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dispositio

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SEMIOTICS AND POETICS IN BRAZIL

Guest Editor Maria Lúcia Santaella Braga

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(but not Resnais, who belongs to the first type); Cartier-Bresson; Dostoyevsky - hence the "dialogism" and "polyphonism" of his novels (Bakhtin), which are merely a projection of montage of the first type, which he practised in his early work, as shown by Boris Schnaidermann; Surrealism; Eisenstein's "ideological montage" when influenced by Surrealism, in *October*; João Cabral de Melo Neto (tendency towards the first classification: influence of Valéry and architecture; "prosification" of the melodic line of the poetry);

c) *Montage III* - Pragmatic montage, or bricolage. The São Paulo bus terminal; Gaudí, in the Holy Trinity and Guell Park; Flaubert, in *Bouvard et Pécuchet*; Duchamp; Satie; a number of things in and aspects of Joyce's *Ulysses*; happenings; punk, kitsch (bricolage is a projection of kitsch); the Las Vegas Sunset Strip and so-called pop architecture or anti-architecture (Robert Venturi, for example).

In São Paulo, we can compare the bus terminal and the Praça da Sé subway station. Here, spaces and space shapers (few elements and materials) correspond isomorphically and paramorphically: the syntagm is a projection of its paradigms, by similarity. In the bus terminal, countless forms and materials (paradigms) simply join up to constitute the syntagm. It is not without reason that architects and students of architecture call this building a work of "caritecture"...

Indeed, all the efforts of architects and city planners aim at combating and pushing back the tendency towards bricolage manifested by all modern cities. Hence the dream and aspiration of designing cities *ab ovo*.

In Brasília, only the Pilot plan remains within Montage I; the satellite suburbs tend towards collage and bricolage, as, indeed, do the mass media and Brazilian popular music (from country music to reggae). It might relevantly be observed at this point that the fundamental difference between popular music and so-called serious music is that the former is based on the melody, which is consumable and reproducible by laymen (can be whistled and sung) and which is supplied ready-made, except in some special cases - e.g. João Gilberto, Caetano or Walter Franco. To whistle a theme from a Mozart symphony is to retain practically none of its information, whose secret is precisely its harmony. In traditional Eastern music, it is impossible to image someone whistling a melody.

In contrast to what it is usually held to be, Renaissance perspective is a sign of closure, hierarchic and hypotactic (God, being etc.) - a sign which commands the whole organization of spatial perception, very much in accordance with the logical and teleological universe of the West. Now that this sign has been overcome, West and East come closer once again. It is more important to integrate than to aim at an all-ordering finality which is indistinguishable from power. This is what my beloved Schopenhauer discovered (*The World as Will and Representation*); he was countered by the not so beloved Nietzsche (*The Will to Power*). There is no power without a finalistic discourse.

Translated by Kevin Marc Benson Mundy

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REFLECTION OF AND ON THEORIES OF TRANSLATION

Julio Plaza
São Paulo University

*Translation seems destined to illustrate
the debate on aesthetics.*

Borges

*The more I reflect on my art, the more
I practice it.*

Paul Valéry

INTRODUCTION

Intersemiotic translation is conceived of here, in the arts, as a space where conflict takes place (productively) among the various codes and elements of the system of art - from the production to the reception of a work of art, understood not as an absolute category but as a cluster of relations between the elements of that system: object-representation-interpretant-author-reader. It is within this cluster of relations that we can locate the act of creation itself contained in the act of translation, and vice versa, when language is set in motion.

It is in the nature of art to be intersemiotic; art at its extreme, the search for its purity, finds in its core the precise relations which can be set up with other systems of signs. It, as it were, becomes saturated, interweaves, resolves and dissolves in contact with other systems. This relationship is bound to become increasingly rich and complex as a result of the inflation and accelerated growth in mutations of language, codes and media in our time, a characteristic feature of the contemporaneity of present and future art. It is from this point of view

that one can conceive of the theory and practice of inter-code translation in tune with present and future needs, in order to develop a kind of perception which can produce the feeling and understanding of the influences operated reciprocally by one language on another.

It is not the object of this study to claim a higher status for translation (considered a minor art in academic circles), but rather to demonstrate that art itself (the higher kind) holds within itself the germ of a translation of something since translation and creation are opposite sides of the same coin. To create is to translate, to translate is to create; as Marx put it, production and consumption stand in a close relationship. The act of consuming is implicit in the very act of producing, and production is embedded in consumption: "Each is at once its own opposite", writes Marx in a thoroughly Oriental manner. Or again: *PRODUSSUMO* ("PRODUMPTION"), as the process is synthesized in Décio Pignatari's creative translation. The same occurs with transcreation, when the translator, by appropriating the original, is transfigured and objectivated through the act of appropriation, while at the same time creating and recreating himself in the work of translating, humanizing himself in an act of love.

By recreating, the translator does not fetishize his object, because he transforms and sets language in motion. At the same time, he reflects history and creates a circular temporality which runs counter to the linear conception of time so characteristic of the avant-garde. In this territory, transcreation can be seen as a way of resolving and exorcizing the old ghosts of mimesis, on the one hand, and of the "new", on the other, in order to give meaning to history through forms; for translation and tradition communicate reciprocally.

Considering the problem of creative translation means considering the problem of creation: both one and the other reflect on their own medium: language.

A work of art has countless ramifications, amongst which we shall choose the most significant for our purposes: to focus on translation in general, and, more specifically, intersemiotic translation.

The text proposed here is an initial attempt to map out the terrain in the field of theory and, above all, of creative practice. This is a work in progress.

ON THE SYNCHRONIC NATURE OF THE WORK OF ART

A work of art is an object, a synthesis and/or syncretism of codes, forms, gestures or action which, once synthesized, constitute and proclaim the existence of a work of art. Any work of art is thus a more or less successful and declared palimpsest which, when read critically, leads the way to history. Any work of art is a meaningful and synthetic form in a dialogic relationship with the other forms in its series (style). The form (art) has paradigms which are analogous, but not identical, to other forms. There are variations. A work of art thus shares the metaphoric nature of the stylist and aesthetic series to which it belongs. In this context,

therefore, a work of art also has a unique character within the series, due to its codification, although there are similarities and differences. In a certain sense, a work of art is the meaning (or part of it) of other works where it is more developed.

This synchronic nature of a work as palimpsest leads us to think of its historicity: that is, aspects included in its composition can be examined through analysis and located diachronically; a work at one and the same time dialogs with the present and with the past, and is in some way akin to tradition. Diachrony is embedded in synchrony (the synchronic absorbs the diachronic), just as linearity is a case of simultaneity. A work of art thus encompasses a number of codes and ordering laws, in a highly particular synthesis.

As Octavio Paz puts it, "every text is unique and simultaneously a translation of another text. No text is entirely original because in its essence language itself is already a translation: first, of the non-verbal world, and next, because every sign and every sentence is a translation of another sign and another sentence. But this train of thought can be inverted without losing its validity: all texts are original because every translation is distinct. Every translation, up to a point, is an invention and thus constitutes a unique text"¹.

The reservation - "up to a point" - included here by Octavio Paz raises the question of the invariability and the definitive nature of a work, for: "There is no good text which will not appear invariable and definitive if we practice it frequently enough"². However, at the same time, "the concept of a definitive text corresponds either to religion or to fatigue." And again: "To assume that any recombination of elements is necessarily inferior to the original is to assume that rough copy G is necessarily inferior to rough copy H since there are no rough copies"³.

To this can be juxtaposed the following statement by Borges which, in a way, synthesizes the above: "It is without enthusiasm that I offer these conjectures: the only certainty is that it is impossible to separate what belongs to the writer from what belongs to language" - that is, "the categorical difficulty of knowing what belongs to the poet and what belongs to language. To this fortunate difficulty we owe the possibility of there being so many versions, all of them sincere, genuine and divergent"⁴.

In this sense, the creative individuality of the artist is mediated by language, and vice versa. Language (what has already been done with it and what has been left undone) imposes the conditions for its own construction on the artist. Nevertheless, the choice of a given syntax, the selection of certain terms and functions (verbal and non-verbal), the subversion of certain syntactic patterns

1. Paz, Octavio, "Traducción: literatura y literalidad", *Cuadernos Marginales* (no. 18), Tusquets, Barcelona, 1971, p. 9.

2. Borges, J.L., "Las versiones homéricas", in *Discusión*, Emece, Buenos Aires, 1964, p. 90.

3. Idem, *ibidem*, p. 90.

4. Idem, *ibidem*, p. 91.

in sign systems, and even the critical-creative recreation of tradition - all this is the responsibility of the creator-translator. Thus, any creation-translation moves in the quicksands of the impossibility of separating "what belongs to the writer and what belongs to language".

This leads to the conclusion that the construction of any work leaves behind it the marks of relativity (of the authors, choices, points of view etc.) which paradoxically, however, will become absolute, unique and tautological in the finished "work-of-art". It is precisely in this chink between the absolute-ness and the relativity of any work that the possibility of translation appears to arise.

In short: all works aspire to definitiveness. Yet it is impossible to go beyond what is permitted by language at a given point. This is the flaw, the breach in any work, and it is in this breach that there can arise elements of chance, playfulness and creativity, and indeed extrapolation from one code to another, or translation. Thus, all translations are in advance of the original in some respects, but also fall behind in others; from this, language emerges as a specific system for coding and structuring the work, and for presenting it, while at the same time revealing the individual characteristics of each artist and/or translator. To this extent a work is consummated as the metaphor of a subject, at the same time as the breach of its translatability points towards the vector of an absence-replacement of this same subject.

In synthesis, we thus have, at one extreme, the work as a potentiality open to translation, since the very act of reading already functions as an embryo of translation. Translating thus consists of "the most attentive way of reading . . . the desire to read attentively, better to penetrate complex works"⁵: that is, it consists of "a privileged form of critical reading"⁶.

At the other extreme, however, while it is correct to say that "any new language will initially be linked to a certain extent to one or more existing languages, on the other hand its development will gradually make it autonomous. This autonomy, this uniqueness, not only of one language in relation to the others but even of each work of art, is indeed a *sine qua non* for any work of art to be seen as such. In other words: "a work of art is irreducible"⁷. From this it flows that translation is impossible, as to translate would be to lose the essence of the peculiar quality which makes any work a work of art.

5. SUBIRAT, Salas - quoted in CAMPOS, Haroldo de, "Da tradução como criação e como crítica", in *Metalinguagem*, Vozes, Petrópolis, 1970, p. 31.

6. CAMPOS, Haroldo de, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

7. PIGNATARI, Décio, "Nova linguagem, nova poesia", in *Invenção: Revista de Arte de Vanguarda* (no. 4), Dec. 1964, p. 81.

ON THE TAUTOLOGICAL NATURE OF THE WORK OF ART

The value of a language lies in what in it cannot be translated, transposed or reduced to other languages.

Décio Pignatari

The essence of art is tautology. Works of art do not signify; they are.

Fabri

In an article entitled *On translation as creation and as criticism*, Haroldo de Campos makes a parallel between two theoreticians of art and literature, A. Fabri and M. Bense. These two writers set out from differing assumptions to arrive at similar conclusions concerning the problem of translation. For Fabri, the characteristic feature of literary language is the "absolute sentence", whose "only content is its structure" and which is "nothing if not its own instrument." This leads Fabri to conclude that this "absolute or perfect sentence" cannot be translated, as translation "presupposes the possibility of separating meaning and word."

M. Bense, on the other hand, sets out from the distinction between "documentary information", "semantic information" and "aesthetic information" to develop the concept of the "fragility" of aesthetic information. Following the trail already opened up by Haroldo de Campos, from this it can be said that "aesthetic information" can only be coded by the forms in which it is transmitted by the artist. When the fragility of aesthetic information is at its utmost, no alteration, however minute, may be made to even a mere particle without disturbing the aesthetic realization. Thus, aesthetic information may not be separated from what it realizes: "its essence and its function are linked to its instrument, its unique realization. It can be concluded that the sum total of information contained in aesthetic information is, in each case, equal to the sum total of its realization", whence, "at least in principle, its untranslatability"⁸.

Thus the impossibility of translation is, as it were, postulated. This impossibility is grounded in the aesthetic object's singularity-uniqueness, which aspires to be absolute. In other words, its singularity is established by the "fragility" which constitutes it as a unique being in dialog with itself and the objects in its series. It should be noted that the "fragility of aesthetic information" does not occur in the sense of precision, as in the numeric system, but in the sense of the semantic imprecision which results from its realization and is inseparable from it. This leads to the problem of uniqueness as a differential quality of a work.

Now at the level of quality, of the analogic, every message is less precise but more direct. At this level, it cannot be explained, interpreted, translated: it simply points to itself. A work of art is therefore tautological and cannot be translated to another system without changing its quality.

8. Cf. CAMPOS, Haroldo de, *op. cit.*, pp. 22 and 23.

However, Haroldo de Campos leaps out of this framework of the impossibility of translation and, in a qualitative thrust of theoretical reflection, makes the impossible give birth to the possible. Referring to poetic translation and setting out from the *sine qua non* established by Bense to the effect that any translation requires another set of aesthetic information, Haroldo de Campos proposes that, although the original and the translation are different from the point of view of language, the aesthetic information they bear "will be connected by an isomorphic relationship - that is, like isomorphic bodies they will crystallize within one and the same system"⁹.

Haroldo de Campos also reclaims Walter Benjamin's thesis that "translation is in the first place a form"¹⁰ and extracts all its radical consequences. Thus, translation is "always recreation or parallel, autonomous but reciprocal creation . . . In translation of this kind, not only the meaning but the sign itself is translation, i.e. its very physical nature, its materiality . . . This is therefore the opposite of so-called literal translation"¹¹. Or, as Haroldo de Campos himself points out in another article: it is a matter of "exponentiated literality, of being literal to the form (rather than the content) of the original." In short, it is a matter of translating "under the sign of invention"¹².

What emerges most conspicuously, however, from the observations of Haroldo de Campos is that at the heart of his thesis concerning what is possible in terms of poetic translation there is an issue which is by nature semiotic. In order for translation not to be, as W. Benjamin remarks, "the imprecise transmission of an inessential content", H. de Campos shows that poetic translation should go beyond sole linguistic wisdom, so that the fundamental criterion for this activity is translation of form: hence trans-creation.

It should be noted, however, that translation as form has also nothing to do with simple transposition or mere literal illustration, where the relation between the original and the translation would be one of imitation - that is, translation produced at the level of appearance and not that of the formal-semantic structure. This type of translation is servile and thus lacks the playfulness of transcreation or recreation of the original.

Translation as form, on the contrary, poses complex problems. According to W. Benjamin, "conceiving it as such means above all returning to the original, in which after all the law which determines and contains the 'translatability' of a work is finally to be found"¹³. Thus, just as "no item of knowledge

9. Idem, p. 24.

10. BENJAMIN, W., "A tarefa do tradutor", in *Humboldt* magazine (no. 40), Bruckmann, Munich, 1979, p. 38.

11. CAMPOS, H. de, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

12. CAMPOS, H. de, "A poética da tradução", in *Arte no Horizonte do Provável*, Perspectiva, São Paulo, pp. 98 and 111.

13. BENJAMIN, W., *op. cit.*, p. 38.

can be or claim to be objective when it is limited to a reproduction of reality, so no translation is feasible if it aspires essentially to be a reproduction which resembles the original"¹⁴.

However, following in Benjamin's tracks a little further, we reach a point where he also insinuates semiotic questions which are very relevant to problems of intersemiotic translation.

The idea that "affinity between languages depends on the fact that the totality which each language is aims to achieve the same as the other without being able to do so in isolation" leads Benjamin to the conclusion that "languages complement each other as to the totality of their intentions." This leads to the conclusion that "no translation is more than a provisional way for us to become deeply engaged in dealing with the disparity among languages"¹⁵.

It is precisely this impossibility for a single language to be all-embracing (despite the internal totality it represents) that lays the basis for the possibility of poetic translation as form. For it is in the confrontation of languages, in the act of translating, that their strong points as generators of forms are revealed.

In this sense, any translation moves between identities and differences, touching the original at tangential points, as Benjamin also remarks. All translation are better and worse than the original. Hence the intimate and secret relationship between languages is that they are akin and analogous with regard to what they intend to express.

Benjamin's observations seem to leave implicit the fact that it is because one language is saturated in another that translation as form is possible. Now it is precisely the continuous migration from one code to another - that is, the saturation of one code in another - that lays the basis for the possibility of intersemiotic translation and gives feasibility to any kind of reflection on such translation.

When he refers to an intimate and hidden relationship between languages "in that they are akin and analogous with regard to what they intend to express", Benjamin gives a hint of an intimate relationship even between very different systems of signs, such as visual and verbal signs, for example. As representational codes, both these systems of signs may show a certain kinship in their common enterprise of alluding to the same reference point.

Thus, when Benjamin compares and contrasts the expressions *Brot* and *pain*, stating that they have the same content but a different way of intending to express it, he once again leaves the question open and paves the way for an intersemiotic approach.

According to Benjamin: "Whilst the modes of presentation are undoubtedly opposed in these two words, from the point of view of the language of origin, the 'modes of wanting-to-see' are complementary, in terms of the meaning presupposed by them"¹⁶. Similarly, when two codes are confronted, what may come

14. Idem, p. 39.

15. Idem, pp. 39 and 40.

16. Idem, p. 40.

for otherwise it would no longer be a translation. Intersemiotic translation thus stands in a frontier zone between being a second to the original or being another original in itself, thereby enhancing the clash between differences and similarities (variety in sameness, in analogy with what is translated) which is prototypical of all translation, whether it be intersemiotic or not.

This is exactly why any translation reflects its lost other half: in the analog, it appears as what is different, what is singular. It is this singularity that adds something to the function of translating and leads a translation to aspire to complete what is "missing" - hence the difference. Yet it is because in a translation there is this difference in conflict with itself that one language can contribute to the enrichment of another, as can one code to the enrichment of another. In the marrow of the difference is thus encapsulated the inalienably critical-meta-linguistic nature of any translation.

Translating is thus coming in contact with the deepest aspects of creation: this entails a reappraisal and analysis of the original's procedures while at the same time these same procedures are questioned in a playful manner, newly positioned and rearranged in the product (translation) which is to follow the original as its second. To translate is to lay the original bare, make its fullness visible and concrete, turn it inside out.

It follows from this that reading, translating, criticism and analysis are simultaneous, interwoven and/or parallel operations which are synthesized in the product (translation). All this can be summed up in this lapidary quotation from Borges: "Translation, by contrast, seems destined to illustrate the debate on aesthetics"²⁰. Moreover, in intersemiotic terms, Borges' statement can be extrapolated by saying that intersemiotic translation constitutes a privileged place in which to think out the problem of the migration and saturation of codes, and the aesthetic potential of each code and among codes.

ON THE AMBIGUOUS NATURE OF THE WORK OF ART

The translator of poetry is a choreographer of the interior dance of languages, in which the meaning (or content, as it is didactically termed), rather than being the linear target of a race from term to term, the Pavlovian bell of conditioned feedback, acts as the semantic wings or manifold scenery for this mobile choreography. A Dionysian pulsation, that dissolves the Apollonian diamantization of the already pre-formed original text in a new signic festival: it brings the crystallography back to its boiling lava state.

Haroldo de Campos

Examining the language of poetry from the viewpoint of its inherent ambiguity, both Octavio Paz and R. Jakobson argue that translation is, in principle, impossible. According to Jakobson: "The pun -- or, to use a more erudite and perhaps more precise term, paronomasia -- reigns over the art of poetry; be this

20. Idem, p. 89.

dominance absolute or limited, poetry is untranslatable by definition"²¹. And this statement is complemented by Octavio Paz: "... if it is possible to translate the denotative meanings of a text, by contrast it is practically impossible to translate the connotative meanings. Made of echoes, reflections and correspondences between sound and sense, poetry is a tissue of connotations and, therefore, it is untranslatable"²².

This argument concerning the impossibility of translation is however turned relative by both Paz and Jakobson in ways which are apparently divergent but in fact end up meeting.

For Jakobson, only 'creative transposition' is possible: "... transposition from one poetic form to another -- interlingual transposition -- or, finally, intersemiotic transposition -- from one system of signs to another"²³.

According to Paz, "translating is very difficult -- no less so than writing more or less original texts: but is not impossible . . . Translation and creation are twin operations. On the one hand, . . . translation is often indistinguishable from creation. On the other, there is an incessant ebb-and-flow between the two, a continuous and mutual fecundation"²⁴. Having postulated poetic translation as, in the words of Valéry, consisting ideally of "the production of analogous effects with different means", Paz defines translation as "transmutation".

It is clear, then, that each of these theoreticians begins from a different starting point and take a different road in dealing with the question of translation, yet all of them converge on the same destination: translation as creative transcodification.

However, when approached from the viewpoint of poetic ambiguity, the problem of translation presents new nuances which once again can be laid open to intersemiotic reflections. As Jakobson puts it, "in humor, dreams, magic, that is in what may be called the verbal mythology of every-day life, and above all in poetry, grammatical categories have a heightened semantic content. In such conditions, the question of translations becomes complicated and is much more open to debate"²⁵. This statement can, moreover, be extrapolated to any aesthetic message in any code, for the ambiguity and imprecision created by a high semantic content are intrinsic and inalienable features of a work of art.

To speak of ambiguity in aesthetic messages leads back to Jakobson, for it is this theoretician who has penetratingly brought to light the procedures which engender poeticity and plurisignificance in verbal and non-verbal messages. The issue here is the poetic function of language -- or, in other words, the projection of the equivalence principle from the axis of selection onto the axis of combination, so that equivalence is promoted to being a constitutive source of sequence. The supremacy of this function over the rest gives ambiguity to the

21. JAKOBSON, Roman, *Linguística e Comunicação*, Cultrix, São Paulo, 1973, p. 72.

22. PAZ, Octavio, *op. cit.*, pp. 10-11.

23. Idem, p. 72.

24. Idem, p. 16.

25. JAKOBSON, Roman, *op. cit.*, p. 70.

referential capacity of languages. This ambiguity lends messages a tone of imprecision and creates a tendency toward self-reference, toward metalanguage -- that is, the message points toward its own construction process.

An examination of the process of construction of language from the viewpoint of the dominance of the poetic function leads to the raising of a number of conjectures concerning the problem of translation.

It is again Jakobson who points out that operations of combination (syntagm) and selection (paradigm) "provide each linguistic sign with two groups of interpretants, to return to the useful concept introduced by C.S. Peirce: two references serve to interpret the sign -- one to the code and the other to the context, whether coded or free . . . The constituents of any message are necessarily linked to the code by an internal relation and message by an external relation . . . Both for the linguist and for the ordinary user of words, the signified of a linguistic sign is nothing more than its translation by another sign for which it can be substituted, especially a sign 'in which it is developed more completely', as Peirce repeatedly affirmed"²⁶.

What can be extracted from these statements, in the first place, is that any substitution is by nature a translation -- one sign is translated into another -- and, indeed, an inalienable condition for any interpretation: the meaning of a sign can only be realized in another. From the viewpoint of the poetic function, this operation is hyperbolized, for in it equivalence (paradigm) is promoted to being a constitutive source of sequence. The constituents of poetic language, then, both in its internal link (with the code) and its external link (with the message), operate under the dominance of the axis of similarity: one sign is translated into another. Thus, here, at the heart of language in its poetic function, lies the core of translation. Translation in the broad sense is therefore a (meta-linguistic) operation embedded in the production of language itself, and in a message with a poetic function this operation is exponentiated.

On this basis, it is clearly possible to establish a number of relations with the observations made by Paz when he refers to translation as "an analogous operation to poetic creation, except that it unfolds in the opposite direction . . . One of the features of poetry -- indeed, perhaps its cardinal characteristic -- is the preservation of a plurality of meanings . . . The critics have dwelt upon this disturbing particularity of poetry without noticing that this kind of mobility and indeterminacy of meanings corresponds to another equally fascinating particularity: the immobility of signs. Poetry transforms language radically and in the opposite direction from prose. In the latter case, the mobility of the signs corresponds to the tendency to fix a single meaning; in the former, the plurality of meanings corresponds to the fixity of the signs. Now language is a system of mobile signs which, up to a point, may be interchangeable: one word can be replaced by another and each sentence can be said (translated) by another. To parody Peirce, it can be said that the meaning of a word is always another word . . . Now no sooner have we entered the realm of poetry than words lose their mobility

26. *Idem*, pp. 40, 41, and 64.

and interchangeability. The meanings of a poem are multiple and shifting; the words of one and the same poem are unique and irreplaceable. To change them would be to destroy the poem. Poetry, without ceasing to be language, is a going beyond language. The poet, immersed in the movement of the language, a continuous verbal to-and-fro, chooses certain words -- or is chosen by them. By combining them he constructs his poem: a verbal object made of irreplaceable and immovable signs. The translator's point of departure is not language in motion -- the poet's raw material -- but the fixed language of the poem. It is a frozen language, and yet perfectly alive. The operation he carries out is the opposite of the poet's: rather than constructing an immovable text with mobile signs, he dismantles the elements of this text, puts the signs back into circulation and restores them to language"²⁷.

These remarks by Octavio Paz highlight the fact that any poem (and this can be extended to any aesthetic message) is an unrepeatable, and therefore frozen, system of choices. To translate, then, is to set this crystal of selections newly in motion, in order once again to fix it in another system of choices, which, however, is analogous. To translate, in this sense, is to rethink the arrangement of signs (signic translations) in a work which is trans-muted (trans-created) into another selective arrangement: for where there is artistic activity there is the dominance of the axis of selection. The translator rethinks the significant choices of the original and re-orders them in another system, making use of planning -- which is an analytical operation -- and assembly -- which is a synthetic operation. It would, however, be more correct to say that these are two phases of one and the same operation.

Thus any translation comprises a transformation of the original. It operates within the marrow of language: metaphor and metonymy. And the original text only reappears in the translation as an indirect description (the part for the whole), through contiguity and differences, or as a metaphorical equation, through similarity. From this it can be concluded that as any work takes the form of an unrepeatable system of choices, it constitutes one single complex sign. To translate is therefore to aspire to develop and interpret this sign into another more developed one (relation of contiguity, therefore). The product-translation, however, when operated according to the movements of creation, finally appears as another complex sign, which is also unrepeatable and tunes in with the original by the analogic force of its qualities. In synthesis, to translate and to think of translation is to pursue qualities which are to stand face to face.

THE PHYSICS OF INTERSEMIOTIC TRANSLATION

"Today all knowledge is necessarily comparative knowledge."

Paul Valéry

On the horizon of artistic activity, I conceive of doing as a kind of signic production, with a poetic or aesthetic function.

27. PAZ, Octavio, *op. cit.*, pp. 15-16.

Translation, then, is the semiotic meeting place and confrontation of different languages and systems of signs.

From this radical point of view, such a statement coincides with the theses of Ernest H. Gombrich on the relation between art and creation. Gombrich sees art as the development of a tradition based on the transmission of schematized visual vocabularies.

Implicit in this set of transmitted conventions on representation, there is the concept of an art whose origin is art itself, rather than the observation of nature or even an idealistic "world view". Gombrich also sets aside the concept of "style as the expression of an era or a race".

As seen above, to make art is thus to produce paradigms of style, as acts of choice between alternatives prefigured by tradition, having discarded the concepts of truth, progress and decline with regard to the evolution of forms and the similarities between the representation and the thing represented.

An immediate problem is posed here with regard to creation: the appearance of the new-sign in art, apparently impossible in this order of ideas. However, the new-sign may occur in the breach of the confrontation of different sign systems, as a clash of energies between these systems, when language is set in motion.

To translate intersemiotically is thus a more radical way of taking up such theses: translation here is conceived as the meaning of a sign in another sign which is better developed for certain purposes, since art is not produced in a vacuum, nor is any artist independent of predecessors and models.

In my experience as a translator, I see translation as recreation or "creative transposition", or creation of creation. I translate whatever gives me pleasure and, above all, whatever can incorporate certain methods and forms of creation proposed by artists of verbal or non-verbal language into my own.

From this point of view, then, I try to avoid translation as illustration, since in my view this would be the "imprecise transmission of an inessential content".

To complete the circle and paraphrase Borges: what really interests me is, through translation, to inscribe the discussion on aesthetics in writing.

Now, having reflected and refracted the theories of translation, let us move on to describe the way intersemiotic translations are processed in my work, preceded by an analysis of the original translated.

ORGANISMO (Décio Pignatari - 1960)

The first impression the poem gives, as a whole, is that the procedure by which it is engendered is itself intersemiotic: in macrostructural terms, it is organized by connecting up with cinematographic syntax. Each page (or statement of the poem) is equivalent to a film shot. The first statement (*O ORGANISMO QUER PERDURAR* -- "the organism wants to endure") appears as a wide-angle shot which is gradually cut back in a process of approaching and expanding. This process grows more and more intense until the last page is reached, when the top of the grapheme O is in the very close foreground.

In terms of the sequential process, however, this movement of coming nearer in fact presents the radical passage from the verbal to the non-verbal, in a reductive synthesis of no more than eight pages shots. The poem opens with a verbal syntagm which is increasingly condensed down to the purely visual material of the expanded graphemes in the last two pages.

The fundamental element in this procedure, however, consists in the poem's capturing of the most perfect isomorphism between form and content. Let us then examine this process.

The first syntagm (*O ORGANISMO QUER PERDURAR* -- "the organism wants to endure"), followed by the syntagm *O ORGANISMO QUER REPET* ("the organism wants to repeat"), immediately sows the semantic seeds of each and every organism which can only endure by repeating the primordial act in search of which the poem has set out.

The succeeding shots/pages are in fact pure repetition through reduction/approaching. *REPET* is reduced to *RE* (semantic prefix of repetition). Next, the *RE* falls away to highlight the *QUER* ("want" -- carrier of the sema of desire). In these reductive passages from one shot to another, the word *ORGANISMO* gradually expands in a crescendo until, between pages 5 and 6, the transformation occurs from *O ORGANISMO* to *ORGASM*, which widens out and expands on the page to give physical embodiment to the meaning. The next page iconizes the merging of male and female genitals in the close-up (*O O)rganism*; this is followed, on the last page, by the iconic fragment of the penetration of the female by the male.

The poem's main iconic feature, however, is at the level of its rhythm, that is, in terms of tempo and movement, when the structural whole is focussed on. The process of reducing and approaching in the syntagms/shots leads to a shorter and shorter reading tempo and from one page to the next. This shrinking in time corresponds to the expansion of the word *ORGANISMO*, while at the same time reproducing the more and more accelerated movement/rhythm of the sexual act, until it explodes in *ORGASM* and the pure synthesis/design of penetration in the final shot. The woman is fecundated at the very moment when the poem consummates itself, fecundated.

o organismo quer perdurar
o organismo quer repet
o organismo quer re
o organismo quer
o organism
orgasm
o o
o

the organism wants to repea

the organism wants to re

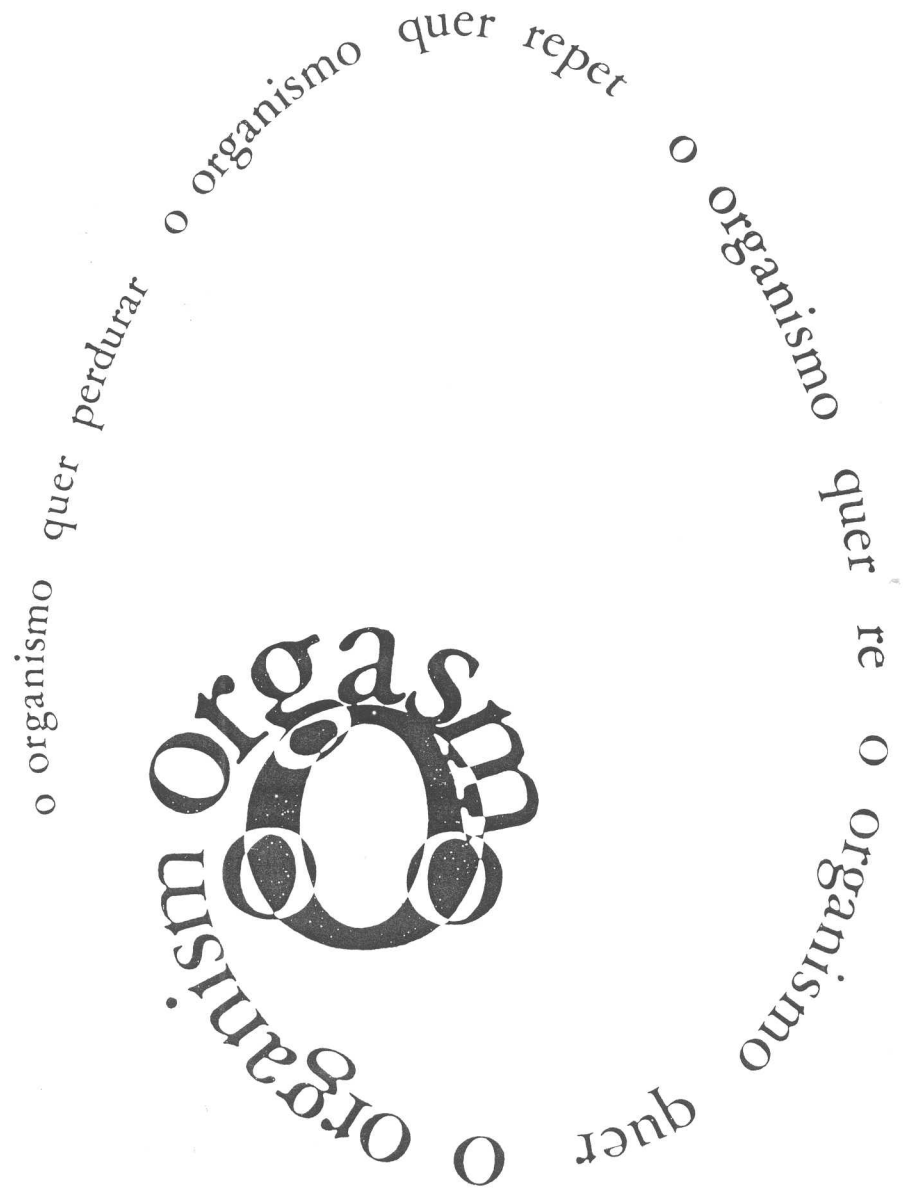
the organism wants

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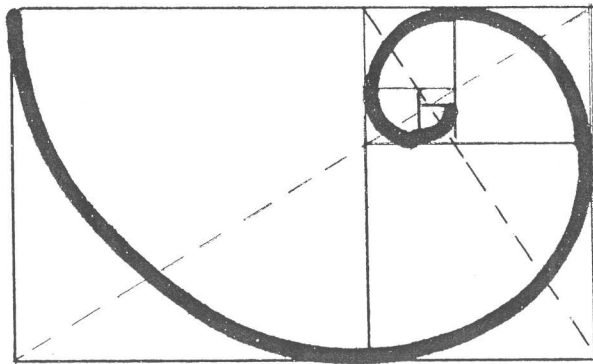
The poem as a whole thus physically realizes, in a concrete and sensible form, the repetition of the primordial act semantically proposed in the passage from the first to the second syntagm. A concretized meaning.

GOLDEN ORGANISM (Julio Plaza - 1980)

This is a translation of the "enveloping" type, in that it reclaims the text of the original; in other words, it recuperates all the statements/syntagms, as well as the actual typography and, above all, the size graduation set up by the original poem's cinematic macro-micro movement.

What the translation does, in fact, is to re-dimension and re-situate the original poem in another production space: no longer that of the cinema, but an ideogrammatic/physiognomic space. The original is inscribed in a Mondrian-like form/structure, with vertical shots, frontal framing, zooms -- features which indicate the industrial mode of production: cine camera and photography. The radical processing of the passage from the verbal to the non-verbal thus takes place through a fragmented sequence of short takes in the form of film shots which give the poem movement.

On the other hand, the translation of the "organism" is mounted on the relational structure of the Golden Section: a diagram, or iconic legisign in the Peircean sense. The Golden Section -- so called by Leonardo da Vinci -- or *Divina Proporcione* (Luca Paccioli) is a mathematical geometrical line which reflects and reproduces the theme of the whole, at a given, more or less veiled rhythm, in each of its parts (one could say that the poetic function is already built into it). This line, which was already known to the Greeks, seeks a harmonic correspondence



between the parts and the whole; this is the basis of the Gestalt principle and of the aesthetic concepts of Analogy, Similarity in Diversity and Variety in Identity.

The Golden Section transmits the ideas of Harmonic Perfection of Form and "Ophelimity", or degree of optimization of form in terms of resistance and harmonious growth. It evokes and directly denotes the notions and ideas of germination, fecundity and flowering, which play a primordial role in human symbolic representation. This law of harmonious growth can be found in nature in snails, sea shells, pentamerous flowers and fruits such as the pineapple, as well as in eggs and even in man's middle and fourth fingers. In culture, it can be found in the Athenian Parthenon and Greek statues, in Leonardo, Mondrian, Le Corbusier, Seurat and the movie "The Battleship Potemkin".

It is, therefore, upon this harmonic structure that the translation is based, borrowing from it organization, organicity and harmony between the whole and its parts like a hyper-ideogram, in isomorphism with the ideas of organic, continuous and growing evolution.

It is the outline of the Golden Section that supports, organizes and spatializes the syntagms/shots:

o organismo quer perdurar	the organism wants to endure
o organismo quer repet	the organism wants to repeat
o organismo quer re	the organism want to re
o organismo quer	the organism wants
o organism	the organism
orgasm	orgasm
o o	oo
O	O

Through the radical change in structure, the space of the translation is semanticized in isomorphism with the structure, for the very meanings of the Golden Section itself refer to the much wider notion of organism. The translation gains in simultaneity and isomorphism, since the space is temporalized by the movement and progression in size of the typography. From this movement, spiral and oval in shape, from the background to the foreground, is born, syntactically and semantically, the thematic idea of the ovule-ovum, paradigm of the structure which is latent in the original. The icon of the orgasm is thus structured as an enveloping physiological action in which the paranomasia "organism/orgasm" becomes condensed simultaneously until it organizes the indissociable superimposition of male and female genitals.

The original's spatial-temporal structure is encapsulated and substituted by the structure of the Golden Section, which proposes the simultaneity of the event.

Thus, the Golden Section is here a signifying structure: the translation communicates its structure.

In short: the original poem is sequential and purely frontal; in a process of reduction/approaching, it reproduces the more and more accelerated movement/rhythm of the sexual act until it explodes in ORGASM. The word ORGASM, as it gradually expands, functions as a kind of icon of the male genital organ. There is thus a predominance of the male.

In the reading/translation, the sequentiality is encapsulated in pure simultaneity. The erotic process/movement is caught as a whole, in one and the same space (vertiginous synthesis). The change in structure creates another kind of erotic movement: the erotic as gradual envelopment, i.e., movement as involving which circumscribes, moves around in a gradual arriving until the plunge occurs, coinciding with the expansion in ORGASM. This expansion also coincides with the glimpse of the female genitals in an indissociable fusion of both (male and female).

NOUSSPHERE

chanutes aders wrights demoiselles voisin
 s blériots flowing tense silks dragonflies
 gold onvionlet in the setting of the ocher afternoo
 n air down there over the megalopolitan hub
 cap in a fish-eye view sign (S TAKING OFF
 GLIDING CIRCUMVÖLUTING OVER LOBËS CALLÜSES
 QUIASMATA BULBS VENTRICULI TRIGÖNS PEDU
 NCLES FISSURES OF RÖLAND AND SYLVIOUS ÜNDER A
 PARIENTAL SKY)

NOOSFERA

(Décio Pignatari 1975)

At the macro-structural level, the poem can be divided into three spaces. First, there is the space of the representation of the planetary-atmospheric-aerial medium, through which signs referring to airplanes and names of aircraft builders circulate: *chanutes*, *adlers*, *demoiselles*, etc. These signs are situated topologically in the upper iconic space of the poem. Airplanes metalinguistically entering and leaving the blank space of the page: *voisin-----s* (here the grapheme *s* acts as an icon of the propeller). Airplane-signs "flowing" (*fluindo*) light as "dragonflies gold . . . in the setting of the ocher afternoo-----n air" (*libélulas ouro . . . no por de ar de ocre da t-----arde*): here the afternoon runs off -- which burns or glows (*arde*) economically and syntactically unites *tarde* and *arde* in a single sign. Airplanes flow like "tense silks" (*seda tensas*) -- here referring to the *asas*, "wings", of the airplanes embedded in *sedas tensas*.

Again at the macro-structural level, there is a phonetic icon of the airplane (*aviao*): *onvionleta no*, where there is the symmetry of *on* and *no* embedded in the word-montage and referring to the symmetry of the icon-airplan and its sound.

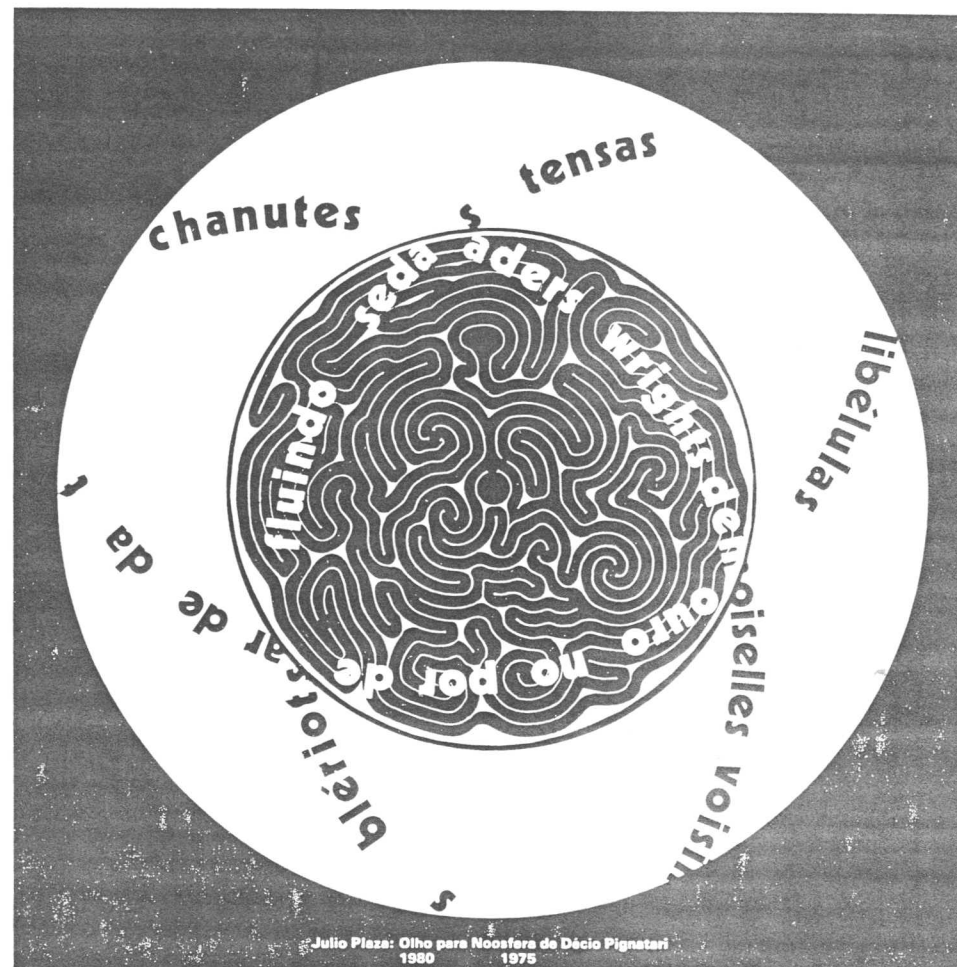
In a second space, described by "down there over the megalopolitan hubcap in a fish-eye view" (*lá em baixo sobre a calota megalopolitana em olho-de-peixe*), there is the topology of the territory (the earth seen from above), with the icon of the city (*calota*) -- a word with multiple meanings ranging from "skull" to "hubcap" or "polar cap") seen in 360 degrees, as in a photograph taken with a fish-eye lens. Embedded in this second space, there is a third space which represents the brain as receiver. This reception is indexed by "sign (S TAKING OFF GLIDING CIRCUMVOLUTING . . ." (*sign(OS DECOLANDO PLANANDO*

Noosfera

chanutes aders wrights demoiselles voisin
s blériots fluindo sedas tensas libélulas
ouro onvionleta no por de ar de ocre da t
arde lá em baixo sobre a calota megalopol
itana em olho-de-peixe sign (ÕS DECOLANDO
PLANANDÕ CIRCUNVÕLUINDÕ SOBRE LÕBÕS CALÕS
QUIASMAS BULBOS VENTRICULÕS TRIGÕNÕS PEDÚ
NCULOS FENDAS DE RÕLANDÕ E SYLVIUS SÕB UM

CÉU PARIETAL)

Décio Pignatari



represents the brain as receiver. This reception is indexed by "sign (S TAKING OFF GLIDING CIRCUMVOLUTING . . ." (*sign (OS DECOLANDO PLANANDO CIRCUNVOLUINDO . . .*), where the icons of the parietals are coded as brackets () open to signic penetration -- i.e. *sign (OS . . .* This gives a typographical differentiation in relation to the external signs which circulate in the "sky" -- *chanutes aders wrights . . .* -- penetrating and taking off, gliding and circumvoluting inside the cerebral space.

Still in the space of the brain, we have: "CIRCUMVOLUTING OVER LOBES CALLUSES QUIASMATA BUBS VENTRICULI TRIGONS PEDUNCLES FISSURES OF ROLAND AND SYLVIUS UNDER A PARIETAL SKY (*CIRCUNVOLUINDO SOBRE LOBOS CALOS QUIASMAS BULBOS VENTRICULOS TRIGONOS PEDUNCULOS FENDAS DE ROLANDO E SYLVIUS SOB UM CEU PARIETAL*). In a summarized form, this refers to the scientific names for elements and parts of the brain. There are also the signs/icons indexed by the floating accents: ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ at various heights, circumvoluting about the brain. An interesting part of the poem can be registered here: there is a translation embedded in the poem itself -- a translation which iconizes the verbal substance of the signs/events in the upper space (*chanutes aders . . .*) with the accents which float among the "FISSURES", "LOBES", "CALLUSES" (*FENDAS, LOBOS, CALOS*) of the brain. This translation of a part of the poem inside the poem itself (thus a metalinguistic translation) represents and transmits the idea of conversion of stimuli (sign events) into the visual image of perception. This detonates visual thought by coding a process of internatization of signs (reality) in the mental-nousspherical.

Thus, we have here an abstract-symbolic representation of a real situation -- sign events fly through the skies and penetrate a receiver (brain) which iconizes and internalizes those signs in its mind.

The space of the poem is an ideographic space onto which alphabetical signs are deposited in a linear order (resulting from the system of textual production). These layers of text are revealed as iconic: the linearity is subverted by the simultaneity of certain elements such as the space between lines, separation between words, exit and entry of graphemes on the page, and above all by the icon/index of penetration: *sign (OS . . .* The predominant similarity comes about not only at the micro-structural level but above all at the macro-structural level, especially through the spatial orientation which orders the layers of writing. There are thus at the same time three spaces which are analogically and topologically connected -- upper space, lower space and middle space -- and which simultaneously code the icons of the aerial space, the earth, and the brain, embedded in the latter.

However, the use of upper case within the brackets, which refer to the cerebral space, creates a curious inversion (conversion) of reading in the poem. The cerebral space comes to the foreground, in visual terms, in relation to the other two spaces (which remain in a kind of background).

There are therefore two possible readings: first, a reading from the top down (from the space representing the planetary-atmospheric-aerial medium to the second space, in which the cerebral space is embedded); second, a return

reading, from the bottom up, where the use of upper case and the highlighting created by the brackets make the embedded space of the brain leap into the foreground, thus inverting the previous reading. It is then the space of the brain which appears as the first, a mediator, an access route to the rest. The linking element between the inside space (brain) and the outside spaces is the word *sign (OS . . .)* it is no accident that this word is cut in two by the bracket which iconizes precisely this interpenetration of inside and outside.

This is the staring point in the poem for the creation of a whole cluster of curious analogies and interpretative possibilities.

Thus, through the nousspherical-cerebral space -- that is, under a parietal sky -- reality is always reality-sign. Under a parietal sky, the world is apprehended as if seen from above: the signs separate us from reality just as airplanes take us away from the earth's surface. Reality becomes rarefied just as the air becomes rarefied in the glow of late afternoon.

"Under a parietal sky" thus makes a perfect parallelism with "over the megalopolitan hubcap". Here the fish-eye view simultaneously points to two references: first, the view from above in an airplane (literal meaning); second, the metaphorical meaning of "fish-eye" as inalienable deformation and refraction of reality by the sign.

It is no accident that *olho-de-peixe* ("fish-eye", or wide-angle lens) in the poem precedes the word *sign (OS . . .* It is also no accident that both occupy the near-middle of the poem and mark the dividing-interchanging line between the airplane-space and the brain-space.

Despite the linearity imposed by the textual system of production, there is thus the suggestion in the poem of the possibility of a circular reading (from the top down/from the bottom up) whose center or intersection is the word *sign (OS . . .)* which, indeed, is itself split in two.

OLHO PARA NOOSFERA ("LOOK AT NOUSSPHERE")

(Julio Plaza 1980)

A first glance already enables one to see the radical change in the space. While in the original it is the orthogonal and directed space on the page which commands the production of the text, in the translation it is the space of a circle-mandala which agglutinates and condenses the signs.

The translation leads to the highlighting of this iconicity insofar as it involves the icons of continuity and organicity, in a semantic relation with the meanings of the original poem. This similarity is especially maintained with regard to the referents: supporting space, hubcap (*calota*) space, fish-eye (*olho-de-peixe*) and parietals (). It is a case of economy of language -- a comprehensive synthesis which incorporates various elements of the poem. This circular space, then, becomes a substitute for the flat space of the page in the original. The nature of the closed O points to the idea-icon of internal circularity and topological continuity. Here it can be seen that it is the structure itself which organizes the meanings -- a signifying structure, therefore.

This substitution at the structural level commands the echoing of the paradigms (), which in fact serve as a structure for the poem as a whole. This is a typical case of reduction to the limit of a signal which, by association, forms other sets.

It can thus be seen that the substitution of some elements in the original poem occurs in terms of the references and meanings of the poem, and above all of its intentionality. Structures organize their own meanings within the translation. They also condense the linear layers of the original text in terms of simultaneity.

The outside circle substitutes the aerial space in the original, in the colored version, it includes orange, an icon of the sun, of the *tarde que arde*, the golden sunset, hot air. In the middle, the inner circle, the labyrinthine space of the brain, an icon of the brain which, by chance (it happened during production), also includes the icon of the starry sky, in a double meaning with the parietal sky (one meaning saturates itself in the other): chance penetrates the materiality of language (*CEU PARIETAL*) and adds to the translation.

On these two simultaneous spaces in the form of a trigon, or spherical triangle, there is a form which is homomorphous with the circle, with isomorphistic features in relation to the circles which contains it.

On this structure, which in reality, is a Möbius strip, are the signic elements of the translated poem:

chanutes wrights aders demoiselles voisin s blértiots fluindo sedas
tensas libélulas ouro no por de ar de ocre da t arde

This incorporation is carried out in terms of the metonymic recovery of the signs, to prevent the translation from losing sight of the object translated, and thus losing its *raison d'être* by becoming an independent object.

The positive-negative treatment of the verbal signs makes them sometimes pass inside and sometimes outside: this creates circularity and continuity outside the circle -- an iconic idea of the transposition of the sign to other nousspheres. In this way, the work codes an icon of the idea that thoughts are sometimes inside and sometimes outside the brain, in the form of signs, or objects. We thus have a limiting case of translation as form: the simultaneous and condensed absorption not only of the three spaces of the original but also of its exchanges, of the reading movements insinuated by these exchanges and of the reading circularity suggested by the original text despite its orthogonal space.

Thus, it is not the literality of the original's meanings which is translated, but rather the movements and forms which are implicit in its relations: not only the patent relations but also those which are potentially subjacent. There is therefore a confrontation with the intentionality of the original.

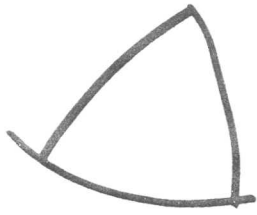
In a comparative synthesis between the original and the translation, it can be seen that there is a radical change to a different structure, one of a visual

nature. This transcription to visual signs metaphorically condenses all signic activity: signs entering and leaving the spaces of the air-brain-eye-earth. The image/writing can be seen as the icon of the schematic cross-section of all these condensed spaces.

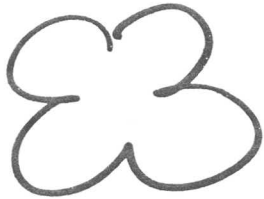
At a first level, the original can be seen as having a somewhat cryptic tone which makes decoding difficult to some extent; in the translation, however, this aspect disappears through the incorporation of icons. There is thus a passage from the iconized abstract to the concrete visual in a paradigmatic projection.

Another aspect of the translation -- perhaps the most important -- is the poetic function. While this poetic function in the original is found at the micro-structural level, in the translation it is at the macro-structural level. There is an evident systematic projection of the paradigm *circle* (with its various signifieds: earth-sun-eye-brain), so that the result is an equation with a poetic function.

From the point of view of fidelity to the original, the translation can be situated as a "trans-creation" rather than a "transcription", in that the original is considered an "alibi" for the development of another creation, and this creation metonymically recovers aspects of the original to place them in a poetic function.



TRIGONS



PEDUNCLES



FISSURES



PARIETAL



OPTIC QUIASMATA



PROPELLER



TOPOLOGIC LINE



HUBCAP



CIDADE, CITY, CITÉ
(Augusto de Campos 1963)

At the macro-structural level, the poem is structured by the syntax created by the organization of the text itself: letter by letter, word by word, in a linear sequence which is characteristic of the textual mode of production.

The grand syntagm-poem is built up from dictionary words in alphabetical order, each of which contains in a virtual form the suffix *city*. Thus, we have: *atro-city*, *cadu-city*, *capa-city*, up to the last word in the poem: *vora-city*. In each word, the suffix is suppressed, only to be recovered at the end of the poem, by the joining up of all the words continuously (without spaces between them). This produces the noise of a constant and repeated friction which confuses the reading of the poem and the discrimination of the terms used (each word). It is only when, at the end of the poem, the suffix *city* appears, that the code for apprehension of the whole poem is given. This code, moreover, is valid in three languages: Portuguese, English, and French - *cidade*, *city*, *cit *.

From the graphic point of view, the poem is already intersemiotic insofar as it incorporates a schematic "picture" of the city, as if it were seen from a distance. The poem thus contains an iconic image, and this serves to facilitate intersemiotic translation and transcription to a visual medium. This iconic aspect, indeed, is developed, stressed and hyperbolized above all in version A (Panorama of the City).

The ideographic system of representation in the original poem stresses the linear nature of spatial and temporal forms. In the visual translation, this linearity is used in terms of developing the poem's structure, i.e. its icon: a picture of the city, a semantic fact which results from the poem's linearity. The translation makes use of the structure of the original and highlights it. It also builds simultaneity into the linearity, however, by capturing words and their transformations through typographic elements which create a mobile and iconic writing, superimposed on the writing of the original poem.

Through the use of movable types, the translation is organized as a *bricolage* of elements or stylemes which refer back to a historical typography. Thus we have Antiqua, modern Roman, Egyptian, sans-serif, Gothic, and ornamental (*fantaisie*) or miscellaneous typographic styles and, parallel to this in iconic form, buildings which correspond to these same styles.

Semantically, then, these letter styles arranged in the syntagm "panorama of the city" incorporate plastic dimensions into the space where they are situated and thereby, as it were, incorporate, and become iconized in, buildings and streets (the spaces between letters), thus highlighting the space "city" and its superobjects, the buildings. The icon of the city is thus organized by the inclusion in the poem-translation of plastic, graphic and spatial aspects which together produce the design.

There is also an emphasis on certain letters which are scattered throughout the syntagm "panorama of the city"; these letters gradually incorporate and redistribute the suffix *CIDADE* within the syntagm -- a translation of the enveloping type, to facilitate the reading of the poem.

atrocaduapacaustidupielastifellerofugahistoriloqualubrimendmultiploorganiperiodiplastipubliropareciprorustisagasiplitenavloverivaunivoracidade
city
ctié

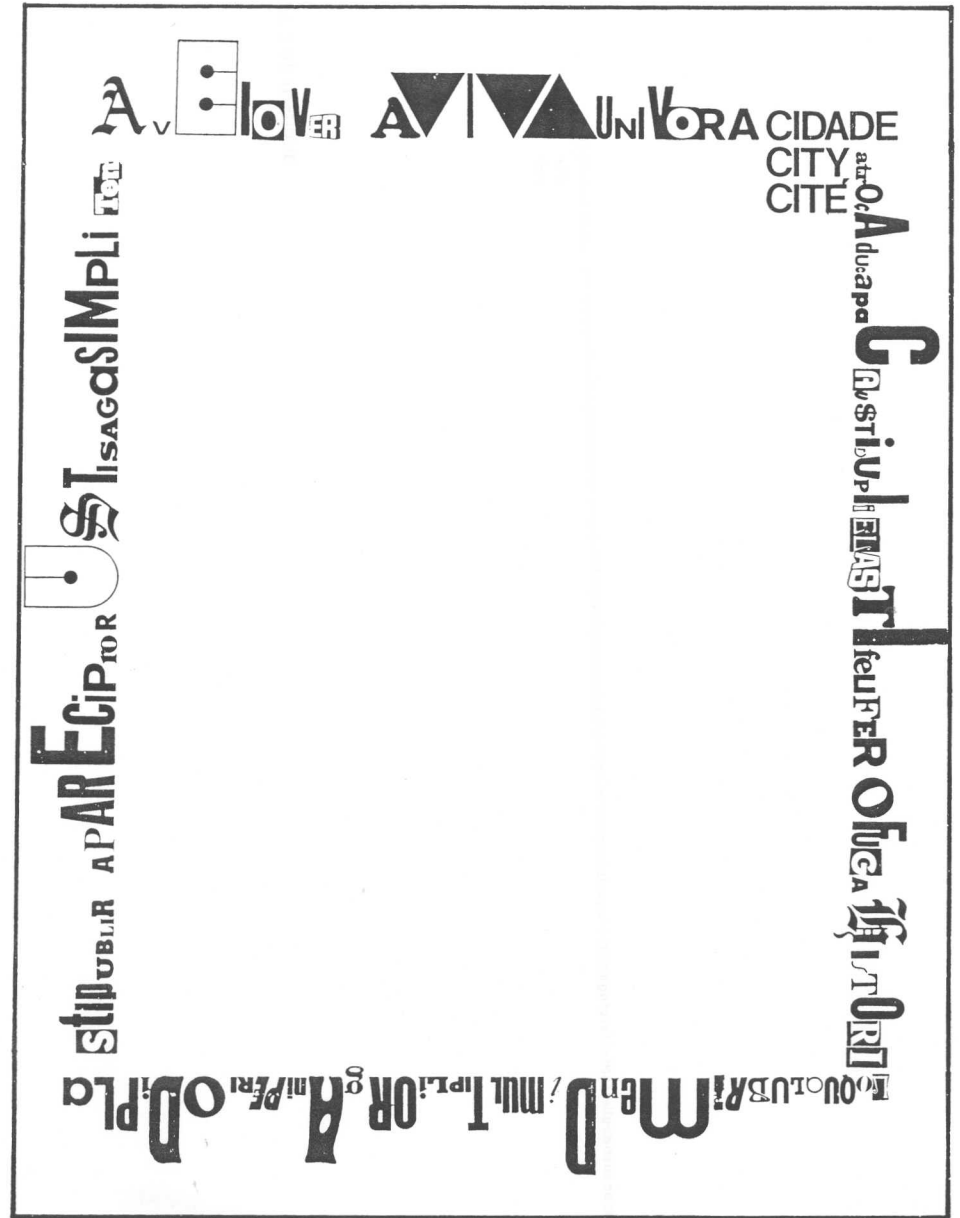
augusto de campos (1963)

I

LOQUALUBRIMEND;MULTI



PANORAMA OF THE CITY (version B)



PANORAMA OF THE CITY (version C)

C I D A D E is scattered in this way both in order to iconize buildings in the city by emphasizing certain letters through their size, and also to assist in the systematic decoding of the poem.

Furthermore, still in dialogic terms, it can be seen that the translation also incorporates the poem *VIVAIA* (by the same author), in an intersection of inter-textual layers, as well as generating at the end a semantic-parallel hymn to the industrial city: *VIVA CIDADE* ("long live the city" and also "vivacity"), pointed with irony by the contamination with *VAIA* ("boo").

The idea of translating these elements arose from the visualization of the spatial arrangement of the poem as a whole, which is five meters in length. Thus, the translation was conceived to occupy a concave space facing the spectator (vertical positioning of the poem). Here the "City" would once again be iconized as a whole, in an intersemiotic substitution of the real city as a sign. Thus, seen from afar, the translation would still maintain a close-up dialog with the city (seen in panoramic vision, the city tends to be perceived as a curved plane of the 180° projection type).

In this version, the reading of the city tends toward the figurativism which is inherent in the linearity whereby the city is iconized as if seen from afar, like a landscape. The translation or reading thus tends toward a space of the figurative Euclidean type, where there is a parallelism with the sky in the upper part of the poem, and with the earth in the lower part, while the city is spread out in the middle. The translation, then, operates at the level of the figurative and illustrative, without transforming the structure of the original. This is not the case with the other two versions, B and C, which are commented on below.

These two versions set out to change the structure of the poem but do so in a merely demonstrative and schematic manner. Later on they may be improved, for they were based on the available material from the first translation (production economy).

In version B a radical change in the representation space is operated by verticalizing the text in the manner of Japanese or Chinese prints, with their typical ideographic structure, rather than in the form of a textual ideographic space. The code here operates on the basis of the spatial nature of its elements: that is, the upper sub-syntagm signifies "far", while the lower sub-syntagm signifies "near". Linearity is replaced by simultaneity, incorporating into the translation a greater degree of abstract-iconic substance than was the case in the figurative form of the first version. In the translation, the letters C I D A D E can still be seen scattered vertically and ending with the parallel change (*VIVA*) to the City.

There is a decrease in figurative elements, compared with "Panorama of the City". The reading of the translation is also made more difficult by the simultaneity, which here plays a subtly ironic and humorous role in relation to the original, owing to its decomposition and re-composition in another production space. Another possible reading of this translation would be as with *Kakemono*.

Version C incorporates a new element -- space -- as in the city square. Here the text acts as a (city) wall, as in medieval representations of enclosed ideographic/topologic space; this introduces the spectator into the poem. Here

the translation must be read as if the spectator really were inside the space of the poem-translation.

The translation thus gains in simultaneity and design, but loses to the textual reading, which is diluted and organized as a *bricolage* of historical styles. These styles are articulated as a form of writing which is incorporated into that of the poem.

A comparison between the three versions shows that the change in structure (as a styleme) is also a semantic fact: in other words, the structure informs the translations semantically, as an isomorphic relation between form and meaning; or more precisely, the structures upon which the translations are based are signifying forms in constant dialog with the forms of textual production (in the first reading) and with the historical Oriental and Western forms of representation (in versions A and B). These two versions, in turn, tend to move apart from the original and become autonomous. Moreover, it is above all in version C that the reading sequence is lost, although from the macro-structural point of view it gains the plasticity of the spatial square in its instantaneous iconic form. It is, then, a creative translation, in which, while the valorized space in the first version is the functional space of textual production, in the others the space is aesthetic, i.e. has a poetic function, or is a paradigm of the space on the page, above all in versions C and B.

Digressions could be made at the level of meaning. The most important ones would be those which operate at the macro-structural level: version A; the "city" is industrial and, through the linearity of the text, refers to the assembly line (production of a line in linotype). The city can be seen at high speed or as a representation in images of the route followed when travelling by car. This gives rise to the fragmentation and metonymization of language as seen in advertising in the city.

In version B and C, on the other hand, the simultaneity at the macro-structural level makes it necessary to juxtapose events. It thus points to art rather than to the city (referent) -- art as a system of representation, an index of a dialogic relationship with other artistic series.

From the point of view of production, or of the phenomenology of composition, version A is coherent with its own system of production. Version B and C, on the other hand, are more plastic-pictorial.

The poetic function is thus introjected in ideographic-plastic terms -- in the space of the square as paradigm of the space of the page. In this way, the graphic elements of the poem, as it were link up with the spatial limits of the page -- hence it is at once a topologic space and ideographic-iconic space: index on icon.

Version C compared to version A gains in spatial concreteness, for the space is imprisoned in the form of a city square. This shows how other elements are incorporated by contiguity with the referential "city".

Thus, in their phenomenology, in their physicality, the translations are realized by the operation of commutation and creative transcription. Aspects of

the original are forgotten but at the same time others are incorporated, in an intellectual interplay of similarity and contiguity with the referent and the meanings of the original.

céu

cem

com

cor

dor

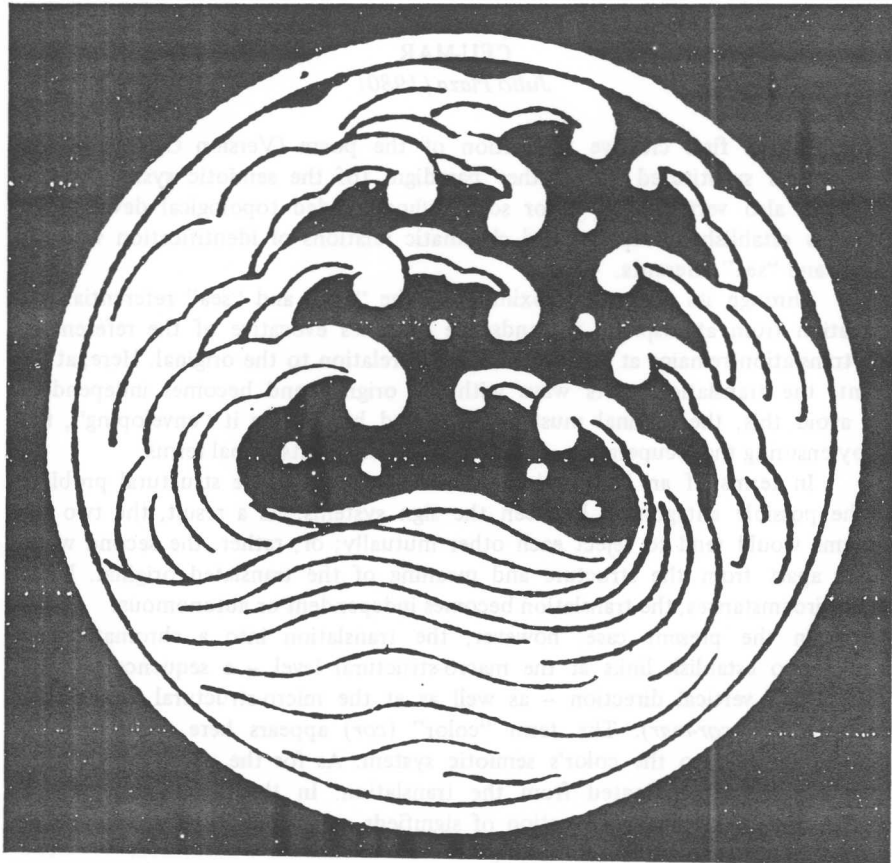
dar

mar

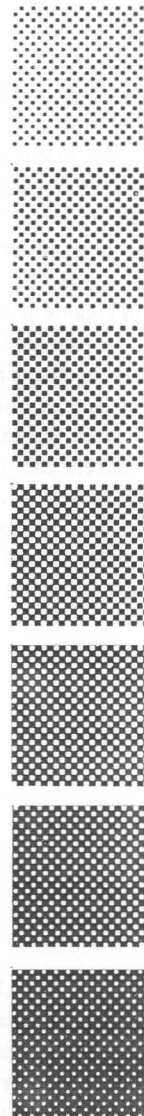
SKY
HUNDRED
WITH
COLOR
PAIN
GIVE
SEA



CEU-MAR (version A)



CEU-MAR (version B)



CEU-MAR (version C)

CEU-MAR
(Augusto de Campos 1971)

At the macro-structural level, the poem develops systematically through a topological-analogical transformation from one word to the next (condition for Lewis Carroll's game, on the basis of which the poem is constructed). One grapheme at a time is changed, as each word develops vertically into the next, giving the doublet a Japanese Kakemoto character.

The condition for Lewis Carroll's game is quite simple: "Two words of the same length are proposed. The puzzle consists of linking them through the insertion of other words, each differing from the previous one by only one letter. That is, a letter has to be changed in one of the two words, then another one in the resulting new word and so on until the second proposed word is reached. Within each word, the order of the letters can not be changed: each letter has to keep its own place.

For instance, the word "head" can be transformed into "tail" by inserting the words "heal", "teal", "tell", "tall". I call the two initial words a Doublet (pair), the inserted words, Links and the entire series, a Chain -- of which the following is an example:

HEAD

heal

teal

tell

tall

TAIL

Lewis Carroll

The first operative module of the "CEU-MAR" doublet is the word *céu* ("sky") which, through undergoing a transformation of one of its graphemes -- U into M -- is turned into *cem* ("hundred"; phonetically, the same as *sem*, "with-out"). The latter, for its part, and following the same procedure, is transformed into *com* ("with"), and so on, in a temporal-spatial isomorphism which generates rhythm and movement. Thus, a purely sensitive structural movement predominates.

The composition of the poem emerges as ideogramic through a direct juxtaposition -- an analogical juxtaposition -montage of elements -- on the page's space, in a structure which creates a temporal dynamic and engenders tension among the words in this space, in such a way as to produce a Gestalt which isomorphically communicates itself.

The poem's ideographic space, for its part, reveals itself as iconic: the two opposed terms -- CEU-MAR ("SKY-SEA") -- are located spatially, above and below, giving the poem an iconic aspect in relation to the referent. Here, the symbol (text) is saturated in the iconic spatial.

CEU-MAR
Julio Plaza (1980)

In the first creative translation of the poem (Version C), the vertical structure is substituted by another paradigm (of the semiotic system, color), which is also vertical: the color scale, whose graded topological development helps to establish the spatial and chromatic relations of identification with the "sky" and "sea" referents.

Through its semantic proximity to the "sky" and "sea" referential (the gradation from atmosphere to landscape becomes evocative of the referential), the translation remains at an abstract level in relation to the original. Here, at this point, the translation parts ways with the original and becomes independent. To avoid this, the original must be recovered by making it "enveloping", that is, by ensuring the recuperation, for example, of one of its verbal terms.

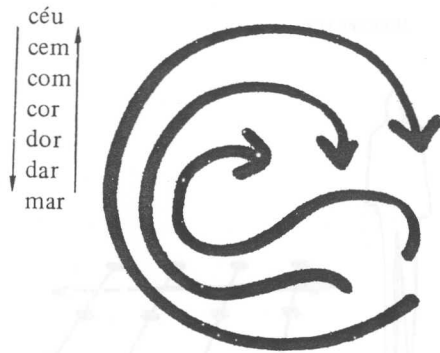
In terms of an intersemiotic translation, one of the structural problems is the possible antagonism between the sign systems. As a result, the two sign systems would tend to reject each other mutually; or, rather, the second would move apart from the structure and meaning of the translated original. Under these circumstances, the translation becomes independent or autonomous.

In the present case, however, the translation into a chromatic scale manages to establish links at the macro-structural level -- a sequence of color planes in a vertical direction -- as well as at the micro-structural level -- sky-color-sea (*céu-cor-mar*). The term "color" (*cor*) appears here, suggesting the transformation into the color's semiotic system. As for the poet's other terms, they are simply eliminated from the translation. In this translation, there is change and creative transformation of signifieds and, consequently, of meaning, but not of structure.

TRANSLATIONS A AND B

These are, actually, variations of the same structural translation. In both these versions, the transposition is more radical in the shift from one structure to the other. There is a shift from a linear structure -- which involves the form of production of the text (line by line) -- to a topological-ideographic circular structure, which summarizes and synthesizes the action of the two pole-signs of the "CEU-MAR" poem.

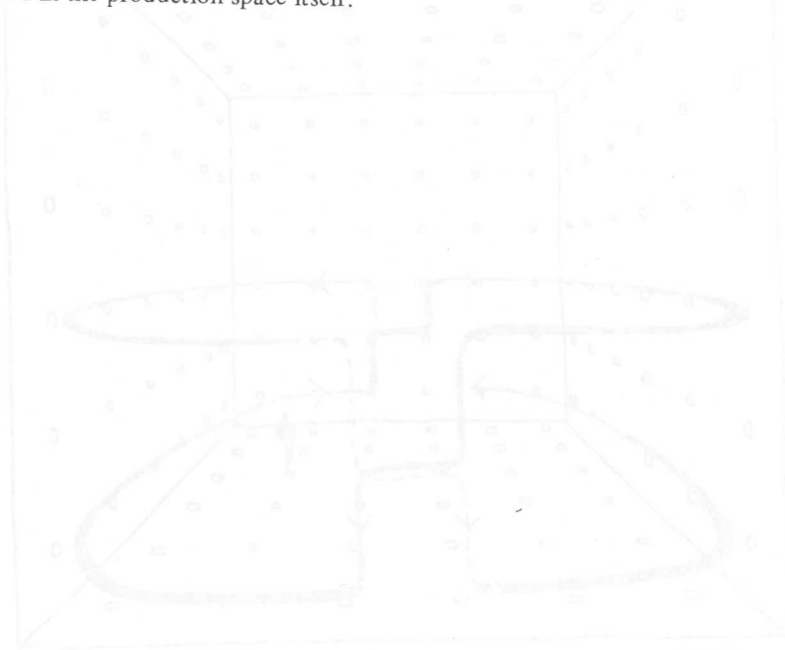
In one sense, this enveloping visual reading follows the movement of the making-unmaking of the poem, of the poem's remaking



in which this topological movement is really translated at the structural level of the form. Through the structure's radical change -- no longer linear, but now more simultaneous and mandala-like -- all the movement is resolved in a continuous circularity at a visual level, where the intermediary terms (*cem-com-cor-dor-dar* -- hundred/without-with-color-pain-give) are no longer recovered, as occurs in the enveloping type of translation presented above.

Translations of this kind are complementary and illustrate one another in relation to the original, perhaps as a result of the extent of figurativeness.

In these translations there is a radical change in the space of representation, so that the transcreation operates more at the rhythmic level of the movement inbedded in the production space itself.



VAI e VEM

José Lino Gruenwald (1959)

The visual syntax of the poem is structured in accordance with gestaltic rules governing factors of proximity and similarity which relate words in space with a view to simultaneity. This simultaneity introduces time and movement into the poem in a structural manner, or by qualifying the structure.

In the words of Décio Pignatari: "In concrete poetry, movement tends toward simultaneity -- that is, toward a multiplicity of concomitant movements . . . At a more advanced stage of formal evolution, at a more rational state of creation, isomorphism tends to be resolved in pure structural movement, dynamic structure. It can be said that at this state the geometric or mathematical form predominates" (18).

In the case of *VAI e VEM*, the poem in its becoming communicates as movement. Its communicability entails a problem of functionality in relation to the receiver, and this functionality is given through the structure. The movement is not of the physiognomic-organic type, but is geometrically and mathematically organized, and produces a kinesthetic relation between space and eye in the receiver.

The poem can thus be seen to be dynamic in its structure, planned before being put into words: "The chosen structure will rigorously -- almost mathematically -- determine the elements of the game and their relative position" (18). The artist here associates forms rather than ideas. The meaning of the poem is its structure.

Thus, the organic physiognomic movement present at the semantic level is surpassed by the geometric isomorphic movement. In other words, the movement is given by the structure, at the level of the kinesthetic sense, of the geometry of the eye.

VAI e VEM is an iconic indicator of movement at the macro-structural level, it obliges the eye to travel through the blank space on the page. This structure, which delimits the space upon which the signifieds of COME (*VIR*) and GO (*IR*) are exerted (surpassing the verbal semantics of the verb), detonates the signified GO-COME (*IR-VIR*) in the eye's possible routes over the page, condensing a constellation of spatial movements in which the repetition of the verbs GO (*VAI*) and COME (*VEM*) is no longer redundant but informative because of its spatial position.

VAI e VEM

Julio Plaza (1980)

In the sound translation (see fig. 1), substitution is carried out by means of loudspeakers, which are placed in groups, or batteries. There are altogether 48 loudspeakers: they are arranged symmetrically around an axis (occupied by the human figure), with 24 on each side. The idea here is to have the loudspeakers produce programmed sound in such a way as to create a sound movement (stereo

VAI E VEM

E E

VEM E VAI

GO AND COME
AND AND
COME AND GO

Figure 1

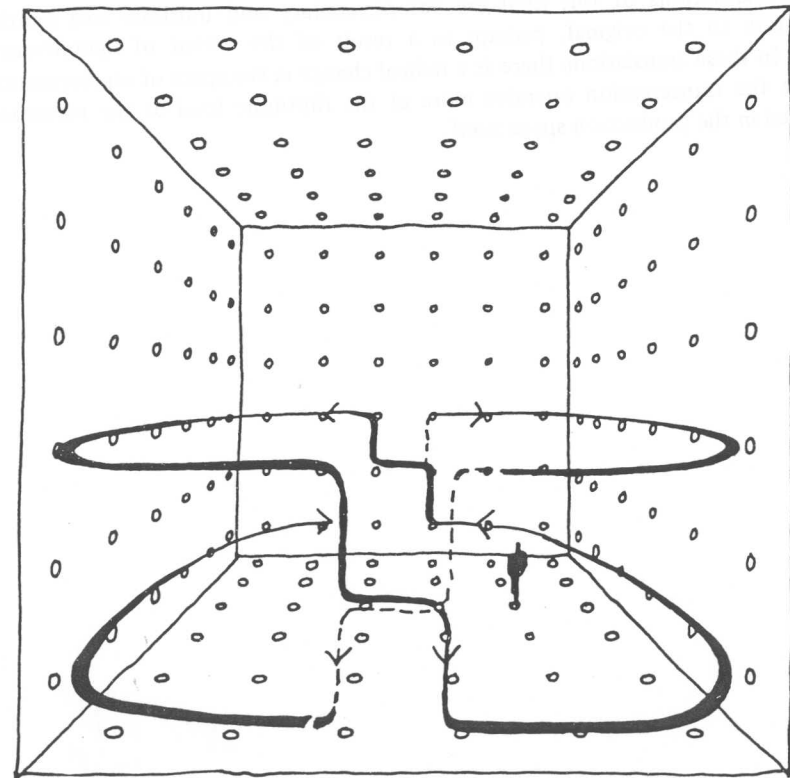
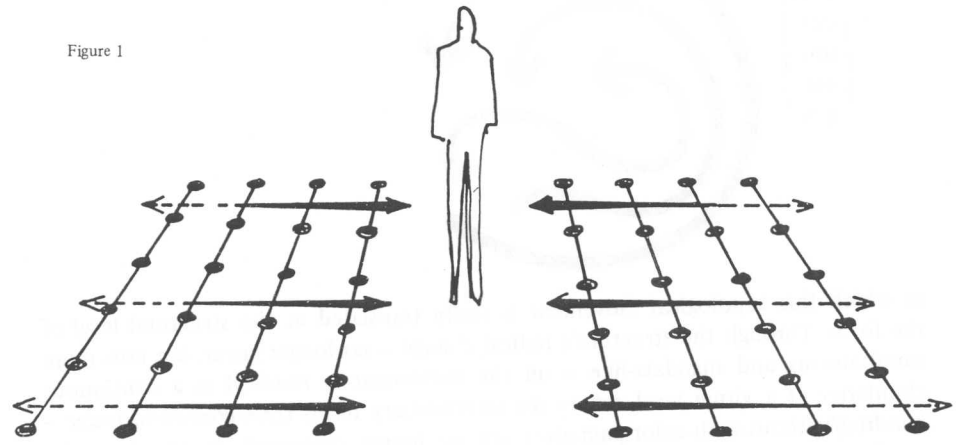


Figure 2

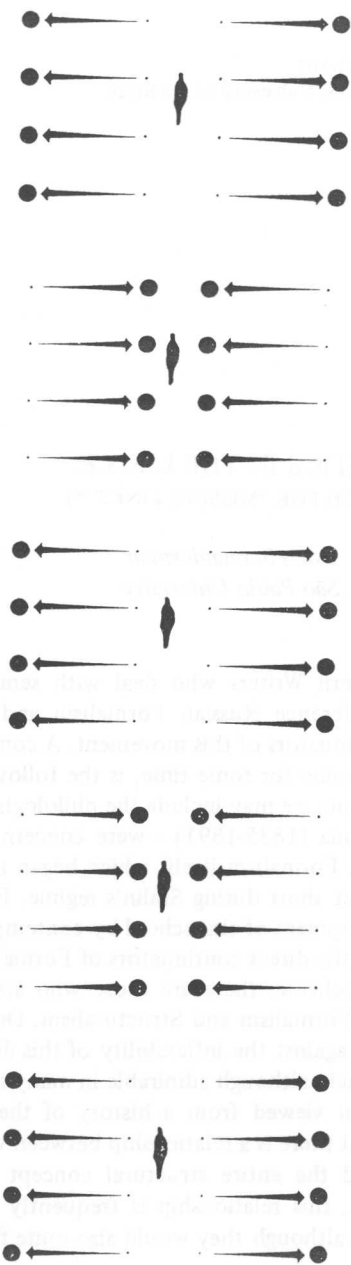


Figure 3

effect) as shown by the arrows: a movement of COMING and GOING, creating spatial contraction/expansion.

A radical change is operated here from one structure to another: the structure of the flat graphic space of the page changes into real three-dimensional space. This new kind of space entails a different apprehension of a kinesthetic nature: the relation between the senses -- sight, touch and hearing -- organized by the sense perception of the body as a whole.

In the case of the second version (fig. 2), which in fact is a more complex case than the first a programmed cubic space is constructed with loudspeakers. The spatial organization here is far richer insofar as it is not the sound that reverberates against the walls, but the walls themselves which transmit the sound. The loudspeakers thus act as signallers and indicators of space, and even reach beyond the physical limits of the sound cube. It will be possible to program circumnavigations such as those drawn in the cube in figure 2. This will produce the kinesthetic sensation of COMING and GOING spatially and corporeally.

This is in fact an intersemiotic translation operated from one system of signs to another quite different one: this in turn gives us a space-time continuum in perfect isomorphism.

Translated by Kevin Marc Benson Mundy.