Margarida Vale de Gato
Universidade de Lisboa

Edgar Allan Poe in Portuguese: A case-study of "Bugs" in translated texts

"The Gold-Bug", intended to capitalize upon the reader's curiosity about Edgar Allan Poe's cryptographic writings published in *Alexander's Weekly Messenger* and *Graham's Magazine*, is a story about a treasure hunt that literally made Poe's fortune. In fact, this tale, which in 1843 won the first prize of a literary contest sponsored by *The Dollar Newspaper*, is now more than a "world classic" (as testified by the names of the collections in which some of its Portuguese translations have appeared, such as *Universal Library* or *Great Geniuses of World Literature*); it is a story that haunts generations of readers to the extent that, to gloss critic Daniel Hoffman (1972), one cannot remember not having known "The Gold-Bug".

For the sake of clarity in the ensuing discussion, however, I deem it useful to recall the basic incidents of its plot. Set on Sullivan's Island, in South Carolina, where Poe served in the army at Fort Moultrie between 1827 and 1828, the story is told by a self-conscious yet obtuse narrator who befriends the recluse and cryptographer-hero William Legrand. Legrand, always followed by his negro servant, Jupiter, discovers an unusual golden "*scarabaeus*" that will lead the threesome to the discovery of a treasure buried by Captain Kidd. But this is only half of the story; in the remainder of the narrative, the hero explains to the narrator – who initially thinks, and leads the readers to think that Legrand is maddened by solitude and superstition, or perhaps, as Jupiter suggests, because he has "bin bit somewhere bout de head by dat goole-bug"[1] – how he pieced together the clues leading to the treasure. A scrap of parchment on which he had made a drawing of the bug concealed the treasure map with the solution to its location. Subjecting it to a chemical mixture, he finally found, between the emblems of a skull and a goat (or, to be exact, a "kid", the hieroglyphic signature of Captain Kidd), an encrypted message that he determined to be a substitution cipher. This also turned out to be a cryptic set of directions that he had to match to a coherent context.

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[1] Mabbott, 1978: 812; further references will be to this edition, cited in the text by page number.

"The Gold-Bug" as a Case-Study for Translation Criticism

It is safe to say that Legrand is a romantic genius, devoting his solitary life to the understanding of the universe, not for the benefit of mankind, but "because his curiosity will not be assuaged until he himself has mastered the secrets written into the world by the Author of its so far uncracked code" (Hoffman, 1972: 127). Nevertheless, his ludic relationship with language, in search of the hidden text, justifies the interest of poststructuralists and deconstructionists in Poe's detection tales. One such critic is Michael Williams who, in his article "Interpretation in 'The Gold-Bug'", analyses the deep meta-textual implications displayed in Legrand's interpretative method: "the identification of context, of authorial intention, and of appropriate reference" (Williams, 1982: 657). These requirements allow Legrand to render a "full translation" (p. 840), thus positing an equivalence between interpretation and translation, a platitude which in my view deserves to be emphasized in order to gauge fully the uniqueness of translation-cum-hermeneutics, that "in which *a meta-language* (the translated text, which juxtaposes the other and interprets it) *is, at the same time, the linguistic object* (a specific literary creation)" (Barrento, 2002: 23 [my translation]).

Interpretation and meaning-negotiation are at the core of "The Gold-Bug", not only because Legrand is depicted as an arch-decoder, but also because the characters' different attitudes towards language lead to misunderstandings and puns that stress the shifting value of signifiers and the different motivations for the attribution of meaning. Thus, the tale plainly offers itself as a case-study for translation criticism. It is noteworthy that Legrand's investigation methods in reconstituting the "links of a great chain" (p. 831) seem suited to Lawrence Venuti's definition of translation: "a process by which the chain of signifiers that constitutes the source-language text is replaced by a chain of signifiers in the target language which the translator provides on the strength of an interpretation" (Venuti, 1995: 17).

I am aware that my borrowing from Venuti implies an agreement with his thesis that the process of translation is an ethical practice that surpasses the translator's semantic responsibility and engages his or her aesthetic, ideological and political responsibility, since meaning is indicative both of the translator's interpretation of the source text and of his or her position within socio-ideological systems. To be sure, the recognition of this ethical dimension cannot but imply an ethical stance of the translation critic – whose attempt at a descriptive analysis is at odds with the prescriptive value inevitably conveyed by such dichotomies as "adequateness" vs. "acceptability" (Toury, 1978), "fidelity" vs. "hypertextuality" (Berman, 1985) or "foreignization/ resistance" vs. "domestication/ fluency" (Venuti, 1995). However, it is by considering the activations of either pole of these dualities – or of both poles concomitantly – as socio-historically determined strategies, according to descriptive criteria that integrate the translating activity within the norms and conditions of the target cultural system, that we can better assume the responsibility for our own evaluative critical acts, and, to gloss the French-Canadian critic G. Lane-Mercier (1997), go beyond dualistic conceptions of translation, acknowledging their fundamental "dialogical" nature.

The History of the Translation of "The Gold-Bug" into Portuguese

Contrary to what happened in France or Russia, where "The Gold-Bug" was the first piece by Poe to be translated,[2] in Portugal the first translation of this tale appeared relatively late, in the daily paper *O Paiz* of October 1875, eighteen years after the publication of the first known Portuguese translation of Poe, in 1857, an incomplete version of "Hanns Pfaall". However, the history of "The Gold-Bug" in Portugal is an obvious success story, for it is the tale that has been the most repeatedly translated, with at least thirteen different versions and twenty-two editions, all of them referenced in chronological order at the end of this article.

Four of the five different translations published in the 19th century were done through an intermediate language, which was the French of Charles Baudelaire's *Histoires Extraordinaires* (1856). France was of course the main cultural exporter into Portugal, French the cultivated language of the elites, and Baudelaire's romantic fiction of Poe as his "soul-mate" had been fully accepted and digested by the late-century *Geração de 70*.[3] Between 1888 and 1899, four versions of "The Gold-Bug" came out, partly due to the success of the first anthology of Poe's tales, published in 1889 with the title "O Escaravelho de Ouro" ["The Gold-Bug"]. This collection, translated by Mécia Mouzinho de Albuquerque (1870-1961) with a detailed biographical account by Fernandes Costa (1848-1920), had an impact on Portuguese readership paralleling, though to a lesser extent, that of the *Histoires Extraordinaires* in France. Albuquerque's translation, based on Baudelaire, was often pirated and has become a reference work for subsequent translators.[4]

Around 1923, "The Gold-Bug" was published for the first time in a separate volume. This extremely rare book is prefaced by Fernando Pessoa, who at the time was himself translating Poe's poems, and it can be taken as a sociological document of the Portuguese modernists' acknowledged indebtedness to Poe's fiction and poetics. The translation is signed Carlos Sequeira, pseudonym of Augusto Ferreira Gomes, a writer of "*novelas curtas*" avowedly influenced by Poe. The translation itself, however, is a disappointment, for it follows, almost *verbatim*, Albuquerque's version.

Up to the 60s, "The Gold-Bug" was either reissued or re-translated a few more times as a separate volume, but all versions, though occasionally referring directly to the English text, are still very close to Baudelaire's French or to Albuquerque's rendering of it. In 1966, in the anthology *Histórias de Mistério e Horror*, Maria Ivelise Martins and Maria Fernanda de Brito are the translators of a totally new version of "The Gold-Bug" in which the cryptographic text itself is encoded and decoded according to the rules of the Portuguese language. Since then, and up to now, new editions of "The Gold-Bug" have come out almost every five years, but the great majority are still based on Baudelaire.

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[2] In 1845 and 1847, respectively. On the issue of Poe's early reception abroad, see Vines (1999).

[3] In an essay by Eça de Queirós, both Poe and Baudelaire are presented as heralds of the attraction of modern literature towards the "imp of the perverse" ("Poetas do Mal", *Gazeta de Portugal*, 1865).

[4] However, it is not a basis for my discussion since my preliminary analysis of the translated *corpora* suggested I should choose texts that illustrate Albuquerque's strategies while adding others that are more relevant for this study.

Methodology

For methodological purposes only, I have divided my analysis into two working categories, context and (meta-)text, although, of course, my discussion shows that these two are interdependent and blurred in the realm of *discourse*, which I take to be the significant level for this translational study. Accordingly, the first stage of my analysis was to select, in the source text, discursive units that I deemed to be representative of the sorts of "bugs" they were bound to create in the target texts. I use the term "bugs", here, not merely for the sake of a pun, but as an umbrella term for the interferences that occur when the linguistic medium, the aesthetic assumptions, and the socio-historical determinations of a given text are displaced through its translation into the language and culture of the Other, subjected to different geographical and historical conditions. These "bugs" are not "translation errors" but often represent a double-bind, defying the translator's ingenuity to maintain the reader's "willing suspension of disbelief" and to conceal his or her own discursive presence alongside the "ostensible" Narrator's (see Hermans, 1996: 28-29).

The examples I have chosen had to do with three aspects that are central in this text: (1) the specific Southern setting of the story and its socio-ideological implications, namely concerning the issues of slavery and race – an example to be studied under the heading "context"; (2) the method for "translating" the cryptographic document, which, as a case of self-referentiality, has been placed under the heading "(meta-)text"; (3) the speeches of the negro character that result from the foregrounding of plurilingualism in this story, sustained by misunderstandings due to the characters' different sociolects, which bear contextual information but are also self-reflexive.

I then proceeded to register and analyze the translations of my chosen examples in all of the thirteen different Portuguese versions. For the purpose of this discussion, however, while I may occasionally refer to other versions, I will focus mainly on three texts selected according to two criteria: the variety of strategies used, possibly suggestive of different *operational norms* (Toury, 1978) underlying the decisions made during the translating process, and the relevance of its role within the literary polysystem of the target culture, whether sustaining or challenging its norms, behaviors and policies. These three texts are:

(1) the translation published in *O Occidente*, a magazine of arts and letters, between September 1888 and July 1889. Translated by Francisco [Augusto] de Almeida (1838-1918?), a polyglot who was responsible for the *Dicionário das Seis Línguas* sponsored by the same magazine, this is the only 19th-century version done directly from the English – henceforth this translation will always be referred to as "Almeida".
(2) the translation published in the daily paper *O Tribuno Popular* (of liberal orientation), in 1890, signed L. E. C., whose name I could not "crack", but who also translated Tolstoy and Émile Richebourg for the same paper; this version, translated from the French of Baudelaire, is also indebted to Albuquerque's translation – henceforth "L. E. C.".
(3) the translation by Maria Ivelise Martins and Maria Fernanda de Brito published in the anthology *Histórias de Mistério e Horror* in 1966 (Coimbra, Civilização), which I mentioned above – henceforth "Martins/ Brito".

Context

Legrand's hermeneutics is triggered by a context (the finding of a piece of parchment not far from the remnants of an ancient boat; the emergence of a drawing in the fire-lit parchment) that leads him to the concealed text (the cipher) and uses text as a means to reconstitute context, tracing the signifiers back to their original referents: thus, the "Bishop's Hostel" turns out to be a "***Bessop's Castle***", which does not even refer to a castle but to "an irregular assemblage of cliffs and rocks" (p. 840). Extrapolating from Legrand's commentary at midpoint in this search route – "I was sorely put out by the absence of (...) the text for my context" (p. 833) – we may say that the reader is likewise baffled by the absence of a coherent text which would enable him or her to decode the displaced contextual clues of a misled narrator: the bug's ominous claws that require its handling with a piece of paper; the drawing of a beetle that resembles a skull; the insinuated lunacy of Legrand, who spends hours drawing figures on a slate. As Jean Ricardou (1976) has noted, Legrand, amused with these diversions, not only decodes Kidd's text but also encodes his own text – and when the latter comes out, in the form of a detailed explanation, the reader is urged to match it to the previous (con)text, thus re-covering a palimpsest that is made up by the superimposed meaning of words and signs in several possible contexts.

In this process, the reader, like Legrand, cannot escape a "final superimposition of the decoded text upon the landscape" (Williams, 1982: 656). And, in order to meet the realistic demands of a story based on a fundamentally rational procedure, Poe offers us the minute details of an actual landscape, that of the South Carolina coast near Fort Moultrie. This makes "The Gold-Bug" a rare specimen of Poe's tales, for his narratives are generally placed in idealized or highly aestheticized settings, frequently made out as outward signs of the characters' tortured psyches ("The Fall of the House of Usher" being the most typical example), and often in far-away and exotic European places, the presence of which, though stereotyped, surely contributed to Poe's European appropriation.

In "The Gold-Bug", however, the European appropriator (the translator) is faced with a vivid ambience that, though partaking of the exotic with its sub-tropical environment, is unmistakably American and Southern. Captain Kidd's buried treasure is an American legend, but more American even is the legend of the "land of riches", re-enacted in Sullivan's Island where an incalculable fortune is buried under a tulip-tree, "the most magnificent of American foresters" (p. 818). And unmistakably Southern is Legrand's stately countenance, as well as his trick of "sober mystification" (p. 844) which makes the narrator believe him to be "infected with some of the innumerable Southern superstitions about money buried" (p. 822).

Indeed, Legrand is depicted at the outset of the tale as the prototype of the Southern gentleman fallen into disgrace. He is a descendant of an "ancient Huguenot family" (p. 806), the first group of settlers to reach the Carolinas, as early as 1562, where they established themselves as plantation-holders, constituting the dominant political and economic force. And here is where "the bugs" begin to intrude, because in almost all Portuguese translations this Huguenot family becomes "a Protestant family" ("uma antiga família protestante"), evidencing a strategy of generalization that shifts away from the highly charged socio-ideological determination of the source text, and is mainly due to

the use of Baudelaire's text ("une ancienne famille protestante"). Even if we disregard Baudelaire's problematic Catholic upbringing, it seems evident that the French poet who took in the American writer with the "conviction that, for Poe, the United States was nothing more than a vast prison through which he wandered with the feverish unrest of one who was born to breathe the air of a purer world" (Baudelaire, 1856: 80-81), had his reasons for generalizing the provenance of Legrand. He would not want to vex his French audience with the troubling idea that this super-intelligent man came to be "great" ("Legrand") in America because his forefathers had been despotically harassed out of France. The Portuguese translators, however, had no such motivations, and their use of "Protestant" for "Huguenot" – which occurs, with rare exceptions (such as Martins/ Brito: "uma antiga família de Huguenotes") even when the translation was not done through the intermediate French – can only be explained by a norm of acceptability of the term in the target language, domesticating that which is alien to the target culture.

As the text goes on to depict Legrand's relationship with his "good old negro" (p. 810), Jupiter, it becomes evident that, controversial as Poe's authorship of the "Paulding-Drayton review" may be, the white-master/ negro-servant pair of "The Gold-Bug" is representative of the values upheld in that typically Southern pro-slavery statement.[5] Accordingly, Jupiter's condition as a free servant endorses the anti-abolitionist stance regarding the "peculiar character" of the negro; for Jupiter "could be induced, neither by threats nor by promises, to abandon what he considered his right of attendance upon the footsteps of his young 'Massa Will'" (p. 807). The phrase "right of attendance" – the negro's right to serve and to stand beside the white master (something which the Portuguese language can only convey by means of a periphrasis) – crystallizes the thesis of the review, that of "moral influences flowing from the master and slave", depending on the slave's innate love to serve and to be mastered.

The Portuguese translations, in general, do not render the full meaning of this relationship. Almeida and Martins/ Brito both effect what Antoine Berman (1985) calls a "destruction of underlying networks of signification": the first expands on the original, suggesting that Jupiter was not a cherished presence and that he arrogantly bestowed upon himself the right to follow his master ("a quem nunca puderam resolver, nem com ameaças nem com promessas, a desistir do direito que se arrogara de seguir por toda a parte os passos do seu senhor moço *Massa Will*"); the latter effaces the ideological implications of the source text ("nada neste mundo – nem ameaças, nem promessas – o convencera a abandonar o 'menino Will'"). L. E. C., however, resorts to an interesting compensation strategy: "era-lhe tão dedicado que nunca quis deixar o seu jovem *massa Will*, de que se tinha constituído verdadeira sombra". Though it also omits Jupiter's subservient rights, this solution (partly borrowed from Albuquerque's 1889 version) is ingenious because, suggesting that the negro was set to be his master's shadow, it foregrounds a latent idea in the Southern myth of racial dependency: that of the Negro as double/ Other of the white man. It is this shadow, claims Joan Dayan in "Amorous Bon-

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[5] Review of *Slavery in the United States*, by J. K. Paulding, and *The South Vindicated from the Treason and Fanaticism of the Northern Abolitionists* by William Drayten, *Southern Literary Messenger*, April 1836. On the controversy regarding Poe's authorship, see Rosenthal (1974).

dage: Poe, Ladies, and Slaves" (1994), that haunts much of Poe's gothic imagery of ens-
lavement and possessive submission.

 This "amorous bondage", of course, though Southern-specific in certain aspects,
such as the miscegenation taboo and the consequent idealization of the "untouchable"
Southern Belle (also revisited in Poe's fiction), is not very far removed from the Portu-
guese colonial experience and its socio-economic conditions – which, in the words Gil-
berto Freire used to refer to Portuguese politics in Brazil, led to "negro abuse by the
whites, through sadistic forms of love which grew among us and were generally attri-
buted to African lust" (Freire, 1966: 547 [my translation]). It is thus not surprising that
some Portuguese translations of Poe's tale follow a domesticating tendency, replacing
the form "*Massa*" with target-culture equivalents such as "*sinhô*" (used in Brazil), in the
1875 version, or "patrão" (in the African colonies), in the 1996 version. Most translators
(namely Almeida and L. E. C.), however, in line with Baudelaire, maintain the foreign
"*Massa*", thus foregrounding, in this instance, the source culture. Martins/ Brito, despite
the bland "menino Will" at the outset (an address form indicative of social, but not
racial, background), opt for a phonologically-orthographically marked Brazilian form
("*siô*") throughout the rest of the text.

 This latter phonological mark is indicative of a major translational "bug": the diffe-
rent sociolects in which the three main characters express themselves: Legrand, with a
deliberate "grandiloquence" (p. 843) typical of the dignified, albeit "somewhat unset-
tled" (p. 807), Southern gentleman; the narrator, whose speech shows that he belongs
to the urban upper middle class, and is saturated with "clichés and formulaic expres-
sions" (Williams, 1982: 651); and finally Jupiter, whose speech Hervey Allen (1926)
identifies with the negro dialect of Virginia. In this last case, however, because the
servant's speech has many traits in common with what Wallaert (2000) calls the
North American Slave Vernacular, a non-standard variety of 19th-century American
English, I find it representative of a specific social and racial group and I think it
best falls under the category of a sociolect, though with a certain degree of regional
variation.

 Baudelaire explains in a footnote his decision not to translate Jupiter's speech into
any non-standard form of French:

> Le nègre parlera toujours dans une espèce de patois anglais que le patois nègre français
> n'imiterait pas mieux que le bas-normand ou le breton traduirait l'irlandais. En se rappelant
> les patois figuratifs de Balzac, on se fera une idée de ce que ce moyen un peu physique peut
> ajouter de pittoresque et de comique, mais j'ai dû renoncer à m'en servir faute d'équivalent.
> (Le Dantec, 1951: 1070-1071)

Many translation scholars would agree with Baudelaire. Antoine Berman represents
the dominant line of thinking:

> Unfortunately, a vernacular clings tightly to its soil and completely resists any direct trans-
> lating into another vernacular. *Translation can occur only between "cultivated" languages*. An
> exoticization that turns the foreign from abroad into the foreign at home winds up merely ridi-
> culing the original. (Berman, 1985: 294)

Berman, however, overlooks the fact that literary renditions of sociolects are them-
selves highly stereotypical and more or less stylized or, in other words, caricatures that

tend to exoticize the Other.[6] In fact, their purpose is often (as in the present case) to ridicule the speaker of the vernacular, thus achieving what Baudelaire interpreted to be a comic effect. But this effect is grounded on strong socio-ideological prejudices that connote power relationships between the characters; consequently, the translator that, like Baudelaire, standardizes the linguistic variations of a sociolect is perforce uprooting the socio-cultural context of the source text, as well as its ideological orientation within that context.

As for the strategies adopted by the Portuguese translators for representing Jupiter's speech, both Almeida and L. E. C. introduce some colloquial lexical markers to reproduce what, in the source text, through the conjunction of lexical, phonological-orthographical and syntactical markers, is perceived as sociolectal and regional variation: *e. g.* "Eu arranjei um bom cacete para lhe dar uma tunda" (Almeida) for "I had a big stick ready cut for to gib him deuced good beating" (p. 811). The use of this strategy seems to support Birgitta Dimitrova's hypothesis (1997) that there is a general trend whereby translation shifts will move to the left of a continuum that goes from regional or rural varieties to those of a specific social origin, and from the latter to colloquial varieties, and finally to "neutral" language, tending towards a denaturalization of linguistic variations that are geographically and socio-culturally motivated. This denaturalization is pervasive in L. E. C. since, more often than not, the substandard variety of the source text results in a speech that is not even colloquial but standard/ formal European Portuguese (*e. g.* "é justamente por isso que *Massa* Will está muito doente" for "him berry sick for all that" – p. 811). Also, probably due to the space constraints of the newspaper in which this translation was published, L. E. C. seems to follow *matricial norms* (Toury, 1978) that lead to a simplified adaptation of the source text; these entail omissions, segmentation changes, and the transformation of direct speech into reported speech, whereby Jupiter's linguistic specificity is erased by the narrator's upper-class speech.

Almeida's version is more marked in that he adduces some instances of syntactical variation. But the inconsistent use of this strategy confounds the reader's perception of Jupiter's performance: *e. g.* "o escaravelho ser um escaravelho de ouro massiço" vs. "Que quer o senhor dizer com isso?", for "de bug is a goole bug, solid" (p. 809) and "What de matter, massa?" (p. 813), respectively. Furthermore, the syntactical anomalies displayed are not relevant markers in any racial or social linguistic variation of the target language, but at best indicate an infantile stage in the process of language acquisition, emphasizing the negro's already inferior status in the social hierarchy.

Finally, Martins/ Brito opt for a consistent use of phonological, syntactical and lexical markers of linguistic variation: *e. g.* "Aí a póca tóce o rabo, siô. Minha cabeça me pesa por causa de patão Will, siô!" (for "dat's just whar de shoe pinch – my mind is got

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[6] This stylization is based on assumptions of socio-cultural and linguistic differences that are shared by the source culture, and the attempt to find an equivalent substandard variety in the target culture will inevitably alienate those assumptions. Another option is opened to the translator: the creation of a strictly literary substandard variety, facing the risk of reproducing in ungrammatical and illogical Portuguese the grammatical and logical anomalies of the original – which, however, leads to the linguistic and cultural alienation of the target text. As Lane-Mercier (1997) points out, the translator cannot escape this double-bind, but must be aware that his or her choices entail his or her responsibility and engagement with respect to the aesthetic, ideological, and political meanings that those choices generate.

to be berry hebby 'bout poor Massa Will" – p. 811). In this version, phonological traits, such as the suppression of / r/ before a consonant, or syntactical choices like the enclitic position of the reflexive pronoun "me", are suggestive of Brazilian Portuguese, which transports the reader to the domestic imagery of Portuguese colonial politics in Brazil and, at the same time, conveys socio-ideological assumptions about Brazilian Portuguese, transforming a national variant into a substandard variety. It is also remarkable that the translation of the English idiom ("dat's just whar de shoe pinch") into a functional equivalent in the target language ("Aí a póca tóce o rabo") is coherent with the overall domesticating strategy, displacing the source-text's cultural specificity. But this domestication (which is not necessarily "fluent") exposes the source-text's illocutionary force – "the performance of an act in saying something, as opposed to performance of an act of saying something" (Austin 1962: 99) – in a way that the other translations, and Baudelaire's version, do not.

For all their ingenuity, Martins/ Brito fail to reveal some "under-currents of meaning"[7] that result from ambiguities in the source language. One of these, highlighted by Daniel Kempton (1987), stems from the orthographical-phonological rendition of "gold-bug" in Jupiter's speech as "goole bug", homophonous of "ghoul bug" – an "evil spirit" supposed to feed on human beings and to rob graves. This explains the enigmatic utterance of Jupiter, "Ise heerd 'bout dem goole bugs 'fore dis" (p. 812), when he accounts for Legrand's odd behavior after the latter is bitten; also, it upsets the rational logic of Legrand's final explanation about the skeletons found beside the treasure, and helps to create a subplot of romantic/ gothic overtones, supplemented with the "jargon about 'devil's seats,' 'death's heads,' and 'bishop's hostels'" (p. 840) in Kidd's letter. Of all the thirteen Portuguese versions, only one blandly refers to the potentially demoniac nature of the bug, making Jupiter refer to it as a "bewitched bug" ("escaravelho enfeitiçado", 1876 version). Legrand's "sober mystification" is thus weakened in the target texts, and so is the author's parody of the gothic imagery which, as Joan Dayan (1994) stresses, Poe picked up not only from European literary models, but also from his own native soil, impregnated with African-American beliefs that the white masters called sorcery.

(Meta-)Text

The variation gold/ goole/ ghoul bug is in line with the narrative's shifting terminology for its central image, variously referred to as "*scarabaeus*", "insect", "beetle" and "bug" – which, in the words of Williams, "emphatically illustrates the arbitrariness of the relationship between word and referent" (1982: 648). The Portuguese translations, in general, only present three alternatives – "*scarabaeus*", "insecto" and "escaravelho" – the latter of which is a problematic clarification of the more inclusive term "bug". Only one translator, J. C. Nogueira (in the 1996 version), comes up with the equally inclusive alternative "ca'ocho" [sic, for "carocho"] in Jupiter's speech. This choice, however, is not sustainable in the other characters' speeches because of its colloquialness, heightened by the orthographical-phonological transcription; furthermore, it lacks

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[7] The term was employed by Poe in a review of de la Motte Fouqué's *Undine* – repr. Thompson (1984: 256).

the ambiguity of the word "bug" – which, in the nineteenth century, according to the Poe scholar Barton L. St. Armand (1971), was a slang term for "madman", while "to bug" meant "to deceive or hoax". This polysemy, combined with that of the word "Kid[d]", makes a strong case for reading the tale as a "sober mystification" regarding the possibilities of properly applying words to plausible contexts, despite Legrand's faith in some final order that reconciles signs with referents.

The elusiveness of linguistic referentiality is enhanced by the puns resulting from Jupiter's limited communicative abilities, since, as Williams notes, "he fixes on a single referent in the speech of others, recognizing familiar sounds rather than understanding meanings in context" (Williams, 1982: 650). One striking example is that of the following dialogue in which Jupiter interrupts his master's description of the beetle:

> [Legrand:] "(...) The *antennae* are –"
> [Jupiter:] "Dey aint *no* tin in him (...), de bug is a goole bug, solid, ebery bit of him"
> (pp. 808-09)

Here, wordplay ensues because Jupiter believes that the middle syllable of the word pronounced by his master ("***Ann-tinny***", typical of a Southern accent that helps to contextualize Legrand; see Mabbott, 1978: 845, n.9) has only one referent – the metal, tin.[8]

Baudelaire tries to keep this effect and has Jupiter misunderstand "antennes" for "étain"; nevertheless, he seems to fear that the reader will not recognize the pun between these not quite homophonous words, and adds an explanatory footnote in which he states that it is a "***calembour intraduisible***" (Le Dantec, 1951: 1070). The Portuguese translator Almeida opts for a foreignizing strategy and dispenses with the footnote by inserting a bracketed explanation when Jupiter reacts to the utterance of the word "antennas [sic]": "***Não tin*** (estanho) n'elle". In this case, the emergence of the translator's voice alongside the foreign author's (which is audible due to the non-translation of the word ***tin***) foregrounds the translated text as an act of co-production and creates a "credibility gap" (Hermans, 1996: 30) that readers only overcome by reminding themselves that they are in the presence of a translation. While this subversion of the dominant ideology of transparency might help raise awareness of the irreducibly hybrid nature of the translated text, the fact remains that the pun is helplessly lost between these shifting voices. As for L. E. C. and Martins/ Brito, both of them discard the ambiguity by doing away with Jupiter's reference to the word ***tin***; thus, in the first case, Jupiter's interruption seems to be the logical conclusion of Legrand's sentence ("as antenas são..."/ "... de oiro", replies Jupiter), undermining the illocutionary force of the source-text's misfired speech act; in the latter version, it seems that Jupiter suddenly decides not to listen to his master and talk nonsense: "Não ter ***mestura*** (...) O bicho é de ouro sólido" – which also results in a misfired speech act, but not one ensuing from the characters' different sociolects.

The space limitations of this essay prevent me from adducing other examples; suffice it to say that, with the exception of one more instance also noted by Baudelaire as a "***calembour***" (Jupiter's use of "nose" for "knows" – p. 812), the other puns – ***e.g.*** "con-

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[8] According to St. Armand (1971) this pun suggests yet another "under-current of meaning" in the tale – that of an alchemical sub-text by which Legrand effects the transmutation of tin into gold through the mysterious force of the "tree of life" (the tulip-tree).

fined" misunderstood as "find" (p. 811), "cause" as "claws" (p. 812) – are overlooked in all the thirteen different Portuguese versions. Admittedly, it would be difficult to transfer these ambiguities into Portuguese without making major adjustments; but the absence of any explanatory footnote seems to indicate that, in most cases, the Portuguese translators did not even recognize the wordplay as such – that is, they were not able to fully **decipher** Jupiter's sociolectal markers (at least, no more than Baudelaire). That this might also have been the case for the average American reader is demonstrated by the narrator's own difficulties in understanding Jupiter's pronunciation: for instance, he cannot establish a correspondence between "syphon" and the standard "cipher" (p. 811). "The Gold-Bug", then, is a text with several reading levels, and, in order for us to attain those that lie more deeply, it requires the effort of matching verbal signs to actual words – which meta-textually parallels Legrand's substitution method in retrieving the words of Kidd's cipher. If translators cannot reach the deeper layers of signification, they fail to activate that effort in the target readers.

The translation of Kidd's cipher – or rather, the translation of Legrand's translation of Kidd's cipher – is perhaps the greatest challenge to be dealt with, since, as a case "of self-reflexiveness and self-referentiality involving the medium of communication itself" (the source language) it falls under one of the categories that, according to Theo Hermans (1996: 28), force the translator's voice to "directly intervene in a text which the reader had been led to believe spoke with only one voice" (**idem**). Indeed, Legrand's step-by-step explanation of his deciphering technique involves an in-depth knowledge of the rules of written English – including letter and word frequencies and the admitted positions for vowels and consonants –which allows him to reconstitute single words such as **tree**, **degree** or **good**, and, eventually, the whole text. Here, Baudelaire opted for a strategy of **non-translation**, bringing the English text to the fore and adding a bracketed French translation immediately after the words and text. This option, which seems to have pleased most of the Portuguese translators (Almeida does exactly the same), is one that Venuti (1995) would surely endorse since it registers the linguistic difference of the foreign text. In the present case, it is noteworthy that this strategy seems to extend the deciphering route: when reading the English text, the target reader is no longer faced with a "full translation" but with a text that still needs to be decoded by the emergent translator's voice.

L. E. C is remarkable in his effort to erase this voice, and all the more so because he does it by means of a very brief addition: after producing, in English, the "tradução completa do documento", Legrand adds: "que, traduzido, quer dizer: ["which, translated, means"]" – and proceeds to give the Portuguese translation of the document. These four words achieve the feat of plausibly bringing back to the target culture (domesticating) what was perceived as foreign. What is not so plausible, of course, is the need, felt by an American Southerner, to translate an English text into Portuguese; but then again, it is also implausible that he should speak Portuguese in the first place. The translator's strategy, thus, is that of pushing "the conventional suspension of disbelief" (Hermans, 1996: 37) to the limits of its sustainability.

The obvious alternative is to make believe that Kidd's text was originally written in Portuguese. For that purpose, however, the translator has to build an alternative cipher and then completely alter Legrand's explanation to make it suit the rules of written Por-

tuguese. Martins/ Brito are the only translators who go to all this trouble. Unfortunately, it is still impossible for them to circumvent the fact that the document could only be written in English, for, as the source text puts it, "the pun upon the word 'Kidd' is appreciable in no other language than the English" (p. 835). Since the creation of a "Capitão Cabrita" would be highly improbable, Martins/ Brito had no choice but to convey the English provenance of the text. But this did not deter them from adapting the encrypted text and its solution to Portuguese, explaining in a footnote that "the Author's rationale has been adapted to Portuguese in order to render a version of the letter in our language" [my translation] – which, alas, alerts the reader to the "bug" of linguistic interference and of multivoicedness, resulting from the co-authorship of the translated text.

Nonetheless, I think that Martins/ Brito's hard work was not in vain. Through Legrand's explanation, they give the reader insightful information about the structure of the Portuguese language: *e. g.*: "não há na nossa língua, nem *oo* nem *aa* dobrados ou ditongos compostos por *oe* ou por *ea*" ["in our language there are no double *oo* or *aa*, nor diphtongs composed of *oe* or *ea*", my translation]. It is my contention that, though this domesticating strategy may be equated with ethnocentrism according to Venuti's reductive dichotomies, it fulfils a fundamental function of the source text: that of raising the reader's awareness of the conventional use of language. It seems to me that this can only be done by means of the very language the reader uses, and I dare say that in the other versions the average reader will just skip through the irritating parts about a language he or she cannot relate to, in order to rapidly obtain the text of the letter (its meaning) without having to deal with the letters of the text (its conventional signifiers).

Conclusion

The "Gold-Bug" is a text that calls for a ***tour de force*** in translation, requiring a rigorous command of linguistic and cultural competences, but also of a translating competence ***per se*** – the ***transfer*** practice that, according to Barrento (2002) obviates the orchestration of the "other-text" in the target language. Almeida, despite his attempt to go against the 19th century norm of adaptation to the target culture, and to offer the sophisticated readers of ***O Occidente*** an honest rendition of the source text, falls somewhat short of the latter competence and does not profit from the insertion of foreignisms to restore the linguistic ambiguity of the original. Also, he is not able to recreate a consistent sociolect for the character Jupiter, and ignores information of socio-ideological content.

This last remark also holds for L. E. C.'s translation, which, moreover, as a shortened and adapted version for a more popular audience, follows a norm of acceptability in the target culture that preserves fluency at the cost of significant mutilations of the source text. Although at the outset he renders the relationship between white master and negro servant in a way that is relevant both to the source and target cultures, he erases important socio-ideological determinations that ensue from language use. Furthermore, both he and Almeida fail to suggest the elusiveness of linguistic reference and the shifting conventions that regulate it. In this respect, they do not stray from Baudelaire, whose version may well have suited his romantic vision of words that "céssent d'être signes pour participer aux choses elles-mêmes" (Raymond, 1985: 14) but does not account for the indeterminacy of linguistic signs apparent in the source text.

The fact that the meaning of words and signs is contingent on socio-linguistic conventions is more satisfactorily conveyed by Martins/ Brito's version. Maria Ivelise Martins took a degree in Germanic Philology in 1960, and it is safe to speculate that post-Saussurian structuralism inspires the translators' reading of the story, focusing on the arbitrary relationship between signifier and signified. Moreover, Maria Fernanda Brito, who studied history and philosophy, must have been more sensitive to aspects of contextual determination. Their dual strategy, which favors acceptability in the target culture – adapting the meta-linguistic excursions to English, and transporting the reader to a colonial Brazilian ambience – calls for a revision of Venuti's axiological positioning, since domestication, in this case, is effective in conveying the complex relationships between language and ideology which inform the foreign text.

I do not mean to imply, however, that foreignizing strategies, more attentive to the letter of the source text, should be dispensed with; actually, I believe they would be more effective in manifesting the illocutionary force of misunderstandings and puns overlooked by Martins/ Brito. In fact, translation is never just domesticating or foreignizing; it is a dialectical and dialogical process, its hybrid nature triggering various and at times conflicting strategies that will always leave loose ends, or "bugs". These "bugs" cannot but foreground the visibility of the translator's voice, namely when context intertwines with meta-text by means of linguistic variation and suggestive wordplay, often said to be untranslatable. Paradoxically, these untranslatable texts, such as *Alice in Wonderland* or *Huckleberry Finn*, seem to be the very texts that most beg to be translated, for they never cease to suggest different interpretations to various audiences, and, in this sense, the Portuguese "Gold-Bug" is a *work in progress* whose full assessment is yet to come.

PORTUGUESE EDITIONS OF "THE GOLD-BUG" (in chronological order)[9]

1875 "O Escaravelho de Oiro" [anonymous translator], *O Paiz*. *Jornal do Partido Progressista* (Lisboa), Oct. 6-17.

1876 "O Escaravelho de Oiro". Trans. G. S., in Archard/ Poe/ Sardou, *Alexandrina. O Escaravelho de Ouro. A Pérola Preta*. Porto: Imprensa Portuguesa (Col. Biblioteca Elegante).

1886 "O Escaravelho de Oiro", Trans. G. S. [follows the previous version]. *A Folha Nova*. 10-27 Oct.

1888-89 "O Escaravelho de Ouro". Trans. Francisco de Almeida. *O Occidente. Revista Ilustrada de Portugal e do Estrangeiro.* (Lisboa). Sept. 11, 1888-Jul. 1, 1889.

1889 *O Escaravelho de Oiro* [and other tales by E. A. Poe]. Trans. Mência [sic] Mousinho de Albuquerque. Intr. Fernandes Costa. Lisboa: Companhia Nacional Editora (Col. Bibliotheca Universal Antiga e Moderna).

1890-91 "O Escaravelho de Ouro". Trans. L. E. C.. *O Tribuno Popular* (Coimbra). Oct. 4, 1890-Jan. 10 1891.

1899 "O Escaravelho de Oiro". [anonymous translator; follows the 1875 version] *Novidades*. Aug. 12-Oct. 4.

1923?[10] "O Escaravelho de Oiro". Trans. Carlos Sequeira [despite the declared authorship, this translation, with slight alterations, is that of Albuquerque: 1889]. Intr. Fernando Pessoa. Lisboa: Delta (Col. Novelas & Contos).

1932 "O Escaravelho de Oiro (Novela Misteriosa)" [anonymous translator; follows Albuquerque: 1889, with slight alterations]. il. G. Moore. Lisboa: Edições Mundiaes (Col. Romance Ilustrado).

1935 *O Escaravelho de Oiro* [anonymous translator; follows Albuquerque:1889, with the same alterations as the previous edition]. Lisboa: Tipografia Gonçalves (Col. Gonçalves).

1937 "O Escaravelho de Ouro". Trans. João Meireles. Porto: Livraria Editora (Col Juventude).

1939 "O Escaravelho de Ouro". Trans. F. J. Cardoso Júnior. Lisboa: Ed. Inquérito (Col. Novelas Inquérito).

1942 "O Escaravelho de Ouro". Trans. João Meireles [follows the 1937 edition]. Introductory essay by Mário Gonçalves Viana. Porto: Editora de Educação Nacional.

1966 "O Escaravelho de Ouro", in E. A. Poe, *Histórias de Mistério e Horror*. Trans. Maria Ivelise Martins and Maria Fernanda de Brito. Porto: Civilização (Col. Autores Americanos).

1971 "O Escaravelho de Ouro", in E. A. Poe, *Histórias Completas*, 2 vols. Trans. João Costa. Lisboa: Arcádia (Col. Clássicos Universais).

1972 "O Escaravelho de Ouro", in E. A. Poe, *Histórias*. Trans. João Costa [follows the previous edition]. Lisboa: Círculo de Leitores.

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[9] This list, though thoroughly analyzed, cannot claim to be comprehensive; periodicals were only screened for translations up to 1900, and this research was based on Rodrigues's bibliography (1992-94).

[10] Dates followed by question marks were established through the registration date in the National Library, or through my own inquiries.

1978? "O Escaravelho de Ouro", in E. A. Poe, *Histórias Extraordinárias* [anonymous translator; revision by L. Nazaré]. Lisboa: Amigos do Livro (Col. Grandes Clássicos da Literatura Mundial).

1982? "O Escaravelho de Ouro", in E. A. Poe *Histórias Extraordinárias*, vol. 2. Trans. Luísa Feijó. Mem-Martins: Europa-América (Col. Livros de Bolso, nº 279).

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1996 "O Escaravelho de Ouro", in E. A. Poe, *Histórias Extraordinárias*. Trans. José Couto Nogueira. Alfragide: Ediclube (Col. "Grandes Génios da Literatura Universal).

2001 "O Escaravelho de Ouro", in *O Rei Peste e outros contos*. Trans. L. V. Nicolau [despite the declared authorship, follows Cardoso Júnior's version (1939) with slight alterations]. Lisboa: Hugin.

2002 "O Escaravelho de Ouro", in *O Escaravelho de Ouro & Criptografia*. Trans. João Costa [follows the 1971 edition]. Lisboa: Guimarães.

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