

En el marco conceptual desarrollado por Bajtín en su memorable estudio sobre Rabelais y la cultura popular de la Edad Media y del Renacimiento, el destronamiento representa una aproximación teórica fundamental al significado de los géneros, imágenes y discursos que construyen el mundo carnalesco y de la risa paródica. En este artículo, defendemos que el destronamiento del original en el sentido bajtiniano es en realidad el primer objetivo de determinadas traducciones. Investigamos esta cuestión en dos casos significativos: la traducción del Quijote publicada por John Phillip en 1657 y una versión portuguesa de la Iliada de Homero publicada en 1944-45. Ambos textos pretendían degradar sus originales, pero en vez de responder con un juicio de valor negativo, nuestra intención es señalar las principales estrategias implicadas en la carnavalización de los textos de partida e identificar los programas de la cultura receptora que puedan ayudarnos a explicarlas.

Uncrowning the Original: Carnivalised Translation

In the Bakhtinian network of concepts deployed along his celebrated study of Rabelais and popular culture of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, uncrowning offers a key theoretical hold on the meaning of the genres, images and discourses that make up the world of carnival and of debasing laughter. In this article, I will argue that the uncrowning of the original in the Bakhtinian sense is actually what certain translations set out to accomplish in the first place. Here two case studies will be investigated: John Phillips's translation of Don Quijote, published in 1657 and a Portuguese rendering of Homer's Iliad published in 1944-45. Both texts were charged with degrading the originals, but rather than coming up with a counter-value judgement, my purpose is to pinpoint the main strategies involved in the carnivalisation of the source-texts and identify the domestic agendas that may help us to account for it.



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L'homme prêt à traduire est dans une intimité constante, dangereuse, admirable, et c'est de cette familiarité qu'il tient le droit d'être le plus orgueilleux ou le plus secret des écrivains — avec cette conviction que traduire est, en fin de compte, folie

Maurice Blanchot, «Traduire»

In his famous lecture on Walter Benjamin's «The Task of the Translator» published in *The Resistance to Theory*, Paul de Man points to the desacralising nature of translation as regards the original, and to the fact that — playing with the religious overtones of the word — translations *decanonise* the originals (1986: 98). In a sense neither the metaphor nor the concept would strike us as new even in 1986. A few years before André Lefevere was using the very same words to account for the effect of systemic conceptions of literature on «the corpus of canonized sacralized texts» (1982: 12), and the notion stands now at the heart of what has been called «the cultural turn» in Translation Studies, which has been grounded in a consistent critique of the epistemological privileges of a unique and unchanging original (Bassnett 1993-94; Koskinen 1994).

What may be more intriguing in de Man's position, though, is the reasons he offers in support of his claim. To sum them up, the original loses its sacred character because translation conveys «all that is idiomatical, all that is customary, all that is quotidian... all that is *prosaic*» (1986: 97), and being «a piece of ordinary language» (1986: 98), it thus brings about a «prosaization of the original» (1986: 97). To the extent that this is a general statement, the first part of my paper will attempt to engage with it in theoretical terms; but since the proof of the pudding is in the eating, in the second part I will briefly look at two examples of — to stick to de Man's terminology for the moment — prosaic translation.

A convenient starting-point to help us grasp the implications of Paul de Man's conception of translation may be found in another theory of the prosaic, the one that is built upon Mikhail Bakhtin's notions of heteroglossia and dialogism. As is well known, heteroglossia refers to the condition of language in society, governed by stratification and the ensuing multiplicity of utterances and points of view always responding to each other and unfolding in the absence of a purely self-identical origin of discourse. For Bakhtin, such socially heteroglot diversity at the level of speech finds its fullest written expression in *prose* as opposed to poetry, the genre most apt to enact, as he puts it, «the Tower-of-Babel mixing of languages that goes around any object» (1981: 279). Here we may note a striking similarity between de Man's and Bakhtin's deployment of categories: while the former sees translation as «a making prosaic of what *appeared* to be poetic in the original» (1986: 97), thus setting poetry, sacredness, and the original against prose and translation, Bakhtin in analogous fashion elaborates on the distinction between poetry «narrowly conceived» and prose. The former is said to be monologically sealed off from verbal otherness and therefore traditionally suitable for representing «the language of the gods» (1981: 287), whereas the latter is the realm of the historically bound manifestations of dialogism.

Seen from this perspective, translation is dialogic discourse through and through, or rather, in Bakhtinian terms (1984a: 185-99), double-voiced discourse that is internally dialogised due to the fact that a single syntactic unit is made to express two different points of view about the world, two interacting semantic intentions: the author's and the translator's. This theoretical point, indeed, highlights the affinities translations show with all kinds of dialogic discourses, in particular with *parody*, as has been noticed before in non-Bakhtinian conceptual frameworks. Such is the case, for

instance, of Anton Popovič's encompassing notion of the *metatext*, which refers to all intertextual forms of receiving and transforming an original text, from plagiarism to literary criticism. Both translation and parody are, of course, metatextual models of an original, differing only as to the axiological nature of the relation - whether affirmative or controversial - and to the scope of the link between the two: apparent or concealed (1976: 232). In a typology of metatexts constructed with the help of these categories, translation is mostly an affirmative and apparent modelling of the original, while parody is controversial and concealed. However, their resemblance becomes even more visible when *polemic translation* is taken into consideration, which, very much like parody, consists in polemically engaging with various aspects of the original, style, poetics, etc., or simply «bring[ing] the original up to date» (1976: 229). A stronger conception of translation as polemics is convincingly put forward by Annie Brisset, who couples parody and certain types of translation under the category of paradoxical discourses, that is, modes of achieving a critical awareness by self-reflectively exposing the limits of the dominant doxa (1985: 192). Such is the case of Antonin Artaud's parodic rendering of a chapter of Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking-Glass*, which she sees as undermining the traditional status of both translation and parody as relying basically on mimetic procedures.

Now, having hinted at the close relationship between translation, dialogic discourse, and parody, it is time to move Paul de Man's insight one step further along Bakhtinian lines. I propose then that de Man's point about the prosaic nature of translation may be logically read as meaning that *translation brings about the uncrowning of the original*. I am referring, of course, to Bakhtin's key concept developed in his celebrated study of Rabelais and popular culture of the Middle Ages and the Renaissan-

ce, which allowed him to focus on the overall significance of the genres, images, and discourses that make up the world of Carnival. Uncrowning describes the process of bringing the high and mighty down to earth, degrading all that is repressive, serious or solemn, debasing canonical authorities, and levelling out hierarchies. Instrumental to the wholesale dethroning of power set in motion by the spirit of Carnival and its logic of the upside down is laughter in its manifold forms, particularly parody and the grotesque representations of the «lower stratum of the body», as Bakhtin put it.

It is obvious that at this stage in my argument «uncrowning» as applied to the relationship between translation and the original can only be taken in a metaphorical sense, the legitimacy of which may be gauged from the recent theoretical re-evaluation of both categories within Translation Studies in the light of the post-structuralist critique of binary systems of thought (Derrida 1985; Koskinen, 1994; Bankier 1996). Its descriptive power will be, however, further enhanced if we depart from Popovič's view that, with the exception of well-defined cases, translations hold mostly an affirmative and positive attitude toward the original, and accept instead Raymond van den Broeck's assertion that translation «always implies a confrontation, if not some kind of conflict, between the source and target literary systems» (1989: 57). In this context, the metaphor brings «the violence that resides in the very purpose and activity of translation» (Venuti 1995: 18) to the surface, even when uncrowning is correctly interpreted in its anthropological sense of authorised transgression.

There are, however, translations that are committed to uncrowning their originals in a more literal meaning of the word, that is, translations that achieve a degrading or debasing appropriation of the original by employing a set of discursive strategies and textual devices akin to the ones Bakhtin extensively examines





in his work on Rabelais. These I will call, as might be expected, *carnivalised translations*, of which two instances will be looked at in the rest of my paper: John Phillips's translation of *Don Quijote*, published in 1687, and a Portuguese translation of Homer's *Iliad*, published in 1944-45. Let me add that, in dealing with these carnivalised target texts, my purpose is not to focus on uncrowning for its own sake, as if translation took place outside of a concrete context of reception, but rather to identify the domestic agendas that may account for such an acculturating enterprise. In other words, I start from the theoretical principle that a culture, as Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere pointed out, «assigns different functions to translations of different texts. The way translations are supposed to function depends both on the audience they are intended for . . . and on the status of the source text they are supposed to represent in their own culture» (1990: 8).

John Phillips's *The History of the most renowned Don Quixote of Mancha and His Trusty Squire Sancho Pança*, like the 1700 version by Peter Motteux, with which it has much in common, is a likely candidate for the sort of often encountered misjudgement that stems from an attitude of reverence and supposed fidelity toward a canonised original that should not be tampered with, let alone profaned. In the Introduction to his 1949 translation of *Don Quixote*, Samuel Putnam reduced Phillips's text to the following comment: «This is truly a disgraceful performance, coarse and clowning . . . The less said of Phillips the better» (1949: XII). More recently, Henri van Hoof, in *Histoire de la traduction en Occident*, disposes of it in a similar fashion by remarking that «[elle] ne fait que ravalier un chef-d'oeuvre au niveau d'une littérature vulgaire» (1991: 142).

Disparaging opinions apart, both authors are indeed on the right track as regards the true nature of Phillips's manipulation of the source text: the allusions to 'clowning', 'degrading',

and 'vulgar literature' help us pinpoint the wholesale strategy of carnivalisation that an already carnivalised text is subject to here. Of course, van Hoof's statement reads history backwards, since the 'masterpiece' status he talks about is mainly the outcome of a consecration process that did not begin to take shape earlier than mid-eighteenth century. By the time Phillips writes, the reception of *Don Quijote* in England turns it into a burlesque story, pure farce, stressing and amplifying the comical side of the main characters and their adventures (Flores 1982: 7-15), thus making it join the repertoire of cultural artifacts that originated from and contributed to the popular world of Carnival, still very much alive despite the efforts of the reformers.

In this sense, the clownish aspects of the translation are hardly more than an intensification or foregrounding of the carnivalised nature of the original and the uncrowning elements already present in it (Redondo 1989; Martins 1996). The few sample quotes that follow taken from Chapter III of the Second Part will certainly help us catch a glimpse on the chief means of production of carnivalised rewriting set in motion by John Phillips.

(1) Pensativo además quedó don Quijote, esperando al bachiller Carrasco, de quien esperaba oír las nuevas de sí mismo puestas en libro. (557)

(1) *All the while Sancho was gone, Don Quixote thought every Minute a thousand years, till he came again. He sate like one that had been studying the Philosopher's Stone, musing, and dreaming, and wondring who the Devil this Person should be, that had finish'd and printed the Story of his famous Achievements.* (305)

(2) teniendo a raya los ímpetus de los naturales mivismientos; (558)

(2) *all his wanton and lascivious inclinations at a Bay;* (306)



(3) y rebién haya el curioso que tuvo cuidado de hacerlas traducir de arábigo en nuestro vulgar castellano, para universal entretenimiento de las gentes. (558)

(3) *and may he never want claret, as long as he lives, that translated it into English, for the Delight and Pastime of Male and Female. And blest are we, that the Copy comes out now in Peace and Quietness; for there had like to ha' been a foul Stir about it, while one Bookseller claim'd one Limb of your Lordship, and another another.* (306)

(4) tengo para mí que el día de hoy están impresos más de doce mil libros de la tal historia; si no, dígalo Portugal, Barcelona y Valencia, donde se han impreso; y aun hay fama que se está imprimiendo en Amberes, y a mí se me trasluce que no ha de haber nación ni lengua donde no se traduzga. (558-59)

(4) *and that I believe there has been printed already in several Languages above twelve thousand Volumes at Lisbon, Valentia, Barcelona, Antwerp, Colen, Paris, London, &c. and I don't believe that any other Books will be printed for these seven years together.* (306)

(5) Nunca —dijo a este punto Sancho Panza— he oído llamar (559)

(5) *Bodikins, quo Sancho, I never heard her called* (306)

(6) las cabriolas que el buen Sancho hizo en la manta. (560)

(6) *honest Sancho's dancing Trenchmore I' the Blanket.* (307)

(7) algunos de los infinitos palos que en diferentes encuentros dieron al señor don Quijote. (560)

(7) *that infinite number of Drubbs, and Rubs, and Ribroastings, that you have receiv'd with Cudgels, Candlesticks, and Pitch-forks,*

from Carriers, Mule-drivers, and Penitents, in several desperate Encounters. (307)

(8) Yo apostaré —replicó Sancho— que ha mezclado el hideperro berzas con capachos. (562)

(8) *I'll lay my life, quo Sancho, the Son of a Whore has made Gallimawfrey of my Master's Life, and crowded foul and clean, Higglede-pigglede, into his Cloak-bag. Pox take him, quo Don Quixote, I'll be hang'd if the Fellow ben't some Narrative-writer, or one of those that scribble the Lives of Great Men, nowadays, as soon as the Breath is out of Bodies, in abominable Six-penny Duodecimo's.* (308)

(9) volvió Sancho (565)

(9) *till waken'd again by Sancho's Hobnails...* (309)

As can be easily perceived, the carnivalised elements of the translation consist basically in additions and insertions drawn from the «language of the market-place», to use one of Bakhtin's favourite concepts, that is, colloquialisms and idioms, as in (1) and (8); elements of Billingsgate speech such as curses, oaths, and improprieties, in (1), (5), and 8; the compiling of paratactic lists or catalogues characteristic of popular modes of expression, as in (4) and (7); the emphasis on material and bodily representations, as in (2), (7), and (9). Especially interesting in this connection is passage (7), in which the Spanish «palos» is expanded into various types, instruments, and agents of physical abuse, thus referring the reader back to the respective episodes in the First Part of the novel, while at the same time making the downward movement inherent in fights, beatings, and blows explicit, which, according to Bakhtin (1984b: 370), are a hallmark of the grotesque body of Carnival. One last comment concerns aspects of the Universe of Discourse of the target culture that crop up in (3), (6), and



(8), in particular the rather clever allusions to the book market that throw the self-referential contents of this most «narcissistic» chapter in the whole novel into relief.

Certainly such extensive liberties taken with the original might be accounted for in terms of its status in the host culture, as mentioned before, or as a function of the laws governing transfers from peripheral to central cultures (Even-Zohar 1990: 51). However, the carnivalised features point also to another direction as a major cause of domestication: to audience expectations and market demands in the wake of the immense success and widespread popularity *Don Quijote* enjoyed in England immediately after the publication of Thomas Shelton's translation of the First Part in 1612 and the Second Part in 1620. This was followed by two reprints of Shelton's text in 1652 and 1675, Edmund Gayton's *Pleasant Notes upon Don Quixot (sic)* in 1654, Peter Motteux's often reprinted translation of 1700, published in duodecimos (Peers 1950: 275), as well as by other forms of appropriation like Samuel Butler's *Hudibras* of 1663-68, Thomas d'Urfey's *The Comical History of Don Quixote* in three parts (1694-96), and the eighty literary references in the seventeenth century alone, which scholarship has been able to dig up (Riva 1948: 116). Particularly worth mentioning are the various abbreviated editions circulating in chapbook format, such as *The famous History of Don Quixote de la Mancha*, a 20 page edition from 1686; *The delightful history of Don Quixote, the most renowned Baron of Mancha*, a 204 page edition from 1689; *The history of the ever-renowned knight Don Quixote de la Mancha*, a 24 page edition from c. 1695, and *The much-esteemed history of the ever-famous knight Don Quixote de la Mancha*, a 191 page edition from 1699.

In fact, nothing of substance distinguishes John Phillips's translation from these publications, which often bear long titles devised in

the form of popular advertisements or the cries of hawkers (Bakhtin 1984b: 153) and phrased in the formulaic register common to so many other publications of the time: *The Historie of the most renowned and victorious princess Elizabeth, late Queene of England* (1630); *The Most Ancient and Famous History of the renowned Prince Arthur* (1634); *The Life & Death of the Valiant and Renowned Sir Francis Drake* (1671); *The Famous and Renowned History of Sir Bevis of Southampton* (1689); *The most Excellent and Famous History of the Most Renowned Knight, Amadis of Greece* (1694), etc. Carrying the signs of hurried composition, it is a product made for the emergent market of new readers (Bassnett 1993: 150), catering to tastes that fed upon the forms of comic culture popular at the time, and profiting from the rise of literacy in the second half of the seventeenth century especially among craftsmen (Burke 1994: 250-52). What ended up differentiating between potential audiences was not so much the level of education or the constitution of their cultural capital but purchasing power.

My second example of carnivalised translation comes from a totally different historical, literary, and cultural environment: the previously mentioned rendering of Homer's *Iliad* into Portuguese, published in 1944-45 in three volumes. M. Alves Correia, the translator, was a Franciscan priest as well as a Hellenist scholar who had already co-translated the *Odysey* in 1938. Both books were published in a prestigious series of classics geared to an audience made up of mostly academics and students of the Humanities at a time when the study of classical literature still rode high on the cultural and educational agenda. All things considered, this would seem the least promising soil in which a carnivalised translation would thrive; however, in a deeply Bakhtinian sense of the word, it managed to accomplish an uncrowning of this most canonical of all epic poems in Western literature which is simultaneously a



renewal and a rebirth of the text.

Alves Correia's prose translation is first of all an amazing feat of verbal virtuosity. He draws from every resource of the language, including anachronisms, substandard variants from diverse local and regional communities, different speech registers, allusions to Portuguese literature, and bold neologisms resulting from etymological calques such as «rododáctilo» for *rododaktulos* («the rosy-fingered») and «crisótrono» for *chrusothronos* («of the golden throne»). We can also find, in addition to words in transliterated Greek, lexical items in Latin, English, and Italian. As far as the Carnival aspect is concerned, it relies very much on the same strategies as could be seen in John Phillips's version of *Don Quijote*: a profusion of colloquialisms, proverbs, idioms, humorous comments, comical insertions, and even improper words, which effectively bring the elevated seriousness of the war epic down to the sphere of the low bodily stratum and the everyday exchanges of the marketplace. Following Bakhtin's description of carnivalised texts, it reminds us of the kinds of *parodia sacra* that in the Middle Ages were composed by the clergy and used inside the Church itself.

For the purposes of this article, the following examples can, I think, aptly convey the extent to which the translator carried his labour of carnivalisation of the original. I have included in (a) the transliterated source-text, in (b) Alves Correia's Portuguese text, in (c) my own English translation as literal as possible of the former, and in (d) its 1924 rendering by A. T. Murray published in the Loeb Classical Library. This is intended as a sort of control translation, not in the sense of an ideal fidelity but rather as a telling instance of how the opposite effect of high seriousness and distance supposedly proper to the holy of hollies is engendered by means of a systematic usage of lexicogrammatical archaisms.

1.—

(a) Telamôni, ho s' etrephe tutton conta, kai se nothon per conta komissato hoi eni oikoi (VIII, 284-85)

(b) Telemão, que te alimentou quando eras menino; e que, não obstante tu seres dos pés à cabeça fideputa, tomou cuidado de ti em sua própria casa. (I, 185)

(c) Telamon, who nourished you when you were a baby, and although you are an utter son of a bitch, took care of you in his own house.

(d) Telamon, who reared thee when thou wast a babe, and for all thou wast a bastard cherished thee in his own house.

2.—

(a) Ton d' êpeita Dolôn, hupo d' etreme guia (X, 390)

(b) Dolão respondeu (as pernas tremiam-lhe como varas verdes); (I, 205)

(c) Dolon answered, and his legs trembled like an aspen leaf;

(d) To him then Dolon made answer, and his limbs trembled beneath him;

3.—

(a) all' age moi tode cipe kai atrekeôs katalexon (X, 405)

(b) Mas deixemos lá isso e voltemos à vaca fria; desconfrange-te e explica as coisas bem; (I, 241)

(c) Come on, let's return to our mutttons; relax and explain it to me well;

(d) But come tell me this, and declare it truly:

4.—

(a) prôtos d' exereêne Gerênios ippota Nestôr (X, 543)

(b) E o venerando ancião de Gerénia, Nestor, pôs-se outra vez a dar à taramela: (I, 543)

(c) And the venerable old man of Gerénia, Nestor, went on prattling:

(d) And the horseman, Nestor of Gerénia, was the first to question them:



5.—

- (a) podas ôkus Achileus (XI, 112)
 (b) Aquileus, por alcunha «O pés ligeiros» (I, 254)
 (c) Achilles, nicknamed «The swift-footed»
 (d) Achilles, fleet of foot

6.—

- (a) Zeu Pater, ê 'pa nu kai su philopseudês etetuxo pagchu mal' (XII, 164-65)
 (b) Zeus-Padre, que grande trapalhão me saíste! Com quantos dentes na boca tens também mentes tu? (I, 293)
 (c) Father Zeus, what a cheat you turned out to be! You lie in your throat!
 (d) Father Zeus, of a surety thou too then art utterly a lover of lies!

7.—

- (a) Nestor d' ouk elathen iachê pinonta per empês (XIV, 1)
 (b) Como inválido de guerra entretinha-se Nestor a bebericar; (II, 39)
 (c) As a war invalid, Nestor occupied himself by sipping wine.
 (d) And the cry of battle was not unmarked of Nestor, albeit his wine,

8.—

- (a) entha d' ep' autaôn plunoi eurees eggus casi
 kaloi laineoi, hoti heimata sigaloenta
 pluneskon Trôôn alochoi kalai ke thugatres
 to prin ep' eirênes, prin elthein huias
 Achaiôn (XXII, 164-67)
 (b) Perto das nascentes há dois tanques de pedra lavrada, onde as mulheres dos Troianos e suas belas filhas iam lavar roupa, que antes da guerra e da vinda dos filhos dos Acaios indicava muita opulência: interiores de princesa, cuecas de heróis e não frangalhos ou rodilhas de cozinha. (III, 35)
 (c) Near the springs there are two washing-tanks made of wrought stone, where the wives and fair daughters of the Trojans used to wash their clothes, which before the

war and the coming of the sons of the Achaeans, showed a sign of great wealth: princesses' underwear and heroes' pants, not rags or kitchen mops.

(d) And there hard by the selfsame springs are broad washing-tanks, fair and wrought of stone, where the wives and fair daughters of the Trojans were wont to wash bright raiment of old in time of peace, before the sons of the Achaeans came.

9.—

- (a) Hôs phat' apeilêsas: ton d' ou kunes amphepenonto (XXIII, 184)
 (a) Assim dizia, ameaçando; mas os cães respeitaram e até afagaram Heitor, e alçando a perna, de Aquileus nos «rápidos pés» mijaram. (III, 102)
 (b) So he spoke, threatening; but the dogs honoured and even fondled Hector; then, lifted their legs and pissed on Achilles's «swift feet».
 (c) So spake he threatening, but with Hector might no dogs deal;

Of course this is by no means a transparent translation bent on fluency, to be read as if it were an original: on the contrary, otherness intrudes upon discourse all the time, the signs of the translator as subject are stamped everywhere, and the work of carnivalisation is so blatant that it raised a minor scandal, leading one contemporary reviewer to complain that he was «not reading Homer but a caricature of Homer»¹ (Antunes 1946: 224-25). In this context, it may be useful to learn that this was precisely the translator's point, made clear in one of his many «notes, comments, and reflections» appended to the third volume. Here he insisted on proclaiming the universal genius of Homer, but finally on condition that he be seen «on textual evidence» as a comic author who «laughed even at what causes us horror» (III, 251).

¹ All translations of Portuguese quotations are mine.

How can we possibly account for an interpretation that so obviously goes against the grain of all scholarship since Antiquity as well as of the traditional status of the Homeric poems in our culture? The final words of the lengthy Introduction to the translation may give us a first clue:

The *Iliad* in relation to the war, or the war in the *Iliad*, has neither beginning nor end. When the composition of the poem starts, the «state of war» already existed; after the last line, the war still goes on. . . It seems that the Poet wanted to suggest a precise meaning: infinite war. . . Prophet of ill omen! But the worst thing is that almost three thousand years have passed and nobody could yet prove the prophecy wrong. (I, LVIII)

This quite clearly brings the poem and its translation to bear on contemporary events, thus becoming a powerful statement not only on the Trojan war but on all wars, in particular on the war that was raging at the time Alves Correia was writing. The wholesale debasing of the fierce and blood-thirsty heroes of the *Iliad* stems first and foremost from a deliberate intention to take a critical stand against the war by means of a poetics of carnivalised, fictional characters which the translator sketched out as follows:

Is there fighting among dreadful gods and frowning, giant-like warriors? The epic poet is careful enough to warn us: be advised, do not take them too seriously; mostly they are imaginary warriors, bragging too much in the burlesque mode. There are dead people and many wounded; but what surprises us is how so much blood was shed by airy ghosts and paper dragons. (III, 251)

One of the most consequential points Bakhtin makes about carnivalised genres and discourses concerns their «oppositional character», that is, by means of degrading laughter,

they set themselves against all that is intolerant and dogmatic and liberate «from fanaticism and pedantry, from fear and intimidation, from didacticism, naïveté and illusion, from the single meaning, the single level, from sentimentality» (1984b: 128). Looking back at the social and historical circumstances of the time and place that gave birth to Alves Correia's translation, Bakhtin's statement sounds more or less like an accurate description of the main features of the ideology then prevailing in a country that for two decades had been ruled by Fascist authoritarianism.

A deeper political meaning of Alves Correia's interpretation of the *Iliad* may thus be hypothesised, one that reads it against the backdrop of censorship and the repression of non-dominant discourse, which forced antagonistic views to look for indirect ways of expressing themselves. In the forties, by far the most successful of all alternative strategies of resistance at an aesthetic level was neo-realism, a movement of Marxist-leaning intellectuals who, mostly in novels written from 1939 onwards, set out to portray the life of the common people as subject to dire conditions of poverty and distress. In view of their distinct affinities, neo-realist poetics may have helped shape Alves Correia's style as translator. In any case, his carnivalised domestication of the Homeric poem must surely be read contextually as an *oppositional act*, and, furthermore, one that indirectly comments on the official status of *The Lusíads*, the sixteenth-century Portuguese canonical epic of the discoveries, which was turned by the ruling authorities into an almost sacred text that was widely manipulated in order to ideologically legitimate a notion of cultural and national identity redefined in the interests of dictatorship and imperialism.





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