

# Greek Mythic Heroines in Brazilian Literature and Performance

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# The Dynamics of a Brazilian Collective Appropriation of Euripides' *Medea*: The TRUPIERSA Experiment

*Maria Ant3nio H3rster and Delfim F. Le3o*

## 1 Translating *Medea* for the Brazilian Stage

This study addresses a recent experience of the TRUPIERSA group of the Federal University of Minas Gerais concerning the translation and staging of Euripides' *Medea*. The scientific mentor of the project is Tereza Virg3nia Ribeiro Barbosa, a Professor of Greek Language and Literature at the Faculty of Letters of the University of Minas Gerais, who fostered the collaboration between a post-graduate program in Literary Studies of that same university (P3s-Gradua33o em Estudos Liter3rios da Faculdade de Letras: Fale-UFMG) and a post-graduate program in Translation Studies from the Federal University of Santa Catarina (Estudos de Tradua33o do Centro de Comunica33o e Express3o: PGET-UFSC), while promoting their interaction with professional actors (Barbosa 2013: 9).<sup>1</sup> TRUPIERSA describes itself as a "translation and staging" ensemble and is a heterogeneous company that brings together not only teachers and young researchers (undergraduates, master and doctoral students) in the fields of Classical Studies and Translation Studies, but also theatre professionals.

The group's name, TRUPIERSA, in addition to its obvious humorous associations, is also richly suggestive in both graphic and sonic terms. First, is its connection with the Portuguese word *trupe* – deriving from the French *troupe* (*th34trale*) –, which is quite frequently used, as in other modern languages, to describe a theatrical group. But it also resembles the term *trope3a* (from the verb *trope3ar*, 'to stumble'), a suggestion of self-directed irony that also

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1 We wish to thank Tereza Virg3nia Ribeiro Barbosa and Andreia Garavello for the most valuable information that they provided respecting the work of TRUPIERSA in translating and performing Euripides' *Medea*, and to Maria de F3tima Silva for her helpful criticism. Special thanks are also due to Manuel Tr3ster and Isabel Pedro, who read an earlier version of this paper and whose comments helped us to improve it, especially at the linguistic level. This research was developed under the project UID/ELT/00196/2013, funded by the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT).

functions as a sort of *captatio benevolentiae*. This play on words emphasizes, on the one hand, the obstacles posed by the translation itself, and, on the other, the rudimentary and experimental character of the whole project – as if the members of the group were still trying to find their artistic path, being therefore unable to walk or run steadily. An interesting optical/visual effect is also created by the choice of writing a Greek Π (instead of a P) right in the middle of the word. This is of course a way of visually highlighting the connection with Greek drama, although another effect is that it contributes to create the sensation that the term was coined via the combination of two words, with the conjunction point being marked by the Π: *trupe* (as discussed above) and *persa* ('Persian').

The final version of the Euripidean text was the result of a three-year collaborative project translating *Medea*, developed by the aforementioned post-graduate programs. This institutional and personal framework requires some preliminary considerations: since the translation was carried out in an academic environment, it is legitimate to admit that it had some pedagogical concerns. The basic objective of the exercise was most probably to deepen students' knowledge of Greek literature and language, as well as of translation and performance techniques.<sup>2</sup> However, the didactic intent clearly went much beyond the limits of the academic domain: it was continued backstage and culminated in multiple shows, in which the aim was to stimulate the direct participation of the audience.

This primary didactic purpose is also reflected in the general design of the volume *ΜΕΔΕΙΑ de ευριπίδης* [sic], as it was finally published. Throughout the book the original Greek text is displayed side by side with the translation, with the corresponding original line numbers<sup>3</sup> appearing in the left-hand margin of the page. This editorial option deserves some further comment: first, the strategy undoubtedly substantiates the institutional framework in which the project was generated, presenting the work as an instrument for learning and/or for improving the knowledge of the Greek language, as well as of translation methodologies; secondly, it fits in with the intellectual modesty of the group, which facilitates the readers' access to the original, allowing them to make a judgment on the work done. But modesty can go hand in hand with a sense of discreet pride: this strategy can also be perceived as a way of inviting readers to appreciate, together with the group, the interesting results obtained through the translation process. In other words, the appeal is to read the translated text

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2 Barbosa (2013) 21.

3 Barbosa (2013) 40–153.

and compare (or check) it with the original – for those who can do so, and an invitation extended to those who are still unable to do it.<sup>4</sup>

In the “Preface” to the written version, Tereza Barbosa, who coordinated the translation, synthesizes the project thus:<sup>5</sup> “With the research done, we have, finally, the satisfaction of offering our readers what we call a ‘Brazilian functional and scenic collective translation’”. The characterization of the translation with these four adjectives (Brazilian, functional, scenic and collective) is certainly no mere coincidence, since it proclaims certain programmatic objectives that merit further thoughts.

The translation is, first and foremost, “Brazilian”, obviously because it was made by a team from Brazil and in Brazil, for a Brazilian audience, and in accordance with Brazilian Portuguese. On the other hand, the translation proudly presents itself as a “collective” enterprise: first, because it is not the work of a single translator, but rather brings together contributions from the various teachers and students involved. During the translation process, the participants were organized in pairs – constituted, whenever possible, by a female and a male element, with the aim of obtaining an “androgynous and individualized speech for each character”.<sup>6</sup> This first stage was followed by another, in which the evolving text “was submitted to the leading actress Andréia Garavello, also a Greek-language reader, for a first evaluation, and, from there, the whole process began once again: the translators listened to their texts in the mouths of other people and, with surprise – sometimes happy and sometimes

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4 Opinions on the publication of translations in bilingual editions are not unanimous. With some humour, Dominique Grandmont, for example, refers to them as “an invitation to mental strabismus”: “This is where the bilingual edition (...) seems to me quite contradictory to the existence of the translation. (...) Even if we knew all the languages, at the moment of reading, we would use only one (...). Why then this invitation to mental strabismus, if the plurality of senses can only manifest itself within the same text?” The quotation is a translation of the Portuguese edition of Grandmont (2013) 68. On the other hand, experienced translators, like Paulo Quintela, understand this principle as a sign of humility and an express confession of insufficiency, whether of the very translator or of aspects of the translation, enabling the readers with the means to form their own judgment. For this translator, one of the possible effects of the translated texts is to stimulate in readers the desire to read the primitive text: “Por isso eu, ultimamente, faço sempre imprimir os originais em face das versões portuguesas. E esta prática, ao mesmo tempo que oferece certas vantagens pedagógicas, é implícito reconhecimento de insuficiência e de radical frustração”. Quintela (1999) 644 (For this reason, I have lately printed the originals facing the Portuguese versions. And this practice, while offering certain pedagogical advantages, is an implicit recognition of insufficiency and of radical frustration).

5 Barbosa (2013) 13: “Com a pesquisa realizada, temos, enfim, a satisfação de oferecer para os leitores o que chamamos de ‘tradução brasileira coletiva funcional e cênica’”.

6 Barbosa (2013) 21: “uma fala andrógina e individualizada para cada personagem”.

angry –, they started to make the necessary adjustments for the staging, in collaboration with the actress”.<sup>7</sup> It was only after these preliminary phases of progressive cleansing that the translated text was delivered to professional actors, in order to be finally tested before the public.<sup>8</sup> The last stage included going through successive filters, so that the confrontation with a performative orality would stabilize the written form: “(...) before being fixed on paper, the text was tested in parks and squares of the periphery of Belo Horizonte, always before a heterogeneous public, which was, according to some, unprepared for erudite texts; then in faculties and universities, from the UFMG to those hidden in the remotest places of Minas Gerais”.<sup>9</sup>

The motivation for this laboratory experiment came from the awareness that Brazilian translations of Greek theatre are for the most part envisioned as written texts, intended to be read by *individual* readers, and that they do not work well when transposed to the *public* space of the stage. Also, they tend to be produced by a *single* translator (usually a philologist), and hence they completely lack the *collective* dimension that marked Greek drama in its original context. Therefore, the intent of TRUPERSA’s methodological approach is to recover the original strength of the Euripidean work, as is pertinently argued by Flores-Júnior in his preface to the translation:<sup>10</sup>

7 Barbosa (2013) 33: “foi submetido à atriz regente Andréia Garavello, também leitora de língua grega, para uma primeira avaliação e, a partir daí, recomeçou todo o processo: tradutores ouviam seus textos pela boca de outrem e com surpresa – ora felizes ora enfurtecidos – faziam eles mesmos, conjuntamente com a atriz, os ajustes necessários para a encenação”.

8 Given the specificity of the theatrical performance, always in close connection with a very concrete context, and subject to different conditions, such as the group of actors and the available spaces and technical means, the target audience and its reception horizon, its knowledge, values and linguistic uses, the intention of the performance, the stage of historical development of the language, etc, the intervention of directors and actors in the translation of the text is not an uncommon practice. See, for example, the case of the translation of a play by Peter Turrini for the Évora Group by Maria Helena Simões, who, after having produced a first Portuguese version, participated in successive rehearsals during which the members of the theatre group suggested and introduced some changes, with her agreement and collaboration. This often affects particularly the domain of colloquial expressions, insults, slang, interpellations, and allusions. See Hörster (1999–2000).

9 Barbosa (2013) 15: “(...) o texto, antes de se fixar no papel, foi testado em parques e praças da periferia de Belo Horizonte sempre com público heterogêneo e, segundo alguns, despreparado para textos eruditos; depois em faculdades e universidades, desde a UFMG até aquelas embrenhadas nos mais remotos lugares de Minas Gerais”.

10 Flores-Júnior (2013) 10–1: “No intuito de reconstituir o próprio da tragédia, a *Medeia* da Trupersa substituiu a figura de um único tradutor que sozinho comunica o poeta antigo com o seu público e que sozinho decide as formas da porosidade que devem conduzir um texto determinado à sua versão traduzida, por um colégio de tradutores que explora

In order to reconstitute what is proper of tragedy, in Trupersa's *Medea* the figure of a single translator, who is alone in conveying the ancient poet to his audience and in deciding the forms of porosity that must lead a specific text to its translated version, was replaced by a college of translators who explore the matrix of a well-known story by widening the spectrum of its reception and its interpretive possibilities through a kind of "convergence of multiple sensitivities". Therefore, instead of something close to an individualized philosophical exercise, what one has at the end of the process is the result of a plural and, in a certain sense, cathartic experience, which, by anticipation, imprints in the new text the effects that it is expected to produce on the stage. And in the case of this new and innovative company, the translation project has indeed moved beyond the written page and gained a stage, and the stage is, in this sense, the space where the virtues of a (re)written text are verified.

The first goal of this "collective" enterprise was to restore the efficiency of ancient drama and test it, in its new, reshaped form, before a modern audience. In fact, the whole process was conceived with a view to involving the community as much as possible: rehearsals took place in a space shared by young people who sometimes had problems with authorities, and preliminary performances were presented in open spaces of remote and forgotten regions of Minas Gerais. But most important of all, the very conception of the translation and of the staging processes was intended as a manifestation of intensive collective work.

"Functional" is the third adjective used by the project director to characterize the translation. We believe that Barbosa had in mind the functionalist theoretical trends of translation, launched by the Heidelberg School in the late 1970s, in Germany. In fact, the translation was conceived of and carried out according to a functionalist perspective, that is, in full awareness of the function that TRUIERSA had assigned to it: to be performable on stage and to meet the expectations of a heterogeneous contemporary Brazilian public. In effect, functionalism introduced a Copernican turning point in the approach

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a matriz de uma história bem conhecida alargando o espectro de sua recepção e de suas possibilidades interpretativas através de uma espécie de 'convergência de sensibilidades múltiplas'. Logo, no lugar de algo próximo de um exercício filosófico individualizado, o que se tem no fim do processo é o resultado de uma experiência plural e, em certo sentido, catártica, que por antecipação imprime no novo texto os efeitos que ele deverá produzir em cena. E, de fato, no caso dessa nova e inovadora companhia o projeto da tradução saiu do papel e ganhou cena, e a cena é, nesse sentido, o espaço de verificação das virtudes do texto (re)escrito".

to translation: the entire translation strategy is no longer determined by the source text, which loses its status as a determining and exclusive criterion for the translation decisions to be taken, but rather by the function, the *skopos* of the translated text in the new communicative situation.<sup>11</sup> Indeed, a translation that was also intended to function as a “scenic” translation should work on stage; it should be valid not only as a written text, dragging a more or less obscure life on the shelves of university libraries, but should also interact effectively with the other elements constitutive of the dramatic text.<sup>12</sup> Therefore, translation and performance become the visible double face of the reception of ancient drama.

Thus understood, the TRUPIERSA experiment admittedly includes a much wider cultural and theoretical scope: that of questioning the way the Classics may (or should) be approached in a country like Brazil, whose intellectual and academic *milieu* shares many similarities with the European tradition of approaching Classical Studies, but whose population is, for the most part, quite unfamiliar with this kind of linguistic and literary sensibility, typically focused on text interpretation. Even if the gap between Classical Philology and the interests of the general public (mainly the younger generations) is a well-known and inexhaustible topic of discussion for all those who work in the area (in Europe and North America alike), it may constitute a particular

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11 This current, commonly known as “Functionalism” and initially championed by Katharina Reiss and Hans J. Vermeer, is now widely accepted and practically unchallenged. One of the most striking names in this field is that of Christiane Nord, who was also initially linked to the well-known Heidelberg School. With a clearly practical and pedagogical intention, Nord sets out a series of parameters to be taken into account when translating any text, which, together, circumscribe two different communicative situations: firstly, the one in which the translated text will be received, followed by the one to which the source text belonged. At first, a series of six important extratextual factors must be traced: prospectively, with regard to the communicative situation of its reception, retrospectively, respecting the source situation. These are: the sender, the receiver, the time and place of publication (important, for example, for the translation of time and place deictics), the publication channel or the reason that triggered the act of translation. Only then does the analysis of intratextual factors start: lexicon, syntax, rhythm, in addition to specific themes and contents, structure and non-verbal resources. From the interaction of all these vectors comes the answer to the key question concerning the function of what has been transferred – that is, the *translatum*, or translated text – in its new framework, and all translation decisions depend on that function. See Nord (1988, 1991, 2011a, 2011b); Hörster (1999).

12 In a performance, signs of various semiotic systems come into action, which Tadeusz Kowzan systematized as follows: “The first of these is the spoken text, for which there may or may not be a written script, the second is bodily expression, the third is the actor’s external looks, gestures etc, the fourth is the playing space with props, lighting etc and the fifth is the non-spoken sound”. (*apud* Bassnett (1998) 99).

challenge for countries like Brazil, where this gap has deeper cultural and historical roots. This is clearly asserted as a concluding statement of Tereza Barbosa's global analysis of the way Greek tragedy has traditionally been translated, interpreted and performed in Brazil:<sup>13</sup>

To sum it up, I believe that the crisis of tragedy in the Brazilian reality depends on the weight of European tradition and the shyness that makes us confine translation to meaning alone, producing academic texts that remain on the shelf or that wait to be reinvented by the artists on the stage.

This remark clearly expresses the aim of discontinuing translation practices that, because they are reverent towards the European legacy, are incapable of creatively adapting to the new context, ultimately condemning the new text to a vegetative existence in a cultural limbus. TRUIERSA nevertheless argues that its process of approaching the Euripidean text is in fact an experience of delving into the roots of theatre in ancient Greece (as a collective phenomenon) and of combining its original force with Brazilian popular sensibility, as a way of erasing the historical and cultural distance between Greek tragedy and a modern audience. Before analysing their proposal in more detail, it might be useful to recall some of the specific characteristics of ancient drama, in its creative and performative contexts.

## 2 Classical Theatre: The 'Political' Experiment

In the *polis* system, the involvement of the individual citizen in tasks of collective impact extended to all domains of action, involving religious, political, military, financial or even recreational matters. Therefore, the committed and conscientious exercise of citizenship required from each citizen a direct involvement in the interests of the city, which represented a privilege vis-à-vis all those who were excluded, to a greater or lesser extent, from the full use of that status. On the other hand, it was also an obligation from which some might feel the temptation to flee, in order to avoid, for example, the risk of participating in military campaigns or of placing personal resources at the

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13 Barbosa (2014) 88: "Enfim, cremos que a crise da tragédia na realidade brasileira passa pelo peso da tradição europeia e pela timidez que nos obriga a limitar a tradução somente pelo significado, levando-nos a textos acadêmicos que permanecem na estante ou que esperam ser reinventados pelos artistas do palco".

service of common initiatives. This natural expectation of involvement in the activities of the *polis* is evident in the very origin of the most common term to designate the status of a ‘citizen’ – *polites* –, precisely because of the close connection it presupposes with the concept of the city-state. This does not necessarily imply that a citizen should not take care of his private interests (*ta idia*), since that was also a prerogative to which a *polites* was naturally entitled. Moreover, the sources often show that the notions of *polites* and of *idiotes* (as a ‘private citizen’) can coexist in a relatively peaceful way and even be taken as near-synonyms when designating ordinary citizens, as a central “atom of the civic-body”, whose aggregation into a larger group generates a collectivity (*to koinon, to demosion*) or simply a *polis*.<sup>14</sup>

The theatrical phenomenon stands out as a living force that intensely reflects the way the spheres of the *polites* and of the *idiotes* intersect and interpellate each other, closely representing the tensions and challenges to which the *polis* was subjected, confronting its members with the major problems of the moment, through the metaphorical plan of the heroic past of tragedy or through the inquiring utopia of comedy. This is, in fact, an indelible mark of the experience of Greek drama as regards tragedy and old comedy: their “political” nature, that is, the living and committed relationship with the reality of the Athenian democratic *polis*, of which it is simultaneously a reflection, an apology and a critical examination. It is therefore legitimate to expect that, while keeping in mind the timeless reality of the dramatic universe embodied in each play, which is valid on its own terms, the historical circumstances surrounding the creation and representation of Greek theatre in its original context of production may have carried some weight in the way the works were perceived by their Athenian spectators. This is what may have happened, for example, with the *Oresteia* of Aeschylus and the reforms of Ephialtes, which reduced the powers of the council of the Areopagus, or with Euripides’ *Medea* and *Ion*, and Pericles’ law on citizenship, which served to limit access to the status of citizen.<sup>15</sup>

14 The expression “atom of the citizen-body” is taken from Rubinstein (1998) 127, who also provides (141–3) a list of the sources from the Attic orators which explore the contraposition between *idiotes* and *polis* or collectivity, although not necessarily in a negative way.

15 For examples of this kind of legal/political approach, see Leão (2010), for the *Oresteia*; Leão (2011), for the *Medea*; and Leão (2012), for the *Ion*. For a set of studies centred on the analysis of the legal horizon of Greek theatre, see the volume coordinated by Harris, Leão & Rhodes (2010). See also Fialho (2010), who analyses the contexts of ritual affirmation of citizenship and Greek identity along with the awareness of “otherness”, a dynamic that theatre also clearly explores and an operative concept in TRUPIERSA’S work.

In global terms, all these different elements contribute to the understanding of the essence of what was being put on stage: the experience of life in democracy. Aristophanes' comedy shows this clearly, for example, not only in the intensity with which it challenges the political figures of the moment, but also in the way it seeks to find (either in the realm of utopia or in the field of private initiative) solutions to a fratricidal and ruinous conflict such as the Peloponnesian War, in the last quarter of the fifth century. This is also illustrated by tragedy, as noted above with respect to *Oresteia* or to *Medea* and *Ion*, even though the subject of the play seems to refer only to a mythical or proto-historical past, since myth has precisely the undeniable advantage of stimulating a critical reflection on present problems through an effect of personal and chronological detachment.

As was argued in the first section of this chapter, one of the main concerns of TRUIERSA'S *Medea* was to overcome this limitation. It is now time to see how this intent was dealt with in their project.

### 3 The Portuguese Text of TRUIERSA'S *Medea*

In the previous section, an attempt was made to evoke briefly what could perhaps be called (even if a bit loosely) the "track record" of the *polis* system in ancient drama, as a preliminary step to prepare the ground for the approach to TRUIERSA'S work on Greek tragedy. The operation is necessary and justified because TRUIERSA'S entire experience of translating *Medea* and of staging this play is clearly envisaged as a kind of initiation process, which intends to balance (or even to struggle against) secluded philological expertise and collective rebelling sensibility. But, as argued in the preliminary considerations (supra section 1), while admitting this purpose, the group did not intend to openly challenge an instituted order or even to replace it with a new pattern because that "instituted order" – if it really existed – would be identified only by a few and, therefore, a change in pattern would not be noticed as such by the public in general. Up to a certain point, one may even say that the objective was in fact rather conservative: to let the original essence of ancient drama be revived through the mouths and emotions of a collective body of *politai* (consubstantiated in the *personae* of scholars, actors, and accidental spectators), as Teresa Barbosa notes:<sup>16</sup>

16 Barbosa (2013) 14: "De fato, o que temos traduzido, embora de excelente qualidade acadêmica e mesmo artística, exige leitura delicada, lenta, cuidadosa e dedicada. Seu enfoque é quase exclusivamente linguístico. São textos para se apreciar na solidão e não

In fact, what we have as translations, though of excellent academic and even artistic quality, requires delicate, slow, careful and dedicated reading. Their approach is almost exclusively linguistic. These are texts to be appreciated in solitude and no longer in the midst of many, in a stadium or in a large open theatre like those that may be seen in ruins in Greece.

But in doing this, the group also experienced the intense and exciting feeling of promoting a discrete revolution, in order to make Greek tragedy more democratic and more permeated by Brazilian sensibility, without overtly questioning the philological approach. This goal is declared in programmatic texts, which shall be analysed in more detail below, although it can be immediately detected in several seminal options that contribute to the same prospective approach. The Brazilian flavour can be perceived in the name adopted by the group – TRUÍERSA –, which generates a feeling of strangeness comparable to the effect created by the play's title in the published version of the Portuguese translation: *ΜΕΛΕΙΑ de ευριπίδης*.<sup>17</sup> This is the kind of fusion that may generate some mixed feelings in readers, because the title presented is not clearly ancient Greek, just as it is not clearly modern Portuguese. For a classicist, or at least for someone having a basic knowledge of ancient Greek, the first natural reaction is to sneer at the book: another fake translation pretending to be made directly from the original Greek! Contrariwise, for the majority of the other readers, who cannot and possibly are not willing to understand ancient Greek, the reaction is probably the opposite: just another snob translation pretending to be made for the general public! Despite these disparaging reactions, there is, however, a capricious common feature to both these groups of readers: besides their common feeling of reluctance, they also share the much more important ability to *read* and to *understand* the title of the book. In the end, this is probably the main objective of that apparently awkward editorial decision: to promote a convergence of tastes and sensibilities that may take the risk of being intrinsically and intensely divergent.

The literary quality of the translation produced is probably a more important question for those who can read Portuguese than for those who are more interested in the theoretical approach adopted (and the kind of reception stance that motivates it). Even if the latter aspect justifies this discussion, or, at least, most of it, it is useful to transcribe (and comment on) some examples concerning the translation. The text is very readable and generally quite

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mais no meio de muitos, em um estádio ou em um grande teatro aberto como aqueles que se veem em ruínas na Grécia”.

17 Barbosa (2013).

refreshing. As would be expected, taking into account the producers of this version, the Euripidean original constituted the basis of their work, and as the coordinator of the Portuguese translation explains, the collective translators were very aware of formal aspects:<sup>18</sup>

Yes; the text was translated directly from the Greek and became accessible to all. For this, we followed closely all of Euripides' tracks; we used the same linguistic devices, metaphors, hyperboles, and chiasmi, we kept all its precious features in order to offer them to all, in Portuguese.

In the transposition of the text into Portuguese no scenes were cut and no character was eliminated: the text was translated in its entirety, respecting all the speeches and interventions of all the characters. As an indication of its close proximity to the Greek original and of its familiarity with the philological tradition, no stage directions were introduced, and furthermore, those lines that have been considered spurious interpolations by textual criticism were translated in square brackets (e.g. 41, 246, 262, 304–5, and *passim*). These two decisions show a close respect for the philological tradition.

Confirming the words of Tereza Barbosa, it can be said that the collective translators were effectively committed to keeping many of the rhetorical features of the original. This is the case with such figures of speech as metaphor and metonymy, which were generally preserved. Some examples are: “pudera o casco da nau Argos nunca ter batido asas pra terra” (“would that the hull of the Argos had never have flown to the land”, 1: εἴθ' ὄφελ' Ἀργούσ μὴ διαπτάσθαι σκάφος); hyperbaton (although this device has a greater expressiveness in modern languages than in ancient Greek): “que a mulher do marido não discorde” (“so that the wife with her husband does not disagree”, 15: ὅταν γυνὴ πρὸς ἄνδρα μὴ διχοστατήι); “mas vejo chegando Creonte, desta terra o rei / e dos novos planos o mensageiro” – (“but I see Creon coming, of this land the king / and of the new plans the messenger”, 269–70: ὁρῶ δὲ καὶ Κρέοντα, τήσδ' ἀνακτα γῆς, / στείχοντα, καινῶν ἄγγελον βουλευμάτων); polyptoton: “começo a dizer do comecinho” (“I shall begin to tell from the very beginning”, 475: ἐκ τῶν δὲ πρώτων πρώτον ἄρξομαι λέγειν); chiasm: “eu te maldizendo vou aliviar a alma, / enquanto tu vais sofrer, escutando” (“by cursing you I will relieve my soul, / while you will suffer by listening”, 473–4: ἐγὼ τε γὰρ λέξασα κουφισθήσομαι / ψυχὴν κακῶς σέ

18 Barbosa (2013) 15: “Sim; o texto foi traduzido diretamente do grego e tornou-se acessível para todos. Para isso seguimos, de perto, todas as peugadas de Eurípides; usamos as mesmas roupagens, metáforas, hipérboles, quiasmos, enfim, guardamos suas preciosidades para oferecê-las a todos, em português”.

καὶ σὺ λυπήσῃ κλύων). But at times, stylistic features that are not present in the original are also introduced, as is the case with the figure of anaphora: “Por ti, a tenebrosa, a com o marido irritada ... / Por ti, Medeia, ordenei que passes longe desta terra” (“For you, the dark one, the one angry at her husband ... / For you, Medea, I have ordered you to stay away from this land”, 271–2: σέ τήν σκυθρωπὸν καὶ πόσει θυμουμένην, / Μήδει, ἀνείπον τήσδε γῆς ἕξω περᾶν); and anadiplosis: “Por certo meu zelo não deixa ... / não deixa os amigos” (“For sure my zeal does not leave ... / does not leave friends”, 178–9: μήτοι τό γ’ ἐμὸν πρόθυμον / φίλοισιν ἀπέστω).

In terms of the celebrated alternative expressed by Friedrich Schleiermacher – “Either the translator leaves the author in peace, as much as possible, and moves the reader towards him; or he leaves the reader in peace, as much as possible, and moves the author towards him”<sup>19</sup> –, if we were to ask ourselves about the path taken by TRUPERSA, the answer would be unequivocal: Euripides’ text is directed to its new spectators, contemporary Brazilian men and women, young and adult, scholars as well as people from the most poverty-stricken regions of the country, as the group clearly states:<sup>20</sup>

We translate for the theater, we stage and we want to stage *Medeia* (...) in the most needy regions of the country, we want to speak to all the Brazilian people.

Starting from the assumption that tragic myths have a timeless human dimension, the group’s intent was to create a play that, generating both empathy and distance, allowed for an effect of catharsis, a purging of the passions. To achieve this purpose, the collective opted for various processes of drawing closer to the new spectators – in accordance with a strategy worth illustrating with some examples.

Perhaps the most conspicuous resource for generating empathy with the new public is the creation of intertextual relations between the Euripidean text and elements of autochthonous culture, both from high-culture texts and from the Brazilian oral, music and popular heritage. As the project mentor writes:<sup>21</sup> “Intertextuality, clearly embedded in the translation of lines 882–883,

19 Schleiermacher (ed. by Justo) (2003) 60: “Entweder der Übersetzer läßt den Schriftsteller möglichst in Ruhe, und bewegt den Leser ihm entgegen; oder er läßt den Leser möglichst in Ruhe, und bewegt den Schriftsteller ihm entgegen”.

20 Barbosa (2013) 15: “Traduzimos para o teatro, encenamos e queremos encenar *Medeia* (...) nas regiões mais carentes do país, queremos falar para todas as gentes brasileiras”.

21 Barbosa (2013) 16: “A intertextualidade, claramente costurada na tradução dos versos 882–883, provoca no ouvinte uma sensação de conforto. Ele escuta o lugar da brasilidade e o lugar do estranho ao mesmo tempo”.

gives the listener a sense of comfort. He simultaneously listens to the place of Brazilianness (*Brasilidade*) and to the place of the stranger". The translation of the Euripidean passage here highlighted by Tereza Barbosa is permeated with famous lines by the poet Vinicius de Moraes as well as by the music of the no less celebrated Tom Jobim – as will be discussed later.<sup>22</sup> But at other times, intertextual relations recover lines of “beloved poets” (“poetas queridos”) like Mário Quintana,<sup>23</sup> or even carnival marches, easily recognized by everybody.<sup>24</sup>

A structural strategy for getting the text closer to its new listeners / readers respects the lexical selection and the syntax, seeking a style more capable of engaging their attention. Lexical units and expressions tend not to lie outside the experiences and the linguistic habits of the average Brazilian, often using an informal or colloquial contemporary register in: “Jasão deita e rola / na cama real” (“Jason lies down and rolls / on the royal bed”, 17: γάμοις Ἰάσων βασιλικούς εὐνάζεται); “Fica quieta e segura a língua!” (“Be quiet and hold your tongue!”, 81: ἡσύχαζε καὶ σίγα λόγον). The words used in Rocha Pereira’s widely disseminated academic translation of *Medea* are<sup>25</sup> “tálamo” (“chamber”), “esposo” (“spouse”), “desposar” (“espouse”), “núpcias” (“nuptials”), “ancião” (“elder”), but are here translated as “cama/lençóis” (“bed/sheets”), “marido/homem” (“husband/man”), “casar” (“to marry”), “casamento” (“marriage”), “velho” (“old man”). Speeches also tend to be more direct and more synthetic, for example: “Mas agora tudo é ódio” (“But now everything is hate”, 15: νῦν δ’ ἐχθρὰ πάντα); “Não ergue o olho nem tira a cara da terra” (“Does not raise her eyes nor lift her face away from the earth”, 27–8: οὐτ’ ὄμμ’ ἐπαίρουσ’ οὐτ’ ἀπαλλάσσουσα γῆς / πρόσσωπον); “e mato! Da audácia vou ao extremo” (“and I kill! I reach the peak of audacity”, 394: κτενώ σφε, τόλμης δ’ εἶμι πρὸς τὸ καρτερόν).

The whole style is more emotional. This is made rather patent by the use of interjections, which are quite varied, with some of them being introduced in the target text: “Mas tu, ó, ainda não é hora da patroa saber / disto, hã?” (“But you, oh, it’s not time for the mistress to know / this yet, huh?”, 80–1: ἀτὰρ σύ γ’, οὐ γὰρ καιρὸς εἰδέναι τόδε / δέσποιναν); “iIh ...! ôÔ eu!/ Infeliz! Sofro em vão! / iIh ...! ôÔ ...! mmôI, mmoi, como queria morrer!” (“iIh ...! ôÔ me!/ Unhappy! I suffer in vain! / iIh ...! ôÔ ...! mmôI, mmoi, how I wish I was dead!”, 96–7: ἰώ, δῦστανος ἐγὼ μελέα τε πόνων, / ἰώ μοί μοι, πῶς ἄν ὀλοίμην). In her introductory

22 Musician Tom Jobim (Rio de Janeiro, 1927, New York, 1994) is the greatest representative of Brazilian popular songs and one of the creators of the *bossa nova* movement; together with poet Vinicius de Moraes (Rio de Janeiro, 1913–1980), he composed the universally known hit ‘*Garota de Ipanema*’.

23 The poet Mário Quintana (Alegrete, 1906, Porto Alegre, 1994) was particularly appreciated because of his fine irony and acuteness in dealing with topics of daily life.

24 Barbosa (2013) 16–7.

25 (1996) 35, 36, 40, *passim*.

considerations, the group's mentor explains<sup>26</sup> that with his speech the Pedagogue tries to engage the attention of his interlocutor by using a number of rhetorical effects, like insistently repeating, at the end of the line, the demonstrative pronoun τὸδε, which was translated as 'Hã' [huh], an interjection. Even if the translation does not exactly match the original, a comparable result is in fact achieved by obtaining what Eugene Nida called the "equivalent effect".<sup>27</sup>

A curious decision was to translate ἀρ'(α)/ἄρα by using the archaic interjection "Ar/Arre" (and "Ara"),<sup>28</sup> the main advantage being that it creates a phonetic closeness between the Greek and the archaic Portuguese. The same motivation may be adduced to the translation of φεῦ φεῦ (330) as "Phu!", but there is no obvious reason to render the same words a few lines later (358: φεῦ φεῦ) as "Arre!", unless some kind of involuntary linguistic contamination happened during the translation process. Elsewhere, as mentioned in the previous paragraph, particularly emotive expressions of pain are simply transliterated, as happens with "Oi moi!" (1210: οἴμοι), although at times with some slight variations: "Ôi mmm ... ôi" (1310: οἴμοι), "Ôh, mmm ... ô!" (1399: ὦμοι), or even with an expansion of meaning through the addition of new words: "Ih! Ó moi, moi mãe ... eu?!" ("Ih! O moi, moi mother ... me?!", 1271: ἰώ μοι), closely followed by "Ô quê, pra mim?" ("O what, for me?", 1273: οἴμοι). Even if some of those expansions may seem questionable in strictly philological terms, they work well on stage (the ultimate goal of this project), and they may perhaps suggest to the audience that Medea is calling for her mother, as a symbol of her solitude and personal exposure.

This sense of emotional heightening and naturalization of the speeches is further reinforced by the use of punctuation, which is in general more emphatic and expressive than in the source text. In the following example, the suspension generated by the ellipsis, the exclamatory tone marked by the final exclamation point and even the hyperbaton all contribute to this effect:

26 Barbosa (2013) 25–6.

27 Translator of the Bible and translation theorist, Eugene Nida distinguished two modalities of equivalence between the original and the translated text: "formal" and "dynamic equivalence". The first would deal with the content and form of the source text, while the second would be based on what he called "equivalent effect". An example of dynamic equivalence that became famous was that of the proposed translation of the biblical term "lamb" by "seal", were the translation of the Bible intended to target an Eskimo audience, in whose culture the seal occupies a position corresponding to the one that the lamb holds in Jewish culture. See Munday (<sup>4</sup>2016) 67–71.

28 Barbosa (2013) 32–3. *E.g.* 78, 1262, 1280.

“de amor ferida no peito ... por Jasão!” (“of love hurt in the heart ... by Jason”, 8: ἔρωτι θυμὸν ἐκπλαγεῖσ’ Ἰάσωνος).

The example just analysed is significant in yet another respect. All the rhetorical devices mentioned tend to express a sympathetic movement towards the woman, who is seen as a victim of love. A similar effect can be found in lines 31–3, although in this case it is conveyed by other resources: “Vez em quando vira pescoço **branquinho** e / pr’ela mesma, lastima o pai querido / e a terra e a casa, coisas que, traindo, largou / com um homem que agora a desonrou”. (our emphasis) (“Now and then she turns her **little white neck** and, / to herself, weeps for her beloved father / and the land and the house, things which, through her betrayal, she abandoned / with a man who has now dishonoured her”, ἦν μὴ ποτε στρέψασα πάλλευκον δέρην / αὐτὴ πρὸς αὐτὴν πατέρ’ ἀποιμῶξι φιλον / καὶ γαῖαν οἴκους θ’, οὓς προδοῦσ’ ἀφίκετο / μετ’ ἀνδρὸς ὅς σφε νῦν ἀτιμάσας ἔχει). Here ellipsis and contraction are used, but above all there is an affective diminutive and a syndetic serialization, which together generate sympathy for the character.

Diminutives, which are so widely used and have such a great expressive potential in Portuguese, are also introduced at other points, for example, as a vehicle of Medea’s irony when she forges her plans for revenge: “Uma: lumino a casa dos **noivinhos** com o fogo” (our emphasis) (“First: I’ll light up the house of the pretty young newlyweds with fire”, 378: πότερον ὑφάψω δῶμα νυμφικὸν πυρί).

Here as generally throughout the text, the result is, we believe, an invitation to empathize with Medea, while there is also some emphasis on the accusation of the betraying husband. Medea appears in a less condemnatory light: whereas, in the above mentioned translation by Rocha-Pereira,<sup>29</sup> Creon says of Medea: “Motivos de temor, há-os de sobra. Tu és por natureza astuta e sabedora de muitos artificios” (“Motives for fear, there are plenty of them. You are by nature cunning and knowledgeable about many artifices”, 284–5: συμβάλλεται δὲ πολλὰ τοῦδε δείγματα / σοφὴ πέφυκας καὶ κακῶν πολλῶν ἴδρις), in the TRUIERSA version the words of the king of Corinth do not project such a negative light over the female figure: “Muita coisa junta motiva isto: / tua sábia natura, uma perícia pra muitos males ...” (“Many things together motivate this: / your wise nature, your skills in many evils ...”).

There is indeed a general tendency to emphasize Medea’s dimension as a victim. The following example atones her guilt for her brother’s death and for the fact that she had abandoned land and family of her own free will: “Ô pai, ôÔ pátria, que me expulsastes pela vergonha / de ter matado meu irmão!” (“O father, oO homeland, who have cast me out for the shame / of having slain

29 (1996) 44.

my brother!”, 166–7: ὦ πάτερ, ὦ πόλις, ὦν κάσιν αἰσχρῶς / τὸν ἐμὸν κτείνας’ ἀπε-  
νάσθη). In the following speech Medea also portrays herself as a helpless vic-  
tim : “já eu, solitária e sem pátria, afrontada / pelo marido, arrastada da terra  
bárbara, / sem mãe, sem irmão, sem família, / de porto em porto busco refúgio  
dessas desgraças” (“but I, alone and with no motherland, affronted / by my  
husband, dragged out of the barbarian land, / with no mother, with no brother,  
with no family, / from port to port I seek refuge from these misfortunes”, 255–8:  
ἐγὼ δ’ ἔρημος ἄπολις οὐδ’ ὑβρίζομαι / πρὸς ἀνδρός, ἐκ γῆς βαρβάρου λεληισμένη, /  
οὐ μητέρ’, οὐκ ἀδελφόν, οὐχὶ συγγενῆ / μεθορμίσασθαι τῆσδ’ ἔχουσα συμφορᾶς).<sup>30</sup>  
In this version, Medea is “dragged out” of her land, and she herself undertakes  
a vain and painful pilgrimage “from port to port” in search of a place of wel-  
come. The words with which the Nurse expresses her fear of what Medea’s  
revenge might be are equally far less condemning: “É que já vi o olhar dela:  
toureira / – pr’estes aqui, como que. ... Matutando algo. E não vai acabar / com  
a sanha – vê bem – antes de atacar alguém”. (“I have already seen how she – the  
bullfighter – looks at these two here, as if ... hatching some plan. And she will  
not put an end / to her rage – you see – before she can attack someone.”; 92–4:  
ἤδη γὰρ εἶδον ὄμμα νιν ταυρουμένην / τοῖσδ’, ὡς τι δρασεῖουσιν οὐδὲ παύσεται /  
χόλου, σάφ’ οἶδα, πρὶν κατασκήψαι τι). In TRUPIERSA’s version, both the lexical  
connotations and the punctuation suggest a much less aggressive reaction on  
Medea’s part.<sup>31</sup>

Moreover, in our reading of this translation, the Brazilian Medea appears  
as a more natural being, a more earthy character in which the dimension of  
being a “creature” gains greater expressiveness. Thus she “bellows” (“Eu ouvi  
um berro / da desgraçada colca”; “I heard her bellow, / the wretched Colchian”;  
131–2: ἔκλυον δὲ βοᾶν / τᾶς δυστάνου Κολχίδος), she “howls” (“Escutai de que  
modo fala e urra ...”; “Hear how she talks and howls ...”; 169: κλύεθ’ οἷα λέγει κάπι-  
βοᾶται), while a more traditional Medea releases a “clamour” and “screams”.<sup>32</sup>

30 See the translations of the same two passages by Rocha-Pereira (1996): “Ó meu pai, ó  
minha terra que eu deixei, / matando com opróbrio meu irmão!” (166–7: “O my father,  
O my land that I have left, / killing my brother with opprobrium!”); “E eu, sozinha, sem  
pátria, sou ultrajada pelo marido, raptada de uma terra bárbara, sem ter mãe, nem irmão,  
nem parente, para me acolher desta desgraça” (255–8: “And I, alone, without a country, I  
am outraged by my husband, abducted from a barbarian land, without mother, brother or  
relative, to welcome me out of this misfortune”).

31 See the translation by Rocha-Pereira (1996): “que eu já a vi olhá-los com os olhos bravos  
de um toiro, que vai fazer algo de terrível; nem cessará a sua cólera, eu bem o sei, sem se  
abater sobre alguém” (“because I have seen her look at them with the angry eyes of a bull,  
who is going to do something terrible; nor will her wrath cease, I know it well, without  
falling upon someone”).

32 Cf. Rocha-Pereira (1996) 39, 41.

In addition, the whole text also intensifies her erotic nature and gives her a more carnal character: “E tu, que navegaste da casa pátria (...) sobre um chão / estranho habitas, do leito / sem macho, cama arruinada” (“And you, who have sailed from the homeland ... a strange floor / you inhabit, from your male-less bed, / a ruined bed”, 431–7: σὺ δ’ ἐκ μὲν οἴκων πατρίων ἔπλευσας ... ἐπὶ δὲ ξέναί ναίεις χθονί, τᾶς ἀνάνδρου κοίτας ὀλέσασσα λέκτρον); “e um doer-se quando privada das cobertas do homem” (“and in pain when deprived of a man’s weight”, 286: λυπήϊ δὲ λέκτρων ἀνδρὸς ἔσπερημένη).

The impression that TRUPIERSA’S translation and performance of Medea contribute to promote a certain rehabilitation of the protagonist is indeed corroborated by the introductory words of Tereza Barbosa, when she states that “we all, Brazilians or Greeks, have our moments of folly when in love”.<sup>33</sup> To put it in other words, there is almost an exculpation of the woman whose strong passion stripped her of lucidity. Conversely, the negative presentation of Jason seems even more marked than in the original: he is depicted as someone devoid of any trace of dignity, and simply disqualified to the level of an ordinary Don Juan.

A movement towards the text’s new recipients is also very clear in the forms of address. Thus, a popular oral register, for example, prevails in the conversations between the Pedagogue and the Nurse: (e.g. “Ó prata velha da casa”; “O, you old piece of furniture!” (49: παλαιὸν οἴκων κτῆμα)). But in addition to the adoption of a contemporary spoken, and sometimes even popular, register, designed to find an echo in wide sections of the population, another strategy leading to the elimination of any sense of strangeness is the translation of some proper names of erudite origin with explanatory periphrases. In the opening words pronounced by the Nurse, the Greek κυανέας Συμπληγάδας (2), which is usually translated as “Negras Simplégades” (“Dark Symplegades”), is rendered here as “rochas sombrias e moventes” (“the somber, moving rocks”). Further on, the “Pontus” is rendered as “sorvedouro vazante” (“ebbing drain” (212: Πόντου κλῆϊδ’)). And even when the original name is retained – for example, when an orographic reality is mentioned –, a process of “innere Erläuterung” (“internal explanation”)<sup>34</sup> is activated, i.e., brief informative elements are added in order to solve some possible unfamiliarity on the part of the recipients.<sup>35</sup> This

33 Barbosa 2013: 16: “todos, brasileiros ou gregos, temos nossos momentos de insensatez no amor”.

34 Cf. Levý (1969) 98.

35 In his seminal work on literary translation, Jirí Levý discusses the question of how to translate *realia*, such as newspaper titles, which can convey information about the political position of a given character or the social class to which he/she belongs, but which are not decodable /easily understandable by the readers of a translation. As one of the

is what occurs precisely with “Pelion” (484: τὴν Πηλιῶτιν), which is rendered as “Monte Pélion” (“Mount Pelion”).

As follows from some of the above-mentioned examples, the “manipulation” of the text<sup>36</sup> points in the direction of a general tonality that may be perceived as feminist. Corroborating this tendency, in her introductory notes, Tereza Barbosa explains that the Erinyes lose their female status, being delineated as “disturbingly asexual beings” (“seres perturbadoramente assexuados”).<sup>37</sup> Received by critics with some disappointment and perceived by Hellenists as a deviation from the classical tradition, change was nevertheless intended by the group as libertarian.

Contrariwise, the literal translation of the supplicatory formula “pelo teu queixo” [“by your chin”], as well as the maintenance of the word “fígado” [“liver”] signifying the centre of human emotions, go against the general principle of naturalization – “Pelo teu queixo, não faças mistério pra tua companheira de / servidão” (“By your chin, do not keep it a mystery to your partner / of servitude”, 65: μή, πρὸς γενείου, κρύπτει σύνδουλον σέθεν); “and I fear she / will push a sharp sword against the liver” (“e temo que ela / empurre uma espada afiada contra o fígado”, 39–40: δειμαίνω τέ νιν / μὴ θηκτὸν ὥσφι φάσγανον δι’ ἥπατος); “a sharp dagger I push through the liver” (“afiado punhal atravesso pelo fígado”, 379: θηκτὸν ὥσω φάσγανον δι’ ἥπατος).

In broad terms, it may be said that, without completely abandoning a learned style, particularly in its use of archaic Portuguese terms, some rare words, and rhetorical devices characteristic of a higher style, such as the hyperbaton, this version of the Euripidean *Medea* essentially resorts to oral and everyday contemporary language.

#### 4 Dionysiac Flavour and “*Brasilidade*”

As it becomes clear from our analysis of TRUPIERSA’s work, their purpose was to frame the process of reception of ancient theatre from the double perspective

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processes for overcoming this distance in time and space, Levý points precisely to the “innere Erläuterung” strategy/method, which has the advantage, over the traditional footnotes, of keeping the information in the main body of the text, without the need of referring it to the paratextual apparatus. He recommends, however, that this process should be applied with great parsimony.

36 Translating is by nature a manipulative operation. See, in this sense, the provocative title of a classic of the Theory of Translation: the collection of essays *The Manipulation of Literature*, edited by Hermans (1985).

37 Barbosa (2014) 18–9.

of translation and performance, permeated in both cases by contemporary Brazilian sensibility. A key question, however, is how they kept the balance between an intention to respect the literal constraints of the original text *and* the driving forces of a more creative interpretation. The group was acutely aware of this challenge and explicitly mentions the theoretical influence of Susan Bassnett's studies on the translation of drama, especially regarding the incomplete nature of the dramatic written text. During the creative process, TRUIERSA also took the production of the tetralogy *Les Atrides* by the Théâtre du Soleil, directed by Ariane Mnouchkine<sup>38</sup> as model, insofar as it combines "manipulation" with a declared awareness of *Brasildade* ("Brazilianness").

In fact, the concept of *Brasildade* is particularly evident and provides the motivation behind the presence of allusions to compositions by famous artists like Tom Jobim and Vinicius de Moraes, to poets such as Mário Quintana, or even to the lyrics of celebrated carnival songs, which are, as indicated above, discretely combined with Euripides' lines. As Barbosa<sup>39</sup> pertinently emphasizes, this process of using intertextuality in translation gives the audience a feeling of comfort, through the recognition of *Brasildade*, while simultaneously making the spectators more willing to approach a universe with which they are less well acquainted. It corresponds to an advanced stage of the "manipulation process" that will ultimately lead to the intended fusion of familiarity and strangeness, of identity and otherness.

Let us now listen to Tereza Barbosa's words describing the tumultuous experience of transferring the written text to the stage:<sup>40</sup>

This was the most critical moment: the occasion to check the stage quality for each line. So many words were heavy; they sounded terrible, and crawled over the floor! So many changes were required by the stage! So many disputes among us all! *Translation actors* and *stage actors* were

38 Barbosa (2013) 18.

39 (2013) 16.

40 Barbosa (2013) 33–4: "Este foi o momento mais crítico: a ocasião de se verificar a qualidade de palco para cada verso. Quantas palavras pesavam, mal soavam, arrastavam-se no chão! Quantas modificações a cena exigiu! Quantas contendas entre todos! *Atores de tradução* e *atores de cena* buscavam seu estrelato. Nunca se ouviu tanto a palavra 'meu'! E, todavia, nada soava como se supunha ter sido traduzido. Assustados, sofremos, amamo-nos e odiamo-nos. Do ponto de vista intrinsecamente coletivo do ritual religioso, social e político dedicado ao deus Dioniso, levar os *atores-tradutores* e *atores de cena* de uma cultura personalista como a nossa ao exercício tradutório conjunto foi um gesto de crueldade, pura *omofagia*. Tivemos que intensificar o papel/função do diretor de tradução, que passou a agir não mais como um regente, mas como um sacerdote cruel na prática do sacrifício".

all seeking their own stardom. You had never heard the word ‘mine’ so many times! And yet, nothing sounded as it was supposed to have been translated. Scared, we suffered, we loved and we hated one another. From the intrinsically collective perspective of the religious, social and political ritual dedicated to the god Dionysus, the act of leading the *actors-translators* and *stage actors* from a personalist culture like ours to the joint translation exercise was a gesture of cruelty, of pure *omophagia*. We had to intensify the role/function of the translation director, who from then on no longer acted as a regent but rather as a cruel priest in the practice of a sacrifice.

This interesting passage vividly depicts a very stimulating connection with ancient drama and its reception in modern times by describing the way the group of translators – who could be seen, and really saw themselves, as true followers of Dionysus (*thiasotai*) – and the group of professional actors (*technitai*) became involved in an *agon* with each other, while claiming their respective right to a closer relation with the final text, which is here equivalent to the poet himself or even to the god who inspired him in the first place. The very act of poetic creation is metaphorically brought before the eyes of both sides. All felt intensely (dis)united by the same dramatic experience of *sparagmos*: the internal distortions/bifurcation of each person’s individuality as a preliminary ritual necessary for the final initiation into a transversal collectivity. In other words: they were experiencing the ultimate stages of the *mania*-process that would finally transpose them into “a multiple, mixed, and huge organism”<sup>41</sup> engendered during the translation and staging phases. This collective organism was constituted first by the whole group, but soon it would also embrace the different audiences that attended the performance in the poor neighbourhoods of Belo Horizonte and elsewhere.<sup>42</sup>

As Tereza Barbosa aptly says when defining the essence of this theatrical experiment, *sparagmos* is “the mark of the Ancient in our dilacerated culture”,<sup>43</sup> an expression of the same *Brasilidade* that transforms extreme diversity into a palpable collective identity, where laughter and music festively meet during the massive cathartic experience of Carnival. That is why it is so meaningful that

41 Barbosa (2013) 23: “um organismo múltiplo, misturado e enorme”.

42 TRUHERSA’s *Medea* was performed approximately twenty times, since its premiere at the Mangabeiras Park (Belo Horizonte), on 26th August 2012, with free entrance. A significant crowning point was reached when the group was invited by the National and Kapodistrian University to present this same play in Athens, during the summer of 2013 (9th and 10th July).

43 Barbosa (2013) 33: “a marca do Antigo na nossa cultura dilacerada”.

TRUIERSA'S approach to *Medea* is complemented by a parody of Euripides, the radio soap opera *Love, Abysmal Love* (*Amor, Abismado Amor*),<sup>44</sup> as if it were the concluding satyr-play of the ancient Athenian festivals. Here again the ancient and the modern are joined, in jubilant gaiety, in order to honour the past by celebrating the joviality of the present.<sup>45</sup>

## 5 Concluding Remarks

While evoking the legal and political horizon that served as a reference for the Greek theatre, it is important to emphasise that this manifestation of the vital energy of the *polis* should not be confused with the mere artistic expression of a possible political ideology. This would be doubly mistaken: first, because it would suggest that Greek theatre was at the service of a specific ideological propaganda; and second, it would follow that the comprehensiveness of the powerful phenomenon of Greek drama was being reduced to a circumstantial outgrowth of political agendas. The traits of such a propagandist ideology are by no means on display (even in old comedy, which, by the very nature of the genre, has a more direct relationship with the political reality of the moment); and Greek theatre would never have attained such transhistorical and global significance were it simply at the service of one particular regime or ruler. The political dimension of Greek drama must, on the contrary, be understood as

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44 Barbosa (2013) 155–89. This parody is presented as a Brazilian *satura lanx*, where the basic love/adventure/business story of Medea and Jason is presented by Radio Thebes (“Rádio Tebas”), the “sole radio station that pleases Greeks and Trojans alike” (157, “única emissora que agrada a gregos e troianos”). The main lines of the myth are combined with contemporary events (like the financial crisis of modern Greece) or references to popular outlaws like Bonnie and Clyde and their Brazilian counterparts Lampião and Maria Bonita (184). Intertextuality is particularly frequent with Euripides’ *Medea* (with direct allusions being identified in the footnotes) and Apollonius’ *Argonautica*, although the epic style of Homer and Hesiod are also clearly present, as well as the universe of Aristophanes. Significantly enough, the playwright is the most important “sponsor” of the broadcast, identified as “Refrigerators Aristophanes” (“Frigoríficos Aristóphanes”), which provide “the freshest frog’s meat” (157, “a mais fresquinha carne de rãs”), in a clear parodic allusion to the comedy *Frogs*.

45 A similar experience to that of *Medea* was carried out more recently with *Electra*, and there TRUIERSA follows again the same pattern. Besides the collective translation of the Euripidean play, the project also comprises a final parody: a “Radio tragedy of a single chapter: *Electra on Dr Franz’s divan* (Based on the tragedy *Electra*, by Euripides, Aeschylus, Sophocles ... and whoever else arrives!)” (*Radiotragédia de um capítulo só: Electra no divã do Dr. Franz*. Baseado na tragédia *Electra*, de Eurípides, Ésquilo, Sófocles ... e quem mais chegar!). See Barbosa (2015) 175–96.

an expression of the involvement of the individual in the interests and affairs of the collective, of the *polis*, without ignoring the tensions arising from its evolution.

However, despite its more ephemeral traces, the original performative context should not be neglected either, since it contains information which, when considered in due proportion, may also provide interesting interpretative clues. But the opposite operation requires a similar effort: the transfer of an ancient text to a modern reader and to a modern stage, taking into consideration the different audiences that it may reach and the different levels of reading that it is expected to stimulate.

An analysis of TRUPIERSA's experience of translating and performing *Medea* is important in order to understand the way the Euripidean drama was interpreted and revived in powerful blending of Dionysiac *sparagmos* and Brazilian *enthousiasmos*. The result is the reconciliation of two attitudes, regularly considered opposites: on the one hand, respect for a matrix text which, without being sacralised, is always kept in sight, and, on the other, the freedom to manipulate it, revitalizing and popularizing it, so as to extend its life and ensure its effectiveness for an audience that is intended to be much wider and radically different from the text's usual academic recipients. This is certainly not a cannibalistic translation, as defined by Gavronsky:<sup>46</sup> a translation in which the aggressive translator or translators appropriate the original, nourish on it and regurgitate it in their own language, claiming themselves as creators in their own right and denying the original creative act. Instead, as this chapter has tried to demonstrate, in terms of the linguistic register adopted, of the intertextual networks created or of the empathetic tendency towards the Other, this translation enacts an assimilatory process that abolishes the boundaries between the strange and the familiar, the centre and the periphery, the claims of identity and of otherness.

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46 Cf. Guldin (2008) 111.