

TWO APPROACHES TO *DOIS IRMÃOS*:
SOCIOLINGUISTIC DISTANCE AND LITERARY TRANSLATION
STRATEGIES

DUAS ABORDAGENS EM *DOIS IRMÃOS*:
DISTÂNCIA SOCIOLINGUÍSTICA E ESTRATÉGIAS DE TRADUÇÃO
LITERÁRIA



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Abstract: Using key chapters from Milton Hatoum’s *Dois Irmãos* (2000), we set about testing John Milton’s hypothesis (2011) that grammatically more similar languages would yield fewer adaptations in translation. Our sample, on the contrary, revealed that the sociolinguistically closer Italian translation varied more than the more distant English version, and in equidistant sociolinguistic cases involving slang and indigenous loanwords, the Italian version offered more audience-appropriate (i.e. acceptable) variations. It could be that the closeness of the languages (Portuguese-Italian), combined with the translator’s sociolinguistic understanding may, instead, have provided a platform for both more “acceptable” (freer) and more “adequate” (“equivalent”) structures.

Keywords: Milton Hatoum; Translation Strategy; Sociolinguistic Distance; Amazon

Resumo: Utilizando capítulos chave do romance *Dois Irmãos* (2000), de Milton Hatoum, testamos a hipótese de John Milton (2011) de que línguas mais similares necessitariam de menos adaptações durante a tradução. O recorte, entretanto, parece revelar justamente o contrário já que a tradução para a língua italiana (linguisticamente mais próxima) apresentou mais variações do que a versão em língua inglesa; além disso, em eventos envolvendo palavras de origem indígena ou gírias manauaras, a tradução italiana foi capaz de oferecer opções mais apropriadas ao público leitor. É possível que a aproximação das duas línguas (italiano-português) combinada com a compreensão sociolinguística do tradutor, tenham proporcionado um leque de estruturas mais “aceitáveis” e “adequadas”.

Palavras-chave: Milton Hatoum; Estratégia de Tradução; Distância Sociolinguística; Amazônia

1. Milton Hatoum and his novels

Milton Hatoum is one of the most well-known writers of Brazilian contemporary literature. He is also a journalist, translator, and professor, having taught literature at *Universidade Federal do Amazonas* and at the University of California, Berkeley. Gustave Flaubert’s *Un cœur simple* (1877), Edward Said’s

Representations of the Intellectual (1994), George Sand's *Spiridion* (1839), and Marcel Schwob's *La croisade des enfants* (1896) have all been translated into Portuguese by Hatoum. And, as a writer, he has published novels, poems, short stories, and literary critiques, but one could say he is mostly acknowledged as a novelist. In most of his narratives, Hatoum uses his background on the Amazon to discuss how the region's changing identity affects and is affected by the changing identity of those who live in it.

His fiction, from his earliest (*Relatos de um Certo Oriente* - 1990) to his most recent work (*A Cidade Ilhada* - 2014), is marked by the problematization of language, family, political, and identity structures. Hatoum's narratives thus endlessly question the character and history of Brazil's immigrants and, consequently, the history of the country itself. His central characters are generally those who have suffered most from the processes of homogenization and transculturation (both their short and long-term effects), but who have been conveniently forgotten by the system that was supposed to embrace them. One of the author's strong points is his ability to trigger anxiety in the reader by means of the literary conflicts he sets up, whether on the character level (such as the incestuous relationship among the main characters) or on the level of the general context (such as the development/destruction of the Amazon).

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The pre-World War II background of *Dois Irmãos* (HATOUM, 2000), specifically, involves the colonization and neocolonization of the Amazonian region, the Westernization of its indigenous peoples, the exploitation of the land, cultural suppression, complex love/hate family relationships, and the needs and desires of marginalized Amazonian characters that are in conflict with industrial interests. The dichotomy between industrialism and savagery is, ultimately, pivotal. Nael, the narrator, observes his two masters, who are brothers, as representatives of both realms, and, through most of the novel, hopes to find out he is son of the educated Westernized Yaqub. Nael finds Yaqub's manners and posture attractive and inviting, whereas his brother Omar's are odd. Omar has no prospects, and his apparent irresponsibility makes him unappealing. Nael's suspicious narration bias in favor of the "civilised" brother and the fact that he later finds out the savage Omar was actually less harmful than Yaqub indicate that the novel's purpose is not to endorse normative epistemologies and hegemonic discourse about identity but, rather, to upend it.

2. The translations of *Dois Irmãos* into English and Italian: John Gledson's *The Brothers* and Amina Di Munno's *Due Fratelli*

In a recent interview in *Revista Crioula* (MAGED, 2010), Hatoum said that maintaining close contact with those who retextualize his narratives is of paramount importance. Even though he did not know most of the translators beforehand (John Gledson was an exception in that, Hatoum had already read many of his essays on Machado de Assis, Carlos Drummond de Andrade and Brazilian literature in general), Hatoum believes he is lucky since many of the translators contacted him while working on *Dois Irmãos*. He seemed particularly satisfied with the German, Italian, and English translations, and displeased with the European Spanish translation, indicating that the translator was unable to acknowledge the differences between Brazilian written and spoken language and that the translation was not fluent enough. However, he praised the translation from Argentina for its grasp of the fluency of Brazilian oral discourse and its naturalness (MAGED, 2010, p. 9).

In the same interview, Hatoum continues that practically all of the English translations of his novels have been done by John Gledson; only the first, *Relato de um Certo Oriente*, was translated by Ellen Watson, in 1994. However, this too was later retranslated by Gledson as *Tale of a Certain Orient* (2007). When asked about the differences in the two translations, Hatoum said he preferred Gledson's version because "the translator tried to be closer to the original when translating both the title and the narrative as a whole" (MAGED, 2010, p. 11).

Although Hatoum appreciates a smooth translation capable of flowing efficiently in another language (i.e. acceptability), he, nevertheless, seems resistant to too much liberty being taken with his texts (i.e. adequacy). This is a fine line bordering on contradiction since creating a text that flows more smoothly apparently demands a looser attachment to the original, just as increased literality would apparently reduce readability. However, this hypothesis could be complicated by linguistic differences. In "Adaptation Studies and Translation Studies" (2011), John Milton observes that although many societies still "demand 'acceptable' translations, such as the *belles infidèles* [...], the tendency is to adapt much more when we are translating from a language which is much further away from the source language than a language which is grammatically much closer" (p.54).

Thus, in order to test the effects of linguistic distance on translation strategy regarding the acceptability/adequacy dichotomy, we will examine two of the translations that Hatoum praised - the English and Italian versions. The grammatical similarity between the Romance

languages, Italian and Portuguese, will serve as a control against the greater distance involved in the West Germanic, though Latin-influenced, roots of English. The analysis includes the first, fourth, and final chapter of *Dois Irmãos*, which are critical points in the narrative. The English and Italian translations will be compared to the Portuguese source text to trace which strategies can be considered characteristic. Following such a line of thought, it would be expected that Gledson's translation of *Dois Irmãos* (HATOUM, 2000) would include greater alterations than Di Munno's Italian version.

Dois Irmãos was originally published in 2000 by *Companhia das Letras* (São Paulo), translated into English by John Gledson in 2002 and published by Bloomsbury (London), and translated into Italian by Amina Di Munno in 2005 and published by *Il Saggiatore* (Milan). A brief contextualization of this translation in the oeuvres of Gledson and Di Munno follows below.

John Gledson, who was born in Beadnell, England, in 1945, is a translator, literary critic, and retired University of Liverpool professor of Brazilian studies. His interest in Brazilian literature has resulted in a number of books dealing with the legacy of Brazilian writers, including *Machado de Assis: Ficção e História* (2003) and *Poesia e Poética de Carlos Drummond de Andrade* (1981). He is considered an authority on Machado de Assis since, besides translating the greater part of his work (i.e. more than 120 stories), he has written dozens of articles and essays on the writer and, especially, on his importance for both Brazilian and world literatures. After obtaining his doctorate in Comparative Literature from Princeton in 1970, Gledson has frequently visited Brazil, including stints as a visiting professor at the *Universidade Estadual de Campinas* (1991) and the *Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina* (2005).

Amina Di Munno is a literary critic, translator, and professor of Portuguese and Portuguese and Brazilian Portuguese Literature at the *Università di Lingue e Letterature Staniere* of the *Università degli Studi di Genova*. She has extensive experience translating texts from Portuguese and English into Italian, including works by Eça de Queiroz, Fernando Pessoa, Machado de Assis, Vinicius de Moraes, Clarice Lispector, Chico Buarque, Raduan Nassar, and Milton Hatoum. Palma and Guerini (2013, p.1) observe that she is among the uncommon translators who acknowledge the importance of studying the theory that underlies the daily practice of literary translators. Di Munno's literary criticism includes texts on Brazilian literature and culture such as "*Nota critica e traduzione di: La ballata del falso*

Messia di Moacyr Scliar” (1988), “*Paradoxo, ironia e loucura em alguns contos de Machado de Assis*” (1990), “*Dal Brasile: fra romanzo storico e storia romanzata*” (1991), “*Letteratura e arti visive nel Modernismo luso-brasiliano*” (1999) and “*Raduan Nassar: il grido e il silenzio di un narratore d’eccezione*” (2001).

3. Register, Translation Universals, and Deforming Tendencies in *Dois Irmãos*, *The Brothers*, and *Due Fratelli*

The disparate types of discourse showcased in the novel are integral to its theme and involve questions of class, orality and regionalism. Such a variety of discourse emerging from distinct situations requires the translator’s awareness of the subtle differences involved and their purpose(s). Of course, besides the particular features of register, a range of other decisions must be made about complex words/sentences/expressions of the source text. And although the translator’s choices are liable to vary widely, certain patterns can emerge that seem to fit into a general repertoire from which translators select to form their strategies. Some theorists, such as Juliane House (2008), have gone so far as to codify this repertoire into “translation universals”, including categories such as: explicitation, simplification, disambiguation, conventionalism, standardization, leveling out, avoidance of repetition, overrepresentation/underrepresentation of source/target elements, and third-code. This final strategy, which House defines as standing for “translation as translation in contradistinction to original non-translated texts” (p.10), involves the production of discourse that does not fit into the patterns of the original or target system, and is thus a ‘third-code’ in which the translation itself becomes an alternative language. Below is a selection from the narrative featuring third-code usage and other issues:

Sample A. Third-code strategy and underrepresentation of source language elements in Di Munno’s and Gledson’s translations of Hatoum’s *Dois Irmãos* (2000). (Emphasis added).

Portuguese	Italian	English
O Calisto, um <i>curumim</i> meio parrudo do <i>cortiço</i> dos fundos, cuidava dos animais dos Reinoso, sobretudo dos macacos, que guinchavam e saltitavam nos de imensos cubos arame do quintal. Eram divertidos, dóceis, <i>faziam gracejos para as</i>	Calisto, un <i>curumim</i> mezzo infido, del <i>cortiço</i> del retro, badava agli animali dei Reinoso, soprattutto alle scimmie, che strillavano e saltavano negli enormi cubi di rame del giardino. Erano divertenti, docili, <i>giocavano con gli ospiti e non davano molto lavoro.</i>	Calisto, a stocky lad from the <i>slum</i> at the back of the house, looked after the Reinosos’ animals, above all the monkeys, which squealed and jumped around in huge wire cubes in the garden. They were funny, docile, <i>played tricks for the visitors and</i>

<i>visitas</i> e não davam tanto trabalho. (HATOUM, 2000, p. 61)	(DI MUNNO, 2005, p. 52)	didn't involve that much work. (GLEDSON, 2002, p. 75)
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Curumim is a Tupi language loanword in Brazilian Portuguese. For Brazilians this word indicates, not just a boy, but an indigenous boy, so an important information is underrepresented in Gledson's "lad", including, for example, insinuation of the 'natural' affinity this indigenous boy would have with his surroundings, as well as demographic insight into the neighbours residing behind the house and the composition of the neighborhood. The complexity and cultural distance involved in this lexeme would seem sufficient justification for not importing it directly into English. However, Di Munno did choose to use it as a loanword in eight appearances, including it (along with the original Tupi root-word) in a twelve-term glossary and the end of her translation.

Underrepresentation/simplification is also present in Gledson's treatment of *cortiço* in the same sentence. *Cortiço* indicates, both according to a Portuguese dictionary³ and Di Munno's glossary (choosing again not to translate the term) "a group of adjoined habitations for the poor". The dictionary further clarifies this term by equating it with *estalagem*, which means "a house in which many people of low economic conditions live". This single, if sprawling, dilapidated residence is in sharp contrast with the common primary definition of "slum": "a heavily populated urban area characterized by substandard housing and squalor"⁴; thesaurus entries for slum unanimously referred to neighborhoods, shantytowns and the like, which would mistakenly give the impression that the well-to-do people's house was situated on the edge of a sizeable poor neighborhood rather than beside, possibly, a single extended family of indigenous people. This term has greater prominence in the manuscript (with 18 appearances in Di Munno), and thus the extent of Gledson's decision to underrepresent the content should also be pointed out.

The second class of translational decision apparent in this sentence, the third-code, derives from the treatment of the monkey's behavior. Making *gracejos*, defined as "funny or inoffensive acts", harmonizes with Di Munno's description '*giocovano*' from the infinitive *giocare*, a cognate of the Portuguese *jogar*, to play, the pronunciation of which is all too reminiscent of the English 'joke'. Thus, Gledson's introduction of 'trick' here ("played tricks for the visitors") apparently represents an effort to do something different with the text, which we can only identify as an example of "third-code". The collocation is "translationese", i.e.

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neither source (literality) nor target (fluency) language, and problematic mainly for semantic reasons. First of all, the construction does not make clear in which lexical sense the word is being used: a trick can be a difficult, dexterous, or clever act designed to amuse, a mischievous prank or a deceptive or fraudulent act. In standard usage, one ‘*knows*’, ‘*does*’ or ‘*performs*’ tricks, i.e. difficult feats (e.g. “Can your dog do any tricks?”) but one ‘*plays*’ tricks (i.e. pranks or fraud) ‘*on*’ others (e.g. “That was a dirty trick you played on me!”). Thus, the collocation “played tricks for” short-circuits comprehension. Giving the benefit of the doubt that the monkeys were not stealing people’s wallets, for example, a more basic question arises: Where have these monkeys been actually trained? The next sentence in the narrative could provide the answer: “*Os macacos amestrados eram o tesouro vivo de Estelita*” (HATOUM, 2000, p. 61). *Amestrados* indicates that they had ‘received special teaching’, which could easily be supported by the context, given the cadre of servants described, as well as the “huge wire cubes” (GLEDSON, 2002, p. 75) that may have been large enough for someone to enter, train, play with the pets and instigate performances for visitors. Thus, although the translator seems to be using contextual clues for purposes of explicitation, the collocational confusion, which could be stemming from a literal translation of the Portuguese preposition *para*, demarcates this as a *tertium quid*.

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The other strategies we shall look at in Hatoum’s original and translated texts are not among those provided by House, but by Antoine Berman (*Translation and the Trials of the Foreign*, 2000). In *Translation and the Trials of the Foreign* (2000), he discusses some of the deforming tendencies of translated texts. Those pertinent to this study include the opposing notions of popularization and ennoblement. According to Berman (2000, p. 291), the process of textual popularization concerns a “blind recourse to a pseudo-slang which popularizes the original, or to a ‘spoken’ language which reflects only a confusion between oral and written [...that...] betrays [...] fluency”. Popularization is, therefore, close to House’s notion of “simplification”, since it attempts at making the target text simpler even though it might lead to incoherence in a given dialogue or point when such shortcuts are not necessarily welcome. In the opposite direction, Berman’s concept of “ennoblement” or “rhetorization” marks what he sees as the apex of classic translation. It consists of “producing ‘elegant’ sentences, while utilizing the source text, so to speak, as raw material. Thus ennoblement is a ‘stylistic exercise’ based on -and at the expense of- the original” (BERMAN, 2000, p. 290-291). Interestingly, even though the notion of popularization and ennoblement can be seen as

opposite strategies during the translation process, they might be found in the same translation at different moments.

Sample B. Example of Popularization/Simplification in Di Munno's and Gledson's translations of Hatoum's *Dois Irmãos* (2000). (Emphasis added)

Portuguese	Italian	English
Eu tinha a impressão de que eram incansáveis, não podiam ficar paradas um só minuto, faziam tudo na casa e ainda ajudavam o pai na <i>taberna</i> . (HATOUM, 2000, p. 63)	Avevol'impresione che fossero instancabili, non stavano ferme un solo minuto, facevano tutto incasa e aiutavano anche il padre nel <i>ristorante</i> . (DI MUNNO, 2005, p. 53)	I had the impression they never tired; they never stopped for a moment, did everything in the house and still helped their father in the <i>bar</i> . (GLEDSON, 2002, p. 77)

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The many cultural redesignations the Latin lexeme *taberna* has undergone, as it has travelled geographically and historically, allow these two almost mutually exclusive words ('bar' and 'restaurant') to be used here as synonyms. What is interesting is that all three terms 'bar', 'restaurant' and 'tavern' exist in basically the same format in all three languages (with 'bar' as a ubiquitous loanword) and have very similar meanings in all three systems. The fact that they are related, but not interchangeable, means that their use colors the narrative differently in each case. So the question arises, if there is a cognate for *taberna* in both Italian and English, why not use it? 'Restaurant' focuses on the food aspect and 'bar' focuses almost exclusively on the alcohol aspect contained in the broader concept of 'tavern'. Later on, Hatoum describes a stop at a *taberna* for the purpose of both drinking and eating fried fish (HATOUM, 2000, p. 115), which could only be done at a 'bar and grill', if 'bar' must be insisted upon. The upshot is that *ristorante* serves to sanitize the family business and 'bar' tends to degrade it, while both terms tend to bleach away the historical setting; both choices are examples of simplification or underrepresentation (especially if one also considers the inherent anachronism – which is let aside by both translations – of the word *taberna* in Portuguese, as it brings readers to the '50s and is practically no longer used). On a side note, it is also interesting that Gledson used the American 'bar' here instead of the British 'pub', since the British 'lad' was selected in the above-mentioned sample from p.75.

Sample C. An example of popularization in Di Munno’s and Gledson’s translations of Hatoum’s *Dois Irmãos* (2000). (Emphasis added)

Portuguese	Italian	English
“Queres <i>engolir</i> <i>minha filha</i> , seu <i>safado</i> ?” (HATOUM, 2000, p. 63)	“ <i>Sfacciato</i> , vuoi forse <i>farti mia figlia</i> ”? (DI MUNNO, 2005, p. 54)	“Do you want to <i>swallow my daughter alive</i> , you <i>rascal</i> ?”(GLEDSON, 2002, p. 78)

Deriving from the greek *saphos*, *safado* means something close to “unabashed” (but more pejorative): that is, characterized by or showing a lack of embarrassment and shame. Due to the nonstandard nature of this insult, any cognate-based translation would be impossible, despite possible etymological affinity. *Sfacciato* carries the idea of someone insolent, cheeky, impudent⁵ and thus seems to adequately portray the circumstances, while interestingly reversing the order of ‘charge’ and the ‘verdict’. The use of ‘rascal’, however, in the English translation seems out of place. First of all, the term is almost on a par with “knave” in its antiquity. Secondly, although it can indicate unscrupulousness or even villainy, a primary definition of it is a “mildly reproving” term for “playfully mischievous”, which is corroborated its use in the title of the long-running and much syndicated MGM shorts “the Little Rascals” (a.k.a. “Our Gang”). It goes without saying that such a sense clearly excludes the innuendo in this passage and the naturally harsh rebuke such an affronted father would deal out.

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The cannibalistic aspect of the verb in this sentence is subject to the same type of treatment: whereas, in the Italian, the reflexive of *fare*, i.e. to “do” someone, in this case, fits in context (borne out by the Brazilian expression for a bitter woman as *mal comida*, i.e. “poorly-/half-eaten”), the English more literally follows the Portuguese *engolir*, but complements the verb with “alive”. A cursory Google search (“swallow whole” vs. “swallow alive”) reveals approximately ten times more results for “whole”, with results for “alive” frequently specifying it in contradiction to swallowing whole and dead (e.g. spiders). So if “swallow whole” is the base expression, why specify “alive” given the metaphorical context: (greedily) “consume” + “all at once”?

Sample D. An example of ennoblement in Di Munno’s and Gledson’s translations of Hatoum’s *Dois Irmãos* (2000). (Emphasis added)

Portuguese	Italian	English
<i>O rei da Bélgica</i> se hospedou aqui em casa e passeou no iate do meu avô”. (HATOUM, 2000, p. 62)	“ <i>Il re del Belgio</i> è stato ospite da noi e ha fatto un giro nello yacht del nonno” (DI MUNNO, 2005, p. 52)	“ <i>The King of the Belgians</i> stayed a tour at our house, and went for a trip on my grandfather’s yacht”. (GLEDSON, 2002, p. 76)

Gledson’s treatment of “*o rei da Bélgica*” provides an example of ennoblement. Again, whereas the Italian version contours the grammar of the original, i.e. ‘the ruler of a territory’, the English version depicts ‘the ruler of a people’. Increased pomp is the effect of this appositive oblique construction, which is evocative of the speech of yesteryear, e.g. “Tarzan, king of the apes”. This construction (complete with glossary entry) emphasizes the pettiness and ridiculousness of Estelita’s uninvited bragging about her grandparents’ former glory.

Sample E. A second example of ennoblement along with underrepresentation in Di Munno’s and Gledson’s translations of Hatoum’s *Dois Irmãos* (2000). (emphasis added)

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Portuguese	Italian	English
Certa vez as filhas o <i>flagraram</i> com uma <i>cunhã</i> atrás do balcão da Taberna Flores do Minho. (HATOUM, 2000, p. 64)	Una volta le figlie lo <i>colsero in flagrante</i> con una <i>commessa</i> dietro il bancone della Taverna Fiori del Minho. (DI MUNNO, 2005, p. 54)	Once, his daughters <i>caught him in flagrante delicto</i> with an <i>Indian girl</i> behind the bar at the Flores do Minho. (GLEDSON, 2002, p. 79)

There is no verb form in Italian to accompany the Brazilian Portuguese *flagrar*, so *cogliere* (to catch) must be added, as it is in the English. However, the common oral-level register in these two similar versions is lost in the English, despite/ due to superficial literal adhesion. In resorting to pure Latin legal phrasing, the translator evokes the formality of a courtroom setting, producing an obvious ironic effect. The more common expression “red-handed” is avoided, which in itself is ironic because even a mainline Italian-English dictionary defines ‘*flagrante*’ using ‘red-handed’.

Cunha, short for the indigenous *cunhatã*, is the feminine version of *curumim*. With no Latin base to work from, both translators are set at an equal sociolinguistic distance; both approach this obstacle differently and both underrepresent its full content to some extent. Instead of introducing the term as a loanword with a glossary note, Di Munno substitutes the Italian *commessa*, which is drawn from the circumstances and ascribes a ‘shop clerk’ identity

to the girl, which provides backstory, i.e. a scenario through which the two could have met. The impropriety is thus due to class (+age)-based social inequality. “Indian girl”, on the other hand, describes an ethnicity alone (and is a problematic way of doing so in the original text, it is worth mentioning, inasmuch as the word “indigenous” is much more common nowadays, to the detriment to “Indian” – which is now a reference to someone from India), hinting that a milieu of racial inequality leveraged Talib’s advantage-taking.

Sample F. An example of popularization and overrepresentation of source language elements in Di Munno’s and Gledson’s translations of Hatoum’s *Dois Irmãos* (2000). (emphasis added)

Portuguese	Italian	English
Eu devorava <i>o quibe cru</i> sem tirar os olhos das pernas cruzadas de Zahia, cobertas de <i>pêlos dourados</i> . (HATOUM, 2000, p. 63)	Io divoravo <i>le polpettine</i> crude senza togliere gli occhi dalle gambe incrociate di Zahia, velate di una <i>peluria dorata</i> . (DI MUNNO, 2005, p. 53-54)	I devoured <i>my raw quibe</i> without taking my eyes off Zahia’s crossed legs, covered with <i>golden hairs</i> . (GLEDSON, 2002, p. 77-78)

As with *cunhã*, the dish *quibe cru* presents a further opportunity to deal with the translation of an exotic element, this time originated in the Middle East. This dish is a ground meat mixture that can be eaten raw with a little mint garnish. The significance of a plate of raw meat is hardly lost here, serving as the immediate vicarious fulfillment of the boy’s carnal desire. Di Munno again substitutes a more familiar but semiotically-linked concept, meatballs, which but for the fact that *quibe cru* is generally served in a yonic format (thus aligning the two ‘objects’ by gender) seems to fit. However, Gledson half imports the term into English, leaving the Brazilian spelling intact but adding a glossary entry. The glossary entry describing it as raw dish could lead to a disjunct for readers, since in its worldwide trajectory Kibbe(h), as it has come to be known in the English-speaking world, is typically fried, since raw ground meat dishes are pretty much an unknown commodity in popular Anglophone cuisine.

The girl’s *pêlos dourados*, due to being transcribed literally into English, create an unappetizing clash with the above-described dish, since ‘hairs’ seems more evocative of the stiff individual bristles on a hog’s back than the cloud of soft ‘peach fuzz’ that might be expected on the legs of the “timid little girl” (GLEDSON, 2002, p. 77). It could be considered that this is somehow an interference from Portuguese, since different words are used to indicate head and body hair (*cabelo* and *pelo*, respectively), with noncount usage being admitted for the former but not the latter. This seems to be a clear case where a preoccupation with grammatical ‘fidelity’ overruled both contextual adequacy and acceptability, since

“hairs” is previously modified by “covered with”, which would nullify any individual, countable idea. Without further comment, the expected softness and allure is completely brought out in the Italian, “veiled with” *peluria* (down), where again we see Di Munno freely transmute elements to portray the sense of the context.

Sample G. Underrepresentation of source language elements in Di Munno’s and Gledson’s translations of Hatoum’s *Dois Irmãos* (2000). (emphasis added)

Portuguese	Italian	English
Mas quando elas dançavam, Talib <i>lagrimava de gozo</i> , sua barriga tremia de tanto prazer. (HATOUM, 2000, p. 64)	Ma quando loro danzavano, Talib <i>piangeva di allegria</i> , la sua pancia tremava dal piacere. (DI MUNNO, 2005, p. 55)	But when they danced, Talib shed <i>tears of pride</i> his belly trembled with so much pleasure. (GLEDSON, 2002, 79)

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Set in a paragraph charged with incestual innuendo, this sentence serves to gauge the degree of the translators’ sanitizing tendency. The following series of elements occur in response to the widower’s daughters dancing (for him): tearing + *gozo*, trembling + belly/gut, degree + pleasure. In order of increasing divergence, the cognate *prazer* is translated literally, although the degree, *tanto* (‘so much’), is emphasized in the English and the causation, *de* (‘da’), in the Italian version. The second set both locates the action at the waistline and describes it as an involuntary spasming, physiologically distinguishing it somewhat from other types of trembling, such as laughter for example, and is also handled in a relatively straightforward manner by both translators. The basic process of the sentence, however, receives an oblique, underrepresentational treatment from both translators. The verb *lagrimava* is literally “to shed tears”, describing a biomechanical dripping action removed from any emotional associations (e.g. lachrymal glands). ‘*Piangere*’, on the other hand, seems closer to ‘crying’ or ‘weeping’ tears, which nevertheless fits into the common expression ‘weeping with joy’. The problem, however, is the exact sense of the more enigmatic *gozo*, which, depending on how it is handled, can paint the nature of the father’s pleasure in a completely different light.

Gozar has at least three possible meanings that are pertinent to this situation, i.e. it is a triple entendre: 1) the lighthearted happy delight of the entertainment (‘*allegria*’) or, likewise, the satisfaction (‘pride’) of seeing “my dark-skinned warriors, my lovely Amazons” (GLEDSON, 2002, p. 79) all grown up; 2) it has to do with possession, stepping into command of a thing; and 3) it is the Brazilian slang for ejaculation. Although 2 and 3 do not

rule out the level 1 meanings, it is hard to believe that the significance of describing Talib's reaction to his teens' frenetic dancing with a combination of *gozo*, involuntary trembling and (metaphorical, silent) tears, all within the same sentence, escaped Hatoum or would escape his Brazilian readership. In case there were any doubts about what is at play here, three sentences above we read: "I saw [the widower] lying on the floor, writhing under the plump strong arms of his daughters, begging...they were dreadfully jealous and couldn't bear seeing him near a woman" (GLEDSON, 2002, p. 79). The libidinous element in the trio's mutually-imposed frustration, enforced by the possessive daughters and the protective father (see Sample 2a), which is an important facet in the narrative's self-interpretation, is thus sidelined or downplayed in this case by the way it is transposed into Italian and English.

It should be kept in mind, however, that this case involves literally nontransferable, meaning-specific wordplay based on a single Brazilian Portuguese verb. Whatever his motivations in sanitizing the wording here, Gledson, nevertheless, indicates his awareness of such ambivalence in his glossary by describing the obscene sense of *pau*. No such references can be found in Di Munno's glossary, which could be part of an overall translational strategy.

However, it should be obvious at this point that the *bon gout* ('good taste') legacy of the *belles infidèles* does seem to be in force, at least to some degree. The *belles infidèles* were a French school of translation from 17th/18th century whose guiding principles were limited to *clarté*, *beauté* and *bon gout*, emphasizing the reception of the translated text as the only concern for translators. This tradition, which still survives, emphasizes that fidelity is not to be pledged to the original text but, rather, to the "spirit" of the narrative.

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4. On the focus and validity of this sample

Before proceeding, a word is necessary about the relevance, size and focus of our sample. Even if hundreds of translation choices, from cover to cover of both Di Munno's and Gledson's translations of Hatoum's *Dois Irmãos* (2000, 2002, 2005), were examined, the study could still be criticized in that conclusions could only be drawn about what they did in this one novel, and not even about their full work on Hatoum's oeuvre or their broader translation habitus. Much less, generalizations cannot be drawn about British or Italian translators of Brazilian literature, or literature in general. We are comparing apples to oranges, it might be said. Nonetheless, both are highly experienced literary translators, professors whose careers have focused on Brazilian Literature and serious readers of Hatoum. Thus, in

undertaking this project they were under no grudging obligation or contractual pressure from a publisher and it is reasonable to assume that their work here is carefully considered.

Would the study have benefitted from the Argentinian version? It certainly would have been enriched by any number of other translations, either approved or disapproved (e.g. the Spanish vs. Argentinian versions to gauge cultural distance within the same language, which is a good idea for future research). However, this brief panorama should be sufficient foothold for broader dialog. Although our sample is arguably cherry-picked examples, we were simply intrigued by the divergence in these two translations and wanted to test for patterns in what we considered to be a few critical points that caught our attention. It turns out that these eye-catching points all involved sensitive issues in one form or another: power relations, abuse, obscenity, incest, ethnicity, etc. Several of these also involved equidistant sociolinguistic issues, which eradicate the apple/orange distinction, since the Italian language proximity to Portuguese was eliminated in these cases, thus revealing on a level playing field how these two different translators reacted. Moreover, both translations were praised by Hatoum, and are cited among his “approved” translators (e.g. Gledson being now his exclusive portal into English). The sample’s “incompleteness” (i.e. pretensions to statistical significance) does not mean that it is completely arbitrary or that it is without merit. Thus, for the purposes of this article, it is at least provocative and sufficient to indicate patterns suitable as hypotheses for further research.

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5. Overview of Di Munno’s translation choices

On the whole, foreignization is used for a number of (although not all) indigenous words, which are explained for readers in a glossary. In the case where an indigenous loanword was avoided, potentially relevant information was sacrificed for another option insinuating backstory and helping bring the incest issue into focus. In the case where an unfamiliar dish was involved, it was transposed to a more familiar item, which although losing some poetic force in the exchange, appeared to be a carefully reasoned trade off. Where allowable, the narrative’s situations are generally “improved”, i.e. depicted in their best light: monkeys ‘playing with’ rather than ‘doing tricks for’, ‘visitors’ become ‘the hosted’, ‘taverns’ become ‘restaurants’, ‘hairs’ become ‘down’, ‘happiness’ is skimmed from *gozo*. Insults and slang are handled with apparently identical register, which is presumably due to the sociolinguistic proximity. Sexual/cannibalistic imagery is handled straightforwardly, although

incestuous insinuations are apparently resisted. Irony is neither accentuated nor reduced. In summary, although not to the point of license, a great deal of freedom is apparent, which might be attributed to a high comfort level (competence) with the source language rather than simple kinship between the languages. Decisions where information is lost seem more like reasoned tradeoffs than shortcuts. Di Munno granted us an interview clarifying a number of points involved in our sample and more general points about translation and adaptation.

6. Overview of Gledson's translation choices

Gledson was, it seems, willing to redirect the discourse to heighten an otherwise subtle irony. On other occasions, however, common cognates were avoided, which altered the sense for reasons unapparent in the text. Indigenous-based lexemes were (although not always) glossed over, losing 'valuable' information. Verbal insult was toned down and there was unnecessary foreignizing. Incestual innuendo was downplayed, despite being a major undercurrent throughout the novel. Over-literality led to unappealing collocations and unnecessarily awkward collations were found on more than one occasion, indicating that neither *clarté* nor *beauté* were the highest priorities. If a trajectory could be drawn from these points, it would appear that there was either a certain uneasiness with the language, especially the more sophisticated, farther-removed sociocultural (i.e. indigenous-based/slang) aspects or difficulty in determining how to best represent these elements to the English-speaking public. Nevertheless, readers were guided through the linguistic safari with a 55-entry glossary (heavy on the botanical and zoological), whose thorough explanations proved useful even for readers from the Southern and Southeastern regions of Brazil (a device that Hatoum's original could have benefitted from).⁶ Of course, having entered in direct contact with Gledson for further clarification would have certainly enriched this analysis.

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7. Final Remarks on Sociocultural Distance and Adaptation

Does an Italian (or any Romance language) translation of Brazilian fiction, due to grammar, have an advantage over a less-Latin based language? Will such a translation naturally come out "more faithful", "more readable"? Is Di Munno's version actually less 'adapted' than Gledson's, as Milton's hypothesis would indicate? Is 'less adapted' even any better? Of course, it may not be a question of adapting more or less, but adapting differently. This difference may not be based so much on linguistic parameters but on familiarity both

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with that different, distant world being portrayed and the parameters of ‘home’. This is also how Hatoum could pan a European Spanish translation but praise a South American Spanish version – proximity is not a question of grammar (alone), of mere linguistic distance.

Even using the concept ‘Brazil’ as a measuring stick is problematic since it is a hardly monolithic structure: São Paulo, although within the membrane of Brazilian Portuguese, may actually be less distant in certain aspects from Genoa, or even Liverpool, than Manaus. And this is also Hatoum’s point in the narrative, like Yaqub and Omar, from the same household yet representing very different worldviews. So, in a very real sense, Hatoum’s story is already translating Manaus into Brazil, long before it encounters any exogenous linguistic systems. And Manaus itself is the physical remnant of a prolonged encounter with another, more indigenous, ‘other’. Thus, adapting from up close or from afar may not be as important as the translator’s grasp of the socio-cultural-linguistic systems involved. To draw some sort of satisfactory comparison between these translations, therefore, a single-axis model based only on the “major-ness”, or degree, of the alterations alone is insufficient, their direction (sanitizing, foreignizing, etc.), adequacy (representativity) and acceptability (readability) must be taken into account to provide a fuller idea. A more relevant analysis when connecting all these points could be: are the tradeoffs reasonable?

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In terms of this sample, Di Munno gives herself the freedom to imagine and make more non-literal, semiotically reasonable substitutions, which could in part be *because* the languages are so close and/or her fluency in both worlds gives her the confidence to make intelligent transpositions. Although both translators have had lengthy affairs with Brazil, Di Munno was partially raised there, which could have added an aspect of identity that study alone cannot provide. Success, it seems, involves both soundness and elegance and, unquestionably, firm rooting on both banks of the gap.

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² Currículo William Franklin Hanes. Disponível em: <http://lattes.cnpq.br/5710028292619217>

³ For all definitions in Portuguese our source was *Dicionário Priberam da Língua Portuguesa*: <http://www.priberam.pt>

⁴ For all definitions in English, our source was *Oxford Dictionary*: <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com>

⁵ For all definitions in Italian our source was *Collins Dictionary*: <http://www.collinsdictionary.com>

⁶ Ad hoc survey of all glossary items in Gledson's "The Brothers" with three university-educated Brazilians from the South and Southeast regions. On average, they could minimally define only about 60% of the entries.

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