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Emma/Juremma: An Intersemiotic Translation of Jane Austen's *Emma* into Brazilian Culture

Abstract: The project described in this article focused on investigating and experimenting with the three main types of translation (interlingual, intralingual, and intersemiotic). Based on the concept of transcreation – here understood as a creative approach to translation – this research aimed to reimagine the novel *Emma*, written by Jane Austen in 1815. In attempting to bring two cultures and two very distinct time periods together, the research took as its primary motivation the study of the relationship between words and pictures. And, in addition to exploring how a text can be translated into another context, I studied the narrative flow of the story and the dynamics between its characters, performing several investigations into the variation of pace and rhythm, sound and image, and shapes and colours, as well as the translation of colour schemes and formal structures into visual elements. Throughout the whole process, aspects of Brazilian culture and imagery, as well as traits of the present era, were explored to ensure that the narrative would be able to reflect, at least in part, Brazilian culture, even though the final product is based on a piece of classic English literature.

Keywords: illustration, intersemiotic translation, reimagination, translation

1 Introduction

Throughout their lives, people develop their own ways of perceiving the world. These viewpoints vary, and can be as diverse as the array of people in the world, depending on backgrounds, cultures, and the ages in which people live. When Haroldo de Campos first introduced the concept of transcreation in his book *A arte no horizonte do provável* (first published in 1963), he used T. S. Eliot's comments on Gilbert Murray's translations of Euripides to justify the necessity of a creative approach to translation: "Necessitamos de um olho capaz de ver o passado em seu lugar com suas definidas diferenças em relação ao presente e, no entanto, tão cheio de vida que deverá parecer tão presente para nós como o próprio presente. Eis o olho criativo" [We need an eye which can see the past in its place with its definite differences from the present, and yet so lively that it shall be as present to us as the present. This is the creative eye] (Campos 2010, 110–111; my translation).

That idea, allied with Campos's concept of transcreation, was the starting point for this project. This research primarily aimed to bring two cultures, two ages, and two very different forms of narrative together in order to produce a reimagining of *Emma* (Austen 2008), written by Jane Austen in 1815, and involved broadening Campos's theories and applying them to narrative prose. By considering the characteristics of both Brazilian culture and the current era, the project was intended to create a reimagination that is capable of portraying another historical and spatial reality, while simultaneously preserving aspects of the original novel. The resultant new version of the book, which is more strongly integrated with the Brazilian context, is highly influenced by the country's popular culture and echoes the ways in which that culture is expressed. In addition to portraying Brazil's unique language and imagery, the project highlights the similarities between this reimagination and the original work by exploring the dialogue between the written word and images.

The research relates to questions of language, and its main focus was transporting a text into another context, producing an experimental project that involved the relationships between text and image, and exploring the three main types of translation (intralingual, interlingual, and intersemiotic). The reimagination of the text in the Portuguese language, for example, took into account the sonority, customs, and particularities of Brazilian culture in order to characterize a different society in a different time, and thus generate possible plot changes. Although the translation processes were carried out mostly through comparison, free association, and the use of figurative language and metaphors, the methodology also included the translation of colour schemes, formal structures, pace and rhythm between sound and image, colours, and shapes.

2 Reimagining the novel

Overall, the research was divided into three main stages: the translation of the text from English into Portuguese (interlingual translation); the reimagination of the translated text, which aimed to incorporate elements of Brazilian culture into it (intralingual translation); and the visual translation of the reimagined text (intersemiotic translation). This division not only helped to organize the amount of work that had to be done and track my own progress; it was also a fundamental part of the project. As the introduction clearly states, this study was an interdisciplinary one and combined many disciplines and many interests, including those in the field of art and design.

As Carole Gray and Julian Malins state in their book entitled *Visualizing Research: A Guide to the Research Process in Art and Design* (2016), the key to getting effective results when conducting research like this is to establish appropriate research methodologies. Mapping the terrain and dividing the study into stages is part of this methodology, which also includes evaluating and analysing what was produced and documenting the creative process of translation. Therefore, dividing the research into parts and creating subdivisions for each stage helped to organize the workload and made analysis of the results more manageable.

Prior to beginning the translation and reimagination of the text, or even starting to elaborate on the images that would feature in the final product, the starting point of this research was an extensive investigation of the original work and its context. This examination favoured an in-depth understanding of not only the author's writing style and the linguistic resources that she employed, but also the story itself, and allowed each of the characters and their roles within the structure of the narrative to be outlined.

Placing *Emma* in its socio-historical context and then studying how it relates to its own time was an imperative precursor to starting the interlingual translation and creating a reimagination of it. However, and despite this, the bibliographical groundwork and the theoretical analysis are not described in this article, which concentrates solely on reporting how text and imagery were translated and reimagined to create an illustrated book.

After acquiring knowledge of the original text, the author, and the context in which the work was created, the first step was to translate the text from English into Portuguese as part of a process that is known as interlingual translation. Once translated, the material was ready to be subjected to a second translation process – intralingual translation – in which I started to create a reimagination of the entire text by taking into account the sonority, manners, and many particularities of Brazilian language and culture.

Prior to the process of transcreation, it became necessary to understand the story as a whole and, consequently, to create a timeline and organize the narrative by distributing its pivotal points in a way that made its several layers of meaning visible. Such an arrangement not only favoured the visualization of the narrative structure but made it easier to arrive at an understanding of how all of the significant units of the text are intertwined, and how they could be interpreted and transformed into images. Thus, part of this research included classifying and outlining the characters of the story and the settings where the events take place, in order to ensure that this reimagination of their names, occupations, personalities, and physical attributes would do justice to them and highlight their distinctive features.

When the narrative and all of its elements had been schematized, the full potential of the piece became clear. However, before starting the reimagination, I scrutinized the text itself – which had already been translated into Portuguese – and changed it somewhat: the narrative tone was modified to sound more contemporary, and the rhythm was accelerated to match what is observed and heard on a daily basis. To this end, with due respect to both the plot and the content of the original novel, typical Brazilian expressions were also inserted. This use of popular expressions gave the text a degree of informality and helped to establish a connection between it and Brazilian culture. However, despite these additions, there were also many aspects of the text that remained unaltered. An example of this is that, during this process, I decided to retain the third-person narrator and intensify the stream-of-consciousness passages of the original, which blur the line that divides the narrator and the thoughts and feelings of characters. By deciding to keep these characteristics, I intended to preserve *Emma*'s main feature: irony. In the original novel, Jane Austen used the third-person narrator to create layers of irony. Emma, the protagonist, is what many authors (Azerêdo 2003; McMaster 1996; Monaghan 1980; Page 2011; Tanner 1986; Watt 1963; Williams 1986) like to call an imaginist; this means that she enjoys creating her own version of reality and controlling other people's lives. Control, however, is a mere illusion, for she cannot even rule her own life. She cannot choose her own destiny, and her life is controlled by the author. Emma is a character in a novel, but she is not aware of it. This means that, throughout the novel, her plans do not always unfold the way she expected them to, and that is extremely ironic. Therefore, changing the narrator's perspective would give Emma too much power over her own decisions. Both the third-person narrator and the stream of consciousness were, that is to say, already an important part of the original, and I decided to keep them in this reimagination, for it would be hard to recreate the irony without them.

In terms of methodology, it is important to state that the reimagination was performed paragraph by paragraph: the original structure of the narrative was accurately followed, such that any reader would be able to place the original and reimagined versions side-by-side, compare their content, and refer to them. Yet, no matter how precise I intended this reimagination to be, the aim of the research was to portray the same story in a different society in another era, and so the plot inevitably underwent some changes.

3 Chromatic research

The work of a translator is the result of a series of choices. Even when translators try to remain impartial, they will inevitably have to make a few personal choices every now and then. There is no absolute truth when it comes to the translation of a text, and a creative project such as a reimagination would not be any different. Of the three different types of translation explored by this research, the third – intersemiotic translation – was always the main focus of the whole project. Thus, after completing the reimagination, I initiated the final and longest stage of the research. I started off by evaluating what had been achieved, revising the reimagined text, and reinterpreting its elements to create the images that would constitute the illustrated book.

The primary elements that would constitute the images – such as the use of colour and lines – were studied separately, and the knowledge obtained was used to conceive the illustrations. One example of this approach is the chromatic research that was carried out, for it provided a better understanding of the factors that can influence the perception of a particular colour scheme and thus were extremely important during the elaboration of the images. The chromatic investigation aimed to experiment with how colours behave when certain parameters and conditions are altered. Going beyond an explanation relating to optics, this research sought a method of incorporating colours into translation. The aesthetic principles that were formalized and prevalent during the early nineteenth century in England – a country that is characterized by its temperate climate – were entirely different from those that can be observed in a tropical country such as Brazil today. Geographical differences affect not only landscapes but also the way in which light is perceived and portrayed. This realization triggered another series of chromatic tests that were carried out in order to discover how colour works and define the parameters that I would have to alter to make a colour-palette translation possible.

The first illustrated edition of *Emma* featuring colour images was published in 1909 (Austen 1909). As this is the closest version there is to an illustrated edition of *Emma* contemporary with Austen, the watercolours in it, painted by C. E. Brock, were used in the tests described above. To this end, I created a digital file containing all twenty-four original images and used the *CameraRaw* plugin for *Adobe Photoshop* to systematically alter the following parameters: temperature, tint, exposure, recovery, fill light, black, brightness, contrast, clarity, vibrance, saturation, sharpening (amount, radius, detail, masking), noise reduction (luminance, luminance detail, luminance contrast, colour, colour detail), hue (reds, oranges, yellows, greens, aquas, blues, purples, magentas), saturation (reds, oranges, yellows, greens, aquas, blues, purples, magentas), luminance (reds,

oranges, yellows, greens, aquas, blues, purples, magentas), highlights (hue, saturation, balance), shadows (hue, saturation), and grain (amount, size, roughness).

To ensure that no possibility went untested, I decided to use combinatorial analysis theory to create a chart that would list all of the possibilities and help me keep track of the results. The alteration of the parameters listed above generated 19,895 variations of the original images. Many of these variations were noticeably different from the original digital file, while others remained unchanged. To verify this, I compared the colour table from the original file with the 19,895 colour tables generated by the variations. Those that did not show any difference were discarded and the remaining ones were selected for further analysis. This part of the study eventually yielded 198 colour tables that were completely different from the original file's colour table.

In the next stage of the chromatic research, these results were analysed. As the watercolour illustrations largely consisted of light tones analogous to one another, a change in the “shadows” parameter meant modifying their darker tones, generating a slight change in colouration and a drastic change in the image saturation, which reached its maximum value. As discussed above, this research also involved studying how light behaves and varies accordingly to geographical differences. As a result, based on the way that light presents itself and is perceived in Brazil, I picked a colour table that reflects the vibrant colours that characterize tropical countries. Of the 198 colour tables available, that is to say, the one that originally corresponded to variation 19,861 was chosen because it showcased noticeable alterations to the “shadows” parameter (hue = 30, saturation = 100).

All of the colour tables consisted largely of shades of orange, and table 19,861 is no exception. As the orange colour was predominant in this particular table, one of its orange tones was chosen to be the main colour of the final palette and was later used to determine the other colours that would be used in the illustrations. Figure 1 shows the vector version of this colour table and the selected orange shade.

4 Colour scheme

As discussed above, at the beginning of the reimagination process, I traced the characters' profiles, analysed their manners, and schematized their relationships with one another. Following the chromatic research, this information was used to determine the positions of these characters on the colour wheel.

The first colour added to the wheel was the shade of orange extracted from table 19,861. This shade of orange resulted from the chromatic tests described

Fig. 1: Colour table number 19,861 and the selected orange shade.

above and, consequently, it was chosen to represent the main character in the colour wheel and guided the choice of the remaining colours. At this stage, I assigned each shade of the wheel to one of the main characters, and the choice was based on their relationships with the protagonist, as well as among one another. The complete chromatic wheel is shown in figure 2.

After the translation and reimagining of the text, many aspects of it were transformed, including the names and surnames of the characters. As can be seen in figure 2, the main character, Emma, became Juremma, a name that originates in the language of the Tupi, an indigenous Brazilian tribe. Juremma, whose colour is the shade of orange discussed above, is located in the upper-right portion of the wheel. Taking into account the characters' relationships in order to fill in the

Fig. 2: Colour wheel; each colour corresponds to one of the main characters.

wheel, Juremma’s complementary colour – her chromatic opposite – belongs to her love interest, Jorge (formerly known as George). Using the same logic, the segments on either side of Juremma belong to her antagonists: Joana (formerly Jane) and Augusta, whose name is unaltered. In sum, I filled all of the segments by considering the love interests and the rivals of each of the main characters.

Having established the colours, I defined the colour scheme itself, basing myself on the fact that the orange shade was used to identify the main character, and so its importance had to be made clear to the reader. Thus, I decided that the orange colour should be present in all of the chapters and at its maximum intensity, occupying a prominent position in the contours and the lines of the images, while the other colours would be used every now and then depending on the context. In the end, that is to say, the illustrations for each chapter gained a specific filling-colour that varied depending on who is the most relevant character in the chapter.

5 The structure of the narrative

After performing the translation and reimagination of text and defining the images' theme colours, I plotted the key points of the story in a graph (fig. 3) to graphically depict the inner workings of each chapter's plot and how they relate to one another:

Fig. 3: Graph showing the story's inner structure.

In addition to making the story's structure visible, this graph helped to assign degrees of importance to each action within a chapter, and to each chapter within the text. In this way, I divided the chapters into ten levels, ranging from -4 to 5 , according to their relevance to the story. Likewise, I classified each major event of the story as belonging to one of four levels, ranging from 1 to 4 , based on its relevance to the plot of the chapter in which it occurs.

Fig. 4: Layered column chart demonstrating the connection between the story's inner structure and the intensity of the respective colours.

I then rearranged the contents of the graph and turned it into a bar chart (fig. 4) in order to better visualize the data. The width of each column is directly proportional to the number of pages in the chapter.

It is important to note that the two charts (fig. 3 and fig. 4) possess what Julio Plaza in *Tradução intersemiótica* (first published in 1987) defines as an understandable internal logic that facilitates interpretation, regardless of the reader's repertoire. This is to say, the importance of both charts relies on their efficiency in denoting the structural configuration of the text and translating the story's emotional tension, making it more evident (Plaza 2010, 104).

When the two charts were finished and both the events and the chapters of the novel had been divided into different levels of significance, the next step was to use this information to determine the colour scheme. I used the chapter levels, ranging from -4 to 5, to determine the intensity of the filling-colour for illustrations in each chapter. Ranging from 10 % to 100 %, each level corresponded to a 10 % increase in saturation: thus, a level 4 chapter in which Augusta is the most relevant character, for example, would result in a red shade at 90 % saturation. Similarly, the designated colour for a level -4 chapter would have 10 % saturation, while a level 5 chapter would have a saturation of 100 %. These variations are depicted in figure 5.

Fig. 5: Table showing colour-scheme variation. The saturation of the shades ranges from 10 % to 100 %, and varies accordingly to the importance level of each chapter.

6 Creating the images

At the same time as I was conducting the chromatic investigation, I was also designing the images. It took me a long time to choose their style, and after some experimenting with a range of techniques and drawing styles, I decided to create them using *Adobe Illustrator CC*, meaning that the final illustrations were created digitally, by using vector graphics. As the format of the book was defined after the images had been finished, the flexibility of the vector graphics files in terms of their ability to be scaled up or down without losing any quality was an advantage.

Rather than portraying solely scenes or characters, the images represent the situations described in the text, showing objects that directly reference the metaphors and expressions used. Here, then, the images are closely connected to the content of the text; as the research aimed to create a proportional and intrinsic

sis relationship between the two, one is difficult to separate from the other. Ultimately, with text and images side-by-side, what once was an intention became a reality, and imagining the two elements separately became unimaginable.

Both the text and images were created using analogies. The production of the former had a direct relationship to the original work, and the parallels drawn between two different cultures allow the reader to perceive the connections, similarities, and differences between them. The images establish the same type of direct relation with the reimagined text. In addition to portraying figures that are described in the text, the illustrations also reflect its internal structure. One example of this is the line patterns which are used repeatedly in the images to create the illusion of textures, reliefs, and transparencies. They also, however, have a secondary function, as they add on layers of significance to the final product. The cross-hatching lines, for example, are indicative of the content of the text. In a chapter in which many events take place at the same time, the quantity of visual elements increases proportionally.

Another example is the layered bar chart: initially created to assist in determining at which points in the story the illustrations would be placed, I eventually decided to incorporate it into the final version of the illustrated book, knowing that its presence at the beginning of each chapter would help to signal the significance of that chapter within the story. A miniature version of the chart also appears on every page to indicate how the events described relate to the other events in other chapters. All of the images, without exception, were created based on the chart, and including it in the reimagination made the reader more aware of the story's structure. In other words, this was an attempt to make the research process more visible to a reader who only has access to the final product.

7 Designing the book

Once I had finished the images, the book began to take shape; the chapters were formatted and the images incorporated, with attention paid to achieving a balance between image and text. In order to achieve this, the larger images, which are spread over two pages, were alternated with the smaller ones and interspersed with text. On those pages containing both images and text, the latter is presented in a manner that differs from the norm; rather than being formatted in a straight line, as on the pages that do not contain images, the words form figures that relate to both the illustrations and the content of the text itself.

To achieve a balance, I used three types of font. The first, Garamond (size 12, regular, black), was widely used as it is a serified font that provides greater visual

comfort to the reader in the midst of so much visual information. The second was the same Garamond again, albeit in bold and in the shade of orange used to visually depict the main character. I used it to highlight the most important sentences of each paragraph and to smooth the transition between the pages containing both image and text and those consisting only of words. The third bears the name of the author of *Emma*: the font named Jane Austen was inspired by her handwriting and is presented in size 24, using the same shade of orange as before. Of the three, it is the least commonly used, appearing only at the beginning of each chapter and on the pages that contain images, where it indicates that something important is about to happen in the story.

Figures 6–9 are thumbnails of pages in the book from the first chapter:

Fig. 6: The opening pages of chapter 1, featuring the layered column chart.

Fig. 7: One of the first pages of chapter 1, as indicated by the chart on the right side of the page. It features both image and text, and the words are here presented using all three different types of font.

Fig. 8: As indicated by the chart, this page is in the middle of chapter 1. It is an example of a page that does not contain images and therefore is used as a transition between two large illustrations, aiming to offer visual relief to the reader.

process and including the charts (fig. 4) in the final book was to encourage readers to engage with the story by allowing them to access a new layer of meaning. The visual and graphic elements are all there, but whether the readers will choose to use them in their interpretations is up to them.

This kind of creative exercise can be highly beneficial for translators, for it can help them fully understand the text they are working on. The reimagination process is a form of critical thinking and can help people expand their ideas about a book. By trying to recreate the work, the translator is able to analyse it from a new perspective, and that is why reimaginings and creative exercises should be incentivized. However, in projects such as this one, in order to achieve the desired goal, the researcher must not only have technical knowledge but must also deeply understand the inner workings of the two semiotic media in which he or she is working.

Taking into account the objectives of this research and what I produced in one year, it can be concluded that the work fulfilled its purpose and produced satisfactory results that exceeded initial expectations. I produced an illustrated book of eighteen chapters and fifty-two images, in which the images have a strong connection to one another, and both image and text represent Brazilian culture while still maintaining the same level of connection to the original story.

All in all, the innovative aspects of this research included: exploring intersemiotic translation in practice and reflecting on how visual elements can be used to contribute to the story being told. Reimagining a classic novel for a new culture is no easy task, and it meant trying to make its text more accessible to the people immersed in that culture. My intention was to make the characters and the way they speak to one another easier for other Brazilians to relate to. By changing the setting and the context in which the story is told, I aimed to open a door on literature and encourage people to see the original novel in a new light. Moreover, by changing the way the story is told, including illustrations full of significance and mimicking Brazilian imagery, I hoped not only to make the text friendlier to their eyes, but to make readers relate to the story as a whole. Ultimately, I worked to find common ground between early nineteenth-century England and today's Brazil, while also celebrating the differences that make both of these cultures unique.

Emma was the perfect novel with which to test these possibilities. The original book is full of metaphors, and one of its main themes is the construction of reality, so there was no better way of doing it justice than creating a new reality for it. As has already been stated, the work of a translator is full of personal choices, and the process described here could not be any different. Each step of this research represents a choice that led to the final product. Each element helped to create a work characterized by its unity, where text and image do not only interact but are

also integrated as one. In this illustrated book, the images have textual qualities and the text has a shape of its own, so that together they can intertwine to retell this story.

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