

SHAKESPEARE IN BRAZILIAN PORTUGUESE:
HAMLET AS A CASE IN POINT

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Any discussion about the modern reception of Shakespearean dramaturgy has necessarily to deal with the dual nature that it has acquired since the Elizabethan period. While Elizabethans filled the theaters to **hear** theatrical performances, post-Renaissance admirers of Shakespeare can choose either to **read** his plays as literary works or **see** them as they are staged in theaters around the world. Translators of his works are thus faced with the initial choice of leaning towards either the page or the stage, which will affect the meter, register, diction, and syntax used. Stage-oriented renderings can be in verse, provided that the lines are not too long. Also, such translations—in prose or in verse—tend to avoid scholarly diction and unorthodox word order. Although most translations for the page eventually come out in book form, this does not mean that all published translations are necessarily page-oriented texts, or unfit for performance. Actually, some of them have been originally commissioned by theatrical companies, being published afterwards. In such cases, the initiative to publish may come either from a publishing house, for various reasons, or from the translator,

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who wishes to see his/her work in print. Other translations are published first and used on stage later on, certainly much changed to meet theatrical needs; and a few are staged and published almost simultaneously—an arrangement that seems to suit some publishers perfectly, since it gives their book more exposure and visibility.

Since it would hardly be possible for an essay to cover every aspect of Brazilian renderings of Shakespeare's dramaturgy, I have decided to focus on published translations only. As a rule, published Brazilian translations of Shakespearean drama feature the full text (although one might ask **which** full text: that of the Second Quarto? The First Folio? A conflated modern edition?), whereas the stage productions based on those translations tend to shorten it, shedding lines of a scene or even entire scenes. There are, of course, stage-oriented translations that never got published. I chose not to consider them due to their relative unavailability—which rules out the possibility of even a perfunctory textual analysis—and to the lack of prefaces, forewords or postfaces, extratextual statements which help contextualize and understand both the translational and the editorial projects.

Shakespeare's works were first introduced in Brazilian literature in the nineteenth century, by means of translated excerpts of his plays. The Parnassian poet Olavo Bilac, for one, translated fragments of *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, *Othello*, *Romeo and Juliet* and the soliloquy "To be, or not to be," as also did the writers Francisco Otaviano and Machado de Assis. At the beginning, most of these renderings were indirect translations, for they had a French source text. It was not until the late twentieth-century that the English language became widely learned and understood in Brazil; the intelligentsia and the upper class were France-oriented, and from literature to fashion and manners the major source of inspiration came from the culture of the *fleur de lis*.

The first rendering of a whole play of the Shakespearean canon into Brazilian Portuguese from an English-language source text was published as late as 1933, and the translator himself was the initiator of the task. His choice was *Hamlet*, apparently the most popular of all

Shakespeare's plays in Brazil.¹ From then on, Shakespeare's plays started to be translated in full into our language by poets, writers, and professional translators who have consistently favored English-language source texts. Also, publishing houses started to publish these renderings out of a concern with featuring major "classics" in their catalog. However, as such books cannot be said to be sure bestsellers, some kind of backing or sponsorship tended to be sought; sometimes the source of such backing was the translator himself/herself, eager to have his/her work in print.

A Brief Account of Shakespeare's Drama in Translation in Brazil

The 1930s started at the height of the Modernist movement, launched in 1922 in the Week of Modern Art and consolidated by the Cannibalistic Manifesto of 1928, in which Oswald de Andrade exhorted Brazilians to behave as anthropophagi and to absorb "the sacred enemy to transform them into a totem."² One strand of Brazilian Modernism could look up to European literature for textual models, themes and aesthetic inspiration while others could be quite xenophobic, shunning foreign contamination and searching for the essence of Brazilian culture in colonial traditions. Their themes were inspired by the different native tribes which inhabited the land before the Portuguese came. This inward Modernist perspective resulted in a literary body of work referred to as "regionalist", focusing the remote interior of Brazil and its population. In poetry, free verse was tentatively used for the first time, in an attempt to escape, through innovation, the narrow choice between Symbolist and Parnassian aesthetics. The dilemma "Tupy, or not tupy" stated in the 1928 Manifesto could be approximately rephrased as "To be Brazilian, or not to be Brazilian", in which "to be Brazilian" meant "to turn inside and search for our roots". The intertextual reference also shows the strength of the presence of Hamlet (and Shakespeare, for that matter) in our culture.

In the decade following the loud start of the Modernist movement four plays of the Shakespearean canon were published in Brazilian Portuguese: *Hamlet*, translated into prose by the jurist and poet Tristão da Cunha; *The Taming of the Shrew* and *The Merchant of Venice*, by Berenice Xavier; and *Romeo and Juliet*, rendered in verse by the poet Onestaldo de Pennafort. As far as verse is concerned, it is worth noting that Brazilian Portuguese meter is syllabic, whereas the Shakespearean one, as is known, is accentual, mostly iambic in stress. Therefore Brazilian translators have necessarily to cope with this great source of frustration: the impossible transposition of Elizabethan meter into Portuguese as spoken in Brazil.³

Both Cunha's and Pennafort's translations were used on stage—quite successfully, according to the reviews. It is noteworthy that Cunha's translation was published in 1933 and performed in 1948, whereas Pennafort's was made in 1937, staged in 1938, and published two years later. As to Xavier's two renderings, they are rather "invisible"; they are not only seldom found in major libraries but also are not mentioned by commentators in the press. The fact that such works were translated, published and staged for the first time in our country may be partly due to a felicitous conjunction of factors, namely: (i) the establishment of the publishing industry, spurred mostly by schoolbooks; (ii) the renewal of the Brazilian theater, as pointed out by Barbara Heliodora (1967)⁴. Still according to the same author, one of the basic features of this renewal was a movement of amateur theater, led by the Teatro do Estudante do Brasil, established by Paschoal Carlos Magno, a Brazilian diplomat who wanted to promote English drama in Frenchified Brazil; and (iii) the great incentive to the arts and literature provided by the federal government, then headed by Getulio Vargas.

By the 1940s the Modernist aesthetic agenda had already started to lose its appeal. A new generation of poets was taking shape, the so-called *Novíssimos*, who got inspiration from the aestheticism of the late-eighteenth-century Parnassians. They favored a "noble" diction and classical meter and such fixed forms as the sonnet, the ode, and the

elegy. The publishing industry consolidated itself and the government went on fostering literary activity. In the early 1940s, some critics, such as Eugênio Gomes, regretfully complained that English authors were not popular in Brazil—which was partly due to the fact that very few Brazilians could read English and partly to our readership's lack of acquaintance with English literature (qtd. in Alves 1995: 108-9). Consequently, publishers were at first reluctant to print the work of such authors, a situation soon to be reversed. Actually, the 1940s and 1950s were considered as the "golden years" as far as translations are concerned (Paes 1990). The major publishing houses launched prestigious collections, featuring foreign translated fiction as well as new or acclaimed Brazilian authors. It was then that French presence in our culture began to wane; not only was the English language assuming a new, significant role worldwide—preparing for its present hegemony—but also the wide choice of translations made available to the Brazilian readership works originally written in different foreign languages, thus contributing to make its taste more eclectic. Besides, the translators commissioned by the publishing houses were, more often than not, prestigious authors, which may account for the high standard of such direct or indirect renderings.

The 1940s and 1950s were prolific in Brazilian translations of Shakespearean plays. In 1942, the *Coleção Clássicos Jackson* published *Macbeth* translated by Artur de Sales in twelve-syllable verse lines, together with *King Lear* by J. Costa Neves. Six years later another *Macbeth* came out, accompanied by *Romeo and Juliet* and *Hamlet*. The translator was Oliveira Ribeiro Neto who, according to the Introduction, produced verse translations, a claim to be disproved by a closer look at the texts.

By 1953, the publishing industry had stopped growing and was actually experiencing a severe setback; unfavorable economic policies led 50% of the publishers to close down (Wylér 1999). This situation, however, did not prevent the *Melhoramentos* publishing house from planning and carrying out the ambitious project of publishing all

tragedies, comedies, and histories in Brazilian Portuguese. The job was accomplished from 1950 through 1958 by Carlos Alberto Nunes, a scholar who rendered Shakespearean iambic pentameter in ten-syllable verse lines, ornate diction and convoluted syntax, more easily read than heard in a theater. In the meantime, several isolated endeavors were published. In 1955 a third *Hamlet* came out; it was a translation in alexandrines by the prestigious Neo-Parnassian poet Péricles Eugênio da Silva Ramos. The text was staged a short while later, in 1956, apparently with limited success (Heliadora 1967). Also in 1956 Onestaldo de Pennafort translated *Othello* in verse for a new theatrical company; the translation was published soon after. Finally, in 1957, the famous Modernist poet Manuel Bandeira translated *Macbeth* by commission of a theatrical company that broke up before staging that play. His work was published four years later, in 1961.

The dawn of the 1960s gave new impetus to the publishing industry. The U.S. government decided to fund the translation and publishing of books in Brazil under the famous MEC-USAID agreement, the purpose of which was to influence Brazilian culture and to boost the now weakened publishing activity. In poetry, the major innovation was the so-called Concretist movement, which came into being in the late 1950s and treated the poem as a language object. Among the most prominent features of such poetry are the use of wordplay for sound effects, visual effects, and the abundance of neologisms and plurilingual words. However, renderings of Shakespeare's plays published in the 1960s did not resort to this poetics; in fact, verse translations favored textual models of Parnassianism. There was Millôr Fernandes' prose rendering of *The Taming of the Shrew* (1961); Esther de Mesquita's *The Tempest* (1965); Carlos Lacerda's *Julius Caesar* (1965), also in prose; Péricles Eugênio da Silva Ramos' *Macbeth* (1966), this time in ten-syllable verse lines; Anna Amelia Carneiro de Mendonça's *Hamlet* (1968), also in decasyllabic meter; and a new translation of the full canon of 37 plays by Fernando Carlos de Almeida Cunha Medeiros and Oscar Mendes (1969). The

plays were rendered in prose by Medeiros, with Mendes revising the translations, writing the notes and translating the songs.

In the 1970s, a somber decade in Brazilian cultural and social life, there were no published translations of Shakespearean drama other than Geir Campos' *Macbeth*. Since 1964 Brazil had been under military rule, which imposed severe censorship, closed down the Congress and limited civil liberties, clamping down on leftist activities. Literature and the arts in general were naturally stifled. The situation would not change until the turn of the 1980s, when the new political thaw and the recovery of the economic growth gave new life to the publishing industry. Opportunities were opened for new authors, genres and languages, supplying the readers with "general information" books and titles by foreign writers who had not yet been translated into Brazilian Portuguese. Literary aesthetics became more eclectic, less dichotomic (in tune with the political situation—both domestic and international—since the traditional opposition between left- and right-wing ideologies was becoming blurred). The Shakespeare translations published in the 1980s were mostly in prose and in colloquial language: *Hamlet* by Geraldo Silos, more page-oriented, and *King Lear* and *Hamlet* by Millôr Fernandes, both stage-oriented. According to Mario Sergio Conti (1981) translations became less scholarly (but not witless) and concerned with retaining the changes of register and diction within the plays. Differently from previous renderings, obscenities and bawdy language were also preserved, particularly in Silos' work. It may be assumed that the end of strict censorship and the growing liberalization of social customs have played a role in this change.

The 1990s have been the most prolific decade ever, as far as Shakespeare translations are concerned. Not only has new work been published but also early translations that were out of print were republished. This rekindled interest in publishing the Bard may have been fueled by both the publishers' growing emphasis on pocket-book series, featuring mostly classics, and the current Shakespeare boom worldwide, much commented on and praised by literary critics such as

Harold Bloom (1994 and 1998) and the media in general. Appealing film versions of tragedies, comedies and histories of the canon have been drawing millions of viewers and spectators around the world, encouraging publishers to tap this market of prospective readers by supplying bookstores with a wide assortment of translations. Since 1991, Brazilian readers have been offered mostly verse translations (in ten-syllable verse lines), with a few exceptions, of which the most visible is *The Tempest*, rendered in prose by Geraldo Carneiro and published a few years after it had been staged. Plays that had not been previously singled out by translators (to the exception of Nunes and the Medeiros-Mendes tandem who, as we have seen, translated the whole canon) are now attracting new interest; those include *Henry V*, *Measure for Measure*, *Coriolanus*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Cymbeline*, and *Henry IV* (parts 1 and 2)⁵. Old favorites also became available in Brazilian Portuguese, either in new translations or in reissues of earlier translations. The former include two renderings of *Romeo and Juliet* (by Barbara Heliadora and Beatriz Viégas-Faria); two of *Antony and Cleopatra* (by José Roberto O'Shea and Geraldo Silos); *King Lear* by Jorge Wanderley; *Macbeth*, *Coriolanus*, *Henry V*, *Measure for Measure*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *Othello*, *The Tempest* and *The Merchant of Venice*, translated by Barbara Heliadora; *Twelfth Night* by Sergio Flaksman. The latter include *Hamlet* by Anna Amelia Carneiro de Mendonça (first published in 1968), *Othello* by Onestaldo de Pennafort, and pocket book reissues of all three Millôr Fernandes' translations and of Manuel Bandeira's *Macbeth*.

Another tendency of the 1990s, besides the pocket book reissues and new publications, are the bilingual editions. Publishers as Relume Dumará, Nova Fronteira, and Mandarim favor this format, which all publishers agree is the ideal one but is not always feasible: it not only increases production costs but also demands greater care as far as page layout is concerned.

One might say that contemporary Brazilian writers do not seem notably affected by Shakespeare translations, differently from

European literati, who sought inspiration from the Elizabethan poet especially in the transition from neoclassical to romantic aesthetics. In fact, renderings of Shakespeare's dramaturgy were not as frequent, diverse or numerous in Brazil as in countries such as France or Germany, particularly in the so-called Romantic age, and there are no records of writers who have been aesthetically contaminated by such translations. More often than not Brazilian writers who confessed to have been inspired by Shakespeare said they did not read his work in Portuguese, but either in French (the majority) or in English (just a few).

Even though Shakespeare enjoys great prestige in Brazil, the interest his work raises in our contemporary literature is mostly of a speculative and critical nature, in contrast with the strong impregnation of themes and style felt by Brazilian romantics in the late nineteenth century. Actually, three early generations of poets—Romantics, Parnassians, Symbolists—drew inspiration from Shakespearean works to write their own poetry, and dedicated sonnets and poems to characters of the Bard's canon identified with their themes and fancy. Contemporary poets, on the other hand, prefer the challenge and the aesthetic delight of translating the poetry and drama of the Elizabethan author to echoing his themes or poetics.

The prestigious critic Otto Maria Carpeaux pointed out that "the influence of the greatest classic of world literature" on contemporary literature is *nihil*, as opposed to the situation in earlier periods (1964: 12). On the other hand, critical thinking about Shakespeare and the Elizabethan theater produced in Brazil has increased significantly in this century, resulting in a bulk of work by such prestigious critics as Eugênio Gomes, Otto Maria Carpeaux, and Barbara Heliodora. It may then be inferred that, in contemporary Brazil, Shakespeare is less an inspiration for creative writers than a field of study for scholars and critics.

As to the critical reception of translations, it can be analyzed through statements made by translators, editors, publishers, and other persons involved in or connected with the activity, critical appraisals of

individual translations, or the activity of a translator or “school” of translators (as described by Toury 1995: 65). Such materials—which will be referred to from now on as metatexts—are available either in written form (in reference books, collections of essays, press reviews, and articles) or orally (in interviews, talks, round tables, lectures, classes, papers given in conferences, and the like). The analysis of a relatively large corpus of metatexts shows that the main focus of such commentaries has been—and still is—Shakespeare’s plays themselves, and not the translation. The reasoning, even when allegedly focused on the translated text and quoting long passages from it, refers to “Shakespeare’s words,” as if the Portuguese quotations, produced by a Brazilian translator, pertaining to a given time and cultural context were a perfect equivalent (by normative standards) to the actual words in the source text. In other words, it is as if a translation did not necessarily imply any change in a text. This is, to my judgment, evidence of the invisibility of translations and translators which theorists such as Lawrence Venuti are exposing and challenging.

Additional evidence of the near invisibility of translations is the lack of references to the translation or the translators in commentaries on Brazilian productions of Shakespearean plays. The tremendously successful staging of *Hamlet* by the Teatro do Estudante, in 1948, which motivated many newspaper articles, is a case in point. Out of the 21 metatexts available in the National Library files, only four mention the translation by Tristão da Cunha in complimentary but vague comments.

Also noteworthy is the predominantly normative stance of critics and other commentators, which leads to appraisals based mostly on individual criteria (rather than intersubjective ones). Each reader (professional or not) tends to become “translators,” finding fault with a great number of choices made by the actual translator and even supplying supposedly “correct” translations for certain passages.

A Closer Look Into Eight Brazilian *Hamlets*⁶

Macbeth and *Hamlet* are the two plays in the Shakespearean canon which have originated the largest number of Brazilian Portuguese translations; so far there have been nine published translations of each play (either separately or in complete-works sets). The latter play, however, has apparently generated a larger bulk of metatexts, which have, in turn, made it more “visible” than the former. A few Brazilian *Hamlets* have, in fact, been the object of verbal duels in the 1980s, fought in the pages of one of Brazil’s most prestigious newspapers. The duelists were the translators themselves, criticizing each other’s overall strategies and particular choices; it would run on endlessly if the newspaper hadn’t decided to stop printing their articles. The greater visibility of published translations of *Hamlet* in the Brazilian cultural system (as opposed to those of *Macbeth* and of other plays in the canon) led me to select them for a case study based on a corpus comprising not only the translated texts but also the related paratexts (prefaces, postfaces, notes and similar texts which accompany the translation) and metatexts available. The decision to include paratexts and metatexts in the research corpus stemmed from two main factors: (i) the need to contextualize the translational and editorial projects involved; and (ii) the belief that the study of statements on translation may help achieve a historical understanding of translation practice, insofar as it both informs us about explicitly formulated theories of translation and provides valuable clues about implicit theories.

The concept of paratext is closely associated with Gerard Genette (1997), who elaborates his ideas about paratextual elements in his books *Palimpsestes* (Paris: Seuil, 1982) and *Seuils* (Paris: Seuil, 1987). He notes that literary texts are usually presented together with additional elements which can be verbal or nonverbal, such as a preface or illustrations. As he puts it, a literary text

is rarely presented in an unadorned state, unreinforced and unaccompanied by a certain number of verbal or other productions ... And although we do not always know whether these productions are to be regarded as belonging to the text, in any case they surround it and extend it, precisely in order to present it, in the usual sense of this verb but also in the strongest sense: to make present, to ensure the text's presence in the world, its "reception" and consumption in the form (nowadays, at least) of a book (1997: 1).

It can be said about paratexts written by translators that such texts: (i) follow rhetorical conventions, which are provisional and unstable; (ii) are at once discourse and action, since they not only provide information but also introduce the work in different (and new) environments; (iii) enable translators to present their projects, i.e., make explicit their objectives, criteria, strategies, and to dwell on their major difficulties and on how these were resolved; (iv) again enable translators to reveal their views and conceptions about the author of the source text, translation in general, early and contemporary thinking about translation; (v) are a valuable source for a reconstruction of translational norms⁷ (Toury 1995: 65); (vi) can be either apologetic (the translator praises the author's talent or genius and apologizes for his/her own faults) or self-congratulatory (the translator shows how difficult the task was and in this way underscores his/her own achievement); and (vii) can become an important theoretical formulation, as happened with Walter Benjamin's "Die Aufgabe des Übersetzers", originally written as a preface to the German translation of Baudelaire's *Tableaux Parisiens*.

Paratextual elements may thus be useful to shed light on the translator's project, since they are, in a way, statements of intentions, objectives, and strategies. As Toury warns us, however,

they are likely to lean toward propaganda and persuasion. There may therefore be gaps, even contradictions, between explicit arguments and demands, on the one hand, and actual behavior and its results, on the other, due either to subjectivity or naivete, or even lack of sufficient knowledge on the part of those who produced the formulations. On occasion, a deliberate desire to mislead and to deceive may also be involved. Even with respect to the translators themselves, intentions do not necessarily concur with any declaration of intent. (1995: 65-66)

It should be noted that even though paratexts must not be taken at face value they provide a context for evaluating the consistency of the translator's behavior vis-a-vis his/her stated intentions and objectives.

As to metatexts, a great number of commentaries and statements (both written and oral) made by translators about their own work or that of their peers, as well as by editors, publishers, scholars, critics, and other commentators⁸ have been gathered or elicited for the study.

The purpose of this corpus-based study was to find out:

- (i) what conceptions of translation—both implicit and explicit—
informed the works selected for analysis;
- (ii) what were the translators' objectives, motivations and
expectations as defined by them;
- (iii) which strategies were used, again according to translators'
own statements and to other people's perceptions; and
- (iv) how the work was received by critics and other commentators.

The corpus of Brazilian *Hamlets* comprises eight out of a total of nine published translations of the whole play having an English-language source text. The 1996 translation by Mario Fondelli was not included because it lacks proper contextualization. The edition, in pocket size, has few paratextual elements: there is a bibliographical note inside, as well as three short paragraphs on the back cover presenting, respectively, the collection (Clássicos Econômicos Newton), the character

of Hamlet and basic information on Shakespeare's biography. The back-cover texts are written in faulty Portuguese, whereas the bibliographical note does not contain as many mistakes. As far as reception goes, no metatexts could be found (no reviews, no references in articles or other texts, no translator or editorial statements) – suggesting a “visible” invisibility. For those reasons I have chosen not to consider Fondelli's *Hamlet* in this analysis; more contextualizing material will have to be gathered before any serious attempts to understand this translational and editorial projects can be made.

The eight published translations analyzed were made by Tristão da Cunha (Schmidt, 1933); Oliveira Ribeiro Neto (Martins, 1948, with further reissues); Péricles Eugênio da Silva Ramos (José Olympio, 1955, with further reissues); Carlos Alberto Nunes (Melhoramentos, 1956; Ediouro, undated); Anna Amélia Queiroz Carneiro de Mendonça (Agir, 1968; Nova Fronteira, 1995); Fernando C. de A. Cunha Medeiros and Oscar Mendes (Aguilar, 1969; Nova Aguilar, 1988 and 1989); Geraldo de Carvalho Silos (JB, 1984); and Millôr Fernandes (LPM, 1988, 1991 and 1997). Let us have a look at some of their formal, stylistic, and editorial features:

(i) **Translator's prefaces** – are only found in three of the translations: those by Cunha, Silva Ramos and Silos, who discuss (briefly the first, at length the others) their translational project. Mendonça's *Hamlet* is presented by the her daughter, the critic and translator Barbara Heliadora, who makes explicit some of the translator's intentions, motivations, and strategies. Millôr Fernandes had written a text to accompany the translation but apparently decided against it; his preface-like comments, titled “*Hamlet – a tradução*”, was published one year later in a literary journal.⁹

(ii) **Prose/verse** – the works by Cunha, Medeiros/Mendes, Silos, and Fernandes are in prose (and are presented in paratexts as such) whereas the other four claim to have followed the combination prose/blank verse/rhymed verse found in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. Only three of them, however, live up to this description, since Neto's translation

does not stand the test of syllable counting. His verse lines cannot be said to be decasyllabic nor Alexandrines; in fact, his meter is so faulty and irregular that the analyst has no choice but to disagree with the publisher's claim. Besides, the layout of the text is more like prose than like verse. The text is not broken down into lines of verse; the sentences are chained together, and each character's lines are in block, forming one solid paragraph. The songs are the one exception; the verse lines are clearly laid out.

(iii) **Stage vs. page orientation** – Seven out of the eight editions examined fail to provide this information. The only exception is Anna Amelia's *Hamlet*: in her introduction to the first edition (1968), Barbara Heliadora explains that the work was done upon her own request, since she needed the translated text for a series of drama classes she would be teaching soon. Therefore, the concern with performability is clearly stated in Heliadora's text. As to the other translations, the jacket flap of the first edition of Silva Ramos' *Hamlet* (1955) informs that in January 1956 a new theater will be opened in São Paulo with a production of *Hamlet*, in Silva Ramos' translation. This announcement may be suggestive that the translation had been commissioned by a theatrical company (which would most likely make it stage-oriented) but this inference remains to be confirmed. We can hypothesize that the renderings by Nunes, Medeiros/Mendes, and Silos were meant for the page. According to the critic Eugênio Gomes (1951), the Melhoramentos publishing house planned to bring out several plays by William Shakespeare translated into Brazilian Portuguese (there were few Brazilian translations of Shakespeare's plays at the time). The project had been launched with a rendering of *Henry IV* (parts 1 and 2) by Carlos Alberto Nunes. The "several" plays turned out to be all 37 which then comprised the Shakespearean canon, published in volumes with two works each.¹⁰ As to Silos, his endeavor was most probably meant for the page, according to his own account of the genesis of his translation. Finally, while both Medeiros/Mendes' and Ribeiro Neto's orientation could not be ascertained—since it is not mentioned in their

published translations and there are hardly any metatexts which could shed some light on this issue—Millôr Fernandes, a playwright himself, is known for translating for the stage. His *Hamlet* was commissioned in the 1980s by a theatrical director who had a famous Brazilian actor in mind for the Prince's part; however, due to a disagreement between director and actor the project was called off. The translation was eventually published but it has never been staged.

(iv) **Source text used** – only two published translations disclose this information in paratexts: those by Ramos and by Silos. Both used the Second Quarto, only in different editions. Tristão da Cunha's family informed me that his copy-text was *The Works of William Shakespeare*, edited by William Aldis Wright (London: MacMillan & Co., Ltd, NY: Macmillan, 1904); as to the others, some enquiries will have to be made in order to establish their source texts (if at all possible). Although it is relevant for the research to trace the source text, it is noteworthy that the translation of Shakespeare's dramaturgy has very peculiar aspects. To start with, there are the so-called multiple-text plays, such as *Hamlet* itself, *King Lear* and *Richard II*. With *Hamlet*, the translator may choose the Second Quarto, the First Folio, or even one of the modern conflated editions. Those versions may vary considerably, to the point of affecting some characters' profiles or the overall coherence of the plot, as Rauen (1998) pointed out. She also noted that "the unstable nature of the multiple-text plays is now a matter of common-sense among researchers". Therefore, depending on the source text chosen, translated *Hamlets* may differ considerably (certainly to a larger extent than can be expected from different translations of a fixed source text). The implications of such translations for reception and criticism seem obvious.

(v) **Foreignizing vs. domesticating strategies** – These terms are closely associated with Lawrence Venuti (1995), who expanded the ideas put forth by Friedrich Schleiermacher as far back as 1813. Schleiermacher, in Venuti's words,

allowed the translator to choose between a domesticating method, an ethnocentric reduction of the foreign text to target-language cultural values, bringing the author back home, and a foreignizing method, an ethnodeviant pressure on those values to register the linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign text, sending the reader abroad. (Venuti, 1995: 20)

A microtextual analysis of the translated texts showed that most translators favored a hybrid strategy, avoiding strict and exclusive adherence to the cultural codes that inform either the source culture or the receiving culture. Rather, they tend to negotiate and introduce a cultural compromise by combining particular characteristics of each language. Illustrative of domesticating strategies is the translation of the word "Norway" whenever used to refer to the head of that State (e.g., "When the ambitious Norway combated" (1.2.64, *The Arden* Shakespeare) as the Portuguese equivalent of "the King of Norway", "the Norwegian", "the old Norwegian", and similar phrases. All translators but Nunes have chosen to bring the text closer to the reader/spectator. Equally domesticating, or naturalizing, is the decision not to let Claudius call Hamlet "cousin", since the latter was actually the king's nephew and, in a way, "son". Therefore, in Brazilian Portuguese, Claudius addresses Hamlet twice in the play as either "*sobrinho*" (nephew) or "*parente*" (kinsman). Again, Nunes was the only exception to the prevailing norm. The examples just given do not mean that all translators resorted to the same strategies; those instances are in fact the only ones in which the choices were identical.

As to foreignizing strategies, it is worth mentioning several metaphors and wordplay which were not recreated in Portuguese, but translated word for word. The effect achieved was, of course, one of strangeness. In such cases, bilingual readers will certainly be able to reconstruct the whole phrase in English, so "transparent" (in the opposite sense of the term as used by Venuti)¹¹ is the Portuguese structure.

The analysis of the translated texts, coupled with that of paratexts and metatexts written by the translators themselves, resulted in interesting findings, among which I single out the following two:

- (i) There is a gap between what translators say they do (i.e., their discourse) and what they actually do.¹² Such inconsistency was observed not only in their implicit and explicit views on translation but also between the strategies they claim to employ and those actually used.
- (ii) Although the eight translators analyzed claim they are committed to the goal of being “faithful,” their implicit conceptions of faithfulness seem to be quite distinct.

In relation to (i) above, I have observed that the conceptions of translation and faithfulness formulated by the translators differ from their actual conceptions, as implied in their practice. Such is the case of Péricles Eugênio da Silva Ramos, who claims that the translator of poetry must be faithful both to the form and to the meaning of the source text (1955: 11-30 and 163-180), but does not hesitate in turning the iambic pentameter into alexandrines (in Portuguese). The same happens with Millôr Fernandes, who states that a translator must, “above all, be mimetic, adjusting to the author’s style,” (1989: 80) indicating a conception of translation as reproduction of form and content. His translation, however, substitutes prose for the combination of blank verse, rhymed verse and prose used by Shakespeare, retaining only the rhymed couplets that close most of the scenes.

As to the second finding, namely, the distinct implicit conceptions of faithfulness, it should be noted that although every translator aims to be “faithful,” this goal may be conceived and implemented on the formal and the semantic levels in quite different ways. Perceptions of faithfulness are informed by particular conceptions of meaning as well as of translation in general and that of Shakespearean drama – these, in

turn, also informed by different Shakespearean traditions, such as the organic poetry concept, the philological concept, the idea of popularizing, the tendency to “bowdlerize” the texts.

Summing up, although the term used in the formulations is the same—faithfulness—suggesting that all translators refer to the same concept, this is apparently not true. The eight Brazilian translators of *Hamlet* conceived and implemented their conception of faithfulness by means of different strategies. Tristão da Cunha believed that to be faithful to Shakespeare meant to capture the “spirit” of the text, even to the detriment of the actual words; Silva Ramos aimed at the fullest formal and semantic correspondence, advocating fidelity not only to the meaning but also to the form; Nunes claimed he tried to be faithful “to the English text” by translating in verse; to Anna Amelia, faithfulness seemed to imply transference of content and intentions, which meant retaining the performability of the text; Medeiros sought to make Shakespeare known to the Brazilian public via a translation “as faithful to the author’s text as possible”; Silos intended to restore the meaning of what the Bard had written almost 400 hundred years earlier, attempting to be faithful both at the level of content and of reception; and lastly, to Fernandes faithfulness implied reproducing form, content and response, achieving what might be called pragmatic equivalence. As to Ribeiro Neto, due to the lack of commentaries on his work – formulated either by himself, by peers or critics – no assumptions could be made about his explicit or implicit conceptions of faithfulness. We have already pointed out, however, that although his translation was presented as duplicating the combination of rhymed verse, blank verse, and prose found in Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, the expectations were not fulfilled.

The analysis has also indicated that, although implicit conceptions of fidelity may differ in many aspects, the eight translators examined have one thing in common: the focus on the source text and its author. This commitment is informed by a conception of meaning which locates it in the source text only. So conceived, meaning is to be imparted to the

text by the author, and the translator's task is to decode it and retrieve it. Such views thrived for a long time until being challenged by new theories such as the reader-response theory, reception aesthetics, and deconstruction. The translators whose work and discourse were analyzed, however, seem to adhere to such an epistemology. Silva Ramos, for instance, is concerned with "the literal preservation of the sense" and with "avoiding losses"¹³ (1985), even if this means increasing the length of the line so as to fit into it all the ideas "contained in the English pentameters," and Silos believes he can translate into contemporary and popular Portuguese what Shakespeare really wrote and "reproduce objectively the meaning of the original text" (1985).¹⁴

As to statements by others than the translators themselves, the same mismatch between discourse and action applies. Most commentators (critics, peers, scholars) claim to be concerned with faithfulness to **Shakespeare** and his **text**—also indicating a conception of meaning as intrinsic to the text—but they certainly have different views on what being faithful means. Their judgements on whether a translation is faithful or not to the original are based on their own conceptions of translation and fidelity, which may differ from those held by the translator and from other commentators. Some critics, for instance, pronounce as faithful only those translators whose texts can really establish a connection with the spectators. To them, page-oriented translations, or allegedly stage-oriented ones that fail to connect with the audience are equally unfaithful. This is the case of Silos', Silva Ramos', Medeiros', and Nunes' translations. To the prestigious critic Eugênio Gomes, in turn, the faithful translator should retain the content, even to the detriment of the form, and should also achieve a balance between contemporary and scholarly language. Gomes would not object to a prose translation on the grounds that it is unfaithful if the "content" were preserved.

Concluding Remarks

After presenting some findings of the corpus analyzed, some further remarks can be made about possible contributions of the translators studied to new ways of translating in general and of translating Shakespeare in particular. The major contribution seems to have been made by Millôr Fernandes, whose colloquial register and diction elicited approving reviews and commentaries in the late 1980s and early 1990s. It might be inferred that his colloquial prose does not merely reflect the informality of the 1980s and the shrinking gap between oral and written language. In fact, it is more likely to indicate a break with the tradition of overly “respectful,” elaborate, scholarly translations of Shakespearean drama. This break had already been attempted by Geraldo Silos in his 1984 *Hamlet*, in which he used as many obscenities as possible, and chose to make explicit in crude language most of the sexual puns in the play. His strategy, however, was rather idiosyncratic as far as translation of Shakespearean texts are concerned. Due to several factors, among which Silos’ lack of prestige as a translator, his work failed to assume the position both translator and publisher expected it to have. Rather than being seen as innovative, it was harshly criticized at first and eventually ostracized (to the point of becoming quite “invisible”). In Fernandes’ case, a different conjunction of factors enabled his rendering to change traditional views on how drama in general and Shakespearean drama in particular should be translated, validating such strategies as register-bending and use of oral language features. The other six translators opted for more conventional poetics, in tune either with the aesthetic conceptions of Brazilian literature prevailing at the time their translations were made (as with the Neo-Parnassian *Hamlets* of Silva Ramos) or with canonical, atemporal ways of translating Shakespeare, which include, as already noted, scholarly diction and elaborate syntax.

Shakespeare’s plays have been translated in different ways by different translators, from different cultures, in different periods. Since

1933, more than 40 translations of single plays and two translations of the complete works have been published in Brazil. They are diverse enough to fulfill different needs and expectations as well as to create different images of the author and his work. The function of some of these translated texts may have changed according to prevailing taste and to changes in appraisal criteria, which lately have tended to emphasize performability. As each translational and editorial project is contextualized, the public will be able to single out those more consistent with their own expectations and taste. In the process, a better understanding of the network of relations that build and sustain our cultural and literary systems will be also achieved.

Notes

- 1 According to Gomes (1960), from 1835 to 1960 *Hamlet* was staged 28 times, by national and international companies, and in languages as different as English, Arabic, Italian, French, besides Portuguese (translated and adapted from English and French source texts and imitations, such as the famous one by Jean-François Ducis).
- 2 My translation.
- 3 The reason I stress Brazilian Portuguese is because the variety spoken in Portugal has been increasingly showing an accentual pattern, in which the unstressed vowels are barely pronounced.
- 4 "It was in the thirties that the profound changes began which would eventually reshape the Brazilian theater so thoroughly that it is unlikely that one could easily identify, anywhere else, two 'generations' of actors, authors, directors, and set designers."
- 5 Translations of *Cymbeline* and the two *Henry IV* plays are forthcoming.
- 6 This research was originally done for the doctoral dissertation *A instrumentalidade dos estudos descritivos para a análise de traduções: o caso dos Hamlets brasileiros* (PUC/SP, 1999).

- 7 Norms are the translation of general values or ideas shared by a certain community – as to what is right and wrong, adequate and inadequate – into specific performance-instructions appropriate for and applicable to specific situations, providing they are not (yet) formulated as laws (Toury 1995: 54-55). According to Toury, texts are products of norm-regulated behavior, which makes norms not directly observable. They can be reconstructed, however, through the study of translated texts themselves and extratextual, semi-theoretical or critical formulations (65).
- 8 Provided that such statements do not come in the translated edition; in this case they would be considered as paratexts.
- 9 *34 Letras*, 3. Editora 34: Rio de Janeiro, 76-80.
- 10 Although it can be inferred that Nunes might not be extremely concerned with the performability of his renderings, there is evidence that his translation of *All's Well That Ends Well* may have been staged.
- 11 “Under the regime of fluent translating, the translator works to make his or her work ‘invisible,’ producing the illusory effect of transparency that simultaneously masks its status as an illusion: the translated text seems ‘natural,’ i.e., not translated” (Venuti, 1995: 5).
- 12 Gideon Toury warns that “finalized translations can often be shown to be at odds with their translators’ claims” (1995: 81).
- 13 My translation.
- 14 My translation.

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