no borders. In selecting to recreate this poem in the anthology, the translator had to face a series of reflections on space, belonging, language, and sexuality. “Why the no man’s land, between the borders / of these two countries, a place where footsteps / are measured by the space between two stamps?” was translated to “Por que a terra de ninguém, entre as fronteiras / destes dois países, é um lugar onde as pegadas / são medidas pelo espaço entre dois selos?” The additional “é” reinvests the translator with poetic license to use this affirmation and characterize the land with more descriptive details. Though almost literal in the beginning of “Could it be” (“Pode ser”, the literal would be “poderia ser”), the translation steps out of (almost) literality and into recreation, making use of alternate terms such as “porque,” instead of “que,” “arqueiam-se,” instead of “curvam-se,” or “dobram-se,” and “galhos,” instead of “ramos,” or “raminhos.” Among the challenges was the transcreation of “that pebbles wobble,” a clever image clothed in sound. The phrase became “que as pedras ziguezagueiam,” breaking the sound pattern into a logos that retraces a movement of “coming and going” in opposite directions: as in the crossing of a frontier. The word “ziguezagueiam” then paired with “arqueiam,”

a choice full of semantic implications. “Arquear” means, among other things, to bend, as the original suggested. But it can also mean to acquire a curve as in a bow, or a hunch when getting older, or even to forfeit and bow down in surrender, depending on the context. If the blades of grass “bend” (perhaps an alliteration intent), do they come back to their original position? The imagery created with “as folhas de grama arqueiam-se” shows a field of grass in the form of blades that bend and come back, swaying “according to the whim of the wind.” Had the words “curvam-se,” or “rendem-se” been used, there would be a static moment, a stasis in which the grass would open up the way for the wind to pass, but never in a plungelike manner. The last stanza also reveals the power of authorship that translation can grant when the sentence “Have they not heard of?” was translated to “Será que eles não souberam,” a sentence that would usually be translated to “Será que eles(as) não ouviram falar” had a traditional, literal approach been employed. Five words for five words, then the junction of “of that” in “daquela,” the insertion of “cuja” (whose), and the connective “e” provided the musicality a Portuguese reader/listener would find familiar. This is in accordance with what Haroldo de Campos stated: “In the translation of a poem, the essential thing is not the reconstitution of the message, but the reconstruction of the system of signs that this message is embedded, of the aesthetic information, not merely semantic information⁵.” (CAMPOS, H. 1976).

Another intriguing passage is when the adjective “brigands” was transformed into a verb: “salteia.” The people of the island used to fight over their common matters, and that made them brigands, a characteristic behavior at the frontier space. The psychological trait was now changed into an action linked to an environment. Despite the fact that in the last sentence the word “they” referred to the people in the original poem, the translation into Portuguese allowed, at least, two combinations of the pronoun: “lhe,” or “lhes.” By opting for “amante do que lhe é proibido,” the translation empowered “the people” as the subject of the sentence, and not “they” as the other combination has suggested.

2.4 Transcreation Of Subjectivity

The themes and motifs in “The Bag” (“A Bolsa”) are, somehow, “more intricate” than in De Fréine’s other poems. It is a poem about a sycamore seed that fell from the branch of a tree, and landed inside a woman’s bag:

⁵ My translation of “Na tradução de um poema, o essencial não é a reconstituição da mensagem, mas a reconstituição do sistema de signos em que está incorporada esta mensagem, da informação estética, não da informação meramente semântica.”

BAG

On my way back to my room a sycamore seed
lands in my bag and nestles between the stockings
I have just bought, the greenness of the nylon
cosseting it inside the pink shade of the bag.

It seems that the future of this scrap will not be
decided by wind, animals or water: that when it fell
from the branch-womb where it had been born
and raised, it balked at the fertile ground in which
previous generations had taken up root, opting instead,
for synthesis of what now lies in store for it.

BOLSA

No caminho de volta ao meu quarto uma semente de figueira
pousa na minha bolsa e se aninha nas meias
que eu acabei de comprar, o náilon novinho
a animá-las na parte interna cor de rosa da bolsa.

Parece que o futuro deste arranhão não será
decidido pelo vento, pelos animais ou pela água: pelo que
[quando caiu
do galho-útero onde nascera
e crescera, renegou o solo fértil no qual
gerações anteriores estabeleceram suas raízes, optando
[contrariamente,
pela síntese do que agora lhes resta.

The speaker raises a philosophical and essentialist discussion about the “destiny” of that seed, since its future “will not be decided by wind, animals or water” as it happened to “previous generations” of seeds that “had taken up root.” Allegorical and metonymical, “Bag” also lies upon figures of speech to produce sounds, especially in “s.” “Sycamore seed,” “nestles between the stockings,” and “cosseting inside” are examples of such alliterations. These sounds are recreated in “n” and “m” in the Portuguese language: “[. . .] na minha bolsa e se aninha nas meias / que eu acabei de comprar, o náilon novinho / a animá-las na parte cor de rosa da bolsa.” The preposition usage was repeated for the same reasons: “pelo vento, pelos animais ou pela água: pelo quê quando caiu.” In the second stanza the speaker starts a broken sentence that will be resumed in the middle: “It seems that the future of this scrap will not be decided by wind, animals or water.” This could be the end of it, it seems clear. The problem is that after the colon the sentence overshadows its own beginning: “that when it fell from the branch-womb...” If the sentence could be split into two major ones, the second would be something like “It seems that when the seed fell from the branch-womb where it had been born and raised, it balked at the fertile ground in which previous generations had taken up root.” This interpretation of the original text would cause the target language to lose its potentiality as creation, since the sentence would probably read: “Parece que quando a semente caiu do galho-útero onde (tinha nascido e crescido), renegou o solo fértil no (sobre o) qual gerações anteriores (havam estabelecido) suas raízes.” This last sentence was rearranged to portray different syntactic functions. The word “it” in “[. . .] of what now lies in store for it” refers to the seed. That means the seed “has chosen” to remain inside the bag because the bag resembles a womb: it is a comfortable, cosseting nest.

It seems subjectivity is also loaded with a political positioning that may fall short at any time. In the sentence translated into Portuguese, the pronoun “lhes” refers to “the previous generations” and not to “the scrap”. This is a direct effect of transcreating the subjectivity in De Fréine’s, for the word “scrap” might also mean something disposable, that fell off the tree to be discarded, or thrown away. The choice for the word “arranhão” alludes to the effect of something sharp pressing against the stockings, causing it to be ripped out. A more invasive interpretation of the poem would consider the ripping out of the patriarchal stereotype over women: they are always buying something when outside their “room,” and it is usually a pink bag and stockings... If that was considered, then the “scrap” would also mean the possibility of breaking away from such a limited framing from which “the previous generations” of women have been facing, allowing a feminist “synthesis of what now lies in store.” This synthesis might consider the decision for procreation, for the “branch-womb” may not be found anywhere else.

2.5 Transcreation Of Genre

Transcreation” in “Dear Friend” begins with the title: “Querida Amiga.” The decision for a “feminine” friend whose word in Portuguese has its gender made by the changing of a designating vowel, gave the poem a new direction. According to the Campos brothers, the word in poetry is treated as an object. The word “friend” is treated as an object of multiple meanings, including the gender. Notwithstanding this semantic trait, the poem presented many terms that are almost “part of” the Portuguese language due either to cognancy or assimilation. “Fleches” is a perfect example of a neologism introduced by the hegemonic language and transcreated upon its form into the colonial language. “Lightning flashes that illuminate” were translated to “fleches luminosos que alumiam.” Yet the term is more common in Portugal. Also, the word “fleches” already implicates the understanding of a somehow “lightning light,” a blink in the dark—a moment when darkness flees only to come back again. Though the “idea” or “the message” of the line was meant to indicate a momentary lapse of darkness, an instant of light upon “the labels,” this “message” did not forbid the non-literal translation to instill the same. The assonance in “luminosos que alumiam,” “dizem/quem,” and “somos/vamos” is in conformity with what Haroldo de Campos affirmed: “[. . .] the transcreator can not be content with the meager game of terminal rhymes and the compulsion for the metrics⁶” (CAMPOS, H. 1981, p. 189). The aesthetic information, as a result, indicated that

⁶ My translation of “[. . .] o transcriador não pode contentar-se com o jogo parco das rimas terminais e a compulsão da métrica.”

the surface of the poem, in other words, its structure, walks in rhythm and sound as the original did. Transcreation as employed in “Dear Friend” circumvents this notion of surface resemblance, of imagetic reasoning. The original poem makes references to “packing,” and “packets:” “As soon as the storm / passes we can unpack the future and watch / the sun rise on our calendar of expectation.” These lines became “Tão logo esta tempestade / termine poderemos desempacotar o futuro e observar / o nascer do sol no nosso calendário de esperança.” It is preceded by the line “what’s in store for us,” which may venture an image of “packages” in a store, with labels on them, enveloped as cases. Then in the end, “calendar of expectation” also recovers the “pack” sound, and the “unpack” image with “ex” in “expectation” (Ex - Packet – Action). In recreating that which to E. Pound was crucial (melopoea and phanopea), the line “when we reach there and are enveloped” was translated into “quando lá chegarmos e formos envolvidas,” keeping the rhythm and the assonance in “r,” as well as introducing the term “estranhamento,” instead of “estranheza” to cope in “m” what the original showed in “w.” Thus, “quando / lá chegarmos e formos envolvidas / pelo estranhamento do que nunca soubéramos,” recreates the cadence surface of “We will know that only when / we reach there and are enveloped / by the strangeness of what we never knew.” By the same token, the word “esperança” was used instead of “expectativa,” thus recreating the alliteration in “s.” Therefore, even though the choice for a specific genre might have given a new final image for the overall idea of the poem, the transcreation succeeded in recreating the form, which is also a metaphor for the construction of genre (is it natural or cultural?), as well as for women’s voice in contemporary poetry.

3. Final Remarks

As this reflection has attempted to show, transposing Celia de Fréine’s journey home into Portuguese for both Brazilian and Portuguese cultures is far more than facing a continental fissure—a crevasse between borders whose cicatrization is woven by the thread of the word. The translation device in poetry features many aspects that are not necessarily linguistic, nor semantic. My reading of Wolkoff’s translation/transcreation act is that it was a viable solution to pay tribute to this great poet, as well as a cultural bridge between translator and author, text and public, knowledge and experience. It was written in a familiar language, whose flows become sweet not only to the ear, but also to the eye. As the American poet Dudley Fitts affirmed, in poetry “we need something at once less ambitious and more audacious: another poem.” (VENUTI, 2000, p. 69)

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