

Rilke's Römische Fontäne translated by José Paulo Paes and
Augusto de Campos /
*Römische Fontäne, de Rilke, traduzido por José Paulo Paes e
Augusto de Campos*

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, we compared the translations made by José Paulo Paes and Augusto de Campos of the poem Römische Fontäne [Roman Fountain], by Rainer Maria Rilke, present in his book *Neue Gedichte - I*, [New Poems - I], 1907. These translations are present in the anthologies *Rainer Maria Rilke [Poemas]* (1993), by Paes, and *Rilke: Poesia-Coisa* (1994), by Campos. In order to fulfill our main goal, we discussed about the concept of the book *New Poems*, as well as about the figure of the fountain, in the poetry of Rilke. Then, we performed an analysis using the parameters of analysis of poem and translations proposed by Mário Laranjeira (1993). Hans Vermeer's classification (1994 apud SNELL-HORNBY, 2012) was also used to classify translations according to their degree of distancing or approximation to the target language. Through analysis and comparison, we found that the main difference between the two translations stems from the way each translator dealt with the verbal iconicity present in Rilke's poem, regarding the assimilating or alienating factor of the translation approaches, in relation to the original, and the transgressing potential of the transcreation proposal by Campos. Concerning the Rilkean work, the

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following sources were checked: Judith Ryan (2004), Manfred Engel (2004), Otto von Bollnow (1955), Wolfgang Müller (1997) and Benedito Nunes (2009).

KEYWORDS: Translation; Poetry; Rainer Maria Rilke; José Paulo Paes; Augusto de Campos.

RESUMO

Neste trabalho, realizou-se a comparação entre as traduções de José Paulo Paes e Augusto de Campos do poema *Römische Fontäne* [Fonte Romana], de Rainer Maria Rilke, presente em seu livro *Neue Gedichte – I*, [Novos Poemas - I] de 1907. Essas traduções estão presentes nas antologias *Rainer Maria Rilke* [Poemas] (1993), de Paes, e *Rilke: Poesia-Coisa* (1994), de Campos. Para cumprir o objetivo principal, discorreu-se sobre o conceito do livro *Novos Poemas*, bem como sobre a figura da fonte, na poesia de Rilke. Em seguida, realizou-se a análise, sob os parâmetros de análise do poema e das traduções propostos por Mário Laranjeira (1993). O diálogo teórico manteve-se ainda com as proposições de Hans Vermeer (1994 apud SNELL-HORNBY, 2012), em relação ao grau de distanciamento ou de aproximação à língua de chegada, e Haroldo de Campos, com o conceito de transcrição. Por meio da análise e comparação, constatou-se que a principal diferença entre as duas traduções decorre do modo como cada tradutor lidou com a iconicidade verbal presente no poema de Rilke, levando-se em consideração o fator de assimilação ou distanciamento das abordagens tradutórias, em relação ao original, e o potencial transgressor da proposta transcriadora de Campos. Acerca da obra *rilkeana*, consultou-se as seguintes fontes: Judith Ryan (2004), Manfred Engel (2004), Otto von Bollnow (1955), Wolfgang Müller (1997) e Benedito Nunes (2009).

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Tradução; Poesia; Rainer Maria Rilke; José Paulo Paes; Augusto de Campos.

1 New Poems and the figure of the Fountain

José Paulo Paes and Augusto de Campos, two renowned Brazilian translator-poets, published an anthology of translated poems composed by the bohemian writer Rainer Maria Rilke in the early 1990s. Both poets translated poems from the books named *New Poems*, published in 1906 and 1907, including the ‘thing-poems’, the term Rilke used to describe poems in which objects are presented in reference to themes of human life. One of these poems is called *Fonte Romana* [*Römische Fontäne*, the Roman Fountain]. This paper aims to analyze those translated works considering the practice of translation as an act of interpretation according to what Susan Bassnett (2002, p. 106), a comparative literature and translation theory author, states: “All the translations reflect the individual translators’ readings, interpretations and selection of criteria determined by the concept of the *function* both of the translation and of the original text”.

First, we will present the concept entailed in *New Poems*, and the Fountain as a poetic figure that is central to the poem, which is also present throughout Rilke's work. Then, we will move to the analysis of the poem and the translations, considering the methodology developed by Mário Laranjeira (1993), and the criteria proposed by Mary Snell-Hornby.

There are different thematic groups in the *New Poems*: poems that describe ordinary and anonymous people, such as *The Convalescent* [*Die Genesende*], *The Blind Man* [*Der Blinde*], and *The Reader* [*Der Leser*]; poems that show characters and events from Greco-Roman mythologies, as well as Christian mythologies, like *Orpheus. Eurydice. Hermes.* [*Orpheus. Eurydike. Hermes*], and *Birth of Venus*

[Geburt der Venus]; poems with references to animals, such as the notorious The Panther [*Der Panther*], Black Cat [*Schwarze Katze*], and The Flamingos; poems that focus on objects and landscapes, such as The Steps of the Orangery [*Die Treppe der Orangerie*], The Carousel [*Das Karussell*], and The Island [*Die Insel*]. Most of these poems are inspired by paintings and other works of art that Rilke had the opportunity to experience in his travels throughout France, Italy, and Spain, as well as the interaction with Rodin and Cézanne. We also acknowledge that the themes were often inspired by contemporary or earlier French poets. As Judith Ryan (2004) indicates, poems like The Convalescent, The Beggars [*Die Bettler*], and The Cathedral [*Die Kathedrale*], share mutual themes with French poetry anthologies from the 18th and 19th centuries, including *Poètes d'aujourd'hui* [Poets of today] (BEVER, A. van; LE'AUTAUD, Paul, 1900 apud RYAN, 2004, p. 60) and *Anthologie des poètes français contemporains* [Anthology of contemporary French poets] (WALCH, G., 1906 apud RYAN, 2004, p. 60): "In reworking these late nineteenth-century models, Rilke retains their emphasis on the complexity, fragility and evanescence of the object, but develops metaphors that are less clichéd and sentimental, more original, and even abstract".

Interpretation is not univocal in several poems. The understanding is not drawn solely from the matter indicated in the title, but some illustrations and actions point to other themes that are present in Rilke's work, for instance: God, death, and the frailty of things. According to William Waters (2010, p. 60), "poems that are, in other ways – once we read beyond the title - anything but invocations of an object". Despite the matter hinted in the title, the poem itself does not engage it in a descriptive manner, which is a poetic practice fairly common amongst the author's predecessors – as previously suggested by Ryan (2004). It is not the case of seeking the most exotic and flowery description of something. In fact, "Rilke wanted to instill in his poem, like a thing, a converting power similar to that captured in sculptures, which can move readers to a novel view on life and death", says Benedito Nunes (2009, p. 402), commenting on Archaic Torso of Apollo, a poem inspired by the homonymous sculpture.

Manfred Engel (2004) indicates the existence of a recurrent structural scheme of two leading layers in the *New Poems*: one concerning a "segment of message" [*Mitteilungslinie*], where Rilke "focuses on a sequence of things and processes in a linear motion" (ENGEL, 2004, p. 522, our translation); and another with a "segment of feeling" [*Gemütslinie*], which is an overlap of *Mitteilungslinie*, where there is a trace of human feeling in the poem. These emotions are determined by poetic devices like rhythm, sound, and syntax. Engel (2004) also instructs that the 'segment of message' occurs through different motion processes, and one of them is directly related to the fountain.

Römische Fontäne [Roman Fountain], one of the poems from *New Poems - I*, is part of the *Kunstgedichte* group, which presents objects related to themes in human life. According to Otto von Bollnow in *Rilke* (1955)¹, the poet repeatedly employed the figure of the fountain. Bollnow wrote a subchapter analyzing the symbolism of the fountain throughout Rilke's poems, stories, and letters. In early writings, the poet would compare the motion of water in the fountain to the female body; in later years, the fountain stood for a dialectical motion of ascent and fall of men, their relationship with the world and each other. More importantly, it is about portraying the human life cycle as consolation for the meaninglessness of life:

The image of the fountain seems to be an attempt of comfort in face of a feeling of impermanence since the alternating motion of up and down is no longer to be taken as a futile will, but instead, it forms an elliptical movement in which life goes on forever without however going beyond itself. Rising and falling become the symbol of this eternal cycle (BOLLNOW, 1955, p. 234, our translation)².

Engel (2004) comments on this motion of ascent and fall, incorporating the poems with references to the fountain amongst the texts in which such a process occurs. His considerations are similar to those of Bollnow (1955): “[...] this fall must not be interpreted as decay or failure of the human will, but rather as consented obedience, as the consummation of the founding figure, imposed on all life, the human *Dasein*” (ENGEL, 2004, p. 523, our translation)³. This means that the motion of the fountain is a form of reconciling the individual, life, and nature. This movement is even more evident in *The Duino Elegies* and *Sonnets to Orpheus*.

2 Analysis of the poem and the translations

The present analysis of the poem and the translations take into consideration the analysis and criticism proposed by Mário Laranjeira (1993). According to that author, the poem reading should target significance instead of meaning. Significance relates to the way words can generate meaning within the

1 Regardless of its publication date, Bollnow's study (1955) was consulted for the composition of this paper, as the author has an entire book dedicated to the philosophical interpretation of Rilke's later works. Indeed, it is listed as a reference in companion to the works of Rainer Maria Rilke, organized by Manfred Engel (2004); in *Rilke: Thought and Mysticism*, by Paul Bishop; the *Cambridge Companion to Rilke* (2010), and also in the anthology compiled by José Paulo Paes (2012).

2 Das Bild der Fontäne erscheint als tröstlich gegenüber dem Gefühl der Vergänglichkeit, weil die Wechselbewegung des Hinauf und Herab nicht mehr als vergebliches Wollen zu nehmen ist, sondern sich zur stehenden Kreisbewegung zusammenschließt, in der das Leben, ohne über sich hinauszugehen, in Ewigkeit verläuft. Das Steigen und Fallen wird zum Symbol dieses ewigen Kreislaufs.

3 “[...] dieser Fall nicht als Absturz, als Scheitern des Emporwollens gedeutet wird, sondern als einverständiges Gehorchen, als Vorzug der für menschliches Dasein, für alles Leben vorgeschriebenen Grundfigur [...]”

poem, despite of their denotative meaning. In a poetic composition, meaning is built from signifiers, not from any exterior information. Moreover, we draw further attention to the incidence of ungrammaticalities in the process of constructing significance in a poetic composition. Ungrammaticalities are deviations from prescriptive grammar, and the order of communicative discourse. According to Laranjeira, that term entails “from minimal disturbances in linearity to extreme cases that may lead to hermeticism or even nonsense” (LARANJEIRA, 1993, p. 86, our translation)⁴.

Laranjeira lists three levels of fidelity in the process of translating a poetic text: a semantic level, a linguistic-structural level, and a rhetorical-formal level. The first level concerns the content of the text. The author advises that semantic fidelity can sometimes be forfeited to maintain significance: “[...] when translating a poem, it is not uncommon that the fidelity to significance, which must always prevail, imposes infidelities on a strictly semantic level. This is a condition to uphold the poetics during rewriting.” (LARANJEIRA, 1993, p. 126, our translation)⁵. In a linguistic-structural level, fidelity resides on scrutinizing ungrammaticalities such as sound devices and word repetition, in the interest of composing a text that takes these occurrences into consideration. In addition, a rhetorical-formal fidelity is related to the spatiality of the text, regardless of the possibility of a fixed form, such as a sonnet or a ballad.

We also considered the concepts of distancing or alienating effect, as proposed by Hans Vermeer (1994 *apud* SNELL-HORNBY, 2012, p. 190) in his analysis of the two varieties of translation determined by Friedrich Schleiermacher, who states: “either the translator leaves the author in peace, as much as possible, and moves the reader towards him; or he leaves the reader in peace, as much as possible, and moves the author towards him” (SCHLEIERMACHER, 1992, p. 149). Schleiermacher employs this metaphor to indicate that an assimilating translation prioritizes the language of the translator, fostering the impression that the work could have been written in their native language, and therefore the reader will not find the delivery somewhat peculiar. However, when the translator endeavors to adapt their language to that of the source text (the present study avoids the notion of an ‘original text’), the reader may experience a foreign delivery, which is precisely the distancing or alienating effect.

After introducing the figure of the fountain and describing the methodology for analysis, we can now evaluate the poem in German as it is below:

Römische Fontäne

Borghese

4 “desde casos mínimos de perturbação da linearidade até casos extremos que podem conduzir ao hermetismo ou mesmo ao não-sentido.”

5 “[...] não é raro que a fidelidade à significância do texto, que deve sempre prevalecer, imponha, na tradução do poema, infidelidades do nível estritamente semântico como condição para se manter o poético na reescritura.”

Zwei Becken, eins das andere übersteigend
aus einem alten runden Marmorrand,
und aus dem oberen Wasser leis sich neigend
zum Wasser, welches unten wartend stand,

dem leise redenden entgegenschweigend
und heimlich, gleichsam in der hohlen Hand,
ihm Himmel hinter Grün und Dunkel zeigend
wie einen unbekanntn Gegenstand;

sich selber ruhig in der schönen Schale
verbreitend ohne Heimweh, Kreis aus Kreis,
nur manchmal träumerisch und tropfenweis

sich niederlassend an den Moosbehängen
zum letzten Spiegel, der sein Becken leis
von unten lächeln macht mit Übergängen.
(RILKE, 2012, p. 102)⁶

6 In order to let the reader more situated and understand better our analysis, we bring the translation made by Walter Arndt. The main reason why we chose this translation is that it tries to follow the original semantically close, verse by verse, as well as does not ignore the linguistic aspects of the poem. As professor Cyrus Hamlin makes clear, in his foreword to the book: "Arndt attends to the surface play of language in the complex patterns of rhythm and rhyme used by Rilke to a degree unequalled by any other translator into English." (HAMLIN, 1989, p. xxvi) . Here is the version:

Two basins, one the other overclimbing
Out of an ancient rounded marble rim,
And quietly from upper ones inclining
To lower waters there awaiting them,

The softly talking one with silence rhyming,
And secretly, its hand cupped as it were,
Past green and dark high heavens for it miming,
A thing of which it had been unaware,

Serenely spreading through its lovely shell
Ring out of ring, without nostalgia,
But rarely, drop by dreamy droplet, lacing

Its seepage down a pendent fringe of algae
To the last mirror sheet, which wreathes its basin
From underneath in smiles of interfacing. (RILKE, 1989, p. 93)

Any commentary on *Römische Fontäne* should not disregard the image of two basins, or sinks [*Becken*], overlapped upon each other [*eins das andere übersteigend*], forming a fountain where water [*Wasser*] flows. Although the word fountain [*Fontäne*] does not appear at all in the poem, the figure is created by a linguistic construction. Therefore, we consider it to be a poem with dominant imagery, or *phanopoeia*, following the characterization of Ezra Pound: “throwing a visual image on the mind” (1961, p. 42). The first two stanzas describe the upward motion of water splashing, whilst the following two tercets present its downward motion. Semantically, there is an ascent and a falling movement. Bollnow (1955) and Engel (2004) notice that this motion transposes the reading from the contingency of the object to the universe of men. Hence, we can see the *prosopopoeia* in lines describing the motion of water splashing “without nostalgia” [*ohne Heimweh*] as well as its character: “dreamer” [*träumerisch*], and, lastly, the “smile” [*lächeln*] of the basin.

We consider the expression “*entgegenschweigend*” to be a noteworthy ungrammaticality, a neologism formed by combining the preposition *entgegen* [against, towards to] and the verb in *Partizip I*, *schweigen* [to shut up, to silence]. The expression is antithetical: an active silence, as Wolfgang Müller noticed: “as Rilke puts it, in a significant deviation from the normal linguistic usage, is ‘actively’ silent” (1997, p. 82). Therefore, it is a primary interest to observe how the aforementioned translators decided to deal with this expression, whether they tried to recreate it in their language or solely translate it for meaning.

There are linguistic-structural aspects to contemplate: soundwise, particular recurrences of nasal vowels in the words *Becken*, *alten*, *runden*, *redenden*, *unbekannten*, *schönen*, and *letzten*; the incidence of combined vowels (*Doppellaute*), a peculiarity of the German language, the ‘ei’ diphthong, pronounced /ai/: *Zwei*, *leis*, *heimlich*, *zeigend*, *verbreitend*, and *sein*. Although these occurrences are found in the entire poem, we can isolate the following incidences: in the first stanza, the alliteration of the consonant ‘w’, pronounced /v/: *zum Wasser, welches unten wartend stand*; in the second stanza, a sequence of words starting with ‘h’: *und heimlich, gleichsam in der hohlen Hand, / ihm Himmel hinter Grün und Dunkel zeigend*; and lastly, in the third stanza, a sequence of digraphs with ‘tr’: *träumerisch und tropfenweis*. Müller (1997, p. 83) also observes a sequence of closed vowels: “*zum letzten Spiegel, der sein Becken leis / von unten lächeln macht mit Übergängen*”, which, according to his analysis, escalate the tension throughout the verses. After this sequence, the climax of the poem is realized in the plural noun *Übergängen* [transition, passage], a moment of substantial intensity. Thus, “epiphany and transition coincide” (MÜLLER, 1997, p. 83).

Regarding syntax, there is a substantial number of adverbial and adnominal adjuncts in the poem, which allows a portrayal of the water flow with no more than two subjects, the two basins and the water itself, and two verbs in the indicative mood, *stand* [from *stehen*: to stay, to position] and *macht*, [from *machen*: to do, to make]. We observe a substantial use of the verbal form *Partizip I* indicating an action that takes place in the present. A relative clause is often translated with the gerund. Another aspect worthy of note is the fact that the entire poem is just an extended single sentence. It implies the iconicity⁷ of *Roman Fountain*: just like water, the poem flows without pauses nor punctuation. Engel indicates the iconicity in *New Poems*: “in *New Poems*, R. [Rilke] also uses formal techniques of iconicity that produce formal equivalents for things”⁸ (2004, p. 302, our translation). Later in this paper, we will debate the way translators deal with the isomorphic relationship between the evoked image and the words of the poem, which differ in each case, resulting in two distinctive texts.

Finally, we should pay special attention to the rhetorical-formal aspect, which is in the form of a sonnet that shows the particularly irregular rhyme scheme ABAB ABAB CDD EDE. These rhymes are sometimes feminine, that is, in which “the homophony takes place between oxytonous words, stressed monosyllables or unstressed monosyllables” (MOISÉS, 2013, p. 401, our translation)⁹, but when the word is a paroxytonic, the rhymes are masculine. Examples of feminine rhymes include: *Marmorrand*, *stand*, *Hand*, *Gegenstand*, *Kreis*, *tropfenweis*, and *leis*; and examples of masculine rhymes include: *übersteigend*, *neigend*, *entgegenschweigend*, *Schale*, *Moosbehängen*, and *Übergängen*.

We can promptly examine and compare the two translations below taking the poem’s features in consideration:

Fonte romana	Fonte Romana
Borghese	Borghese
Duas bacias, uma sob outra e excedendo-a por uma antiga borda circular de mármore;	Duas velhas bacias sobrepondo suas bordas de mármore redondo.

⁷ Iconicity is the capability of language, conceived as a system of signs, as proposed by Charles Peirce's semiotic theory, made known in Brazil by Lucia Santaella (2004). When considering language as a set of signs, some are not motivated (therefore 'arbitrary') and others are motivated, as in the case of the icon: “in this theory, the motivated sign is called an icon, namely, a sign that signifies its object because, in some way, the sign resembles its object” (SANTAELLA, 2004, p. 129). Therefore, in our analysis, iconicity is conceded as an attempt to make the formal aspects of the poem resemble its content, i.e.: “language is capable of accomplishing, in the very materiality of words, what it talks about, [...] it can embody meaning” (SANTAELLA, 2004, p. 133).

⁸ R. bedient sich in den *Neuen Gedichten* auch ikonischer Gestaltungstechniken, durch die formale Äquivalente für Dinge hervorgebracht werden.

⁹ “a homofonia se processa entre palavras oxítonas, monossílabos tônicos ou átonos acentuados”. Here we use the Portuguese definition for feminine and masculine rhymes.

<p>da superior, voz em surdina, água vertendo-se na água expectante da inferior, a qual, escâncara,</p> <p>só lhe responde à fala baixa emudecendo e, como num côncavo de mão, a ábside do céu além do verde-escuro oferecendo-lhe como um objeto ignoto; sem nada de nostálgica</p> <p>abrindo-se ela própria, círculo após círculo, na bela taça, e às vezes, sonhadoramente, fluindo gota a gota por musgos pendentes</p> <p>até, um pouco abaixo, o espelho derradeiro que faz sorrir sua bacia docemente com o jogo de mil reflexos passageiros. (RILKE, 2012, p. 103, translated by José Paulo Paes)</p>	<p>Do alto a água fluindo, devagar, sobre a água, mas em baixo, a esperar,</p> <p>muda, ao murmúrio, em diálogo secreto, como que só no côncavo da mão, entremostrando um singular objeto: o céu, atrás da verde escuridão;</p> <p>ela mesma a escorrer na bela pia, em círculos e círculos, constantemente, impassível e sem nostalgia,</p> <p>descendo pelo musgo circundante ao espelho da última bacia que faz sorrir, fechando a travessia. (RILKE, 1994, p. 37, translated by Augusto de Campos)</p>
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Altogether, José Paulo Paes values the sounding aspect of the sonnet. Also, the syntax is as complex as it is in German, which might classify it as a translation with a distancing/alienating effect, following the source text diligently. On the other hand, the translator even supplements new meanings to the poem of Rilke by slightly modifying the connotation of some words.

In most cases, Paes translates closely the vocabulary employed by Rilke, as in "*objeto ignoto*"¹⁰ for *unbekannten Gegenstand*, and "*sonhadoramente*"¹¹ for *träumerisch*. By translating *Grün und Dunkel* as "*verde escuro*"¹², Paes offers a novel connotation to the pair of nouns, which, for some reason, appears separately in the German poem. It is a metonymy, since originally it was not the noun 'green' with the adjective 'dark', but 'green' and 'dark' as independent nouns.

Occasionally, Paes intends to explain the poem, especially in more descriptive parts. For example, "*Zwei Becken, eins das andere übersteigend*" is translated as "*Duas bacias, uma sob outra e*

10 'unknown object'

11 'dreamily'

12 'dark green'

*excedendo-a*¹³. In German, the word “*übersteigen*” means ‘to overcome’ or ‘to exceed’; “*übersteigend*”, however, indicates that something is on top of something else. Thus, for lacking a word in Portuguese that embodies both meanings, Paes chose to use the preposition “*sob*” [under] and the verb “*exceder*” [to exceed], covering both possible meanings.

The translator was careful in maintaining the anthropomorphic character of the fountain, adding the verb “*responder*” [to respond] in the first verse of the second stanza: “*só Ihe responde à fala baixa emudecendo*”¹⁴. Here the water in the lower basin responds to the water in the upper basin. Since Rilke does not employ this verb, in German such dialogue can only be inferred, whereas in Portuguese it becomes categorical. This same verse presents a complex word used pioneeringly by Rilke: *entgegenschweigend*. The verbs “*responder*” (to respond) and “*emudecer*” [to mute] are intended to fulfill the meaning in German. By doing so, the translator attempts to compensate for the absence of an exact translation using a creative term for *entgegenschweigend*, leaving the anthropomorphic character of the dialogue unequivocal.

The translation offers a peculiar impression for its inversion on syntax, which results in a tortuous reading. The dependent clause in the second verse is an exhibit of this inversion: “*só Ihe responde à fala baixa emudecendo*”¹⁵. The conjunction “*e*” [and] should provide continuity to the sentence; but, instead, it is interrupted by the adverbial clause “*como num côncavo de mão*”¹⁶. And resumes: “*a ábside do céu além do verde-escuro oferecendo-Ihe*”¹⁷. Who has made the offer, and what has been offered? For the sentence comes to an end with the comparison “*como um objeto ignoto*”¹⁸, which means, the direct object of “offering” must be “*a ábside do céu além do verde-escuro*” and, therefore, the syntax is inverted because the verb is following a direct object¹⁹ and not the other way around. The stanza is complex in German as well: in all its length, there is not a single verb in *Indikativ* [indicative] mood, only in *Partizip I*. The third verse, in which the syntax is inverted, should read “*a ela [água] céu atrás de verde e escuro mostrante*”²⁰ if translated literally, since the verb *zeigen* [to show, to display], is in *Partizip I*. In his translation, Paes intended to maintain the distancing/alienating effect.

In general, Paes promotes tail rhymes and, therefore, moves particular words from their original lines. For instance, the translation of *ohne Heimweh*, found in the second line of the third stanza, is

13 ‘two basins, one under the other and exceeding it’

14 ‘it only responds to the low speech by muting’

15 ‘it only responds to the low speech by muting’

16 ‘as in a hand concave’

17 ‘the apse of the sky beyond the dark green offering it’

18 ‘as an ignored object’

19 In Portuguese, a regular sentence construction is made of a subject + verb + complement.

20 ‘to it [water] sky behind green and dark displayer’

translated as “*sem nada de nostálgica*”²¹ and in Portuguese is in the fourth verse of the second stanza. However, José Paulo Paes does not seem to follow Rilke's choices for stress, adopting a scheme of masculine rhymes, and dactylic rhymes, of proparoxytonic words. Examples of masculine rhymes are: “*excedendo-a*” [exceeding it], “*vertendo-se*” [pouring itself out], “*emudecendo*” [muting], “*oferecendo-a*” [offering it]; Examples of dactylic rhymes are: “*mármore*” [marble], “*escâncara*” [gaping], “*ábside*” [apse], “*nostálgica*” [nostalgic].

Regarding the linguistic-structural aspects, the translation presents alliterations and assonances. Phones are repeated in alliterations throughout the poem, particularly in the first stanza, in words like “*bacias*” [basins], “*sob*” [under], “*circular*” [circular], “*superior*” [upper], “*voz*” [voice], “*surdina*” [mute], “*vertendo-se*” [pouring itself out]. In addition, we have noticed a regular incidence of the [a] and [u] vowels in assonances, especially in the first two stanzas, as in “*fala*” [speech], “*baixa*” [low], “*emudecendo*” [muting], “*num*” [in a], “*ábside*” [apse], “*escuro*” [dark], “*nada*” [nothing], and “*nostálgica*” [nostalgic]. Interestingly, Paes sought to compensate for the lack of sound equivalence between *träumerisch* and *tropfenweis* by using the expression “*gota a gota*” [drop by drop. *Tropfenweis*, in German]. Furthermore, the expression “*círculo após círculo*” [circle after circle] at the beginning of the stanza is in agreement with the meaning in German, managing to be even more ungrammatical by Portuguese standards.

The last verse demonstrates a peculiarity in the translation of Paes: *Übergängen* [crossings] is translated as “*o jogo de mil reflexos passageiros*” [the game of a thousand passing reflections]. It is a reference to the mirror [*espelho*] that is acting on this relative clause – the word “*reflexos*” [reflections]. The argument that this unusual translation operates in favor of rhyme and meter is valid. The adjective “*passageiro*” [passing] is assumed to refer to the noun in Rilke's poem. However, although the Portuguese adjective “*passageiro*” indicates passage – moving from one point to another –, it likewise suggests what is ephemeral and perennial. Therefore, the choice of using this adjective expands the possibilities of interpreting the poem.

Augusto de Campos, whose translation seems more assimilating, clearly does not follow Rilke's depiction, whereas José Paulo Paes does it nearly literally. Nevertheless, Campos work is further concise and thus amount to a more fluid reading. In the first two verses, for instance, instead of describing each basin, Campos speaks of the two at once: “*Dois velhas bacias sobrepondo / suas bordas de mármore redondo.*” [Two old overlapped basins / their edges of round marble]. The same thing happens in the following two verses: the adjective clause in German “*welches unten wartend stand*” is translated by Paes with an equal adjective clause, “*a qual, escâncara*” [which, gaping] – beforehand he provides the noun

21 'lacking nostalgia'

“água” [water. *Wizth*, in German] with the adjective “*expectante*” [expecting], which translates the verb “*wartend*” [waiting, expecting] in *Partizip I*. Here, Campos decides to employ the infinitive mood: “*sobre a água, mais em baixo, a esperar*” [over the water, further down, waiting]²². Furthermore, Campos chose a more direct language whereas Paes decided to overturn the syntax to achieve a hermetic reading, which is the case in German. For instance, the third and fourth verses of the second stanza translate “*entremostrando um singular objeto: o céu, atrás da verde escuridão*” [showing a singular object: the sky, behind the green darkness], leaving no doubt that it is indeed the sky being shown in the water. Correspondingly, Augusto de Campos replaces the comparison of Rilke for a metaphor by refraining from translating the conjunction *wie* [as, like], and straightforwardly states that the sky is a singular object [*singular objeto*]. This is another example of how this translation is deliberate to be even more concise than the German poem itself.

In terms of vocabulary choices, Campos strayed from Rilke at times, translating *unbekanntes* [unknown] as “*singular*” [singular, exceptional], a word that is closer in meaning to ‘strange’ than to ‘unknown’. In the third stanza, the sentence *träumerisch und tropfenweis* is rendered as “*constantemente, impassível*” [constantly, unmoved], with no direct relation to the words in German. In the penultimate verse, *letzten Spiegel* is not literally translated as “*último espelho*”²³, but rather as “*última bacia*” [last basin]. As a translator, Campos seems to be more concerned in choosing words that make sense in the translated work, so they are meaningful as a new text, as if the source text was merely an excuse for a different poem. As an enthusiast of ‘translation as art’, Augusto de Campos is fairly familiar with this procedure. Translation as art implies the insertion of new elements by the translator to the point where the translated work becomes a piece of art of independent artistic value. Ultimately, the reading of this poem is as novel as the source text is for readers of the literary system to which it originally belonged. This notion of translation was adopted by Augusto de Campos in agreement with the conceptual proposal developed by his brother, theorist Haroldo de Campos, who named this procedure ‘transcreation’. The theory is originated from the principle of Roman Jakobson that “poetry by definition is untranslatable” (1959, p. 238) because the “verbal equations become a constructive principle of the text” (*ibid.*). Thus, the linguistic characteristics provide the form to the poem. According to Haroldo de Campos, poetry must not be translated for meaning but for how it presents itself: “not a mere translation for superficial meaning, but a ‘paramorphic’ practice able to redesign the ‘poetic function’ (as described by Jakobson), the

22 In Portuguese, the infinitive mood is “the verb form as presented in dictionaries [...]”. The infinitive form of virtually all Portuguese verbs ends in either -ar, -er, or -ir” (WHITLAM, 2011, p. 109). Occasionally, the gerund mood replaces the infinitive, which is the case at hand: “*sobre a água, mais embaixo, a esperar*”. Thus, the infinitive ‘*esperar*’ (to wait) has been translated as ‘waiting’.

23 ‘last mirror’

Darstellungsmodus, the 'way of representing' [...] the original *intentio*" (CAMPOS, 2015, p. 104, our translation)²⁴. Therefore, a translation that is a creation itself.

Similar to José Paulo Paes, Augusto de Campos translated *Grün und Dunkel* as one noun phrase: “*verde escuridão*” [green darkness], a construction that does not follow the form conceived by Rilke either. Walter Arndt, who rendered the poem to English, translated as “green and dark” (RILKE, 1989, p. 93). This paper analyzed two Portuguese versions of the same poem in German, and the fact that both translations are deemed as exceptions is evidence that their translation activities are acts of creation.

When translating *entgegenschweigend*, it becomes evident that Campos was not engrossed in the passive-aggressive connotation suggested in Müller’s interpretation. Conversely, the sentence “*diálogo secreto*” [secret dialogue] delivers a sense of conciliation and passiveness. Apropos the anthropomorphic language seen in the poem, explicitly in regards to the fountain, the choice of vocabulary in the translation maintains the rhetorical device by using adjectival words such as “*impassível*” [impassive] and “*sem nostalgia*” [without nostalgia].

In his translation, Campos treasures the sounding aspect of the sonnet. Right in the first stanza, there is the prominence of consonants [d] and [b], occasionally in the same word: “*Duas*” [two], “*bacias*” [basins], “*sobrepondo*” [overlapping], “*bordas*” [borders], “*de*” [of], “*redondo*” [round], “*do*” [of], “*devagar*” [slowly], “*fluindo*” [flowing], “*sobre*” [over], “*baixo*” [low]. We also notice a considerable incidence of the vowels [a] and [o] in the same stanza. This use of open vowels and voiced consonants potentially produces iconicity to the motion of water splashing. They relate to a circular and open movement, rather than a straight and closed flow. For the benefit of sound devices, Campos introduces a number of words with no relation to the source text, as in the first verse of the second stanza: *leise redenden* is translated as “*mudas, ao murmúrio*” [mute, to the murmur]. The adjective ‘mute’ stresses how soft the ‘murmur’ of the water truly is. Also, it repeats the syllable ‘mu-’ composed by a nasal (thus non-aggressive) consonant and a low vowel. This combination promotes iconicity, indicating a soft and restrained speech. We also notice how Augusto de Campos effectively translates the words from the source text maintaining the fluid sound of the poem. For example, the sentence “*ela mesma a escorrer*”²⁵ [sich selber ruhig] enriches the sound experience by repeating the syllable ‘es’, in accordance to the poem in German that repeats the consonant [s].

For Campos, it is a priority to translate the masculine and the rich rhymes as they appear in the poem of Rilke: “*sobrepondo*” [overlapping], “*redondo*” [round], “*devagar*” [slowly], “*esperar*” [to wait],

24 “não como mera tradução do significado superficial, mas como uma prática ‘paramórfica’ voltada para o redesenho da ‘função poética’ (Jakobson), do *Darstellungsmodus*, ‘modo de representar’ [...] a *intentio* do original”

25 herself dripping

“*secreto*” [secret], “*mão*” [hand], “*objeto*” [object], “*escuridão*” [darkness], “*pia*” [basin], “*constante*” [constant], “*nostalgia*” [nostalgia], “*circundante*” [surrounding], “*bacia*” [basin], and “*travessia*” [crossing]. Unlike José Paulo Paes, Campos does not strictly follow the order, and the scheme changes to AABB CDCD EFE FEE, to the point that the word “*constantemente*” [constantly] is split into two verses to maintain the rhyme scheme. We conclude that this procedure sustains the iconicity of the translation as it follows the downward motion of the water splash, as described in this section of the sonnet.

Final considerations

According to the present analysis, we can conclude that distinctive readings produce different translations. José Paulo Paes and Augusto de Campos strived to promote the sounding aspect of the poem, but their translations differed mainly in their syntax structure. Considering the parameters proposed by Vermeer, one can argue that Paes is intended to follow the German text closely, producing a translation with a distancing/alienating effect. Whereas Campos is intended to deliver a more assimilating translation by distancing the text from its source, both in syntax and lexicon. Augusto de Campos operates in view of the transcreation theory and therefore is interested in a paramorphic structure that follows the semantic content of the poem. Such reading is beyond any binarism from assimilating or distancing translations. This was evidenced by the way Campos maintained the iconicity of the poem, replicated the motion at the fountain, and found equivalences in Portuguese for the alliterations used by Rilke. The aspects privileged by the translator provided a bridge between the two texts, regardless of semantics and syntax.

In conclusion, this paper debated how these two poets and translators recreated the iconicity of *Fonte Romana* in Portuguese. Paes attempts to mimic the motion of the fountain, making it tortuous, as the water splashes itself. For Campos, the same movement is fluid and faces no obstacles.

The effort to make comparative research of two translation projects of the same poem is certainly a way of critically addressing processes of rich theoretical discussion in translation studies. According to Vermeer, the polarization between assimilation and distancing is set in a theoretical field that is still affected by classifications. However, the transcreation theory fosters a greater transgressive potential in proposing a novel poetic parameter in literary criticism, understanding the translation practice as both theory and criticism, beyond binarism and classifications.

Lastly, the present analysis of two translations granted a new reading of the German poem itself, evidencing the disparities between two languages and within the target language. To understand translation as a form, following Walter Benjamin's theory of translation, is to comprehend how choices

prove that there is not only one way to translate a poem. Within certain limits, interpretation and techniques can lead to different readings and innovations; from one language to another, and within the same language.

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