

SHADOWS, THRESHOLDS, AND AURAS: THE PHILOLOGICAL CROSSROADS OF ULYSSES IN THE DIALOGUE BETWEEN PIERO BOITANI AND HAROLDO DE CAMPOS

SOMBRAS, UMBRALES Y AURAS: LA ENCRUCIJADA FILOLÓGICA DE ULISES EN EL ENCUENTRO ENTRE PIERO BOITANI Y HAROLDO DE CAMPOS

OMBRES, SEUILS ET AURAS: LE CARREFOUR PHILOLOGIQUE D'ULYSSE DANS LE DIALOGUE ENTRE PIERO BOITANI ET HAROLDO DE CAMPOS

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Abstract: This article highlights a dialogue between the literary critic Piero Boitani and the Poet Haroldo de Campos about Ulysses, specifically in *The Shadow of Ulysses*. Within Boitani's philological and critical projection of Ulysses' shadow, this analysis considers its thresholds, its aura, and its parodic perspective in terms of "transcreation" as defined by Haroldo de Campos.

Keywords: Parody; Translation; Critics; Poetry.

Resumen: Este artículo busca resaltar un diálogo entre el crítico literario italiano Piero Boitani y el poeta brasileño Haroldo de Campos en torno a Ulises. Ulises proyecta aquí

su sombra, desarrollada en dos partes: sus umbrales y su aura. Durante los años 90, los intercambios de “fax” entre ambos propiciaron un intenso diálogo sobre la filología, la traducción y la crítica en torno a las sombras de Ulises.

Palabras clave: parodia; traducción; crítica; poesía.

Résumé : Cet article vise à mettre en lumière un dialogue entre le critique littéraire italien Piero Boitani et le poète brésilien Haroldo de Campos autour d’Ulysse. Ulysse projette ici son ombre, développée en deux parties : ses seuils et son aura. Au cours des années 1990, les échanges par fax entre les deux ont nourri un dialogue intense sur la philologie, la traduction et la critique autour des ombres d’Ulysse.

Mots-clés : parodie ; traduction ; critique ; poésie.

Homère, l’illustre ancêtre, n’était à cette époque guère plus qu’un grand nom, car pour le Moyen Âge, l’Antiquité, c’était avant tout l’Antiquité latine ; mais il fallait quand même citer ce nom. Sans Homère, il n’y aurait pas eu d’Énéide, sans la descente d’Ulysse dans l’Hadès, pas de descente de Virgile aux Enfers, et sans cette dernière, pas davantage de descente de Dante.

(Curtius 54)

Under the tropical heat, a meeting in shaded zones is more comfortable for conversation. In *A Short History of Shadow*, Victor Stoichita emphasized that the relationship with the shadow characterizes the history of Western representation (8). One can also add that, after Walter Benjamin’s fundamental essay, the history of Western reproduction. Between reproduction and representation, certain thresholds make Ulysses one of the most representative figures in Western and non-Western literature. One concrete way to illuminate this aspect is through the dialogue between Piero Boitani and Haroldo de Campos. Their first meeting in Oxford was organized by Kenneth David Jackson in 1999 and resulted in the book *Haroldo de Campos. A dialogue with the Brazilian Concrete Poet*. So, even though they met a bit far from the tropics, the meeting between de Campos and Boitani stretched the shadows of Ulysses to the tropics.

Far from the brief history of the shadow told by Stoichita, Boitani carefully explores a huge topic on the shadow of Ulysses. Still, it is useful to first address the concept of Ulysses’ shadow, where Piero Boitani identifies two types. The first is “the shadow of the journey to Hades and death” (*The Shadow of Ulysses* 12), and the second is how

Ulysses' shadow has persisted into the present. Combined, these shadows bring out "figuralism" and "prophecy" (12). Boitani's philological findings are concrete in terms of the relationship that he sketches between history, myth, and literature. The history of the *Odyssey* persists in the West and beyond. Through different geographies, the shadow of Ulysses keeps its unity through several variations.

In my analysis, figuralism and prophecy are intertwined as part of a fruitful intellectual dialogue between Piero Boitani and Haroldo de Campos. Piero Boitani is an Italian literary scholar and critic. He used to teach comparative literature under the angles of Medieval and Renaissance studies, with particular emphasis on classical texts such as *The Odyssey* and *The Aeneid* and their persistence in later literary traditions. His book *The Shadow of Ulysses: Figures of a Myth*, from 1994, is a rich panorama of the endurance of Ulysses across different historical and literary contexts. This study interests us closely because I keep this book as a meeting point with Haroldo de Campos.

Piero Boitani writes about these two paths of Ulysses' shadow: "The two dark shapes meet continuously on the horizon of this destiny as if moving along a perennial shadow-line" (*The Shadow of Ulysses* 12), and, as he continues, "the literary tradition and the hereafter, poetry and death, are superimposed, interconnected, and revealed each as the extreme aspect of the other" (12). Strongly interconnected, these "dark shapes" also have a fragile composition, as they must remain flexible to assume new figurations and respond to the prophecy as a literary trick.

The Shadow of Ulysses is a remarkable literary analysis. This book attracted the attention of Haroldo de Campos, who took care of its publication in Portuguese. The Brazilian edition is unique because Boitani added a new chapter, "A última viagem de Ulisses no Brasil", in which he analyzes Haroldo de Campos' *Finis mundo: A última viagem*, a poem that he wrote in 1990. As an appendix, Boitani also added a reflection on Ulysses 2001, examining the intersections of myth, literature, and history at the threshold of the 21st century, alongside Haroldo de Campos' transcreations of the poems cited in Boitani's book. This edition stands as a singular piece of this clever dialogue between Piero Boitani and Haroldo de Campos that keeps Ulysses at the core of their literary interests.

Through this exchange, the figurations of Ulysses begin with his shadow, which must be carefully considered, given Boitani's expertise in philology, literary history and criticism. Haroldo de Campos, for his part, viewed the translator's task as a literary device. This is why the angle of this analysis brings together his reflections on parody as a form of knowledge, treated here as a philological crossroad between poetry, critics, and

translation. This point can be understood in critical remarks within the act of translation—which Haroldo de Campos calls “transcreation”—and is strongly related to his work as a poet, which Boitani incorporates into his reflections on Ulysses. This crossroad can be understood as a field for the notion of “transcreation”, because the task of the translator, as Haroldo de Campos was, implies looking into the words and considering their morphological context, going a step further than the simple act of translating.

A Sombra de Ulisses, *L'ombra de Ulisses* and *The Shadow of Ulysses* are, in some ways, the same book, whilst in other ways, they are distinct. This short statement highlights the differences in cultures that provoke direct and indirect variations. This is also because Ulysses' shadow is mobile. It represents Boitani's portrayal of one of the most controversial figures in world literature: Ulysses. Outside of the Western tradition, Haroldo de Campos was the key figure in his time who could extend Ulysses' shadow into criticism, poetry and, as seen in this particular case, translation. The presence and exchange with Haroldo de Campos helped me to read these “dark shapes” also as a threshold, an aura, and a parallel chant (from the Greek: *Para Ode*), as Haroldo de Campos would define it in terms of parody.

Boitani's essay is a masterpiece of literary history and criticism that contributed to the development of Haroldo de Campos' transcreation praxis, as demonstrated by their fax exchange in 2002. From this exchange, I took some notes and words to clarify this exchange as a literary fact. I am grateful for Piero Boitani's generosity in sharing the exchange, made possible by his foresight in keeping the photocopies, without which the fax ink would have disappeared. Even though the fax exchange is only briefly mentioned, it was especially important for building up the reading of their exchange on Ulysses' shadow itself.

1. The Crafty of Myth is Its Shadow: Ulysses' Thresholds

Ancient myths and primal poetic narratives always find cunning ways to inscribe themselves in the present while still projecting into the future. Ulysses is one way of naming this well-known artifice of Western literature that continually evokes curiosity about the foreshadowing of the story presented and how it is transmitted even in times when Greek antiquity was almost forgotten, as Ernst Robert Curtius once depicted (*La littérature européenne*) or Auerbach situates in terms of mimesis (*Mimesis*). From era to era, transmission is never a straightforward programmatic process. When it happens, it relies on detours and branches, drawing on many other names—authors—to ensure that a story continues to be voiced. Yet each era imprints its own historical and poetic tone on

itself, marking the presence of the current age within such an early model. Sometimes, a tradition can remain silent for years until another one activates it —not to set it in motion for movement's sake, but to co-move, that is, to move *with* it, driven by effects that will grant a mutual occupation of the present time in question. This is not, however, a matter of passively waiting for tradition. Again, the term shadow, as found by Piero Boitani to give movement to Ulysses' cunning, reveals that literature inherently opens itself to the crossroads of archetypes, structuring structures, and a continuous writing process such that a certain written text can always be situated as a strong or weak variant. Physically, the shadow depends on the light conditions such as its intensity, brightness, and temperature. In this sense, the *Commedia* is the literary masterpiece for studying light, and it is not by chance that Dante's work is an important reference for Boitani's Ulysses. Tradition allows for the transformation of a proper name such as Ulysses into a place, a *topos*, whose connection to the threshold encompasses many literary devices. From the notion of shadow, one can propose a short shift in Haroldo de Campos' perspective on tradition, which is closer to his notion of parody, as he so effectively outlines:

I used this etymological concept of parody (from Greek. *pará*, next to, beside; *odé*, ode, chant) in my critical introduction (1966) to Oswald de Andrade —*Trechos escolhidos*, R. Janeiro, Agir, "Nossos Clássicos", 1967. I wrote: "One of the main resources in *Miramar* is parody (on which Joyce and Thomas Mann also relied, the two great figures of the modern novel admired by Oswald de Andrade). Parody not necessarily understood in the sense of a burlesque imitation, but in its etymological sense of a parallel chant ("A escritura Mefistofélica" 129)¹.

For Haroldo de Campos, parody can be considered a kind of infra-philological device that enables movement across three distinct literary activities into a single crossroad: criticism, poetry, and translation. From these three fluid points, literary tradition remains open to varying degrees of invention. Tradition is not synonymous with conserved, fixed and suffocated forces by historical grids; rather, it signifies a state of continuous motion, transformation and even a metamorphic *continuum* process that he took from his studies of morphology that were published in *Deus e o Diabo no Fausto de Goethe* (1981).

It is customary to refer to the work of poets with an emphasis on language as infra-philology, a meticulous craft in which they shape words, attending to both the sound and visual form while also preserving the verbal movement that gives it a unique rhythm. On the one hand, it is "infra" because the philological work *tout court* may come

¹ In another essay Haroldo de Campos also writes: "Oswald's 'Miramar' is a kaleidoscope of 163 fragments which must be assembled cinematographically in the spirit of the reader and where a chapter can be a 'pau-brasil' [Brazil-Wood] poem, an excerpt of a postcard or a simple humorous line ('My mother-in-law became a grandmother')" («Ruptura» 30). Unless indicated, all translations of the quotes are my own.

much later, with philology and paleography, which examine —or exhume— a text with precision, yet always within the realm of reception. On the other hand, the poet, when focusing on these minute details before the text comes to light, can, in a sense, keep the metaphor of descending into an underworld to untangle the thread of a text yet to come back with his or her verses. Some verses or poems can help to seize the invention as something that is living and not crystallized under the umbrella of a tradition. They engage in a necessary dialogue with the dead that takes place within one or more traditions. Since translation requires a similar, though different, philological process, Haroldo de Campos engages in both, often using paronomastic movements to create parallels between cultures: cultural ties are tightened within the poem whether written or translated. For this reason, although Haroldo de Campos has never developed a theory of parody per se, his poetic and translational work bears witness to the power of the hypothesis of parallel chants (*Para Ode*).

While infra-philology delves into the internal domains of the text —its procedures and production forms— cultural morphology, with which Haroldo de Campos was well acquainted, captures ideologems, historical cycles, and theoretical approaches. Although the corpus of his work formally concluded in 2003 with his passing, it continues to invite new methodologies. These methodologies stem from his definition of parody. Through cultural morphology, Haroldo de Campos transformed what had remained separate: the realms of the critic, poet and translator, creating liminal zones, or, more broadly, literary knowledge of the internal mechanisms of texts and their capacity to be in the realm of cultural critique. It is in this zone that Ulysses finds himself, and it is through this zone that the encounter between Haroldo de Campos and Piero Boitani unfolds. Both share the cunning of reading with Ulysses. Thus, this article partially explores the legacy of Ulysses and how his shadow highlights the astuteness of Haroldo de Campos and Piero Boitani in a dialogue that deserves a place in the history of literary criticism and theory. Throughout Ulysses' shadow, Haroldo de Campos and Piero Boitani had an exchange during the preparation of the Brazilian edition of *L'ombra di Ulisse*. Having a fax exchange, they mostly discussed the translation of the poems and their sources. This document guided us as a script about a friendship tied by the mediation of one of the craftiest characters of Western literature. In a fax sent in November 18, 2002, Haroldo de Campos wrote: "Finisco adesso la revision del tuo libro tanto bello. Penso (si sei d'accordo) di aggiuntargli un appendice". In this appendix, Haroldo de Campos proposed a "notebook of translations" with eight poems that are included in the Brazilian edition. This shows how Haroldo de Campos was engaged with the project to make a particular edition of Boitani's book in Brazil, even under hard healthy condi-

tions². Through this gesture, there is a structural principle that goes beyond the simple act of translation. It is as if Haroldo de Campos wanted to organize the dissemination of Ulysses in Brazil, creating pathways for future readers or traditions.

One can recapitulate how Boitani formulates the strategy: to spread Ulysses' presence in Western imagination (*A sombra* XIV) so that he becomes a kind of canon defined by cunning rather than by structured power based on national representation or the mature, virile model that Lukács identified in the novel form (31)³. Unlike a rigid existence, Ulysses embodies the union of feminine wiles with masculine strength, blending ancient and modern temporalities whose developments and origins prevent him from being fixed at a single point in the canonical constellation of Western and beyond. One simply learns to live with an omnipresent Ulysses and to fall in love with each new shadow he achieves through other writers. More than an amphibious character, he possesses a concrete form of alternating roles, which one could label as *mētis* (Μῆτις) (Detienne, Vernant, 1989) —that is, the aforementioned craftiness and a strategy of relationality necessary for Ulysses.

Through this strategy, one can situate Haroldo de Campos and his way of intertwining literary practices such as criticism, poetry, and translation, as elements coming from cultural morphology. He shares the same ethos when one looks closer at parody. In *Theory of Parody*, Linda Hutcheon made an appropriate remark that comes along with a historic frame about parody itself. According to her, “a range of pragmatic ethos is implied (...) between kinds of parody”. She adds:

negative versus curative (Highet 1962); critical versus amusing (Lehmann 1963); affirmative versus subversive (Dane 1980). It is better to retain the idea of a range of *intended ethos*, rather than that of formal opposing types of parody, because of the structural similarity underpinning all these types (repetition with a critical difference) (64).

Haroldo de Campos employed parody while keeping a pragmatic ethos with a critical difference. In one stunning remark about the myth —considering the sirens episode—, Piero Boitani emphasizes that there is “an accumulation of mistakes, possibilities, hypotheses, glosses on tradition” (*A sombra* 153). Thus, what is conventionally called tradition is not merely a synthesis of achievements and successes, but rather a broad latitude for navigating errors, misunderstandings, illusions, and even excesses (*hubris*),

2 In the same fax he writes: “mi sono finalmente ricuperato (parzialmente, è vero) e mi sento più disposto a lavorare (un pò sul letto, un può al mio “bureau”, tra i mei libri”.

3 “The novel is the art-form of virile maturity, in contrast to the normative childlikeness of the epic (the drama form, being in the margin of life, is outside the ages of man even if these are conceived as *a priori* categories or normative stages). The novel is the art-form of virile maturity: this means that the completeness of the novel's world, if seen objectively; is an imperfection, and if subjectively experienced, it amounts to resignation” (31).

where Ulysses embodies an astute strategy that can even deny its own name, as in the episode sung in Cyclops' cave, Book 9. Still, another great contribution of *L'ombra di Ulisse* lies in how Boitani placed Vespucci and Columbus (73-97). The former took the same route as the Dantesque Ulysses, with the difference that he would like to sign the discovery of a star situated on the opposite pole. This is the remarkable description that Boitani delivers to us:

"O navegador Florentino (...) perde o sono todas as noites para contemplar o céu, eis que vê quatro estrelas "que desenham a forma de uma amêndoa", evocando à sua mente a passagem do canto I do *Purgatório* em que Dante, "quando finge ir deste hemisfério para o outro" descreve justamente 'quatro estrelas/ nunca antes vistas a não ser pelos primeiros seres'" (*A sombra* 40).

This image will appear later in one of the most important poems not only from overseas but from all literature: *Omeros* by Derek Walcott (1990). The figure of Columbus appears clearly in the chapter "In Breve Carta: Ciência e Poesia do Conhecimento", where the new evangel in the earliest colonisation drive implies bringing new things, objects and knowledge. Regarding this point, when Boitani places the poem "Ulysses" by Tennyson, he situates the poem in a metaphysical Shakespearan push. It seems that he is captivated by his own shadow, convinced that he should leave and keep travelling, but verbally it is a motionlessness that keeps him in discourse. In the Haroldo de Campos' transcreation one reads: "Não posso descansar da viagem: quero/ Beber a vida até a borra" (Jackson 223). Under the entangled relationship between life and travel, Ulysses kept a drama that pushes his shadow to be romanticized whereas the new world is already undergoing transformations and all transcultural contacts have been established.

Under the ethos of parody, Haroldo de Campos has been able to keep all these points without losing his principle of orientation in terms of the material that the poem can share with us. Under an indetermined midpoint, the poem exists, and around its structure, there is outside the morphological value of culture, which means that in culture, tradition is never calcified; and lies under each poem, in this case, beneath the shadow of Ulysses. He reveals the memory of the text itself, as he did with Dante, and Camões, among other authors, going beyond an intertextual approach. In other words, with the book-length poem *Finismundo* and "Sketches to a Nekuia" in *Signantia quasi Coelum/Signância quase céu*, to name only two of his works, de Campos brought the tradition to a very precise project that overtook the work of quotation.

Within the two related approaches of infra-philology and cultural morphology, Haroldo de Campos and Piero Boitani sustained a dialogue mediated by the figure of Ulysses. To do so, they remained on the threshold of literary practices. Evidence of this

dialogue lies in Boitani's book, *L'ombra di Ulisse* [*Ulysses' Shadow*], published in Brazil in 2005 and translated as *A sombra de Ulisses*, with the following section of multilingual poems transcreated by Haroldo de Campos: two books of *The Odyssey*, 11 and 12; the Hell, canto 26, of the *Commedia*; "The last travel of Ulysses", by Arturo Graf; "The Last Journey", by Giovanni Pascoli; "The Meeting of Ulysses", by D'Annunzio; the first chant of *The Cantos*, by Ezra Pound; and "Ulysses", by Tennyson. In this synchronic selection, there is already a cartography of the shadows of Ulysses alongside Boitani's work, which emphasizes the multiform aspect (*polytropos*) of this mythic-literary existence (*A sombra* XVI). Through this lens, the shadow acts as an agent in the dialogue that enabled the inclusion of Haroldo de Campos —Haroldo de Campos' shadow— in other works by Boitani, such as *Il grande racconto delle stelle* (2019) and *Rifare la Bibbia* (2021). It is in the Brazilian edition that this dialogue is best preserved, since it includes not only the transcreations but also a new chapter, "The Last Voyage of Ulysses in Brazil," dedicated to Haroldo de Campos' 1990 poem, *Finismundo: A Última Viagem*:

Pode-se, portanto, imaginar como me senti, ao ler *Finismundo*. Eis um poeta do Novo Mundo que escreve uma poesia sobre a Última Viagem, dizendo antes de mim, de forma mais breve e muito melhor do que eu jamais poderei fazer, o que eu tinha tentado dizer no meu livro, e que, como escrevi depois, numa continuação da *Sombra de Ulisses*, tinha procurado viver e imaginar nos últimos quarenta anos (*A sombra* 158).

Boitani unpacks the idea proposed by Umberto Eco when the Italian critic and semiotician defined Haroldo de Campos as a 'prophetic plagiarist'. However, Boitani adds that, through the lens of poetry, the brevity of the form reveals a network of Ulysses' simultaneities that he can trace in Boccaccio, Petrarch, and the offshoots of Dante's Ulysses, as well as in Portuguese, Camões, Gabriel Pereira de Castro and Fernando Pessoa. Yet, the tradition with which Haroldo de Campos engages is not exclusively Italo-Brazilian. There is also the shadow cast by James Joyce and the extensions of the Hellenic tradition itself, particularly through the presence of Tiresias in Book XI of *The Odyssey*. Although Boitani does not mention it explicitly, Book XI is where one can grasp the movement of shadows in Hades, a figure that originates in the *Nekuia*, which is related to Haroldo de Campos' poetics, and can be summarized as an ethics of the shadows. Analyzing this point from Haroldo de Campos' perspective, *Nekuia* is an infra-philological device that ties parody to translation and poetry. In this reading, it can be understood precisely as a literary procedure (following Shklovsky⁴), as it evokes

4 Explaining the *Ostranenie*, Shklovsky mentions the relevance of the parallelism: "the goal of parallelism —the goal of all imagery— is transferring an object from its usual sphere of experience to a new one, a kind of semantic change" (Berlina 2017, 93).

an unsurpassable estrangement (“остранение”) within Western literature: the dialogue between the living and the dead, specifically Ulysses and Tiresias in the underworld, where all the shadows feel the blood of the sacrifice that the first offers to the former.

In the case of Haroldo de Campos’ use of *Nekuia*, there is the poet’s translation of Book XI of *The Odyssey*, published in *Phaos*, a journal of Unicamp, in 2001 with the original in Greek, with his translation published in *A sombra de Ulisses*. Alongside his translation, there is the poem “Esboços para uma Nekuia” (“Sketches for a Nekuia”), from 1979. Although separated in time, this parallel reinforces the pursuit of sophistication in the parodic device. Haroldo de Campos’ poetic writing spreads the shadow of Ulysses. This aspect deserves emphasis in Haroldo de Campos’ work, since parody holds a central place. One can place him in this “polytropos” that Boitani proposes to define Ulysses. Haroldo de Campos employed parody precisely: the poet parodies the translator, the translator parodies the critic, and the critic, in turn, parodies both the poet and translator, creating a playful interplay of parody among these roles. They form parallel, interconnected lines, from which emerge the difficulty of separating them, as together they produce specific semantic transformations.

“Esboços para uma Nekuia” (1974/1975) comes from *Signantia quasi coelum* (1979). This title is already a translation, as it is presented in both Latin and Portuguese: *Signantia quasi coelum / Signância quase céu*. With this title, the sky comes down a little while the sign, from *signantia*, comes up a bit. The balance between sign and sky is incomplete, which is why the poet insists on “sketches”, as well as “almost” (“quasi/quase”). However, he produces a *Nekuia*, descending, in life, to the underworld, revisiting the moment that Ulysses meets Tiresias, offering to him a sacrifice. With the fresh blood, the Diviner helps him by telling him how to come back to Ithaca. In this *Nekuia*, there is a mediation with the Greek world through the very spelling of the word *nekuia*, signaling the underworld, or the world of the dead. Conversely, in the book title, there is the idea of ascension —*coelum*. *Coelum*, for example, is a term that is difficult to detach from St. Augustine. The author of *Confessions*, in deepening our relationship with the Christian Heaven, is considered one of the creators of the semiology in which Haroldo de Campos, critically, began to designate the *signic* aspect of the heavens. But in all poems and songs, the heaven is kept as a promise, and to avoid surrendering entirely to this promise, the poet turns to the concreteness of the sign: hence the “almost heaven” (*quasi coelum*), for, after all, the sign of heaven is not heaven itself, but its sign, or even, its shadow. It is in the shadowed realm that cunning has the greatest capacity to wield its power. Through the shadow, the visible recedes, giving way to listening, to the actions of words that must be wisely effective.

In the literary experience presented in *The Odyssey*, Ulysses' engagement with shadows and thresholds finds its foundation in Nekuia. Haroldo de Campos' translation of Book XI is hardly coincidental, as it emphasizes the *ex halos* —that is, the serene death of Ulysses— a mystery that *The Odyssey* itself leaves open and that Boitani underscores. In *Finismundo*, at least in Boitani's reading of the poem, Haroldo de Campos constructs a play of Ulysses' simultaneities based on Tiresias' prediction. Between an uncertain end and an open becoming, Ulysses is disseminated, and part of that spreading is mapped in *Finismundo*.

The dialogue between Boitani and Haroldo de Campos has been mediated for several years by other readers, among whom Giacomo Berchi deserves mention. Berchi shows that, with *Finismundo*, Haroldo de Campos poses a question to "Ulysses and to Brazil, to its language, and also to its literary history" (Sterzi 358). In doing so, he situates Odorico Mendes (1799-1864) and the project of a Baroque critique in the work of Haroldo de Campos. Berchi's question is relevant in linking the errancy of Ulysses to that of Guesa by Sousândrade, an epic poem published in 1877 that, incidentally, diverges from the Brazilian Romanticism project, which idealized the figure of the indigenous person in an idyllic way —a mode that perhaps resembles the way Tennyson shaped his Ulysses. Furthermore, even if the errancy of Guesa differs greatly from that depicted in the *Odyssey*, this poem would be connected with the dissemination of Ulysses in Brazil. In the case of the young indigenous child who roams the world, the *Odyssey* is something else entirely. For a brief context, Sousândrade wrote a lengthy poem entitled *O Guesa*, the first cantos of which were printed in 1868-1869. For a better context, it is worth summarizing the journey of Guesa, who was a child taken from his parents at the age of ten, destined to be sacrificed upon reaching fifteen. He was to be offered to the sun god. Following a 15-year astrological cycle, a new child would be sacrificed, becoming, in turn, a new Guesa. With this theme, Sousândrade develops an epic that stands outside the norms of Brazilian Romanticism and that would not be truly read and studied until the end of the 1950s. Published in New York, the work draws on sources from travelers, specifically Alexander von Humboldt, who described the story of Guesa in his *Vues de Cordillères* (1810-13), a name meaning "Homeless or Wanderer," originating from the figure of the Muisca, Colombian Amerindians. A re-visioning of Sousândrade emerged in 1964 through a recovery project undertaken by Haroldo and Augusto de Campos, in special collaboration with Luiz Costa Lima, among others. In literary history, this poem can be considered as part of a web of Ulysses' shadows. Sousândrade quotes Homer in the foreword published in 1876: "I admire the grandiosity of Homer" (Campos, A. 194).

2. Aura of Shadow: The Figuration Work within Dark Thresholds

What, then, is the aura? A strange tissue of space and time: the unique apparition of a distance, however near it may be.

(Benjamin 23)

In Walter Benjamin's language, the term "aura" has a vast critical reach. It traverses the most distinct layers of time and the widest geographical distances. This latency of the aura may well be linked to the shadow. In this case, the shadow of Ulysses. Piero Boitani and Haroldo de Campos are cunning readers. Under their radar, the shadow of Ulysses moves through its philological and infra-philological imprints and carries a cultural morphological background. To say "shadow" is to say "image", even if there is a difference between the terms. The shadow, in turn, is both an image and a sign. It can also move through the sound of a name such as Ulysses. In any case, this is how Boitani moves through the aura of the shadow of Ulysses. He kept him and the name as an ensemble that can also be called a "real image" (*A sombra* XV). However, according to Boitani, this is neither objective nor subjective: "It is like the image produced by a telescope when one observes the moon" (*A sombra* XV). This example not only projects Ulysses' name to space but puts him in orbit whose movement can be perceived through lenses that are, in this case, the literature itself. It is as if Ulysses' movements were generating literature through a unique wandering, one that can be linked to other wanderings that delay the return home. For many readers, this delay is the core of literature, its aura is inherent to it.

In the critical perspective, one can pay attention to the details as if as Ulysses is unfolding his destiny as a part of ours, can produce readings in terms of critics, poetry and translation. Piero Boitani defines the "impure reader" as one who is passionate about theory, with a deep appetite for poetry, and who is concerned with interpretation, the history of interpretation, and its meanings as a reflection (*L'ombra di Ulisse* 6) that involves aesthetic, moral, and religious positions, whilst also considering ideological, cultural, and material contexts. This all stems from his perceptual focus, which interprets Ulysses' presence in Western logos as a shadow, whereas for Haroldo de Campos, it would be more of a reflection, closer to an aural perception. In both cases, Ulysses serves as a mediator between two impure readers, Piero Boitani and Haroldo de Campos. From this comes the aura of his shadow that they read.

In *Haroldo de Campos: A Dialogue with the Brazilian Concrete Poet*, Piero Boitani published an essay titled "The Last Voyage". Again, *L'ombra di Ulisse* was published in 1996, while *Finismundo* appeared in 1992. There is a close to parallel alignment here,

which could be called a mimetic event, in the sense that both Boitani and Haroldo de Campos engage directly with the *logos* of myth. For Boitani, the key to the *Odyssey* lies in the words of Tiresias. After passing by the island of Circe, Ulysses descends into the world of the dead. This journey unveils the aura of descent and ascent: *katabasis*, *anabasis*. Poetry is the greatest art through which we can experience heaven and the underworld going through really light or dark places. However, we should be aware that, in the relationship between light and shadow, there is an aura moving. Light always leaves a trace, just as shadow emits an aura.

For Ulysses, this represents a taste, while alive, of experiencing non-life. But adhering to Tiresias's words, Ulysses will die at an old age and far from the sea —*ex halos*— which would mean trading the oar for the breeze. Even with this end well defined, Ulysses' aura lies in his movement. Ulysses is a figuration. Though he may not be considered a hero in modern terms, he is at least an infinite semiosis, whose nature is shaped more by figurations than by representations. In this respect, Boitani and Haroldo de Campos share another source, Dante. Ulysses' presence in the *Commedia* is a path constructed from antiquity to the medieval world.

Reframing Boitani's study, Ulysses' death is revealed in Canto XXVI of *Inferno*, which suggests a quest for another superhuman experience beyond the Hades he encountered through Tiresias's words. Dante's verses present Ulysses' experience in the southern hemisphere: "d'i nostri sensi ch'è del rimanente / non vogliate negar l'esperienza / di retro al sol, del mondo sanza gente" ("from what remains of our senses / do not deny the experience / of a journey beyond the sun, in a world without people"). Boitani and Haroldo de Campos were profoundly attuned to this passage. Between them, Ulysses becomes a significant mediator, as both inhabit criticism through impure readings, dwelling in critical zones and the chronic side of history: a journey that bears a topography for both Boitani and Haroldo de Campos.

Boitani precisely marks his common ground with Haroldo de Campos when he writes: "Things in poetry, history, and life are always slightly more complicated than mere coincidence or *Zeitgeist* seem to imply. Ulysses is ubiquitous in Western literature, and particularly in the twentieth century" (2000, 219). Ulysses is one of those "ancestors of the future" who figures in the founding of Lisbon, as Fernando Pessoa would affirm, or in the two-headed figure of Vasco da Gama-Luís de Camões⁵. With this, Boitani places

5 Such is absolutely the project designed by Haroldo de Campos: "Quanto ao *Finismundo*, esse poema tem um desenho logopaico, um desenho sintático, é para ser visto e lido também. Acredito que, na medida em que as pessoas se familiarizarem com algumas referências, com alguns elementos que fazem parte desse tecido, do bastidor do poema, ele irá ficando transparente. É um poema para ser lido em voz alta, para ser ouvido. Porque o que mais fortemente está por detrás desse poema é a melopéia homérica, pelo menos na primeira parte. E

Finismundo by Haroldo de Campos as a global intertext of Ulysses' final shadow. From this point, the challenge of this lecture would situate Haroldo de Campos's contribution in *Finismundo* which transcreates Ulysses' shadow into Ulysses' aura.

Regarding Walter Benjamin's definition of aura as a unique apparition that assembles different strata of space and time, one can be aware that the term "aura" comes from poetry, specifically from Baudelaire's short poem piece in prose "Perte d'auréole" (1869, 157-158). Baudelaire's strategy is not far from that of Ulysses, who, before the Cyclops, claims to be no one, dissolving, when necessary, his own aura or name. But the issue is not to dwell on this point, but rather on the event of the fall of the aura, its loss. The narrator in question continued with the shadow of his aura, which was read by the interlocutor who recognized him in one of those low places. Still, according to Boitani's analysis, there is an aural perspective in the shadow of Ulysses. The shadow figuration works with the caption of different tones of this shadow. In this sense, the aura can help with its weak lightness that assembles different times and various geographies, identifying —infra-philologically— the different shadow tones.

Projecting myself as an impure reader, I perceive the aural quality of the shadow, through all the work of figuration within dark thresholds. The cunning hero is anonymous at the beginning of the urban centers, in the case of Baudelaire's poem. The aura mediates Haroldo de Campos alongside his poem *Finismundo*, showing how flexible the relationship between poetry and history can be. Boitani explains that, in Aristotle's view, history is the exposition of real events in the "particular," while poetry is a way of recounting possible events in the "universal" (*L'ombra di Ulisse* 18). One can add that the name Ulysses is indeed an entanglement of poetry and history in which it has its own fragile immateriality that is changeable such as shadow. Therefore, the shadow of Ulysses has an aura that embodies a material force, as Boitani himself defines it:

Finismundo è un poemetto di raro vigore, che disegna l'ombra di Ulisse da Omero a Dante a Joyce, costruendo un vero e proprio intertesto a partire dalla profezia di Tiresia sull'ultimo viaggio nel Libro XI dell'Odissea, dal canto XXVI dell'Inferno e dall'interpretazione che di esso propone Boccaccio nell'*Amorosa Visione*, e dall'Ulisse. Compie, in

na segunda, um certo tom irônico que faz parte de uma linha 'coloquial' da poesia moderna, um certo verso moderno, que foi desenvolvido pelo primeiro Eliot, pelo primeiro Pound, um verso para ser falado, em alguns momentos, para ser dramatizado através de algum tipo de encenação prosódica, oral. Acredito que dificuldades fazem parte da poesia, não apenas da moderna, mas da poesia em geral. Quanto mais se lêem os clássicos, mais se vê o quanto o problema da dificuldade é um problema insito a essa leitura. Um Dante, não apenas hoje, mas através do tempo, sempre precisou de comentários, de aparato crítico, de glosas, para sensibilizar o leitor. Camões também. Eu acho que *Finismundo* espera um leitor, deseja um leitor. Se esse leitor não existir atualmente e se esses destroços do naufrágio realmente subsistirem, esse leitor estará inscrito na memória de Deus. Ele será o meu leitor eleito, para falar com Benjamin. Na memória virtual do tempo, um poema, desde que tenha validade estética estará sempre disponível, como matriz aberta, pronta a ser atualizada na recepção, senão do presente, de algum ponto eletivo no futuro" (*Sobre Finismundo* 35-36).

versi, con assai maggiore incisività, e con guizzi improvvisi di luci e parole, quel che io avevo tentato di schizzare ne *L'ombra di Ulisse* (68).

The auratic Ulysses shadow pursuits within codified codes, because when Haroldo de Campos composed *Finismundo*, he had in mind forty years of working on poetry, which can be summarized with his words: “o enfrentamento constante que o poeta acaba tendo com o fazer poético” (Stoichita 13). Sebastião Uchoa Leite considered two main aspects. The first one is the shipwreck that *Un coup de dés*, by Stéphane Mallarmé, can be considered the highest point of modernity in poetry. The second one is inscribed as a milestone to the historical formal end of the epic and the parodic moment keeping the urban experience where James Joyce’s *Ulysses* is a prototype. The aura of the shadow acts, maintaining parody as a source.

In *Rifare la Bibbia, Ri-Scritture letterarie*, Boitani makes two major references to Haroldo de Campos. The first involves the notion of transcreation (95), bringing it closer to the *Commedia* and its ensemble of theological knowledge that paradoxically flows and revels in secular writing. The second reference is *Finismundo*. This poem cannot be reduced to a formal, intertextual play, as such a reduction can easily be read as a miniature practice that illuminates what constitutes the Ulysses shadow in and out of the Western tradition, considering that in *Finismundo* there is a Ulysses in the tropics.

Yet, tradition is formed through the unfinished processes of secularization, and at this crossroads of modernity—a softer term for an unaccomplished secularization—lies unresolved processes of coloniality and colonization. Still, Western representation pushes its threshold further. If Ulysses explored the limits of the Mediterranean, Dante went beyond them, as did Camões. These images of transit are embraced by poets situated at the other extremes of the world. They know how to carry poetic forms that will be transformed by the very condition of writing itself. In this sense, Haroldo de Campos is both *post-* and *decolonial*, as he extends Western boundaries through his critical translations. This is a point about the aura of the shadow and how long it moves according to Western literature itself. Haroldo de Campos took a stance within a body of work that inhabits the Western imagination, and responded robustly when, in *O arco-íris branco* [*The White Rainbow*], he quotes a late Oswald de Andrade essay on the Orphic sentiment, marking a return “to the ancestral fear before life that is devouring” (*O arco-íris branco* 33). Ulysses shares this fear not only when he is faced by the Cyclops, but also through an idea of hubris which comes along with him and through his history of the presence of his shadow in all literature worldwide making it inseparable from him. Again, the correspondence between Haroldo de Campos and Piero Boitani cannot be summarized only in their great achievements, such as poems,

translations, and critics in books, but how they —without mentioning it— crafted a worldwide Ulysses.

Returning to *Finismundo*, Haroldo de Campos doesn't fail to include a history of the shadow of Ulysses. Or his aura, in which his survival image —the German term used by Boitani is *Fortleben*— endures even in the face of the hero's hypothetical end. Nevertheless, between traditions and translations, the Brazilian poet selects a daring Ulysses and a Homeric figure embodying *hybris* —a man who didn't commit the offence of *hubris*— “excess orgulhoso, desmesura” (*O arco-íris branco* 35) —that the gods who punished him would disagree— but rather someone who astutely ventured into the limits of the human and, still nowadays, the thresholds of Western imagination, and knew craftily how to sing these thresholds.

When Walter Benjamin asked himself what “aura” is, he argued that it is “a strange tissue of space and time: the unique apparition of a distance, however near it may be” (Benjamin 23). Beyond any representation, Ulysses means also a tissue that resembles to its aura, as if it allows —through literary history— to keep all the possible variants in Western and non-Western cultures.

Following the shadow of this aura, Boitani explores the work of Haroldo de Campos, this time situating it within the context of a non-Western Ulysses, whose traces are found alongside him in Latin America and, in the Caribbean, with an author like Derek Walcott:

Após ter publicado *Finismundo* e *Crisantempo*, Haroldo de Campos dedicou-se à Tradução da *Ilíada*, o primeiro poema do Ocidente. Mas em tal Princípio lampeja uma Primeira Guerra, a de Tróia, que é também e sempre a Última. O itinerário do poeta brasileiro assemelha-se enormemente àquele de Derek Walcott, no qual —como nos outros poetas caribenhos Harris, Brathwaite e Dabydeen— as sombras de Homero e de Ulisses são espessas. “The sea is History”, o mar é História, ele canta, e percorrendo os livros da Bíblia, do Antigo ao Novo Testamento, reconstrói as peripécias dos afro-americanos: deportação, escravidão, emancipação. O mar é história, é sangue e opressão. Em seguida, porém, Walcott publica *Omeros*. E *Omeros*, fundindo o hexâmetro e a terceira rima, ecoando Joyce e Montale e Hemingway e a Bíblia, cantará um simples pescador, o “pacífico Aquiles, filho de Afolabe”, que comete uma única chacina, de peixes; e cantará “os sulcus das suas costas ao sol”, e Heitor e Helena, e o Mar do Caribe, que “ainda continua” (*A sombra* 182).

The thickness of the shadow and the density of the aura help to shape a wholly different Odysseus from the one who journeyed through the Mediterranean, whose itinerary within the boundaries of Western literature appears in Canto XXVI of the *Inferno*. The underworlds to which the myth's cunning —drawing on shadow and aura— needed to survive lie within the historical persistence of the sea. It is worth recalling that speaking

of shadow in terms of projections, survival, and reinventions sets into motion a series of figural impulses.

3. Parallel Chants: The Paraphonic Shadows

Through this dialogue between these two “impure readers”, Piero Boitani and Haroldo de Campos let us imagine that Ulysses’ craftiness maintains his journey into one of the most chief human qualities in the *Odyssey*: hospitality (Fisher 161). All of the readings that come from this journey are a way of sharing —craftily— hospitality laws, under the risk of the *hybris*. Nick Fisher writes that Odysseus [Ulysses] proceeds, rather surprisingly, to reveal his own supposed background as a man whose varied career included a good deal of piratical raiding, as the leader of ‘godlike *hetairoi*’ (157). His dubious acts help to amplify all the ambiguities that he carries throughout the poem.

In the Italian edition *Traduzione, Transcreazione*, a translation of Haroldo de Campos’ essays, Andrea Lombardi remarks that he is polyphonic: “Alcune volte da solo e il più delle volte insieme a specialisti dei diversi idiomi, Haroldo de Campos ha inaugurato uno stile polifonico, scegliendo di tradurre dell’*intraducibile* delle culture *altre*, diverse, imparentate o del tutto ostiche” (149).

In the fax exchange between Haroldo de Campos and Piero Boitani, there is an expression that calls my attention: “traduzione parafonica”. The handwriting comes from a verse from *The Odyssey* in a fragment of Book 12, about the sirens. His transcreation is: “Tive ganas de ouvir suas líquidas odes”. What is interesting here is how he moved from the concrete poetry’s perspective of isomorphism into paramorphism. Undoubtedly, it comes from his reflection on the parody as a parallel chant. In the document, he mentions two Greek words: λιγυρήν (*ligyrēn*, clear sounding) and αιδήν (*aoidēn*, singer in a poetic way). In the same verse, it means clear-sounding singer, a resonant voice, captivating. The sirens’ songs here have a poetic appeal that helps us to come back to the distinction made by Piero Boitani between figuralism and prophecies. Historically, critics and poets can organize prophecies, not in a mystical way, but through the materiality of different texts and traditions.

The paraphony proposed by Haroldo de Campos stems from a “wandering” among languages, to use Andrea Lombardi’s expression, which aligns with the impurity of readers in Boitani and Haroldo de Campos. But these displacements assemble figuralisms or, in other words, all the work done by the shadow of Ulysses. Paraphony emphasizes the argument of the use of parody as an infra-philological device, in which the poet maintains the tensions between languages, the history of literature, and philology itself, disseminated throughout his *praxis* of translation. The fax exchange can be considered

as a field of work in Haroldo de Campos' parody and can go further as an exercise of shadowgraphy because both Boitani and Haroldo de Campos are canny readers that know how to read the movements, displacements and diasporas of the shadow of Ulysses, as well as its auras and its thresholds.

Piero Boitani and Haroldo de Campos go beyond a rhetorical use of literary knowledge: they move through Ulysses' parallel chants. Living between languages entails understanding that some languages cast shadows and auras on others. One can well imagine a paraphonic Ulysses, on the run, in transit, sometimes in silence waiting attentively for the next text, poem or translation to keep travelling. Within his desire for an impure reader and travelling drive, Haroldo de Campos' project finds an unending dialogue with Piero Boitani and Ulysses continuously mediating their conversation with us.

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