

Brazilian Portuguese

Jaguadarte

Era briluz. As lesmolisas touvas
Roldavam e relviam nos gramilvos.
Estavam mimsicais as pintalouvas,
E os momirratos davam grilvos.

“Foge do Jaguadarte, o que não morre!
Garra que agarra, bocarra que urra!
Foge da ave Felfel, meu filho, e corre
Do frumioso Babassurra!”

Êle arrancou sua espada vorpal
E foi atrás do inimigo do Homundo.
Na árvora Tamtam êle afinal
Parou, um dia, sonilundo.

E enquanto estava em sussustada sesta,
Chegou o Jaguadarte, ôlho de fogo,
Sorrelfiflando através da floresta,
E borbulia um riso louco!

Um, dois! Um, dois! Sua espada mavorta
Vai-vem, vem-vai, para trás, para diante!
Cabeça fere, corta, e, fera morta,
Ei-lo que volta galunfante.

“Pois então tu mataste o Jaguadarte!
Vem aos meus braços, homenino meu!
Oh dia fremular! Bravooh! Bravarte!”
Êle se ria jubileu.

Era briluz. As lesmolisas touvas
Roldavam e relviam nos gramilvos.
Estavam mimsicais as pintalouvas,
E os momirratos davam grilvos.

Augusto de Campos

Blahblahsaura in Brazil

Adriana Peliano

Hunting for the *Looking-Glass* monsters in the history of “Jabberwocky” translations into Brazilian Portuguese echoes the footsteps of hunting for the impossible. The first translator of the nonsensical poem was a woman, Pepita de Leão, who translated both Alice books in 1934 (Livraria do Globo, illustrated by John Fahrion). She tried to adapt the scenes described in the verses, but did not use any portmanteau words. The poem was called “Algaravia,” a word that already existed in Portuguese, meaning a language difficult to understand or a confusion of voices, a gibberish.

Prior to that, Monteiro Lobato, famed for his “Yellow Woodpecker Ranch” tales, had translated *Alice in Wonderland* into Brazilian Portuguese for the first time (Companhia Editora Nacional, *Alice in Wonderland* in 1931 and *Through the Looking-Glass* in 1933). But Lobato did not translate the first / last, most famous, and most cryptic stanza of the poem, but only the fifth stanza, which stages the monster’s death, written backwards, but with each letter in a normal position and, therefore, without real mirroring.

Following the creative principle promoted by Humpty Dumpty, monster and poem have been given very different names over the years, differences that extended to the poem as a whole. Some translators used existing words like “Algaravia” (above; others used the same title: tr. Oliveira Ribeiro Netto, Editora do Brasil, n.d. (circa 1950); tr. João Sette Camera, Ciranda Cultural, 2019) or “Valentia” (“Bravery”; tr. Maria Thereza Cunha de Giacomo, Editora Melhoramentos, 1966), or invented words like “Jaguardarte” (tr. Augusto de Campos, Summus, 1976); “Javaleão,” “Javaligátor,” and “Jararacorvo” (“Tri-dução” Braulio Tavares published in the literary newspaper *Nicolau*, 1989); “Blablassauro” (tr. Ricardo Gouveia, Martins Fontes, 1997); “Bestialógico” (tr. Eugênio Amado, Itatiaia, 1999); “Pargarávio” (tr. Maria Luiza de X. Borges, *Alice Edição Comentada*, Jorge Zahar, 2002; also tr. Letícia Dansa, Autêntica, 2008); “Tagarelão” (tr. William Lagos, L&PM, 2004);

“Babatrote,” “Jaguaboque,” “Tagareloca,” and “Jagarroca,” (tr. Yara Azevedo Cardoso in the online magazine *Zunái*); “Jaalgaravio” (tr. Maria Luiza Newlands Silveira and Marcos Maffei, Salamandra, 2010); “Gritarrilho” (tr. Jorge Furtado and Liziane Kugland, Alfaguara Brasil, 2012); “Jaberuco” (tr. Alexandre Barbosa de Souza, Cosac Naify, 2015); or simply retained “Jabberwocky” (tr. Cynthia Beatrice Costa, Poetisa, 2015; tr. Márcia Soares Guimarães, Autêntica, 2017); “Jaguadart” (tr. Sarah Pereira, Pandorga, 2019); “Teyú Yaguá” (tr. Ricardo Giasseti, Mojo, 2020). The words oscillate between the name of a hybrid and fabulous monster and an idea that refers to logic and language. If “bestialógico” is a mixture of “bestial” and “lógico” (“logical”), “blablassauro,” mixes the *blah, blah, blah* of a jabbering conversation and the Greek word σαύρα (“saura”), lizard.

It is almost universally acknowledged that the most successful Brazilian translation of the classical Carroll poem is that of Augusto de Campos, who wrote the influential “Jaguadarte.” At a turning point of a deepening understanding of Carroll’s works for the adult Brazilian public who until then had only known children’s editions, through the sophistication of the translation, the brilliant preface, and the presentation of other works by Carroll such as letters, photographs, and his Doublets, the two Alice books translated by Sebastião Uchôa Leite and released by Summus in 1976, also incorporated Campos’s translation of poems. “Jaguadarte” had already been published in *Panorama do Finnegan’s Wake* (Imprensa Oficial, 1962), excerpts from the complex work of James Joyce “transcreated” by the brothers Campos, Augusto and Haroldo. In this endeavor, their great knowledge of several languages, critical expertise in translation theory, and the exercise of poetic creation allowed them a rich repertoire of producing outstanding language and new portmanteaux.

Around 1883, in a letter to a girls’ school in Boston, Carroll jokingly explained that as the Anglo-Saxon word *wocer* meant “fruit” and *jabber* means “excited discussion” in English, that would give “Jabberwocky” the meaning of “the fruit of excited discussions.” Another possibility calls for the sense of “wacky” as crazy behavior. In Augusto de Campos’s transcreation, the Jaguadarte, according to him, was a *jaguar* (the animal) and *arte* (art), or a *jaguar espadarte* (swordfish), or *água* (water) with art, or whatever the reader wanted. In Carroll’s original, Humpty Dumpty explains that the word *brillig* comes from *broiling*, corresponding to the time when one begins to cook dinner, that is, four o’clock in the afternoon. In de Campos’s coining, *briluz* is composed of *brilho* (“brightness”) and *luz* (“light”), meaning the brightness of light at four o’clock in the afternoon, when the scene described in the verses takes place. While *slithy* is composed of *slimy* and *lithe*, smooth and active, de Campos wraps *lisas* (“smooth”) and *lesmas* (“slugs”),

producing *lesmolisas*. *Mimsy* was “flimsy and miserable,” while *mimsicais* are *mimosas* (“delicate”) and *musicais* (“musicals”). And the imagination wanders on.

The first local portmanteaux of Carrollian nonsense were born in Brazil. If the direct correspondence between the words is not faithful, the creative principle, the musicality, the rhythm, the alliterations, the visual suggestions, the spirit of invention remains, chortling in joy. Words cross the mirror of languages and begin a new game in a parallel time-space and linguistic reality. According to Augusto de Campos (2014), “With ‘Jaguadarte,’ Carroll gave impetus to a new, non-dictionary, non-institutional way of approaching language, on the creative plane, providing us with sensitive instruments for our perception within the complexity of the relationships between the world and human mind.”

Recently “Jaguadarte” was published independently of the full text, with



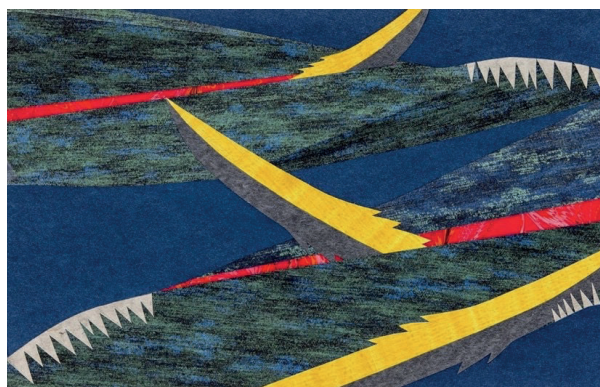
Rita Vidal, 2014

illustrations by Rita Vidal, with a verse over a picture occupying each page (2014). According to de Campos, the images escape the stereotypes of children’s books, seeking to awaken the imagination rather than domesticate it in a predictable format. To give shape to the fantastic universe proposed in the book, the artist used numerous papers of different

textures, colors, and origins in sharp cuts, fighting with surfaces in musical rhythms. In addition to de Campos’s translation, the musical version of the poem, made by the avant-garde composer Arrigo Barnabé in 1982, also influenced the artist’s synesthetic sensibility and creative process. “I can still hear it

when I look at the illustrations. In addition to Tetê Espíndola’s high-pitched voice, the music is all vertiginous, mysterious, sensations that I hope I have managed to convey to the illustrations,” she said.

The inventiveness of the poem triggered artistic paths as a complement to creative freedom and an invitation to the game and

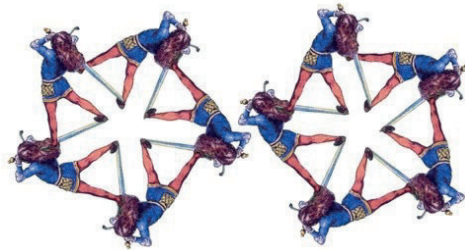


Rita Vidal, 2014

the inexhaustible adventure of language in its kaleidoscopic, and transforming power. The writer, translator, poet, composer, playwright and researcher of fantastic literature Braulio Tavares has repeatedly worked on the poem. Fascinated by different translations into French, German, and Latin, in 1977 or '78, shortly after Augusto de Campos's translation was published for the first time in an edition of *Through the Looking-Glass*, the polyglot proliferation of monsters seduced him. As soon as the adventure began, he realized that the monster grew without stopping: "the translation alternatives multiplied, believing that it invaded some kind of initiation ritual, invoking a creature eager to materialize." He started having nightmares in which he sensed the "proximity of an inextinguishable being, always beheaded and always returning."

In this incessant movement of transcreation, the result was a *tri-dução* (three + translation): "Javaleão" ("javali" + "leão" = "boar" + "lion"), "Javaligátor" ("javali" + "alligator") and "Jararacorvo" ("jararaca" + "corvo" = "snake" + "crow") compose a bestiary of dreams, a monster of creativity itself of movement in the multiplication and inexhaustible reinvention. Each translation presents a different and singular linguistic solution, emphasizing the exercise of incessant creation, a game that always starts over, rather than the search for a unique and paralyzing solution. Language becomes a hybrid monster, devouring words,

sounds, and senses in anthropophagic creativity.



When I first illustrated *Through the Looking-Glass* for my BA at the University of Brasília in 1998, I was driven by the game of language in labyrinthine creativity. The characters in the works were built through

assemblages of different objects, according to their logic, names, shapes, and multiple senses. The monster emerged from a meat grinder, forks, claws, and the broken glass of a Tanqueray Gin bottle, whose letter T looks like a mirrored J. Carroll's imagery unfolds in an imaginary jungle that featured creatures from strange and dreamlike worlds. Portmanteaux are turned into monsters and assemblies, enigmatic beings composed of fragmentations, juxtapositions, metamorphoses, and unexpected encounters. Decipher me and I will devour you!

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