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“MOVING AND CHANGING IN MARIPOSA”: A LITERARY ANALYSIS AND INFIDEL TRANSLATION OF HUMOUR IN LEACOCK’S SUNSHINE SKETCHES

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I must first of all thank God, for only you Lord could…

Ok, just kidding.

I would like for starters to express my sincere gratitude to the first doctors of my life, prototypes of the kind of professional one day I want to be: my parents (not because they are physicians, but because they have a PhD and are then entitled to be called doctors; they are "doctors doctors"). I am deeply proud of being your son, who wishes to be half as ethical and humble as you are in your professions. So thank you both for not giving up on me even when I managed to be expelled from classes of arts (as a kid), when I got an "invitation to leave" *Colégio Adventista* (as a teenager), and when I refused to take part in the final ceremony for getting my piano performance diploma (as an adult!). Hence my special thanks to Maria Luiza, who haven't done anything like that. Yet. Also to Alice and Julia, my sisters – the former for invading my life at moments when I wanted space, and the latter for respecting such space at moments when I needed a life. I couldn't have chosen a better family, so my apologies for not demonstrating more often how grateful I am for your presence, even in your absence.

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La plus perdue de toutes les journées est celle où l’on n’a pas ri.

(Nicolas Chamfort 1795)

ABSTRACT

Humour has always pertained to society as a cornerstone for the foundation and questioning of several of its traditions and epistemes. Hence my proposal, in this research, to provide a literary analysis and translation of Stephen Leacock's *Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town* (1912) as to identify how such narrative might inform (and/or respond to) this view on the comic as a socio-political symptom and trigger. My aim thereby is to articulate a critique upon Leacock's novel, analysing how humour emerges therein as to make out if it might be recreated in my translation into Portuguese. Relying on Jorge Luis Borges' (1972) theory of creative infidelity as the main theoretical framework for my practice and reflection, this s ends up inevitably overthrowing adamant ontological schisms that saturate translation historiography. After all, according to my idea of performative translation, it is not the translator's point of departure or his/her deliberate destiny that need to be stressed, but the journey per se. The findings of my thesis thus highlight the conceptual contributions of taking Borges notion of translation as co-authorship ad litteram, which actually guides us eventually towards perhaps one of the most redemptive rationales for translating.

Keywords: Stephen Leacock. Literary Translation. Humour. Creative Infidelity.

RESUMO

O humor sempre foi elementar na sociedade para a fundação e questionamento de diversas de suas tradições e epistemes. Por isso meu interesse, nessa pesquisa, em propor uma análise literária e tradução do romance *Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town* (1912), de Stephen Leacock, para identificar como essa narrativa pode informar (e/ou responder) a ideia do cômico como um sintoma e dispositivo sociopolítico. Meu objetivo, portanto, consiste na interpretação crítica do romance, bem como da maneira em que o humor lá emerge visando sua possível recriação em minha tradução para o português. Contando com a teoria da infidelidade criativa cunhada por Borges (1972) como principal lente teórica para minha prática e reflexão, esse estudo acaba por destronar cismas ontológicas insistentes que saturam a historiografia tradutória. Afinal, de acordo com meu entendimento de tradução performativa, não é o ponto de partida do tradutor ou seu destino deliberado que devem ser enfatizados, mas a sua própria jornada. Meus resultados evidenciam as contribuições conceituais de tomar a noção de tradução como coautoria, postulada por Borges, em sua literalidade; o que, por fim, eventualmente guia-nos na direção de talvez uma das linhas mais libertadoras da tradução.

Palavras-chave: Stephen Leacock. Tradução Literária. Humor. Infidelidade Criativa.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ABSTRACT

RESUMO

CHAPTER I – INTRODUCTION 1

1. Statement of the problem
1.1. Context of investigation 3
1.2. Significance of the research 10
1.3. Objectives 11
1.3.1. Overall
1.3.2. Specific
1.4. Hypotheses
1.5. Theoretical Framework
1.6. Procedures 13

CHAPTER II – REVIEW 15

2. Deconstructing the hypertext
2.1. Original translation 20
2.2. Literature as a collective project 27
2.3. Playing with words 33
2.4. In need of an echo 38

CHAPTER III – LITERARY ANALYSIS 49

3. Mariposa
3.1. Mr. Smith 58
3.2. The city and the City 63

3.3. Jeff 70
3.4. Election Day 76
3.5. Bagshaw 83
3.6. An unnamed speaker 90

CHAPTER IV – A COMMENTED TRANSLATION 97

4. Translating Mariposa
4.1. Women within the sketches 99
4.2. Robbing banks and meanings 109
4.3. Re-creating humour 118

CHAPTER V – FINAL REMARKS 127

5. Final remarks 129
5.1. Implications 134
5.2. Limitations 137
5.3. Suggestions for Future Research 139

REFERENCES 143

CHAPTER I – INTRODUCTION
"I DON'T KNOW WHETHER YOU KNOW MARIPOSA"

> The lone wolves who know no peace, these victims of unceasing pain to whom the urge for tragedy has been denied and who can never break through the starry space, who feel themselves summoned thither and yet cannot survive in its atmosphere – for them is reserved, provided suffering has made their spirits tough and elastic enough, a way of reconcilement and an escape into humour.(Herman Hesse 1969)

1. Statement of the "problem": Can humour be translated?[1]

The problematicity of problematising the problematisation of this research problem is not that problematic to problematise (eh?): it regards the role of humour and of its effects when experienced through literary discourse and through the recreation of such discourse. Ergo, my thesis sets off from the fact that humour has always pertained to society as a cornerstone for the foundation – and questioning – of several of its epistemes, regardless of how innocuous it might seem to be at a first glance. Hence my purpose, in this study, to provide a literary analysis and translation proposal of Stephen Leacock's *Sunshine sketches of a little town* – as to identify how such narrative informs (and/or responds to) this view on the comic. In *Steppenwolf*, novel wherefrom the epigraph for this chapter was taken, Harry Haller, the protagonist, poses that "humour alone (perhaps the most inborn and brilliant achievement of the spirit) attains to the impossible and brings every aspect of human existence within the rays of its prism" (68). Humour, therefore, shall not be seen as a negligible instance; the comic discourse has always been able to say things that, in many occasions, could never be said otherwise, after all, many reflections surface from those literary instances hidden beneath humorous discourse – i.e. one statement might be effective not in spite of being a joke, but precisely for such reason. Laughing is not necessarily analogous to frivolous rejoicing; it is neither inherently trivial nor inconsequential; on the contrary, it is a channel for one to manifest his/her acknowledgement of a given social expectation.

Humour, as such, would consist, for the Steppenwolf and for me, in an exalted worldly wisdom; this strength would lie in the fact that itspropositions allows one "to live in the world as though it were not the world, to respect the law and yet to stand above it, to have possessionsas though ‘one possessed nothing’, to renounce as though it were no renunciation” (Hesse 69). Coherent with the opinions shared by Herman Hesse’s narrator, the literary tradition that has once marginalised humour to a secondary plane is no longer the same. Debated ad nauseam, it is finally clear that the comic qua comic deserves researchers’ attention; and such has resulted in our “discovery” that, when it comes to humour, meaning and effect are heavily connected. Elaborating upon such relation, literary translation emerges as another enterprise to be undertaken by those who appraise the maintenance of humorous effects. The moot maxim that humour is not translatable is a hindrance to the inevitable need to translate it – and I am eager to defy such maxim. What I mean is that, if notions such as fidelity and/or equivalence are taken into account as the norm, the possibility of recreating laughter loses its feasibility to a considerable extent (inasmuch as transformation is inexorable). One’s opinions concerning what is untranslatable or not depend fundamentally on one’s views upon translation, and it is high time such views were institutionally reconsidered.

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[1] This thesis follows the Modern Language Association guidelines (MLA)

There is much more to a word than its “literal meanings”; so there is much more to translation than a mere verbatim “report” of the original. For a certain reaction to take place (in this case laughter), more important than focusing on the maintenance of meaning per se, it is essential for one to be attentive to those responses that might supersede such manifest meanings – to the aspects of a word that are not conspicuous to such word. If laughter occurs when I read a text, it only does so because such text has objectively affected me, forcing me to respond emotionally, even if I try not to. Emotions are pivotal to any literary discourse, and, to humorous narratives, things are not different. Vincent Jouve distinguishes between two sorts of emotions related to the literary piece: the manifest and the sensed (101). Manifest emotions would be the ones overtly represented by a certain text; they consist in a component of the narrative, materially expressed therein. The characters of a fictional work might be sad, anxious, and happy without necessarily making readers equally sad, anxious, and happy. In the case of humour, sometimes the fun lies in the contradictory nature of emotions as felt by the characters and the ones that are effectively caused in the readers. By the same token, the narrator might pose that an event is terrible or surprising, without making readers terrified or surprised; such contradiction, however, shall not be left aside. For the humorous piece, every information is meaningful; even when such information seems absurd, it is unquestionably meaningful precisely given its absurdity.

Sensed emotions, on their turn, do not regard those emotions denoted by a specific text, but the one that is materially impinged by such text on its reader. As such, these emotions are perhaps more target than source oriented; they have less to do with the surface of a written word and more to do with its effects on an interlocutor. There are cases when the manifest and the sensed emotions cohere with one another (e.g. the sad monologue of a character might make me sad as I read it), but this is far from being a rule (e.g. if the villain of a story suffers, I might feel satisfied by his/her misery). As I see it, sensed emotions are the most important aspect of the literary experience: it is the emotional status of words and the undeniable fact that they affect us which makes literature so valuable – and which, ultimately, motivates me to translate humour.

1.1. Context of investigation: "*Mariposa traicionera*"[2]

Stephen Butler Leacock, born in 1869, in southern England (in a village near Southampton, named Swanmore), moved with his family to Canada in 1876, only seven years old. He was a university professor, a political, economic, and social theorist as well as a writer of fiction novels, short stories, and memorable biographies – having written a book about the life of Mark Twain (1932) and another one about that of Charles Dickens (1933). By the way, visibly versatile, the name Stephen Leacock means something like the Mark Twain of Canada to some (perhaps overexcited) respectable subjects. He counts Groucho Marx, Jack Benny, and F. Scott Fitzgerald amongst his public admirers; even Charlie Chaplin extolled his work, and actually petitioned him to write a screenplay. Unquestionably an avant-garde artist, Leacock tends to be seen by other Canadiansas Eurocentric, male chauvinist, and xenophobe,[3] which reminds us he was not that different from a great number of North American intellectuals of his time. Hence my determination not to romanticise him; if Leacock was a paragon of virtue or not, that does not bear upon the aesthetic richness of his work. My chosen author was not selected for this analysis because I believe his character to be impeccable or his sense of humour innocuous; as a matter of fact I do not as at some of his jokes there is frankly nothing for us to laugh about – reason why, in my translation, I simply change them into something I am willing to countersign as the translator/cowriter. Leacock was not "ahead of his time" and, honestly, is anyone really?

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[2] The title of this topic makes reference to a song by Maná: "*Mariposa traicionera*" (*Revolución de amor*, 2002), which is brought herein as for me to play with the idea of translation as betrayal.

[3]© 2017 The Globe and mail: https://www.theglobeandmail.com/arts/books-and-media

Speaking literally, howbeit appreciably ingenious in terms of language, in political terms Leacock's texts lean much more towards the preservation of Canada's monarchic dependence to Britain in opposition to the openness of the former to the international market, which, by that time, meant transferring such dependence to the U.S.A.. Leacock, as I understand, was not wrong in his scepticism regarding such "change" and, even though I do not agree with his solution either (as I do not agree Brazil was better as a monarchy than it is as a democracy, as many of our literary intellectuals have also implied), his cynically concocted writings tell us much more about the complex condition of Canada than perhaps he wanted them to. I am not justifying his actions, but my choice, which is justified by this thesis working hypothesis that, through Leacock's particular usage of irony, he has not only reflected the disconcerting history of Canadian colonialisation and neocolonisation, but also originally shaped it in a way of his own. Not academically, though; i.e. in his rather platitudinous academic writings, which are marked by Imperialist tautology. Hoping to be taken seriously by his peers (which, for him, implied both discretion and resilience), Leacock has written many scientific works in his areas of aptitude – being the most prominent ones *Elements of political science* (1906), *Practical political economy* (1910), and *The unsolved riddle of social justice* (1920).

In Brazilian universities, if we have failed to talk about Leacock's fiction within literature courses, these three texts are often mentioned in our articles and thesis about economics and international affairs. These are pieces wherein Leacock's insights foreshadow a rather contemporary topic as the author argues for one middle ground between the falling socialism and the rising socialism at that specific period of their production. Besides that, he provides an ad rem and logical rationale therein, defending the financial assistance of the aid to help Canadians who have no conditions of working (aiming especially at ex-soldiers, wounded in battle, and the elderly). However, the writings that have eternalised the author both inside and outside Canada, and which resulted in his oversea recognition even before his death, in 1944, were the fictional and humorous narratives that he concocted. I.e. perhaps to Leacock's surprise (or perhaps precisely as he expected, we shall never know for sure), if people were unenthusiastic about his economic treatises, his outwardly unpretentious fictional stories have never become out of fashion – which may explain why he would gradually begin to privilege them. On the whole, Leacock has written almost thirty pieces of literature, but, among these pieces, *Literary lapses* (1910), *Nonsense novels* (1911), and *Sunshine sketches of a little town* (1912) are perhaps the ones most responsible for perpetuating the author's name, for better or for worse,[4] especially throughout the Anglophone world. One of the clearest evidences of such recognition – that remains in posterity – and which undoubtedly enhances Leacock's contemporaneity and impact, is the award entitled Stephen Leacock Memorial Medal for Humour, established by the Lakehead University, Orillia, in 1946, and still in effect nowadays. Taking place every year, this award comprises, inter alia, the amount of value of $ 15.000 to the best humorous fiction written in Canada during that period. The event usually occurs in June, in Orillia, Ontario – town which is today a tourist centre for those interested in his pieces, not only for it is where he spent most of his life, but because it is the place that has served as the main inspiration for his masterpiece.

That is a fictional book entitled *Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town*, and has originally been published in 1912 by the British Publisher John Lane. According to Margaret Atwood, the book "is neither satire nor parody. It's usually classed as 'humour' and intends to be funny without either literary parody (a Leacock specialty in other books, such as *Literary lapses* and *Nonsense novels*) or satirical attack" (*Second words* 186). The decision to address the object of my research as a "novel" is based on my particular reading of it, bearing in mind that such object can however be seen both as novel and/or a collection of short stories – reason why other critics place Leacock's book within the latter category. I could enter the discussion here concerning the structural distinctions of novels and short story anthologies, as many critics have already done, but, for this thesis, such debate does not sound to me as relevant. As the title is already telling us, the book is built through sketches; and there are twelve of them, of more or less the same size. A sketch is defined as the following: "A rough or unfinished drawing or painting, often made to assist in making a more finished picture"; "A descriptive and informal essay or other literary composition";"A brief written or spoken account or description, giving only basic details"; "A rough or unfinished version of any creative work"; and/or "A short humorous play or performance, consisting typically of one scene in a revue or comedy programme."[5] With such definitions taken into account, and even though Leacock's book was written more than a century ago, one can hardly ignore the fact that, in the contemporaneity, sketches are still rather trendy – and have still been providing us with a comprehensive and disseminated channel for humour to surface. Within the Anglophone tradition, the British group Monty Python is perhaps the most robust evidence of that, with many films and programmes consisting of sketches; in my target context, the sketches of the programme *Zorra total*, in television, and of the group called *Porta dos fundos*, available in youtube, are also worth mentioning (although the latter, in my view, might be a little bit more successful than the former in terms of, well, being funny).[6]

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[4] Regardless of his successful career as a prolific writer in the Early XX century Canada, and even though he is undoubtedly acknowledged by many of his kinsmen and women as an essential figure for the steady development of a literary identity to such a young nation, at that point, not everyone was pleased by the sorts of things Leacock's fictional texts would be saying. As we shall see in the following pages, tackling with issues such as humour, irony, sarcasm, exaggeration, etc. is never an easy task – and when an artist takes such risk s/he would now and then be disapproved or misunderstood, becoming, as a result, a persona non grata to many of those he wished to satisfy. Criticising the sketches, Margaret Atwood, the acclaimed Canadian writer and literary critic, deprecates "Leacock with his condescension and portraits of quaint provincials" (141). In Orillia itself, the town whose streets, points of reference, and even individuals served as inspiration for Leacock's novel and for the "quaint provincials" archetypes, opinions are divided to what concerns his stories "about" the place. As anyone would have expected, "women do not tend to find sexist jokes funny, cripples don't respond well to 'sick' jokes about cripples, blacks don't like 'nigger' jokes, and Jews aren't fond of anti-Semitic jokes" (174). Therefore, since its first publication, if some Canadians felt represented by Leacock's fiction and did not hesitate to laugh of his sardonic sense of humour, others felt outraged and deeply disrespected by his saucy portrayals. Such ambivalent response to my research object should not come as a surprise, though – and I shall not conceal it; after all, when we tell a joke, we are well aware that some people are simply not going to laugh. Since "there is no such thing as universal humour, a joke that everyone will find amusing all the time" (Atwood *Second words* 175), it would be right to infer that if humour worked for everyone every time it would not be funny – and, then, it would not be humour.

Moreover, interestingly enough, the idea of "a rough and unfinished version of any creative work" has all to do with my translation project, as it is coherent with the idea of the original as draft – perhaps my object of analysis already knew what my project should look like even before I devised it. After its first publication, Leacock's sketches have been successively re-edited in English as well as intermittently translated and retranslated. On the whole, amid adapted, illustrated, critical, graphic, and special/anniversary editions, there are about fifteen different English versions of *Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town* available in the market, the last one of them published in 2016.[7]An ancillary pump for boosting this constant flux of Leacock's original is, of course, its translation into other languages – forasmuch as, thereby, his novel has entered the literary systems of countries such as Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, South Korea, and Spain. Furthermore, there are at least two retranslated versions of the novel in French and in Spanish that we know of.[8] It would be right to say therefore that this stout translation history of Leacock's sketches might reveal the rather comprehensive scope of their shifting cultural signatures.[9] Despite this flux, the fact that there have been so many editions of the novel as well as its survival and stretch within distinct Anglophone contexts are both evidence of how temporally and/or spatially transgressive this text proves to be. Given its quite satisfactory reception (which I dare imply since every mentioned re-edited versions of the novel have been followed by reprinted volumes), the work is available in a panoply of means. As a matter of fact, after entering the public domain, distinct versions of it can be easily downloaded online. Curiously, none of the fictional works written by Leacock has ever been translated in full to Portuguese; the only translation available is of one single short story from *Literary lapses* (1910), in the anthology *Os 100 melhores contos de humor* (Costa 2001).

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[5] http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/pt/sketch

[6] By the way, a master thesis on the group *Porta dos fundos* has actually just been defended in UFSC. In "*Riso e subversão: O cristianismo pela porta dos fundos*" (2016), André Silveira focuses "on issues related to laughter and Christianity, affirmation and subversion, clashes between laughter and humorous events with a Christian theme, the limits of humor, and the analysis of gaps in six videos of the group" (9). This thesis is per se a token of how influent the group has become for contemporary manifestations of the comic in Brazilian popular culture.

One of the Canadian classic books, *Sunshine sketches* brings together a compilation of twelve sketches that take place in the fictional Mariposa, a little town located on the bank of Lake Wissanotti in Missinaba County. The story is narrated by an intra and homodiegetic narrator whose name, appearance, and gender remain unknown to the reader – at least until my translation eventually turns him/her into a *she*. Also known as an objective narrator, s/he is one of the characters, but does not actively take part in the actions (even though s/he is unable to or uninterested in hiding his/her passion for the town while s/he describes it). Veiled behind the narrator's apparent optimism centred on small town life, there lurks in the more perceptive moments "a dread of the changes appearing in the new big cities. No doubt, industrial routine and mass housing seemed to the small town onlookers to banish happiness, and, worse still, to lead to a flexible morality" (Magee 36). This narrator's literary critique regarding the local and his/her elaboration upon such local is, at the same time, far from being blind, devoid of criticism, and/or romanticised. His/her view on this supposed dual condition town versus the city seems to me in consonance with Raymond William's critique in *The country and the city* (1973)[10], as the construction of Mariposa infers that there is actually no conflict between the metropolis and the town, for both are constrained by the same conditioning. Setting aside the idea of ars gratia artis, the technique of authorial intrusion[11] is pervasive in the sketches, both when Leacock

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[7] © 2017 Worldcat: https://www.worldcat.org/search/sunshine+sketches+leacock

[8] © 2017 Index Translationum: http://www.unesco.org/xtrans/bsresult/sunshine+sketches

[9] The edition published by New Canadian Library (2010) consists in the version used for the research not only due to the fact that the first one is no longer available, but also because it is one of the few whose editors aver to be only a reprint of the original novel – purportedly with no additional excerpts, alterations or corrections to Leacock's text.

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[10] In the book *The country and the city,* Raymond Williams problematises the categorical divisions between the rural and the urban setting. The author's thesis focuses on the interdependence rather than on the autonomy of both realms, suggesting that it would be potentially dodgy to see the urban and the rural as ambivalent, as conceptually opposed to one another, even though this "contrast between country and city, as fundamental ways of life, reaches back into classical times" (2). The problem of this equivocated contrast is the fact that both country and city have been institutionalised by hegemonic interferences and are now interconnected through complex, but effective means, empowered in both realms – Leacock's Mariposa does not need to be developed into a completely metropolitan setting to be reformulated by the values emerging therefrom. The epistemes shared within the city, regarded "as a place of noise, worldliness and ambition", have also affected the countryside; this is why it is so important for Williams to challenge the traditional idea of a "natural" environment that might be defined simply as surrounded by "peace, innocence, and simple virtue" (3). Such place has disappeared from the moment new places surfaced, inasmuch as there are no frontiers hindering the tentacles of developmentalism (symptomatic of the period wherein Leacock's novel was published). Williams would later suggest that this Manichean tradition cannot be taken for granted because it has given shape to a fabricated dichotomy purportedly innocuous, but that has a very clear agenda: "It is significant […] that the common image of the country is now an image of the past, and the common image of the city an image of the future; that leaves, if we isolate them, an undefined present" (297). It is difficult to provide other moulds for things we think are fitting in – liquefying knowledges is a pivotal step for us to get to new ones. It is within this "undefined present", mentioned by Williams, that Leacock's Mariposa is despotically interjected; and this temporal turmoil (as a city that is not coherent with the future) is effectively and metaphorically reflected upon in Leacock's narrative, as I shall demonstrate in the following chapters.

[11] "Authorial Intrusion is an interesting literary device wherein the author penning the story, poem or prose steps away from the text and speaks out to the reader. Authorial Intrusion establishes a one to one relationship between the writer and the reader where the latter is no longer a secondary player or an indirect audience to the progress of the story but is the main subject of the author's attention." http://literary-devices.com/

"presents himself" to us in the preface, and also when he addresses, through a narrator that often talks directly to the reader, issues that for him went way beyond an idle joke. Bringing the economic, political, and social matters that he had never stopped carrying about to the scenes, his story of Mariposa is also that of *his Canada*.

Already you may notice that there seems to be a dialogue taking place between my overall and specific contexts, as many features of Leacock's plot point towards its macro system of production and reception. It could not be different, for "far from totally isolated individuals, writers are inescapably connected with their society" (Atwood, *Survival* 147). Hence the emergence of a particular tradition within Canadian fictional works, as attempts to create "a national literature in Canada have developed on the interface of metropolis and hinterland, of written and oral literary models, pitting high European cultural models against the oral narrative of North American experience" (Godard 59). One must admit that, at least to some extent, these interfaces – perhaps specially the urban/rural one – might infer a load of empty romanticism and idealisation of a past long gone, depending on how they are articulated. However, the naiveté of Leacock's narrator, when s/he yearns for the redemption of Mariposa in opposition to city life, is in my reading elaborated as a critique regarding the very ontology of the place. Normative epistemes imply that the passage from oral to written as well as from hinterland to metropolis are both inevitable; i.e. we are constantly reminded that oral models are the crude material for the development of written ones and that our pristine rural past shall now make room to our inescapable urban future. Yet, Mariposa insists in remaining there, between the rural and the urban, described by a written text filled with attributes common to orality. Leacock's novel indeed emphasises the hinterland and the rural, as well as it acknowledges the oral origins of North-American fiction. But, as I see it, such does not mean that the narrative is confirming the dichotomies rural/urban or oral/written – on the contrary, the stubborn nature of Mariposa and of its characters might be a token of how debateable such dichotomies have always been in the first place. There is no "passage"; Mariposa exists in-between, it never leaves the threshold of its own discovery.[12]

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[12] Again, *Sunshine sketches* opens up a channel for our appreciation of Canadian history which, in Atwood's words, is the history "of the legacy of colonisation, even though its history is a history of discovery of the country as a new home whose newness constantly calls forth the spectre of the past, the nostalgic replay of other geographies" (*Survival* 9). Hence that feeling of nostalgia for "other geographies" that are neither distant nor close –

1.2. Significance of the research: The state of the art – of humour

Undertaken within the Postgraduate Programme on Translation Studies of *Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina* (PGET-UFSC), under the supervision of professor Luciana Wrege Rassier[13], after published this research shall incorporate the 337 theses (238 MA and 98 PhD) defended by other researchers from this same programme up to 2017.[14] Among these works, none of them analyse any of Leacock's texts, but I could find and consult four that address, directly or indirectly, the issue of humour and translation: one PhD thesis and three MA dissertations. Luciana Kaross' "*A Tradução da comédia teatral em The importance of being Earnest*", supervised by professor Walter Carlos Costa and defended in 2007, "consists of a discussion on theatrical translation of humoristic texts followed by a noted and commented translation of Oscar Wilde's The Importance of Being Earnest" (Kaross 9). Marise Butzke's "*Uma análise do humor irônico em duas traduções brasileiras de Jakob der Lügner de Jurek Becker*", supervised by professor Werner Heidermann and also defended in 2007, analyses "the translation of ironic humour in two Brazilian translations of the first novel of the German Jewish writer Jurek Becker" (Butzke 6). Arlene Koglin's"*A tradução de metáforas geradoras de humor na série televisiva Friends: Um estudo de legendas*", supervised by professor Ana Claudia de Souza and defended in 2008, investigates "the translations of metaphors that produce humour in the context of subtitling" (Koglin 8). And Soeli Staub Zembruski's "*A tradução da ironia em Don Juan de Lord Byron: Uma análise dos fragmentos traduzidos ao português do Brasil*", supervised by professor Rosvitha Friesen Blume and defended in 2013, studies "the translation of irony on the published parts of *Don Juan* by George Gordon Byron (1818-1823) in Brazil by seven Brazilian translators" (Zembruski 7). Integrating these interesting pieces of research, which deal with distinct aspects of

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a common symptom of colonisation legacy. This is why *Sunshine sketches* might be said to integrate the body of fictional productions that are willing to undertake what Itwaru deems the search for Canada: "This search comprises the endeavours in the journey towards recognising, and perhaps, but not necessarily, understanding the intangible Canada within the tangible one" (19). What we have thus is an everlasting journey whereto there is no exact point of departure or arrival since "'that which one becomes' is the arrival at a point of departure in the continual search of meaning" (Itwaru 20). There is perhaps no better definition for Leacock's Mariposa: the arrival and the point of departure in the continual search of meaning for an intangible Canada.

[13] CV: http://buscatextual.cnpq.br/buscatextual/visualizacv.do?id=K4763207A7

[14] http://www.pget.ufsc.br/curso/teses_e_dissertacoes.php

humour translation and which concern diverse languages and media, the significance of my humble contribution is justified by my conviction that the field deserves even more attention.

1.3. Objectives

1.3.1. Overall

- To articulate a literary critique upon Stephen Leacock's *Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town*, analysing how humour emerges therein as to make out if – and, if so, how – it might be recreated in my translation into Brazilian Portuguese.

1.3.2. Specific

- Analyse the discourse of *Sunshine sketches* narrator as to appreciate if, how, and why humour is deployed by him/her within the development of the plot.
- After making out the role of humour within the sketches, to reflect upon how its effects might be reconstructed through an intuitive plus infidel translation.

1.4. Hypotheses

- *Sunshine sketches of a little town* demonstrates how humour, as Bergson suggests, proves to be vital for the problematisaton of the status quo.
- Through Borges' concept of creative infidelity, it is possible to recreate the effects of Leacock's humour.

1.5. Theoretical framework: An infidel (re)creation of humour

Before moving on to the procedures for carrying out the research, it would be pertinent to provide a brief introduction to the theoretical framework I shall rely on. The focus of my project is divided in two separate sectors, which intermingle cyclically during the analysis of Leacock's literature and of my translation. The sources recurred to within the thesis concern mainly humour and translation theories; and I shall present some key concepts regarding such instances in the following chapter: a review of the literature. The material I use to reflect upon the effects of humour refer mainly to Henri Bergson's *Laughter: An essay on the meaning of the comic* (1914), Mikhail Bakhtin's *Rabelais and his world* (1984), and Jonathan Wilcox's *Humour in Anglo-Saxon literature* (2000). For a brief contextualisation concerning my view on the reader, I rely on Ricardo Piglia's *El ultimo lector* (2014). Similarly, and according to Gentzler's critique in *Contemporary* *translation theories* (2001), I set off from such contextualisation to reflect upon some of the contributions brought by deconstruction for a more autonomous idea of translation. Subsequently, in what regards the discussions on my rather manipulative proposal, I rely on Jorge Luis Borges' concept of creative infidelity. Besides Borges' own assertions concerning such concept – as manifested especially in his fiction – other scholars' analysis and further development of creative infidelity as a more consistent analytical and translation tool shall be summoned onto the arena. That seemed necessary inasmuch as Borges himself has not exactly devoted his work to setting forward a concrete translation theory proposal – preferring to interject some of his views and abstractions sporadically, both in his fictional and non-fictional productions.

Having said that, I would like to point out that some other resources regarding creative infidelity would serve me well for my elaboration of a more thorough discussion on the concept as a contribution for my translation of Leacock's narrative, especially in the fourth chapter. These resources consist in Efraín Kristal's book *Invisible Work: Borges and Translation* (2002), and two PhD theses: Elizabeth Leah Leone's "Displacing the Mask: Jorges Luis Borges and the Translation of Narrative" (2011), and Marcelo Bueno de Paula's "Borges e as Mil e Uma Noites: Leitura, Tradução e Criação" (2011). I admit it might sound awkward for some that a PhD thesis is constructed upon a theoretical framework from fictional works and whose leading proponent defines himself as a non-theorist; but that institutional denial is, for me, precisely what makes Borges' insights so valuable. In "*Os limites do mesmo: uma visita aos paradoxos da tradução segundo Borges*", Artur Ataíde describes how the writer has built a legacy based on an elusive past as, in many occasions, Borges published original works as purported translations – i.e. texts deriving from inexistent prior sources, as new versions of originals that Borges himself had invented, for researchers' desperation (15).Travelling from his experience as a writer to come up with reflections upon the theory of creation, instead of the other way round, Borges distances himself from prescriptivism. By doing so, he prevents his readers from reiterating the idea of literature (and consequently of literary translation) as an impeccable mirror that supposedly reflects the authentic image of a single, bona fide, manuscript. The paradox is that, through translation, a literary piece is granted with an opportunity to survive through its own rebirth: the continuation of literature requires its transformation; its endurance is only possible through metamorphosis.

Of course a more thorough and careful analysis of Borges fiction, essays, and interviews would be necessary for a proper understanding of his ideas regarding translation and the creative process. Due to time and space constraints, this particular thesis, whose analytical focus concerns another research object (Leacock's sketches), cannot afford to do so; as a result, I shall sometimes tackle with Borges' notion of creative infidelity taking for granted some crucial steps of his reasoning, not contemplated hereinafter – mea culpa. For the sake of illustration, as a metaphor for translation, it is worth mentioning Borges' entry "Uqbar", where mirrors and copulation are seen as abominable, given that both end up multiplying men. Accordingly, Borges' fictional character Funes the Memorious is able to remember everything he has experienced. To Funes, every object, if seen from another perspective, in another space and time, would be a brand new object; idiosyncrasy exists, but only in a split second (Ataíde 14).Analogous to that story, is the one of "The book of sand", whose narrative is about an evil book: not only due to its never-ending pages, but also because once such pages are read, they can no longer be retrieved, never more. Turning a page means the previous one is forever lost, and the attempt at going back to that same page results in the blooming of a complete new story, precisely because that page is actually no longer there – if I am looking at it again, such movement is already inevitably transforming it, for good (15).To the book of sand, no return is possible; and there is, perhaps, no better metaphor for the myth of uniqueness and origin – the very myth I look forward to rebuffing.

1.6. Procedures: Para-translation as a zone of transaction

Having presented my main theoretical framework, and the chief material that shall provide the concepts accompanying my analysis and translation proposal, I get finally to the procedures of my research. First of all, it is important to reiterate that I see the translator as free from the chains of having necessarily to opt between respecting either source or target contexts, as TS researchers so frequently claim. After all, his/her task is to open up both these instances to one another; i.e., it is not the point of departure nor the destiny that matters, but the invisible events between them. Besides, TS research is suffering from the conceptual fatigue of its oversimplified classifications, the reason why we should now "get beyond the traditional dichotomies of source/target, coloniser/colonised, writing/rewriting, faithful/free, primary/secondary, and high/low that characterise translation theory historically" (Gentzler 197). My first procedure, then, has been to read and analyse Leacock's novel, attentive to its humorous discourse, so as to develop a translation project of my own. Having finished the translation, I bring some literary evidence for showing how I got to the final remarks of the study. The up-shots of my research embrace many issues, conveying my analytical, practical, and theoretical reflections on the (re)creative process of literary translation.

CHAPTER II – REVIEW
“THE ARGUMENTATIVE STAGE OF THE GREAT CONTEST”

> *Este dia em que estamos, ou somos, não havendo qualquer motivo para pensar que virá a ser o último, também não será, simplesmente, um dia mais. Digamos que se apresentou neste mundo como a possibilidade de ser um outro primeiro dia, um outro começo, e, portanto, apontando a um outro destino. Tudo depende dos passos que Tertuliano Máximo Afonso der hoje. Porém, a procissão, assim se dizia em passadas eras, ainda agora vai a sair da igreja. Sigamo-la*. (José Saramago 2002)

2. Deconstructing the hypertext: Reader and translator

This chapter’s epigraph concerns one of the many moments when Saramago’s protagonist in *The doube*,Tertuliano Máximo Afonso, reflects upon the very ontology of time.The possibility of another beginning, of a distinct temporal destiny, is coherent with the deconstruction of master narratives, a crucial step for translation studies. Hence Gentzler’s view that “in contrast to scholars who have attempted to dismiss deconstruction, its incorporation into models for translation in Latin American and other developing cultures merits serious attention by translation studies” (186), I set off from deconstructivism as a fruitful space for repositioning the literary discourse. The place occupied by the translator is a place between spaces; a fluid locale where all concreteness has melted. As it is true for interpretation, “however the translation turns out, other translations are always possible, not better or worse, but different, depending upon the poetics of the translator, the initial choices and the points when the languages interlock” (Gentzler 101). Within such poetics, the only thing that exists is a chain of significations whereby originals and copies are intermingled. Meaning is not graspable or amenable to be tamed; on the contrary, literature is about opening up more space for the seemingly already known to be (re)discovered. A text is many texts: a hypertext, filled in with narratives that mutually supplement one another by de-constructing meanings; and, within such picture, translation emerges not as an opportunity to resurrect the body of an original text, but as a phantasm of both sameness and uniqueness – an “epistemological doppelgänger”. What does exist cannot be seen, it is always on the run; meanings surface from liquefied pages, self-destructive – pages that escape our attempt of defining them for good:

> The harmonious view of the world was shattered at the end of the eighteenth century.The production of anything, from commodities to literary texts, is no longer conceived as structured around individual consciousness, but rather around the age, or the discourse of the age, which actually creates the individual. Language, especially literary language, therefore, takes on a whole new mode of existence; it ceases to play the role of the metaphysical reveller/mediator of philosophical truths and becomes more and more self-referential, merely a manifestation of its own precipitous existence. During this period, then, forms of authority cease to impose laws; genres and forms cease to be viewed as eternal – and the structure of any notion of originality breaks down.(Gentzler 152)

As the structure of any notion of originality is obliterated, the creativity of translation also ceases to be a problem. A manifestation of reading, translation is also liable to alter the text through interpretation; and no individual experience is thereby devoid of the inevitable influences of its social construct. During the act of reading, of decoding, Piglia alerts us to the fact that it is necessary to tell another story for the first story to be understood. Narrating again, from another place and time: that is the secret of reading – and that is what literature makes us see without explaining (51).When we read, we are our silent narrators. Through translation, this reciprocal relation of meaning decoding and meaning making becomes blatant: it opens up one’s eyes to what resides in between the sentences of a text and reminds us that no meaning exists if it is not related to other meanings. Translation becomes “one instance in which language can be seen as always in the process of modifying the original text, of deferring and displacing for ever any possibility of grasping that which the original text desired to name” (161). Continually concealing presence, and repetitively thwarting all desire, translation provokes maintenance by altering the object it maintains: it copies through creation, it constructs through deconstruction. This is why translation can be taken as metonym: as s/he recreates the original text within the target context, the translator highlights those textual elements that s/he deems relevant, those fragments of the text that have touched and determined his/her reading. The experience of translation, way beyond dichotomist standards (e.g. foreign/domestic, equivalent/adapted, faithful/unfaithful, etc.), is finally taken as a profitable realm for the literary discourse to validate its impalpability.

Such shift in the approach towards translation is significant because, although the process of recreation takes place in every textual practice, tradition has been pressurising translation scholars towards the designing of guidelines and evaluations that, I dare say, only obstruct the task of translating.

Literature, instead of ordering and narrowing down our focus, reproduces chaos and creates a chain of meanings. Reading is also determined by what is not understood at a first moment, by the surrounding associations, by the turns and the cuts; the outsides of a book shall ultimately help the reader understand it. As Piglia suggests, the reader is a subject lost in a library, moving on from one book to another, reading a series of texts and not only one of them. Dispersed in fluidity and trying to trace the untraceable, this reader possesses all volumes at his/her disposal, walking through names, sources, and allusions, visiting one city, then another, travelling through references without stopping by at any of them (24).Conscious of the literary power to adapt, mutate, and survive, the translator can no longer conceive his/her job as a simple meaning transfer. “Given such a dynamic conception of ideas, the meaning of a work of art can also never be fixed: it changes as language changes. The range of associations of the words within an older work of art differ with its new re-inscription in a different age or culture” (Gentzler 19). If texts are interwoven, it is useless to discuss about how much of the original and how much of the copy is present in a translated book because, as soon as we try to analyse it from such perspective, it ceases to exist as we now it. The hypertext only emerges when references occur, and they only occur through reading, interpreting and, ultimately, translating. What complicates such reflection, Gentzler admits, is the fact that “the activity of translation somehow reveals to the translator that language is simultaneously unstable and stable, that texts are interwoven” (30).

The book is a concrete touchable object; at the same moment, there is something that exists prior to such book, and something that goes beyond its existence: the narrative it conceals and displays. This is why, after reading a book, there is always something else there that was not read yet: something that only time and space travel, of the kind translation provides, shall disclose in the long run. This is why Piglia calls the idea of reading in isolation (from temporal, spatial, and social context) the myth of “robinsionism”; even when a subject reads because s/he wants to get rid of society it is precisely such society that has determined his/her reading in the first place (140).There is no way to separate text from context, such as there is no way to separate reader from society, or foreign from domestic. Within such picture, the literary translator does not simply decode each chunk of a narrative as for repositioning it in another reality – it is a bit more complicated. The literary experience does not entail partition. If one splits up parts of a text, the only graspable unit of meaning is turned into something meaningless since “the essential translation unit is the entire text, from which one calculates backwards to arrive at the global proposition”(69).

De-constructing the idea of a text that can be cut into pieces and then reformed (verbatim, with no missing fragments) for the experience of “the original” to be restored, translation reminds us that reading itself cuts the text into pieces and is already reshaping the original meaning into something else. The literary work is read, analysed (consciously or not), and recreated into the translated piece: its fluid status forces translators to work as Dr. Frankenstein, picking up the references that soar around their reading and reshaping them according to their specific experience. There is nothing new to that; translation manifests what every reading does, the only difference is that, in the latter, metamorphosis is not necessarily materialised into a new literary piece. “In translation, hidden entities become visible, silently making conditions necessary for particular utterances, ironically, dispelling any notion of truth or literal meaning, and the very concept of ‘meaning’ is altered” (Gentzler 203). Putting these hidden entities in the spotlight, translation unveils not the truth, but the instability of reading, situated between the implicit and the explicit, the said and the unsaid, the palpable and the impalpable. After all, for the writer, reader, and translator the content of a book is never the same. In an endless flux, temporality, spatiality, and singularity kidnap fixity and turn objectivity into pieces. What is left is ever-changing; once a book is published, meanings are forever lost, and when such book is translated, meanings are found just so that they can be lost one more time. In coherence with the axioms of Derrida’s deconstruction, such view on translation is in cahoots with the idea of literary continuity: and to translate means to keep its unceasing flow. The task of the translator would be then to take advantage on the fact that books are never finished – so that s/he shall keep trying to finish them forever.

> The supplement adds itself, it is a surplus, a plenitude enriching another plenitude, the fullest measure of presence. It cumulates and accumulates presence. But the supplement supplements. It adds only to replace. It intervenes or insinuates itself in-the-place-of; if it fills, it

> is as if one fills a void. If it represents and makes an image, it is by the anterior default of a presence. Compensatory [*suppléant*] and vicarious, the supplement is adjunct, a subaltern instance which tales-the-place [*tient-lieu*]. As substitute, it is not simply added to the positivity of a presence, it produces no relief, its place is assigned in the structure by the mark of an emptiness. (Derrida, *Grammatology* 145)

This emptiness is an emptiness of points of departure and of arrival. Literature has no beginning and no end; every "new" text begins in media res, as a surplus, a continuation to previous ones. It is not that the original author has consciously hidden meanings in the source text that need to be disclosed, but his/her work implies an inevitably vast array of possibilities which, through deconstruction, can even be tackled subversively. Therefore, what the dichotomist idea of a good versus bad translation choice (supported by the symptomatic comparison of source and target texts) generally implies is that what enables translation is submission and compliance: the veneration and deference to an invisible authority, regardless of the fact that the authority, for now on, is the translation itself. What this ambivalent thinking also sets aside is the fact that "between the text and its tradition, subjective qualities of style – emotional, irrational, expressive – as well as idiosyncrasies of style – irony, abstraction, brevity, joviality – can be determined" (87). The text I analyse within this thesis is indeed bursting with in-between prompters of irony, abstraction, brevity, and joviality; and it is only through my emotional, irrational, and expressive responses that I might set forth any endeavour to recreate them – and no translation guideline backs me up thereto. Whereas many strategies taught to translators inhibit their creativity at the expense of more learned behaviour, "the uncontrolled, unconscious, and intuitive judgements are perhaps more important than the cognitive, controlled, and rational choices" (Gentzler 67). Standing up for the autonomous and creative nature of translation, Gentzler poses that literary translators should rely much more on their uncontrolled than on their controlled choices, for literature would be much closer to the former than it is to the latter.

Understanding the necessity to play with words and language as inherent to translating is indeed an important step for the associations of the original to be reconstructed and empowered, as new associations are manifested by the reading experience of the translator. Piglia, apropos, brings us back to that image of the reader who, surrounded by books, can only reread what has already been read by others. Jorge Luis Borges would define such experience granting readers with the necessary freedom for them to use texts as they wish – arbitrarily, and eventually establishing connections that no one else could repeat. Since reading is always out of place and time (controversially because it is always located in a certain place and time), Borges' reader is the ultimate reader: an effect of fiction that, in response, produces its own reading (25).Ergo, it is this aspect of intuition that consists in the very channel whereby meanings can be recreated – after all, if something is impalpable the means to access it shall also behaviour as such. Since intuition is the very opposite of the prototypical concepts that translators have got used to be based on, Gentzler concludes that both spheres, the systematic and abstract, contribute to the practice of translation. "While translators must systematically orient themselves to a conceptual plan, they must also stand outside the accepted methods of translation and intuit aspects of the text, a risky behaviour, but that is always part of the process" (65). I am aware of both these realms importance: the systematic and the intuitive; a lot has been said nonetheless about the former, my ambition heretofore is to elaborate upon the latter.

2.1. Original translation: An oxymoron?

Contrary to the idea of following a precise conceptual plan in what concerns translation choices and beliefs, and to the detriment of prescriptive views on translation techniques, the possibility of intuition and creativity has thus surfaced from contemporary critiques upon the matter. Such shift has not only bestowed translations with a fair arena for them to perform their task, but has actually provided them with important tools for their socially and politically positioning in what regards an issue that has always been social and political: the text. When I kidnap meaning from the original and suggest it actually belongs to every instance that happens to touch it, the autonomy inevitably directed by this process towards translator and reader ultimately grants both an opportunity to inflict a material and consistent influence on such meaning. That is, when I pose that meanings do not belong to the original, such meanings end up losing the status of "possessions" and, eventually, one learns they do not belong to anyone at all. The question one might be asking is: why would this autonomy to transform necessarily change anything regarding those involved in the enterprise of translation? Well, it does change many things; not to say everything.

As translators acknowledge the active role they play for the maintenance or alteration of certain narratives, their task is no longer taken as a simple code-transferring; i.e., translators are turned from rewriters into writers, from carriers of old meanings into creators of new ones, from mere reconstructors or, worse, destroyers, into deconstructors. It is only through a more autonomous notion of translation that prejudiced ideas like these might be finally overcome; after all, if translation provides us with a channel to re-access our macro and micro contextual systems of reference through exchange, it shall never cease to be an inherent requirement of globalisation. We need translation not to be where we are, but to understand why is so.

Speaking of which, "in recent decades, Translation Studies has indeed shown a growing interest in national and cultural characterisation and stereotyping, including the selection and potential manipulation procedures involved – other key aspects of the discipline" (Flynn et al 2).[15] Regardless, however, of the obsolescence of traditional archetypes concerning national identities, ethnic attributes, sexual orientation, etc., the fact that questionable approaches towards the subject and the space s/he occupies are no longer taken seriously by most academics (at least purportedly) does not imply that things are similar "in the real world". After all, "images and stereotypes still continue to be framed by the nation and hence it would be unwise to ignore its impact – such images are and have always been constructed, maintained and renegotiated over time" (Flynn et al 8).Literature, as an effect of and response to historical time and space constraints, is located within an atmosphere that is thus permeated by varied images and prototypes regarding the most diverse issues. As such, it goes without saying that the writer of an original text might be willing to promote the maintenance of such prototypes or to put them into question – and that s/he is freed from all social and political chains by his/her basic artistic license. When it goes to humorous literature that is precisely the case, being the former option generally and unfortunately the most recurred to.[16] In this sense, and even though it is already a given that the writers of original literary pieces have a vast panoply of opportunities to perform an active role as maintainers or transformers of the master narratives that precede them, translation does play a crucial role. Likewise, the issue of autonomy concerning the translated text still provides researchers with a considerable body of reflections upon the matter.

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[15] As contemporaneity overcomes the insistence to discuss national identities and realise that the concoction of any generalising image for a community ends up excluding more subjects than it happens to include, the translator emerges as a foundational cosmopolitan figure to evade pre-given concepts and provide target audiences with pioneering ideas regarding the unknown. Even though the cultural exchanges and transfers generally takes for granted prejudiced and stereotypical ideas, empowered when borders are transgressed, translators are now being summoned to help reverting such picture for good. In the words of Flynn et al, "media discourse has a considerable impact on the spread of images through translation selection" (5); once a narrative has been selected from a foreign culture and taken to the domestic one, it shall inevitably promote the maintenance of certain (inter)national images – to the detriment of other (in many occasions unacknowledged) ones. It is nonetheless not only when a text is selected that these images are maintained and/or subverted; after a narrative has been placed within the continuum of literary translation, the choices undertaken by translators are of paramount importance for the recreation of such images. Such epistemological shift regarding meaning making "inscribes translation as a dynamic force co-constructing differences rather than merely reflecting them" (6); i.e., the translator becomes analogous to a co-author, whose ideas on a source text and on the images it provides are no longer taken as irrelevant for his/her translated – hence original – text to be devised.

More than selecting texts, translators also exert their influences on target audiences by the way such texts are translated; i.e. the simple transfer of meanings, marked by the absence of voice from the part of the "carrier", is replaced by a conscious decoding and recoding of new meanings at the door – and the key to such door is the translator's attitude. After all, "creativity and translation go hand in hand" (McKinnon 35); and if there is something that marks contemporaneity in what regards the development of translation theory, it is precisely the importance that translators' creativity has been finally granted with. Notwithstanding its omnipresence within contemporary researches on translation studies, the way such creativity influences the process of translation is in many occasions addressed subjectively and/or completely taken for granted. To translate would thus be analogous to Yolanda Perez' usage of the German word *samenstellen*: "to compose or to compile something by using different elements" (38). Applied in early modern times to refer to varied creative processes by intellectual circles, the word belongs to a time and space configuration whereto notions such as ownership and/or originality were completely pointless. Inferences relating the word to the sphere of translation studies are possible, despite the fact that "translation practices and translation terminology were not that clearly defined in the early modern period. It is therefore not excluded that the term *samenstellen* could also be used to define something new, perhaps created as a result of or inspired by other works" (Perez 39). *Samenstellen* is then a token that a narrative can be new, at the very same time that it is based on other works. This solves the epistemological controversy of originality, that still haunts translation studies, as well as evinces that, where we tend to see a battle, there is just conversation.[17]

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[16] It is important to bear in mind, however, that such will either to endorse or problematise certain issues does not materialise out of the blue – i.e., when something that deserves to be put into question is simply taken for granted by one's narrative, there seems to be a reason. Simon McKinnon reminds readers that "numerous texts draw on and perpetuate a negative cultural stereotype of the other as a contrasting mirror image of the collective self. Such an image is, in fact, politically, socially and culturally motivated" (23). Every original narrative is inevitably also a compilation of previous narratives, so it can only be created through the epistemological translation of what precedes it; i.e. for an original idea to make sense it must necessarily be based on things that have already been said beforehand. This rationale inevitably inscribes the literary text within the temporal and spatial environment it occupies – and is ultimately coherent both with the notion of the hypertext as well as with the idea that there are no longer starting points in the literary continuum, and there actually never were. As an object that dialogues with the other objects which encompass it, the literary text also translates political imperatives, cultural tastes, literary conventions, and stereotypes that inevitably change from time to time – and the rewriting of such text cannot set such transformation aside. But when McKinnon says that texts might draw on and perpetuate negative ideas of "the other", who is this other he is talking about? Well, "the image of the other is used to determine what is and what is not part of the self-image" (34); a logic that may not be even taken into consideration by the author of the original, but which is integral to any attempt at idealising who the self is and why I should like it, as well as in what concerns who is the other and why I should despise it.

Hence the absence of oppositions: every text, source or target, is and is not original at the very same time. Withal, I admit it might sound not enough, for some scholars, to address the source text as nothing but "an inspiration" for the concoction of the translation – as just one among the many elements that lay the groundwork for the creation of a new, albeit translated, narrative. I do agree with such caveat, partially; the source text does stand for one more book that has been added to the cognitive library of the translator, but it rests on the nearest shelves, and seems to be the first volume to be consulted by him/her. The autonomy of translations and their condition as *samenstellen* is, however, not a matter of opinion: it is a plain fact. Since translators are inserted within a particular literary system, influenced by their personal experiences and guided by their varied ideological agendas, the source text enters a realm that is indeed already occupied by many other elements which are blended and reassembled for the conception of the target narrative. In coherence with this logic, Perez relates the concept of *samenstellen* to that of pseudo-translations: “Pseudo-translations have to be understood as belonging to an intertextual continuum. The selection of texts used as inspiration does somehow match a certain grain in the mind of the author” (Perez 47). Perez’ usage of the terms “*samenstellen*”and “pseudo-translation” have nothing to do with an attempt at endorsing any separation between more traditional views on translation and these former notions of the target text as an “original rewriting”. On the contrary, her critique is deployed as to make it clear that, historically, the idea of literary discourses as an inter-textual continuity shall not be abandoned nor undermined, but actually highlighted.

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[17] I would be lying if I said translators and/or translation scholars agree with the idea of translation as *samestellen*. Creativity in translation is still an issue that must be tackled with sensitivity – as well as interpretation, freedom, originality, etc. When the translator creatively recreates the meanings of an original text isn't s/he adapting instead of translating? Isn't the former process less creative than the latter? Apropos to literary translation terminology, I personally see no difference between translating and adapting. None of them asks me to be closer or more distant to the original text than I already am (what does that mean anyways?). As soon as I read a text, my perception is already adapting it, as well as my reading of it is per se a translation – and, why not, adaptation. Adaptation, translation, rewriting… call it as you wish, to me it is all literature.

As time passes, more texts are written, and, as a result, more ideas are rewritten – i.e. the invention of new originals is accompanied by the many re-translations they entail. In-between different literary systems and chronotopes, the translation of certain narratives have always served purposes that go way beyond them; and acknowledging the dialectic status of translated literature consists in a significant step for translators to perform consciously what they have unconsciously always done. “Translations – and pseudo-translations – are not produced in a void, but in a continuum of textual and extra-textual constraints. The history of translation is rich in examples of the way translation can be used in the service of ideological agendas” (Perez 50). It is indeed much easier to resist the adoption of an ideological agenda when translation is promoted; after all, the translator is still not asked to think, interpret, or judge the original information. By the same token, the translated text shall unavoidably take up such agenda, as the work gets within the literary system of the translator and as readers’ are objective and subjectively affected by what is written therein. It is not because I ignore my task that I am magically going to be set free. The literary translator is responsible for the text s/he is putting out, and, at the same time, such responsibility gives him/her carte blanche to expand, alter, recreate, and/or get rid of certain elements that are present in the source text.

Even though such logic might sound far too modern, modernity has actually been the very moment marked by this symptomatic oblivion of the hypertextual character of literature as we learned to overestimate notions of translation faithfulness (which were later replaced by ethics, integral to later ideas of deformation, equivalence, foreignisation, and domestication, for instance). Translation Studies have been infected in the XXI with prescriptive ideas regarding the right or wrong way to translate, a dual logic that brings limited contributions to the field.[18] This is why my deployment of Borges' creative infidelity dialogues with older, more transgressive, ideas on translation which are taken by some as obsolete and/or improper. "Translation in the Romantic era was not bound to high standards of faithfulness to originals: older views of translations – as *belles infidèles* – still influenced many a translator's practice, and translation frequently entailed radical transformations" (Ingelbien 62). My view on translation is indeed much closer to the notions of pseudo-translation, *samenstellen*, and *belles infidèles* (which stand, in a nutshell, for the tradition of privileging "beautiful" choices to the detriment of "faithful" ones) than it is, for instance, to Venuti's simplistic categories of foreignisation and domestication, or to Berman's debateable deformations. It seems that, as soon as a certain theory implies it is easy to judge and appraise translations, the keener we become to embrace it. Ideas like the mentioned ones have been thoroughly applied by TS scholars in a vast array of researches, which has contributed to their success, on the one hand, and prevented translation theory from "moving on", on the other.[19]

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[18] Criticising the product is one thing, but to criticise the process is very different. Aware that "literary texts play a key role in the construction, diffusion, and maintenance of generalisations, including constructs of national identity" (Perez 60), *how* I translate matters because of my specific agenda thereby. What is the purpose of my changing things? It goes without saying that not only the concoction of literary texts, but also (and perhaps more importantly) their translation have been chief for the construction, diffusion, and maintenance of cultural and ideological prototypes. Translation is summoned to fit in this agenda, but it might do the very opposite: (de)constructing, (de)diffusing, and (de)maintaining epistemes – with the very same elements! Translating, after all, is like cooking: the original provides me with many ingredients that I can "deconstruct", combining them as to come up with a completely different meal (text), that I shall eat (read) more fondly than I would appreciate the original, for now it is cooked according to my taste. The ingredients are there, but with no recipe to be followed.

[19] Bearing in mind that I am dealing in this thesis with a Canadian work written in 1912, I set off my analysis and translation cognisant of the space and time boundaries of my own reading – hence my view on the translation activity as a reinvention rather than a transfer. After all, the only thing which is transferred is my own understanding – and the way I decided to put it into words. When literary pieces travel, through translation, from one culture to another, "the cultural images they contain inevitably change, whether to avoid overloading the target reader with new, trivial information, or because of the stylistic, poetic, ideological norms, convictions and opinions of the translator and the target reader" (145). Such change occurs regardless of one's intention; it does not matter if here I am willing to transform foreign items into more domestic ones, or if there I think it is

What I mean is that, if the status of translation and translator as placed "in-between" is already a common ground for researches within the field, why should we still stick to such dichotomist reasoning? There is no way one could think of target and source cultures as stable entities; they are both dynamic realms where everything is different, dynamic, unfinished, and replaceable, negotiating and allowing stories to be devised in abstentia. The translation, as a result, would ultimately stand for "simultaneously supplementation and substitution, surplus and lack, extension and compensation of the always already absent original" (Blazevic 302). In-between the supplementation, substitution, surplus, lack, extension, and compensation, an intricate journey begins, not devoid of power relations and not from a single place to another. On the contrary, the time and space of the other and of the self are culturally pluri-directional, moving within the target and source cultures, as well as between one another. It is in this sense that deconstruction can be ultimately related to the idea of hypertext, since this notion of literature as "entangled history is focused upon the processes of multilateral temporal and spatial entanglings and intercrossings, subsumed under the key concept of 'networks'" (304). This is a network of hybrid, transitory, ambivalent, and transformative historical relationships, that, as they gather momentum, the translator might harness. To bring, within the translation journey amongst nations, a Canadian text for Brazilian readers also means thusly to problematise the very idea of what it is to be Canadian or Brazilian. After all, the purported dichotomy local versus universal proves to be ineffective thereby as the translation evinces the palimpsest of every narrative, including the national one. Texts are written by people, but they are also written by times and spaces, by the historical relationships inherent to the fictional narrative and partially unveiled by the processes of its analysis. If "conceptualizing the nation as a phenomenon that can be translated is an

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important to explain a cultural reference or "keep it as it is". Translators do not translate "the" original: they translate their idiosyncratic reading of an original – an original that does never represent the same thing for another interlocutor. Individual translation solutions, conscious or not, are the source of every original "deformation". As a matter of fact, "changes are most probably not motivated by a conscious wish to change an image, but rather the result of more mundane dilemmas that every translator faces when translating a text from another culture" (Zigon and Moe 159). Of course the receiving culture plays a decisive role in what regards these changes; but it is how the translator responds to this encounter between the foreign text and the target values, norms, tradition, and self-images that shape translation. The translator is between "other" and "self": his/her text lies beyond such poles at the very same time as it hovers above them both.

exercise in de-bordered understanding of the networks, interconnections and intersections" (Blazevic 310), the dual idea of foreign and domestic no longer apply. The translator does not transform the foreign into something domestic: the translation transforms the domestic through the experience of the foreign.

2.2. Literature as a collective project

It is clear now that journeys – temporal, spatial, and epistemological – play a rather crucial role when it goes to the dialogues provided by literary discourses. Each of these discourses operate within and because of time – there is no beginning nor ending, only one more piece of information being inserted inside the milieu of a ubiquitous condition: the condition of endlessness, inherent to literature. One's view on literature and on literary translation depends, inevitably, on his/her view on time, as simple as that. "Time accumulates experiences on the artist, as it does with all men. By force of omissions and emphasis, of memory and forgetfulness, time combines some of those experiences and thus it elaborates the work of art" (310). Borges' idea that we, as individuals, influence and are influenced by time through this force of omissions and emphasis, and due to what we memorise and what we forget, would gradually shape his key positioning regarding the task of the translator, whose work would demand him/her to raise awareness to the fact that there is no neutrality in such picture. The main premise here is that translators create, but even that is not such a straightforward thing; after all, creation is but "a mixture of forgetting and remembering what we have read" (Borges, *Labyrinths* 170).But, if creating has to do as remembering and/or forgetting what we have previously read, then there would not be so many differences between the processes of writing and/or rewriting, would there? Not if we agree that we are "all the heirs of millions of scribes who have already written down all that is essential a long time before us. We are all copyists, and all the stories we invent have already been told; there are no longer any original ideas." (Borges, *Inquisitions* 74).

Questionable as they may seem, Borges innovative views on the process of poetic creation ended up opening a cyclic debate still pretty much in vogue; and such discussion concerns the issue of translation and of artistic autonomy. When Borges poses that we are all copyists, and that every story has already been told, he discredits, without hesitating, the unfathomable tradition wherein notions such as fidelity and/or originality have, for long, perhaps far too long, been the centre of translation researchers' worries. When one looks at literature and at translation s/he must be aware that the "original" meaning of a work is not accessible any longer – perhaps it has actually never been. This is why, "given a choice, he [Borges] preferred to discuss literary effects rather than the meaning of literary works; and he could not countenance any talk about literary theory that did not address the craft of writing" (Kristal, xviii). It is maybe less farfetched to talk about literary effects to the detriment of literary meanings, to reflect upon what a literary discourse *does* rather than about what it *is*; when such shift of perspective impinges upon the process of translation it grants it a new status. The translator is then finally able to dodge the phantom of the original, endowed with an opportunity to effectively see him/herself as both producer and reproducer (as the frontiers between former and latter are mitigated, not to say extinguished). Deeming originals nothing but drafts that precede translations, Borges sets aside a hierarchy that is well established within the literary realm – a hierarchy of artistic creation where translations are allowed a paltry sum of it. It is true, by the same token, that he not only theorises, but actually fictionalises successfully upon such issue, as "his own literary works transform his readings into a repertoire of possibilities in which his own translations, and his views about translation, play a decisive role" (Kristal, xx).

It seems, thus, that if he stopped to look at the processes of writing and translating, for him there would be no way to determine if there is a minor or major task among them (even their differences shrink as he sets the converging points between creating and recreating). What translators face is the same repertoire of possibilities faced by the common reader; the text one reads is not a closed and finished text, but a draft done a priori to such reading. If the translator allows him/herself to be enslaved by the illusion of an original meaning, s/he would end up reducing the authority of the new effects which his/her text is liable to provide. Literature proves to be one of the most effective means for freeing us from our limitations, so why would literary translation be a puppet, restrained by invisible chains and controlled by invisible hands? There is no debt to be paid; translators are the ones who receive an ex gratia payment from the original, a courtesy visit from a remote relative, through the translation, to the target audience. Translating a text from one time and space into another can only be done if one realises that no "closeness" to the source text as a solid and compact work can be achieved, simply because the reading of the translator is already incommensurably distant from it. Translating does not have to do with trying to overlook such distance, but with accepting and manipulating it in one's own terms, regardless of how petulant such behaviour might seem to be – and it is not, is it? Let us remember that, in literature, there is no need to focus on the “essence”, and there is no need to focus on the “final product”; both these instances do not exist, it is the space between the “here” and “there” that matters.

The title of my object of analysis and translation, by the by, is surprisingly convenient given my specific approach towards it. *Sunshine sketches of a little town* consists, as you may infer, of a collection of sketches; and, amongst its many definitions, one serves my project rather well: a sketch is something which is not ready yet, and my decision to maintain such word in the translated text (*Esquete*) corroborates the notion that the de facto novel written by Leacock’s shall never be “ready” whatsoever. One of the basic premises of creative infidelity is that “[a] translator – like a writer correcting a draft – often cuts, adds, and reorganizes a text to produce a work that improves on rougher sketches” (Kristal 14);[20] in this sense, the “original” is but a sketch, such as every translation accompanying its publication.

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[20] Kristal seems here to endorse Borges’ notion that translations are equipped with an armour that results in its enhancement of an original piece – as if translated works, contrarily to what is traditionally posed, consisted in a better material if compared to what inspired their emergence. The source text would be corrected by translation and improved by its passage through time and space. Nevertheless, if it is wrong to assume that the source text is better or “more correct” than the target one, I disagree with the idea that the opposite is inherently true; in my view there is no need to propose such sort of value judgments; our task is not to invert dichotomies, but to prevent them from occurring in the first place. Original and translation are two versions of a same text, none of them is better, none of them is more faithful, they are simply distinct articulations of a literary discourse (there is Leacock’s construal of a novel, and my construal – and they operate through a dialogue, not as opponents). Perhaps what is to blame for the surfacing of this senseless idea that the process of time and space travel entailed by translation would result in an improvement of the text is an orthodox and disseminated, although mistaken, idea of evolution. Generally common sense addresses evolution as if it stood for a series of steps taking us from “simplicity” to “complexity”, from “weak” to “strong”, from “imperfection” to “perfection”, or from “primitive” to “modern/civilised”. What the theory of evolution alleges nonetheless is that everything in the globe goes more through adaptation than it goes through improvement – what survives does not survive because it is “better” or because it has supposedly “corrected” this or that fault, it survives because it adapted successfully within the context whereto it has gotten. Bridging the concepts of evolution and that of translation is not a farfetched proposal, but it cannot be done in a reckless manner. Literature evolves when it is translated not because it is improved or corrected, but because it provides the survival of “the fittest” narrative in a different space and time (the survival of that text which has adapted). Like a translation when compared to the original, we are neither better nor worse than our ancestors, we have not corrected their mistakes nor augmented them. We are different texts, nothing more, nothing less. I have endeavoured to establish this conceptual parallel between translation and evolution ina 2015 article entitled “Translation and evolution.”

Literature is never finished, it is a liquefied artefact, shaped when experienced (and every experience is unique, able to manipulate this liquefied meaning into the most diverging moulds). A story is invisible when the book is closed; stories do not exist if they are not read, such as they do not make sense if no one modifies them, and they die prematurely if they are not translated nor adapted. Literature, therefore, is alive, and it depends on our active participation to prevent such life from vanishing. Translation is then an embodiment and evidence of a mobility, actually rather natural for literature (no matter in what context, no matter in which language). We are always rewriting drafts and working on rougher sketches; and, within the arena of literary journey, translation is an objective interpretation and active manipulation of the interpreted information of a text. Still according to Kristal, “for Borges, therefore, translation from one language to another is a special case of rewriting a draft that does not differ, in principle, from the transformation of a text in the same language, from one dialect or one modality to another” (15).

Borges own experience as a translator informs us regarding his reflections on creative infidelity – not so much as a concrete theory, but as a way to conceive literature. “Borges would have few scruples about editing the original as he translated. A good translator [sic.], according to him, might choose to treat the original as a good writer treats a draft of a work in progress” (Kristal 2). An effective book is that book that is still waiting for us to finish it; literature is not about providing us with answers to our problems, but with more questions to problems we might not even know about yet. Theretofore, our part in the game is crucial, in the end this thesis in your hands only exists because you are reading it. Leacock’s *Sunshine sketches* would be understood, from such a perspective, as the draft that I am recurring to as to design my own draft, which is among the many other drafts that have been and that will be. This is to say that the translator is not a minor writer, nor that s/he is a major writer; there are no levels in the process of artistic creation, there are only “layers of difference” (which cannot be measured in terms of value or ranking). The author has done his job, I am here doing mine, and the translation depends on both of us. The one who translates is not a “minor” writer, and s/he is not a new writer: translators are other writers, writers that enter the game (that, thanks to the original, is already on), writers that ask the literary discourse to keep travelling from one place to another. It is all, again, about a perspective shift: to stop looking at author and translator as opponents, as what is old and what is new, as what came first and what came later, as the original and the copy. Author and translator would be more like partners; after all, every literary production is nothing but a “collective project” (Borges, *Inquisitions* 24).

In his PhD. thesis, about Borges’ translation of *Arabian Nights*, Marcelo Bueno de Paula avers that Borges has always paddled in the reverse direction of most recognised translation theories, mainly because, instead of using literature as an instance to provide his readers with ideas concerning translation, he decides to go the other way round (117).Translation, for Borges, is perhaps one of the most intense literary experiences, a singular path for us to really approach literature as insightfully as we should. Popping insights on creativity, co-authorship, and originality into the very plot of his stories, Borges develops, fictionally and aesthetically, an idea of translation that swerves pre-given trajectories, inferring translation means not to rewrite, but only to *keep writing*. As Leone puts it, coherent to that rationale, it was second nature to Borges that “one does not translate a text in its nascent state of original publication but in the context in which the translator currently exists, which includes the trajectory of the original up to that very point” (43). In this sense, regardless of how pertinent and stimulating it might be to become acquainted with as many features as possible in what concerns the original work in situ, it is the place wherein I find myself, the conditions whereby I translate, and the audience whereto my text is directed that exert direct influence in my “personal” task. Consciously or unconsciously, and notwithstanding what I might allege thereby, as a translator I am an agent who is constructed alongside *my* historical setting, and not the original one. There is, however, some room for conscious interference; and, therein, the translator is autonomous to, as s/he wishes, manipulate past and future, foreign and domestic.

Without obsolescence there would not be novelty – and the original is only a source for what is new and what is old to be defined as such, and defined by the translator.[21]The translator is, after all,

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[21] The point is: artistic autonomy depends on the autonomy given to the author, and such autonomy authors share with their respective translators. This occurs through a process of creative production (no matter how faithful or not the translator decides to define his/her choices thereby) that depends on an original draft for the concoction of another original draft – make no mistake, none of those texts are definitive whatsoever. Of course, for some it may seem to be rather clear and cliché to say creativity is something inherent to the process of translation – by now I am pretty sure such assertion consists in a common ground for those who scrutinise the intricate procedures implicated by literary textualisations and re-textualisations. Notwithstanding the unquestionable growth of TS, which compels researchers to devote the attention such field demands, members of academia do not yet agree when it goes to the extent of sovereignty represented by the

"someone who may use the information an original text provides creatively, constructing a text that adheres to the original to the degree she or he sees aesthetically necessary" (44). There is no universal rule compelling a text to be more or less "faithful" to the source language and author; what determines translators' choices is not only personal, but also subjective, impalpable and, more importantly, irrepressible. This is not, however, to say that translation is a reckless activity; authors, contexts, and publishing houses do play a comparably ethical role as a new version of a text is provided. But so it is in the case of the original. In this sense, it would be fair to say that Borges' "approach to literature legitimises translation as a valuable art form, a creative process that de-legitimises the notion of definitive texts, perfect ensembles of symbols upon which no variation, could be made" (Leone 179). That is basically what Borges seems to allege in his sui generis reflections and discussions within the realm of translation studies, and which particularly interests me. When the purpose of a translation project is to recreate laughter and to provide a text written more than a hundred years ago with an opportunity to keep breathing in another atmosphere, the challenge is even greater. It is not only relevant to understand the literary discourse as an inconclusive art form amenable to suffer variation, it is actually indispensable to be aware of such fact. Deviation is not simply possible, it is inevitable; because texts are not formed only by what words say, but by what surrounds these words. the discursive strength of humorous discourse, therefore, resides in the troposphere of meaning, under and above what is written on the surface of a text. To literature nothing is straightforward, linear, or plain.[22]

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translated text and manifested by those who translate it. Without ignoring such situation, I deem my translation an autonomous construction – and that does not mean at all that I disregard Leacock's original novel. *My* liberty is motivated by *my* personal project of generating a text capable of living up to *my* reading expectations – according to *my* reading ofthe original.

[22] If I now move back towards my object of analysis, it would be possible to say that, even though humour is about meanings, it is also very much about an effect: laughter. As such, humour goes beyond what is written and beyond what the written words might once have meant, in another context, in a different place. It is in this sense that Borges' concept of creative infidelity fits perfectly in my attempt at giving *Sunshine sketches* an opportunity to keep being laughable in my target context, as such concept gives translators the autonomy to be "infidel" – as long as such infidelity lives up to the creativity their text requires. Every literary translation requires a sort of creation, autonomy, and inspiration which is rather expected in the artistic realm; and it is unlikely that an author would be as compressed within so solid frontiers during his/her original textual manufacturing as the translator generally is. In this sense, if there is something that cannot be set aside during the translation of the sketches such thing is humour. The irony of Leacock's narrator and

Translation, on its turn, has a lot to do with this, as well. It is also about moving, changing, reducing, expanding, etc. (as well-known by Berman devotees). As it is pertinent to identify how ironic discourse manipulate language, as well as how some authors have a very specific way of writing, it is indeed also very interesting to look at how words, their order, meanings, and positions are changed in translation. But sometimes, depending on the way and the purpose, such activity proves to be inessential (at least given the way I myself understand literary translation in the first place). It simply *does not matter*. These processes of moving, changing, reducing, expanding… are all given names, labels, and are virtually condemned. However, blind to such verdicts, the deformative nature of translation is experienced vis-à-vis the deformative nature of the literary experience. Perhaps it is high time we stopped looking at translation as an attempt at "not losing so much" or an attempt at transforming "but not so much". A book cannot be translated *a little*; we need to translate it *a lot*. It is clear to me that the task of the translator is more to create than to maintain or reiterate; and translating is exerting our inexorable autonomy to produce the text we desire (based on our convictions) to see published in our target context. I myself aim at producing humour to my potential readers, but for me to set forth such attempt I need first to know how, in general terms, laughter emerges in the first place.

2.3. Playing with words

When we are born, communication and humour already prove to be two sides of the same coin. I mean it. Like adults, children experience humour as a step during their practising their interactive capacities and their putting thoughts together. "In doing so they come across pleasurable effects, which arise from a repetition of what is similar, a rediscovery of what is familiar, similarity of sound, etc., and which are to be explained as unsuspected economies in psychical expenditure" (83). The natural result of such experience is that children realise it is an enjoyable one; thus, "these pleasurable effects encourage children in the pursuit of play and cause them to continue it without regard for the meaning of words or the coherence of sentences". This brief analysis

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the laughter it causes, in the development of the plot, are not collateral damage, nor secondary effects: the fictional Mariposa does not exist if not in a humorous context. Literature, in this sense, is much more similar to humour than you might be thinking. Both are things that we often try to control, restrain, and regulate, but at the same time they only work if some uncontrolled and unforeseen release is effected. It is what escapes consciousness that touches us more strongly.

done by Freud identifies how language is important for some of the first humorous experiences of children, as he concludes that the “play with words and thoughts, motivated by certain pleasurable effects, would thus be the first stage of jokes” (84). Playing with words might be, in the end, one more opportunity for the playing with concepts to emerge. Learning this objective means to a subjective end, first we laugh; just to learn a posteriori how serious a joke can be, as well as how laughing can rid us of a grave condition. This verbal experience ends up consisting in an easier path to “conceptual nonsense” because “[w]e naturally do not perceive that our pleasure in a nonsense joke arises from our having succeeded in liberating a piece of nonsense in spite of its suppression; whereas we see directly that playing with words has given us pleasure” (Freud 89).

In Leacock’s novel, playing with words, making us laugh of the funny and nonsensical events taking place in the sketches, provides the narrator of the sketches an opportunity to transform the textual nonsense in conceptual nonsense. Textual nonsense needs also be conceptual, in this sense, otherwise readers would probably be unable to laugh at it. “The nonsense that still remains in a conceptual joke acquires secondarily the function of increasing our attention by bewildering us”. Therefore, the joker ends up “intensifying the effect of the joke; but only when it acts obtrusively, so that the bewilderment can hurry ahead of the understanding by a perceptible moment of time” (90). In the case of literature, acting obtrusively, the effects of joke are generally accompanied by other, more ambitious, desires; as it happens in every other literary context, each textual stance is based on the assumption that certain feelings shall be triggered in the reader experience. This last aspect is also true when it goes to humorous writing, whose nature cannot be conceptualised through Cartesian categories of triggered emotions inasmuch as the joke depends on the advent of some feelings and on the setting aside of others. “The species of humour are extraordinarily variegated according to the nature of the emotion which is economised in favour of the humour: pity, anger, pain, tenderness, and so on” (Freud 91). What is in this sense perhaps one of the most fascinating facets of this humorous interaction between subjects is the vast array of manners laughter finds for surfacing: the panoply of emotions involved with the process of laughing.

Freud avers, still, that the kingdom of humour is constantly being enlarged “whenever an artist or writer succeeds in submitting some hitherto unconquered emotions to the control of humour, in making them, by devices like those in the examples we have given, into sources of humorous pleasure" (152). Notwithstanding this broad environment wherein humorous pleasure operates, later Freud would define how humour can be manifested as determined by two primordial peculiarities associated with the conditions whereby it is generated. "Humour may, in the first place, appear merged with a joke or some other species of the comic; in that case its task is to get rid of a possibility implicit in the situation that an affect may be generated which would interfere with the pleasurable outcome". In the second place, he continues, humour "may stop this generating of an affect entirely or only partially; this last is actually the commoner case since it is easier to bring about, and it produces the various forms of 'broken' humour – the humour that smiles through tears" (Freud 153). Freud's idea of broken humour raises a very important point: that of readers' constructed empathy and compassion with the described characters and (even comic) events, which, in Leacock's case, seems to me something vital to the development of the plot. Freud would conclude that the humorous pleasure derived from sympathy "originates from a peculiar technique comparable to displacement, by means of which the release of affect that is already in preparation is disappointed and the cathexis diverted on to something else, often on to something of secondary importance" (154). The sympathy allied to humorous pleasure entails the process of displacement; readers are displaced from their initial position as to be ultimately placed within the text, as well as the textual information being displaced from the book pages as for it to be placed within the readers' minds – all this occurring due to readers' cathexis experience with the literary text.

From psychoanalysis, cathexis means "the conscious or unconscious attachment of emotional feeling and importance to a specific idea, person, or object",[23] which also proves to be a crucial element of literary experience. In the case of the sketches, the emergence of sympathy (whose features operate in parallel with the notion of displacement) is only possible due to the several stances of humour, to the idiosyncratic experiences it provides to the reader. As readers open the book, a new journey begins (for both) as they go through a personal process of emotional *displacement* and *replacement*resulting in the vicarious thrills of literature. Because our mind and body are transferred to the text, we get these vicarious thrills out of the simple act of reading (as if we were living those adventures in loco). As characters are described and events narrated we feel gradually inserted therein; reading becomes a solid experience because, for a few minutes or hours, the world that surrounds us loses palpability and the one in the book pages become much more palpable. The "real world" goes to the second plan, and fantasy becomes sovereign. That is the power of our imagination: thinking of things makes them real, as well as forgetting them makes them disappear. In order to understand literature, we must live it and breathe it (knowing the literary language and structure is only part of this project, but far from being enough when it goes to the literary phenomena as a whole). Phenomena which, in Leacock's novel, is important not only for readers to laugh, but for them to ask themselves why and what about they are laughing. Emotions are constructed, and humour helps one to look at how they have been constructed since it provides tools for such constructions to be tore down. Eventually displaced, readers are invited to exchange positions with the characters, and, thereby, both shall be transformed – forever. After entering another story, going back to our own is never the same thing.

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[23] Mosby's Dictionary of Medicine, 9th ed. Canada: Elsevier (308)

In the case of *Sunshine sketches*, throughout the narrator's descriptions of the town and its inhabitants, humour gradually builds up our views on what is going one therein. Theretofore, one of the most persistent characteristic of Leacock's humour is the exaggerated utterances of the narrator. Thomas Veatch poses that, in humorous writing, an "unremarkable quirk of an individual may be exaggerated so that in its exaggerated form it is a violation of norms of personal behaviour or appearance; in this way, exaggeration has a role in construction of humorous situations by generating violations of the moral order" (203). That is exactly what occurs in Leacock's narrative, whereby exaggeration operates often as a violation of social norms aiming at shaping the humorous situations of a deviating and singular moral order. Defined in *The Oxford anthology of Canadian literature* (1973) as having a "gift for controlled exaggeration and an inspired sense of the incongruous" (Weaver 274), Leacock builds a narrator whose overestimation concerning Mariposa and its inhabitants does indeed violate moral order through this controlled exaggeration and sense of incongruity. It is aslo true, nevertheless, that "[i]f we could never provide independent evidence about the relationships between affective attachments of individuals and their humour perceptions, then the argument would be circular and meaningless" (Veatch 170).

Given my proposal of translating the sketches, perhaps what makes the humorous experience of exaggeration such an interesting one is the fact that individuals perceptions regarding it cannot be generalised, especially considering the temporal and spatial abyss separating target and source contexts. This does not mean Leacock's exaggeration would no longer work in my translated text; but that it shall probably work differently – a difference that, on its turn, also varies depending on time, space, and individualities of the subjects who embark on the reading of the narrative. Just as what is an exaggeration in the source context might not be considered as such in the target one, the contrary is also true; that is, my translated text is liable to comprehend other sorts of exaggerations that, for the source context, had no exaggerated aspects. This is indeed an appealing field of inquiry, inasmuch as, when dealing with the literary experience one may "compare different individuals whose moral commitments may be independently established, or one may compare the same individuals' reactions at different times, reflecting increased distance and decreased emotional involvement with the violation in the Situation" (Veatch 171). The mentioned vicarious thrills of literature already depend on a violation of the situation, as the narrative invites us to set our lives aside and start living different ones for a moment. Haven't you ever felt that itch to get rid of your identity and live the life of another? Literature invites you to do just that.

This idea of reading is among those that debunk the classic relationship of one-directional system (whereby the text is seen as the single source of meaning and the reader only the passive recipient of such meanings). Readers reconstruct the subjects that are characterised within a narrative, but such narrative also reconstructs readers by providing them with such characterisations. I say "*re*construction" because it is a subjective and abstract endless circle, or, better, a spiral – since both stories, of characters and readers, are altered in the process, never returning to the place wherefrom they had initially departed before experienced one another. More specifically: the author imagines a character, describes such character, who is then turned into something else by each reader, whose personality gets irreversibly affected by the experience of reading. Such experience implies "a complex interplay of motive forces is envisaged, a configuration of possible events, a complete dynamism of structure" (Eco 57). Concreteness gives way to fluidity; stable configurations are exchanged by the instability of subjective dynamism and, consequently, the reader becomes what s/he has always been: a chief element for the literary content to materialise.

My proposal to translate Leacock's novel, in this sense, accepts the complete dynamism of literary structure, since the way I, as a reader, experience such interplay of motive forces and configure the possible events of my own version of the sketches is as unique as it would be for any other reader. Even if that were not my plan, literature is and shall always be a dynamic experience: it changes regardless of authors, readers, and translators' opinions. No worries, contrary to a real building, the more concrete and methodised a narrative is, the less it might be capable of standing up. In the words of Eco, we are actually living a time when things are not as concrete as they have once been. In academia, however, "[t]he notion of possibility reflects a widespread tendency: the discarding of a static, syllogistic view of order, a corresponding devolution of intellectual authority to personal decision, choice, and social context" (58). Likewise, the authority of the translated text is in parallel with the authority of the source one; since it is not fidelity to a never-reaching origin but deference given the social context which guides the personal decisions of both the readers and, primordially, of the translator him/herself. Having said that, such authority cannot be imposed, but only aesthetically suggested. For the reader to listen to the literary text, s/he must still believe it has something to say; if a text is already given as a concrete, finished, and tangible experience why would any reader be invited to go through such experience? The reader is needed because s/he is what brings the text into life; texts only survive if they are written, translated, shared, and *read*. The literary experience, as such, is never complete – and that is exactly what makes such experience so compelling. One translates because the work is still in progress; after all, if books were finished, we would never need to read them in the first place.

2.4. In need of an echo: The challenge of translating humour

My last topic then takes us back to Borges' view on the fact that there is no beginning or end in the trajectories designed by literary discourses; his creative infidelity invites us to get in the journey aware that we are moving in media res, from and towards nowhere specific. Within such discursive frame, the translator is summoned to guide his/her readers to the direction he "deems" convenient; and, in what concerns Leacock's novel, if readers are still laughing that is even better (regardless of what I had to do theretofore). Causing laughter is conversely no easy task; translating such laughter, on its turn, seems to be an even harder one. A necessary premise, at least given the path we have taken so far, is to raise one's awareness to the features shared by individuals involved in the process. That is, humour does not operate in solitude; we are contextually programmed to find this or that discourse laughable, and, if the original text takes that into account, it is obvious that the same goes to its translation. “You would hardly appreciate the comic if you felt yourself isolated from others. Laughter appears to stand in need of an echo – listen to it carefully: it is not an articulate, clear, well-defined sound” (Bergson 10).[24] The comic is, on the contrary, actually something “prolonged by reverberating from one to another, something beginning with a crash, to continue in successive rumblings, like thunder in a mountain” (11). Even though it is caused by a particular meteorological event, storms never occur with a single drop of water; that is, notwithstanding the fact that an individual as Leacock's narrator is capable of invoking a humorous narrative, such narrative only allows laughter to emerge because it gets its reverberations to a bulky recipient. “Still, this reverberation cannot go on forever. It can travel within as wide a circle as you please: the circle remains, nonetheless, a closed one. Our laughter is always the laughter of a group” (12).

Given the array of possibilities literary translation provides us with, being knowledgeable of the fact that our laughter is always the laughter of a group is already an arena wherefrom the translator might set off. Reverberation does exist, but it is limited to the frontiers of readers’ response; this is to say that, no matter how varied my choices might be (if one endorses creative infidelity as the main locus for deploying discourses), there are abstract limits: the boundaries of meaning/effect making. Every discourse has a cause and an effect, which need to be consonant to the degree that even its dissonance must be coherent, when it happens to take place. “The lack of proportion between cause and effect, whether appearing in one or in the other, is never the direct source of laughter; what we do laugh at is something that this lack of proportion may in certain cases disclose” (Bergson 44). Sometimes we laugh of things especially because they do not make sense. However, even when they do not make sense, this absence of sense is also conditioned, to some degree, to a sort of cause and effect linearity reversal. It is a sensible senselessness. Within this cause and effect linearity things are not as objective as one may think. Bergson affirms that what we laugh at, when we do, is the particular mechanical arrangement that humour reveals to us, "as through a glass, at the back of the series of effects and causes; disregard this arrangement, and you let go the only clue capable of guiding you through the labyrinth of the comic" (45).

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[24] The idea of listening makes me think of music, whose world is one of unfading compositions. Experiencing literature is analogous to experiencing such compositions, as if in a live presentation that happens to be recorded. The music we heard and whose performance we watched was first written and documented, and then it was taped and recorded. It is, therefore, eternalised, amenable to be repeated as many times as possible by any other person. But the event we have been to, that specific presentation, shall never be duplicated, for a song is never played in the same way it has been in other occasions. Reading a book is likewise a singular activity, a unique opportunity to live an experience that shall never be revisited nor stolen. Both the song and book, after written, only keep existing in the echoes of consecutive performances, or as reverberations that might linger in the minds of those who, one way or another, have managed “to be there”. So lucky are the ones who have been to an excelling concert, such as the ones who have read a matchless story.

The social arrangements made fun of by Leacock's narrative is what provides us with the tools necessary to walk through the labyrinth of the comic; and laughter is what discloses the most ridiculous features of such arrangements – features that would go undiscovered otherwise. "[B]y laughter, society avenges itself for the liberties taken with it. It would fail in its object if it bore the stamp of sympathy or kindness" (91). In everything that we do there is a façade of seriousness, but the trees of human solemnity produce a shade of humorous details, and it is by changing our gaze from tree to shade that we might finally be able to plant more *fruit*ful seeds. "Laughterindicates a slight revolt on the surface of social life. It instantly adopts the changing forms of the disturbance. It, also, is a froth with a saline base. Like froth, it sparkles. It is gaiety itself" (Bergson 92). If there cannot be a total lack of proportion between cause and effect in the production of laughter, even though there is a revolt on the surface of social life, this is a slight revolt. Addressing humour is as complex as understanding it, let alone to produce it – which, no matter how demanding, is an inevitable task of my translation. There is not, howbeit, just one way to tell a joke. The literary translation of humour, thereby, is summoned to provide new changing forms of disturbance, to alter the necessary meanings for the necessary effects to surface. Once "laughter had come to have beneficial physiological effects, new vistas would be opened for the 'entertainer' who could raise his own status by creating both the social and the physiological effects in situations in which they would otherwise not occur" (257).

If that were the case the comic would, to a certain degree, serve as an armour that covers and protects the intents of this entertainer, whose project is carried out not *besides* laughter but *because* of it. It is rather unusual for one to laugh by or due to oneself; the laughter of one is generally the laughter of many, which highlights again the social aspect of humour. This social aspect, it is worth saying, has always been there, no matter how complex or simple the operation of the comic is in a given time and place. What I mean here is that, regardless of how multifaceted and complex human language has become, it is also still pretty much instinctive: many of our utterances and responses, no matter how intricate, are, at least to me, still simply motivated by "nature". Among these utterances and responses humour emerges as an instance that makes us look at others and ourselves differently, always socially rather than individually. Nevertheless, and notwithstanding the fact that laughing occurred first as a result of physical events "like tickling, which also has social significance, and which occurs in chimpanzees as well as in humans […], today laughter among humans probably occurs most frequently during social communication without physical contact" (Alexander 259). Humour has been playing its role throughout the evolution of human species; and, if the channels whereby it operates have changed dramatically thereby, the effects it produces are still virtually analogous. Writing and/or rewriting the comic does not mean simply tackling with the rather complex structures of meanings and meaning effects; it also means handling with instincts, with the bare structures of our most primitive behaviours.

Throughout our development, we have for long carried with us something of the tragic and something of the comic, which grows in complexity as do our societies. Curiously, and regardless of the fact that laughter does not really consist in an arena whereto our intellectual attention is consistently directed, "[a]t the early stages of pre-class and pre-political social order it seems that the serious and the comic aspects of the world and of the deity were equally sacred, equally 'official'. This similarity was preserved in rituals of a later period of history" (*Rabelais* 6). As a primitive feature of social organisations, it is true that, once upon a time, there was no division between the comic and the tragic in terms of sacredness and of approval, as there was also no minor and no major effect in the rituals concocted and set forth thereby. Discourses producing laughter would be given as much credit as those that produced tears; both effects are intense, and none belonged to a less or more elevated status in the unnecessary hierarchy of human communication. "In the definitely consolidated state and class structure such an equality of the two aspects became impossible. All the comic forms were transferred, some earlier and others later, to a nonofficial level"(Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 7). It is within this non-official level that Leacock's novel is situated, and, by the time he has written it, he was probably rather aware of that; in this sense his deployment of an unofficial discourse as to make his readers reflect upon matters that are generally taken as the raw material of official communication channels is rather original.[25]

Linguistic back channels – its non-official layers – might be numberless, and detecting them might not be such an easy task, especially in the case of humorous discourse. “Humour is often hard to spot and difficult to interpret. Even within the contemporary world, where humourist and audience share cultural assumptions, humour is often missed or misunderstood or otherwise problematic” (9). If it is easy to spot the misunderstanding of humorous discourse when it is produced, interpreted, and retransmitted in situ, how about that sort of humour that, hoping to work elsewhere, tries to travel in space and time? In Wilcox words, detecting humour in an older literature, especially if emerging from rather distant sources, “is a far greater challenge, but rising to that challenge has significant appeal”. The comic, in this sense, would surface as a manufacturer and slayer of paradigms; making out what it means and rephrasing it to another audience consist in a challenge of unlimited proportions for, when such paradigms happen to change, it becomes difficult not only to reshape them, but actually even to spot such paradigms in advance. Furthermore, “[u]nderstanding how a paradigm has been broken requires an understanding of the paradigm in the first place; appreciating incongruity first necessitates an appreciation of congruity” (Wilcox 10). Congruity and incongruity are nonetheless far from encapsulating universal features; these are words whose definition change depending on their time and space constraints; and, if humour operates also within such constraints, translating the comic is also about making the congruous incongruous and the incongruous congruous, whenever needed.

What this means is that, given the distance and parallels evoked when one reads Leacock’s narrative (in terms of social resemblance with and/or detachment from one’s context) some humorous issues might keep working and others might not. It is up to the translator to try making out when these issues do not work and why as to recreate them, autonomously, at any moment that s/he deems such humour applicable (that might not have been available when the original work was written). So, if reading is about looking through the words as to detect their effects, translating is about going beyond such words as to recreate these effects. That is not to say whatsoever that even though meanings might not be attained in the translation their effects would; the impossibility goes both ways in terms of maintenance of the original. Such effects, however, might be reclaimed and harnessed to operate differently, in a diverse fashion, following a dissimilar direction whenever "required". Linguistic barriers are seemingly all-encompassing and in some occasions (such as poetry, if you will) they seem to become even harder to be trespassed than normally. "Humour, in particular, is a notoriously difficult thing to translate across linguistic barriers. Not just differences in language, but also incommensurate conceptual systems or psychological assumptions can cause a joke to fall flat" (4). Every joke that surfaces from the pages of a text is, to some extent, an in-joke; as such, it sets forward an obstacle for re-textualisations in contexts external to the source one. "Who has not had the experience of trying to explain an in-joke to someone who comes from outside the group and so lacks the cultural competence that makes effortless communication possible?" (Wilcox,14).

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[25] As a scholar himself, it would be fair to say Leacock mastered the official discourses wherefrom humour had once been taken; he had all conditions to shape a narrative no one would laugh at (his non-fictional works are an evidence of that), one to be taken seriously, and he has consciously decided to do the very opposite. Effectiveness and seriousness are, in the end, not synonymic.

Wilcox's comparison is pertinent for, in many occasions, the endeavour to translate humour is analogous to one's attempt at explaining an in-joke to someone else who has just arrived and who lacks contextual competence to make out what such joke means. Leacock's text is per se an in-joke, inasmuch as it was written *in* the early XX century Canada *to* the early XX century Canada. My translation is indeed an attempt at explaining such in-joke to someone who just arrived: you. This, fortunately for the translator, does not mean at all that in situ jokes are liable to mean the same to every generation that might get in touch with it; it is not only space shifts, but also the shifts of time that change the conditions pertaining to humour. As a matter of fact, "[h]umour is to some considerable extent culturally determined and subject to change" (Wilcox 33). Even though the translator's task is that of effectively and objectively adapting the text, changing it so that the comic experience might also emerge in the target context, such changes have always occurred, as actively and intensely. That is, if one agrees with the common sense argument that texts depend on the reader, that their meanings might change when they are digested by distinct minds, even the original text becomes fluid. Who has never told a joke to a group of friends and had the most varied responses emerging therefrom? Some might cachinnate, others force a smile, and some might be unable to get the point of the joke. Fact is: sometimes what is funny to me might not be funny to you, no matter how culturally involved we may be with one another.

The influence of context occurs not because it imposes what we feel, nor are we capable of feeling despite of context: it occurs through interaction, through our reaction towards things that are there to everyone, but which no one experience correspondingly. As a result, regardless of how humour is connected to the original context wherefrom it emerges, it is also an original approach on the issues that it might cover. The context is vital, its influence is undeniable, but what determines the comic is the text plus reader experience itself. Farfetched as it may seem, literary translators tackle with the development of a fictional narrative that gradually constructs a diverse reality – a world per se, one that exists within a context, but gives a specific shape to another: a sui generis contribution. The world of fiction is a world in itself, its characters are not an exact reflection of those they might represent; these characters are a deformed mirror, one that provides us with an image that reflects nothing besides itself: a metareflection. When humour emerges, for it to be encountered, grasped, and recreated by the translator what must be accessed is not the reality represented within such image, but the elusive pretenses that are inherent to it.

To fathom the motives of humour, however, one must first be, to a great extent, familiar with it; even though the comic operates by itself, it only does so as it dialogues with those artefacts that encircle it. This required "[i]ntimacy is possible only insofar as critical thought becomes the thought criticised, insofar as it succeeds in re-feeling, re-thinking, re-imagining that thought from the inside; nothing could be less objective than such a movement of the mind" (15). Translation, by definition, is an intimate dialogue of one text with another. Intimacy, nevertheless, is not analogous to subordination, or to recklessness. Within such rapport, no meanings are imposed; they are shared, apprehended, and, ultimately, reworked. "The meaning of a work is not conceived through a series of intellectual operations; it is relieved, 'taken up again' as a message that is both old and forever renewed" (Genette, *Figures* 16). Translating is, then, taking up again a message that the original text had already taken up from another source; if the context wherein the source text finds itself plays a central role for humour to operate effectively, the context whereto such text is guided does not stay behind. The process whereby translation is effected has nonetheless nothing to do with bringing the reader closer to the author or vice versa; it is not about diminishing or enhancing distances, but about creating new geographies of meaning and new paths for us to get there. Source context, target context, and the line separating them are three artificial measures that we ourselves have invented; and it is high time we stopped taking them for granted.[26]

Moreover, a translation devoted to the effects “to the detriment of meaning” (even though both move around hand in hand) might entail the process of providing the text with a higher level of resilience amongst “discrete realities”. All fictional texts, however, require a specific attitude towards the meanings it conveys, which is that of dodging reality as for a chimerical communication (chimerical, but not less robust than that which is deemed authentic) to occur. “The highest efficacy of literature rests on a subtle play between expectation and surprise against which all the expectation in the world cannot prevail, between the verisimilitude expected and desired by the public and the unpredictability of creation” (Genette, *Figures* 17). This subtle play between expectation and surprise is analogous to the subtle plays between cause and effect, between the congruous and incongruous. Humour is, in the end, about reverting what is presumed, about making fun of the basic premises of our understanding, about laughing at solemnity and ridiculing the façade of the social sobersided character supposedly inherent to human civilisation. We, individuals, are amenable to be ridiculed – our actions have made that possible. Humour is simply doing what is there to be done.

With that in mind, Genette reminds us of something Borges had already implied: “The great poet is not so much an inventor as a discoverer” (*Figures* 17). Author, humourist, and translator are there more to discover than to invent (notwithstanding the bond uniting both); and translating Leacock’s narrative is like making use of his humorous ingredients to come up with a different recipe: the resulting meal is inevitably dissimilar, but still tasteful, I hope, or at least edible, as a last resort.It is true that thinking about a meal as related to translation might sound as another absurd comparison (as many other metaphors in this thesis), but it serves us well to recollect the performative character of literary discourse when it goes to the presence/maintenance of humour. The idea of eating reminds us that I am also talking about human body; humour is a corporeal property, and here I mean that the emergence of laughter results from much more than transparent appreciation. Laughter is a tricky thing, and it requires both our intellectual and emotional responses; it needs our mind and the members it controls to function accordingly. “In the comic moment, head and body function together” (14). There is no way to privilege one of these two instances to the detriment of another. That is, in Leacock's narrative, at the same time that humour needs our most intricate linguistic competences to be set in motion, it also asks us to allow the materialisation of our most primitive instincts; it is as if it were inviting us to stop being so serious and become as dumb as we can be. “Once that time is past – the body dropped away, dematerialized – humour, its head, is done, gone. Meaning is decapitated. The comic is sustained in the life-blood of the now, like dream, the theatre, and any other metaphor” (Baum 114).

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[26] If translation is about liquefying spaces and expanding contextual borders, I do not know why sometimes we get so obsessed about spatial constraints when theorising upon our activity. Readers can never be taken to the author, and the author can never be taken to the reader, they are all unattainable instances whose geography does not exist in objective terms. Literature, translated or not, is not a bus station. More important than privileging one or another, I need to privilege the literary and humorous effects of my text as a continuity, and that is my focus.

Translating, like dismembering, might indeed cause some collateral damages; but I am willing to provide the narrative with new members, not better nor worse, but simply as original as possible. Nothing can pass unnoticed by the translating eye of the observer; gazing in wonder at the comic discourse one is able to capture, as a mirror, some of the images such discourse reflects (images meaningful to themselves and by themselves, no matter how outermost and alluring the references of such images might be). The mirror is meaningful, in the end, due to the concrete object that faces it and the abstract one that it produces. Like literature and humour reflect the world wherein they have been generated, the mirror image is also responsible for creating another world – one whose mysteries the readers are invited to discover. It is a twofold relationship. The comic discourse turns toward us such as “an object splits our position – being a centre of experience, being an absolute observer – at least in two halves” (Horton 170). Aware of this dual condition (as located between what is said and what is left unsaid), inherent to the humorous discourse, I finish this topic highlighting the importance of acknowledging the locale of the novel's reader (Leacock’s or mine) as its centre of experience and absolute observer for devising a scrupulous and attentive analysis and translation project regarding the narrative. In this sense, it goes without saying that humour is of paramount importance for the literary discourse of my object of analysis to keep breathing in the Brazilian context. Creative infidelity is the channel whereby I might reclaim the right to keep alongside the sketches ironic tone, no matter the extent whereto I shall end up manipulating the source text. For Leacock's narrator to enthral my reader as s/he endeavours to do in the original text, my version of him/her also needs to entice such reader, to draw his/her attention to the unusual process of narration developed thereby. One way or another, the absolute observer is now the translator. So come with me to see what we can find.

CHAPTER III – LITERARY ANALYSIS OF THE SKETCHES “READING BENEATH THE PLUM BLOSSOMS”

> *E la mia immagine che voglio moltiplicare, ma non per narcisismo o megalomania come si potrebbe troppo facilmente credere: al contrario, per nascondere, in mezzo a tanti fantasmi illusori di me stesso, il vero io che li fa muovere. Per questo, se non temessi d'essere frainteso, non avrei nulla in contrario a ricostruire a casa mia la stanza interamente foderata di specchi, dentro la quale mi vedrei camminare sul soffitto a testa in giù e volare verso l'alto dalle profondità del pavimento.*
> (Italo Calvino 1979)

3. Mariposa: Getting on the train to the little town in the sunshine

The novel wherefrom this chapter’s epigraph was taken is one that serves to Italo Calvino as the laboratory for him to elaborate on a specific element of the narrative, which particularly interests him: the incipit. Such element also proves to be of paramount importance for guiding Leacock’s sketches, as the scenes taking place therein are much more feisty for the way they begin rather than for their denouement (when it happens). Besides, in his/her endeavour to universalise Mariposa, the narrator also tries to multiply its “real” images as for us to learn about the town by comparing it to all others that are, in his/her view, just equal to it. As the nonsensical and illusory images of Mariposa are reflected by the mirror of his/her narrating gaze (a gaze which is pivotal for us to experience reality in the singular way bestowed by literature), we get the meanings that were hidden beneath its absurdities. Leacock’s narrator could also be seen as if s/he were in a room filled in with mirrors; and, therefrom, s/he invites our spirits/minds to soar, taking off from beneath the deep pavement of our existences. *If on a winter's night a traveller* is, amongst other things, a fictional essay about the “beginning”; so, besides this analogy, the way I start my own analysis of Leacock’s novel is also expressive. Therefore, as the onset of such analysis, I deem essential to address the issue of the sketches’ setting, which is much more than the mere background where actions occur. I dare say, actually, that Mariposa, the fictional town where everything – including itself – happens, could be taken as the cornerstone of the narrative: its main character.

Since the beginning of the story, since actually its first sentence (which works, by the way, as a summary for every following sentence), that seems to be rather clear: "I don't know whether you know Mariposa. If not, it is of no consequence, for if you know Canada at all, you are probably well acquainted with a dozen towns just like it" (*Sketches* 5). We do not know what s/he knows about the place we shall now meet. That is the incipit, the verisimilar deal, and the basis for everything we must followingly learn. Making an incipit pact with us, readers (the mysterious "you"), the narrator expresses his/her intention of introducing Mariposa by explaining the town in what seems to be an informal, spontaneous, conversation. We do not know yet that all the narration occurs while s/he is sitting right by our side in the train to Mariposa (alas! Sorry for the spoiler); but here it is almost as if s/he (the mysterious "I") were a tour guide who agrees to walk through the corners of this town, which happens to be just like a dozen of other towns within Canada. Afterwards, the narrator starts describing the city and allowing readers to, gradually, imagine the setting of this region wherein s/he is about to set forth some adventures; each sketch provides us with another detail and part of the town, progressively making us able to construct the whole town by the end of the narrative. This is done not in a very neutral fashion, to say the least, for the narrator's biased agenda is very clear to the reader: all those things that metropolitan life and hegemonic landmarks embody are much less admirable than what Mariposa stands for.

Notwithstanding how provincial the values of Mariposa seem to be to the narrator, and s/he implies that rather often given his/her attempt at describing it as metropolis, s/he pretends to see no difference between the distant cosmopolitan life and the local, more rural, one. As a matter of fact, at such ambivalence the narrator looks ironically: "Mariposans are proud of the trains, even though they never stop in the town's station" (Leacock, *Sketches* 277). There is, perhaps, no better moment in the narrative when the illusion of fixity facing unending transition is more allegorically treated than in what concerns the novel's train station. The richness of such metaphor lies in the fact that the train station can be read as what marks the transition from small to big, from rural to urban, from town to city, from past to future. It is the symbol of this space and time travel that is, regrettably (or not), observed by Mariposans only from the outside. It is, however, the *idea* that makes them proud; they know the trains are an icon of civilisation, of growth, and, even though such trains only pass through the town without ever stopping by, their passage is per se enough for Mariposans to praise their symbolic participation in the history of Mariposa. The train passes, changes, interchanges, and then it shall return, in a round movement.

Mariposa is flat, it is temporally and spatially lost, it is not amenable to "movement". Curiously, by the end of the narrative, we find out that we, readers, are also inside a train; a train about to get to Mariposa – by then, it seems, they shall finally stop by. Being proud of trains that never stop in one's station might look, nonetheless, just as an idle joke which aims at ridiculing those who have such feeling, but, as a metaphor to the landmarks of development, it is actually far from being simply that.

The past, which was so valuable for people like Mariposans, must, necessarily, be brought to modernity for the present to follow the "right path". To put it differently, the train station represents a "future" that unavoidably banalises the past – and, in the sketches, the ironic tone of his narrator makes Leacock's positioning perhaps even more effective and operational in terms of impact. This is the sort of political discussion that the parodist, through the use of irony, brings to the literary arena. The ironic discourse "moves us into the area of 'law' or 'justice' (the 'necessity' or 'inevitability' of the *lex talionis*) that involves matters of form in art (as form affects anticipation and fulfilment) and matters of prophecy and prediction in history" (Burke 425). A dialectic approach towards the narrator's irony, in this sense, is indeed encompassed by this atmosphere of anticipation and fulfilment, which makes this literary piece very symbolic in terms of prophecy and prediction not only regarding the aesthetics of literary storytelling,[27] but also in terms of the very developments in history. In fact, “there is a level of generalization at which predictions about ‘inevitable’ developments in history are justified. One may state with confidence, for instance, that what arose in time must fall in time (hence, that any given structure of society must ‘inevitably’ perish)” (Burke 429).

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[27] Concerning such aesthetics, and apropos the sketches' ironic narrator, it is true that, when it goes to readers' prior experiences with other novels and main characters, his/her seemingly paradoxical diegetic construction as a plane but also rather tempestuous character might not sound very familiar. Moreover, the narration is confusing, distressing; the narrator "talks to us" in an infrequent manner, eventually unsettling our previously comfortable positions as mere receptacles for what s/he is saying. More specifically, given our Western literary tradition, we tend to expect characters to follow a rather linear development – usually surfacing from a certain status quo, going through an inner discovery/transformation, and learning something with the process by the end of the narrative. Leacock's narrator nonetheless often fails to follow the rectilinear path of the story, taking shortcuts more often than not, and does not seem to be coveting any sort of personal metamorphosis either. Yet, within theatre, there is nothing new to this sort of character treatment; as a matter of fact, the narrator shares many attributes with a rather conventional dramatic figure: that of the Shakespearean fool. To illustrate their resemblance, one could think of at least three qualities of the fool that I also see in Leacock's narrator. 1) The fool's atavistic agency, in the "contradiction and unity of fantasy and realism, myth and knowledge, and social criticism and utopian prophecy", enhances the confusion of veracity levels. Eventually, during his/her (under)development, interlocutors (in this case the audience) shall find it difficult to situate this character within the fictional space and time of the play, as well as to judge if what s/he might be saying is part of the rehearsed script or a "real" and impulsive speech indeed specifically addressed to them. As does the narrator of the sketches, the fool "retains the capacity both

Through his/her ironic perception, this biased narrator describes the town s/he wants us to imagine,[28] and this is what grants the status of

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to enchant and disenchant. He can neutralise myth and ritual through the unmasking and debunking potential of mimesis, through his parody, criticism, or cynicism”. On the other hand, the fool also generates “a ritual dimension through the fantasy and madness of his topsy-turvydom, or through his inversion of values and the transformation of reality into something strange, sad, or comical” (Weimann 34). 2) Besides their inclination to break down through the fourth wall separating the world enacted and the world that “receives” the action (demanding a response), both my narrator and the fool do so mainly through laughter, which emerges as an endeavour for them to conjure and renew audience contact. The verisimilar relationship text-reader/play-audience is synonymic here, and what Leacock’s narrator and the Shakespearean fool do to rearrange such relationship is likewise. Moreover, if “the fool’s joke is harmless enough, but still it retains a kind of subversive function”, in the sketches humour is developed in a rather similar direction. Disrespecting social rules, hierarchies, and etiquette, “irreverence becomes the method, and disrespect the principle of the fool’s comic inversion” (Weimann 36). This subversive behaviour is present in the novel not only when the narrator prevents the story from moving on smoothly (just for him/her to go back or forward as s/he wishes), but also when s/he interacts with the reader, apologetically, melodramatically, or belligerently (his/her tone depends on what s/he is willing to get from us at that given moment). 3) The tendency to ignore the invisible fourth wall, foundational for the fool and the narrator, eventually takes us to the third and last feature that I think is worth mentioning: their ability to step onto the grounds of another discursive dimension. Mostly, they do so in order to appraise the fictional events from the outside, as if they were closer to us than to the story whence they have surfaced in the first place. “For a moment, the plot is comically evaluated from the fool’s point of view” (37) – and, in the novel, this means we shall often ask ourselves: “Is the narrator describing the town to us or also reading it as we are?” Displacement works as a device, allowing both fool and narrator to be more spontaneous than the other characters, oblivious to the rules of the game and disregarding the frontiers of the diegesis whereto they only belong when they fancy. If the Shakespearean fool gives us the impression that the play’s production, rehearsal, and performance cannot be conceived in a straightforward fashion, Leacock’s narrator convinces us that we are reading the novel at the very same time as it is being written. After all, “the comical, clowning, scurrilous position derives its effect from the tension between the mythical world and the actual post-ritual community of the audience” (Weimann 38).

[28] The descriptionsresemble our Brazilian “*crônica*”, which stands for a genre lacking an English equivalent (having “personal essay” as perhaps its closest relative). Generally associated with legends and/or historical records in English, “chronicles” are more often used in South America to refer to a brief narrative, usually within newspapers, encompassing the observations of an author/narrator about daily issues such as culture, history, and politics. In thematic, temporal, and spatial terms, the development is rather

peripety to his/her literary logic. “As an over-all ironic formula here, one that has the quality of ‘inevitability’, we could lay it down that ‘what goes fourth as A returns as non-A’. This is the basic pattern that places the essence o drama and dialectic in the irony of the ‘peripety’, the strategic moment of reversal” (Burke 433). This is why it is so relevant to observe that, recurrently, those events narrated are not coherent with what the narrator seems to believe; what happens is contrary to his/her impressions. This is indeed a very symptomatic technique of ironical reversal: that which goes fourth as A, that is, as how the narrator understands, returns as non-A, that is, the very opposite, an attestation of incoherence. This technique is not only interesting in terms of characterisation, but also given the hegemonic master narrative of Mariposa’s path from “town” into “city”. When the narrator reflects upon trains and the railway system constructed in the town, and tries to reveal (through evidence) how well they serve the interests of Mariposa, such discussion is opened. How many characters who, like the narrator him/herself, defend this “developmentalist metamorphosis” are given a real chance to reap the fruits of their hard labour to that end?

> [Mariposa] is a thriving town and *there is no doubt of it. Even the transcontinental railways,* as any townsman will tell you, *run through Mariposa. It is true that the trains mostly go through at night and don't stop.* [emphasis added][29] But in the wakeful silence of the summer night you may hear the long whistle of the through *train for the west* as it tears through Mariposa, rattling over the switches and past the semaphores and ending in a long, sullen roar as it takes the trestle bridge over the Ossawippi. (Leacock, *Sketches* 8)

Here we have the full excerpt mentioned previously. The image is ad rem: it is an image of progress, the march of progress, represented by these noisy trains moving through Canada in a summer night, heading west (the region of development, colonialism, and growth). As the narrator sees it, the railway system leaves no doubt that Mariposa is a

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limited – marking the genre by deep subjectivity regarding the one who speaks, the way s/he does, and the reason thereto.

[29] This and every following emphases on the excerpts of Leacock’s *Sunshine sketches of a little town* are not present in the original and have been added by me, for the sake of this thesis’ clarity.

thriving town; and again s/he gives us a hint that s/he is about to provide us with evidence to support his argument. Moreover, s/he tells us that, if we do not believe in his/her words, we can ask any townsman to confirm it. This, of course, does not help readers very much, for both narrator and readers know we shall not have any opportunity to indeed undergo a conversation with another Mariposan to check if what is being narrated is indeed true – the narrator's argument, in this sense, is inherently jaundiced from the beginning. But, anyways, this time what s/he brings as a proof of the town’s importance is the fact even the transcontinental railways run through Mariposa. For those who believe in the tale of development (and see in the urbanisation of formerly urban settings a great prospect) this would indeed be very desirable. After this sentence, the narrator admits most trains pass at night and do not stop at Mariposa. This is indeed very funny, and I imagine both Canadians from 1912 and Brazilians from the XXI century shall laugh at this unhappy argument that the existence of transcontinental railways in Mariposa meant anything at all, inasmuch as most trains actually never stop there.

Literary evidence is here showing us the opposite of what the narrator is saying. Mariposa is *not* a thriving town and it is *not* part of progress, but only an obstruction or a utensil in the middle of its pathway. However, it is not that difficult to understand the narrator; s/he behaves as any of us would. To admire and boast the developed and modern status of our contexts, faking happiness and satisfaction therein, is rather typical for those who have been convinced that the master narrative of progress is right. And, for all intents and purposes, we have. Perhaps Leacock’s usage of the train station as to materialise his critique in this excerpt has to do with its foundational role at the time the novel was written. As they started to multiply within the country soil in the beginning of the XX century, railroads virtually decided the destiny of Canadian towns, gradually transforming completely how they were organised and ultimately turning many of them into *cities*. If, on the one hand, trains helped cities become more connected to one another, on the other their autonomy and self-sufficiency was jeopardised to a considerable extent (Morton 15). Moreover, the railroads were turned into something ubiquitous also due to the political condition of Canada in the first half of the century. As the alliance established between Canada and the U.K. since colonial times began to fade away, its partnership with the U.S. was enhanced, and ways to connect both countries were, as a result, improved. Albeit there was a lot of investment from both sides, the reciprocity of this bridge was certainly a rather questionable one, and Leacock, as a political scientist, was probably aware of that. Even though the projects undertaken mainly through the ventures of U.S. entrepreneurs were indeed huge and mesmerising, they seemed to serve their own interests. Using the railroad also as an illustration, Desmond Morton reminds us that, notwithstanding the fact that trains would get to the northernmost parts of Canada, everything (including the content of the train cars) would eventually end up getting back to the U.S. (227). Withal, and departing from the historical background underlying this reference for turning back to the literary effects of deploying the image of the train as a metaphor, one cannot take for granted the issue of velocity implied in the emergence of railroads and exponentiation of train stations.

Piglia suggests that, within literature, the train surfaces as a mythical place; a representation of progress, industry, and machinery. It opens up space for the speed of modernity, for the problematisation of distances and reconsideration of geography – setting forth an array of reflections upon the obsolescence of the familiar world, that world of feelings and of unredeemable intimacy (126). The train station built in the fictional town is thus a symbol of development, of growth, of future – one that, in a way or another, ultimately impinges upon life as Mariposans knew it. Railway systems, harbours, bus stations, airports are all nothing but institutions working as tools, hubs of linear temporality, responsible for inserting and endlessly "reinforcing the illusory idea that the developed world grants us with a possibility to move around the globe with no visible boundaries" (Harvey 302). As one may infer from the previous excerpt, to the narrator what the railway *does* is irrelevant; it is what it *represents* that really matters. A place "feels" developed when it is granted the status of spacelessness and timelessness, when its inhabitants feel able of going anywhere anytime, even though they do not necessarily *need* to, effectively. This becomes clear at the final part of this excerpt, filled with the imagetic devices that give readers the possibility of imagining themselves abandoning the wakeful silence of the summer night in order to listen to the sounds of progress: the long whistle of a train tearing through Mariposa.

The fact that the train is heading west is not an issue; it has already left elements of future in Mariposa, just by passing through it. It is essential to *feel* important, observed, modern and developed. We do not necessarily need to *be* all these things, as long as people believe we are. The future is still a never-ending fallacy. Mariposans, like ourselves, have learned to appreciate the status of objects, the objects themselves mean nothing any longer, just like our narrator might never really feel interested in travelling by train – we do not know until the end. The figure of the train station is, apropos, actually so significant to the sketches that the last chapter, “L'Envoi. The Train to Mariposa”, actually describes a conversation about the train that gets people from the city into Mariposa. Could the structure of flat Mariposa be more circular? Given that its beginning and ending occur both within a train, one could read this as a metaphor for the town’s “static movement”, a symbolic manner of addressing its ambivalent status as a developmentalist, but underdeveloped centre. The train ends up assuming, within the narrative, the condition of what Bakhtin would name a motivic chronotope. Literary chronotopes, according to the theorist, consist in foundational moments of the narratives when time and space are both compressed within a single element: time becomes spatial and space becomes temporal, as “the epoch becomes not only graphically visible, but narratively visible” (Bakhtin, *The chronotope* 244).

The image of the road is applied by Bakhtin as an illustration of a chronotope, for it is present in many literary works as a sign of the passage of time and the transformation of spaces within the development of the diegesis. It is not farfetched to understand the train as operating in an analogous fashion, especially after analysing how it surfaces and pervades Leacock’s sketches. As Bemong et al suggest, integral to chronotopes is the necessity to turn temporal constraints into something palpable, to guide the interlocutor in the direction of acknowledging time as influencing the development of space as influencing the development of time (60). Every narrative contains a number of minor chronotopes and, necessarily, a major one, which stands for the overall time and space compression encapsulating the whole story. The narrator of the sketches brings up the train as to insert an important chronotope, redirecting our attention to the times and spaces that go beyond the pages of the narrative. This is the chronotope of this passage from rural to urban and from past to future: the chronotope of modernity. By the end of the novel, this issue becomes even more blatant, as the narrator describes the train passing through the suburbs, the golf district, and the outlying parts of the City. The narrator is talking to the reader who, on his/her turn, is now inside the train: “Wait a little, and you will see that when the city is well behind you, bit by bit the train changes its character. The electric locomotive that took you through the city tunnels is off now and the old wood engine is hitched on in its place” (Leacock, *Sketches* 151).

As the train gets closer to Mariposa, its electric engine is magically transformed into an old wood one, as if the structure of the train were enchanted. The train embodies the metaphor of time and space compression hereby. The journey to Mariposa is like those cinematographic space and time travels wherein the traveller gets to his/her destiny, but does so completely naked (e.g. *Terminator* or *Ninja Turtles 3*). Such as the travellers' clothing cannot travel in space and in time, the engines of modernity are also not welcome in this mythical Mariposa. Moreover, and getting back to Bakhtin, though the chronotope, "the graphically visible markers of historical time as well as of biographical and every day time are concentrated and condensed; and at the same time they are intertwined with each other in the tightest possible fashion, fused into unitary markers of the epoch" (*The chronotope* 247). The train to Mariposa emerges in the sketches, by the way, as both a marker of historical time (past to future) at the same time as it compresses the specific and particular biographical time of every passenger that is travelling together within the cars of the locomotive. These are subjects who the narrator fuses, through his/her description, into unitary markers of that movement from *city* to *town* and/or vice-versa.

As a matter of fact, even the socialisation taking place within the train is mythically transformed as it gets closer to Mariposa: "See how the passengers all turn and talk to one another now as they get nearer and nearer to the little town. That dull reserve that seemed to hold the passengers in the electric suburban has clean vanished and gone" (Leacock, *Sketches* 152). The scene is undoubtedly a rather comic one; the reality of the city is completely altered as the train approaches Mariposa station, people's behaviour change, as well as their clothes, and the very structure of the locomotive. The narrator describes the train as "the most comfortable, the most reliable, the most luxurious and the speediest train that ever turned a wheel" (153). It is, at the same time, the less disputed train, the less modern, and one of the few that leaves only at five o'clock (whereas trains to other places leave the city station at every half hour). Such contradiction is funny, indeed, but the joke is not a simple one. The narrator's development of the train as a chronotope is in coherence with several other funny moments of the narrative. That is to say, humour emerges from the pages of *Sunshine Sketches* in many occasions as a device that serves an agenda of going way beyond than simply causing idle laughter. The complexity of such metaphor makes it difficult for one to believe that the idea is but to make the reader go through an innocuous process of idle pleasure per se.

The train consists in one of the most recurrent channels whereby people are given an opportunity to leave their town as to become integrated within a more consistent metropolitan area or for them to feel, as they are, more isolated vis-à-vis such area.[30]

3.1. Mr. Smith: Villain, saviour, both, or none?

Besides Mariposa, the novel's protagonist, and the narrator that describes it, another particular character that deserves special attention is Smith. After the town and the narrator (of course), this is the most present subject, appearing in almost every chapter. It might be said that the main structure of conflict in Leacock's narrative is constituted by his development of a seemingly dualism played by the communitarian aspects of Mariposa against the rapacious agenda of this very interesting character, Smith: an archetype of capitalist sagacity. In this sense, at least according to my reading of the sketches, an external conflict can be said to consist in the ambitions of Smith against not the ideas, but the naïve sense of community natural to the rest of Mariposa population. It is his ingenuity against their ingenuousness. In their heart of hearts, these other characters seem to think the very same thing; different from Smith, they just do not know exactly how to put them into practice. Likewise, an internal conflict can also be observed within the mind of the narrator, who strives to make out if the influences of modernity are being detrimental or beneficial to the town – coherent with the incipit, when s/he alleges not to know if we know Mariposa perhaps not even s/he him/herself actually does. It would be a mistake, however, to think that the antagonism "Smith vs. Mariposa" is a Manichean one; Smith is more likely an embodiment of the ambitions of any other Mariposan; he is a symbol of that which they desire to achieve, of what they are, through the master discourse of capital dogmatism, eager to introduce to their lives. He knows and behaves as all Mariposans would like to. Therefore, and problematising Lynch's far too ambivalent views on the matter, Klouda understands that "[t]he character of Mr. Smith is not the destroyer of the ideal community of Mariposa as Gerald Lynch argues, but should be instead regarded in context with Leacock's theory of sublime humour" (3). Such theory, he continues, is one that surfaces not as a manner to *oppose* dual forces but "as a figure Leacock uses to create humour by neutralising forces and to preserve his literary universe of the *Sunshine Sketches*" (4).

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[30] Hence the feeling of ambivalence, omnipresent in the narrative: to grow or to shrink, to stay rural or go urban, to be big or be home. Everything is half-decided by half-ashamed individuals half-forgetting Mariposa: "[I]f you have half-forgotten Mariposa you are only like the greater part of the [...] in the city. Practically every one of them came from Mariposa once upon a time, and there isn't one of them that doesn't sometimes dream […] to go back. They all do. Only they're half-ashamed" (Leacock, Sketches 120). They are "half-ashamed" of missing Mariposa for there is supposedly nothing to miss: city life has everything one should need. If Mariposa fails to be like the city, however, the city also fails to be like Mariposa: it is a matter of perspective. In the end of the story comedy becomes tragedy (there is not much for us to laugh at), and the glowing dreams of city life are finally seen by the characters as deceptive, as an illusion in which they mistakenly believed; the illusion in which we still mistakenly believe. This is the belief that the narrative disturbs, as it provides a distinct picture regarding readers' probable notion regarding what path Canada should follow as it "evolves". Mariposa is a reminder that, perhaps, we have been aspiring what we should forget, and forgetting what we should aspire.

In the article criticised by Klouda, Lynch poses that a crucial distinction to be made between Smith and Mariposa is that "the negative characteristics just rehearsed are evoked, cajoled, and exploited by Smith for the gratification of these same and apparently sole attributes of himself". Smith, in Lynch's view, possesses "no redeeming features", whereas Mariposa seems to do, for the town's most obvious virtue is "its nature as an interdependent community", as if Smith had no virtue whatsoever. Such an opposition, albeit mistaken, is justified given the contrast between real business as practiced by Smith (for his own enrichment) and, for instance, "the illusory business speculations of Jeff Thorpe, the barber, whose evanescent fortune was to be used partially for local philanthropic purposes, and whose real business, barbering, provides a meeting place for leisurely communal intercourse" (12). Among other literary evidences, as Lynch affirms, this event informs us that "Mr. Smith is a quick study, a taker of calculated risks, and a gambler who is uncaring of the loser's fortune". He seems to take advantage of the fact that "Mariposans view things metropolitan" (13), or, better, that they see everything metropolitan as inherently favourable. However, the ambivalence does not sustain itself as Smith proves to be a rather complex character. One of the moments when this ambivalent notion (that Smith represents "superiority" when compared to Mariposa) may be questioned is when we find out he actually does not know how to read: "'Here's your telegram, sir,' Billy said. 'What does it say?' said Mr. Smith. He always dealt with written documents with a fine air of detachment. I don't suppose there were ten people in Mariposa who knew that Mr. Smith couldn't read" (Leacock, *Sketches* 12).[31]

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[31] Such ambivalence is recurring in Canadian humourous legacy, which stories also envelop minorities composed of right-wing extremists as well as impotent monsters.

We, readers, do not know of any other character in Mariposa who is also unable to read, and it is interesting to notice that only a few of them knew that Smith could not. Afterwards, he talks about the changes that are to take place in his hotel after the construction of a café. Curiously, and even though the narrator regards Mr. Smith as the most "civilised" subject in Mariposa, we also have here access to some glimpses on his obliviousness towards the simplest matters. Having had the chance, in the past, to experience life in more metropolitan settings, Smith is thus deemed much more prepared to deal with any matters, by others and by himself. Smith's astuteness, however, proves to be valuable mainly in what concerns enterprising undertakings, as well as commercial problem solving, whereas his familiarity with Canadian culture and history as a whole, at that time, is, it seems, considerably restricted. "Mr. Smith encouraged the use of the French language in the caff. He viewed it, of course, solely in its relation to the hotel business, and, I think, regarded it as a recent invention. 'It's comin' in all the time in the city", he said, 'and y'aint expected to understand it'" (Leacock, *Sketches* 21). At the same time that he seems to be the most knowledgeable character of Mariposa, Smith believes the usage of French is "a recent invention" (a recent invention that had reached Canadian soil four centuries before). Mocking not those who are ignorant, but the idea of knowledge as we know it, the narrative seems to be informing readers that there is no direct relation between intellectual and practical abilities. Other events like this one infer that Smith is actually from a simple origin and has not always been a successful entrepreneur; eventually, readers are compelled to conclude that he is not necessarily the villain of the story.

Mr. Smith seems to have a poverty-stricken origin and, as such, he just wants to profit, without damaging anyone in the process. Much to the contrary, Smith does make his profit, but not without indeed helping Mariposans thereby; he naturally becomes, as a result, something like the spearhead of everything that happens in the town, until he is turned de jure leader after the elections. Smith is not a villain; he is not guided by nasty purposes, but just fighting to maintain his business, one he has built with a lot of work and effort. The conflict – and there is one – is much less straightforward than that, and it is nourished not by Smith himself, but by ideas which had already been stuck within the minds of every character. In this sense, the existence of a character like Mr. Smith, who embodies an intricate and dense ideological struggle, is, therefore, an embodiment of a transgressive narratology. But, starting with his name itself, "Mr. Smith" is chosen by

Leacock in what seems to be a reference to another Smith: a figure of major importance in socio-political history. In many of his non-fictional essays and books "Leacock dismissed Adam Smith's theory and the policy of *laissez-faire*" (Lynch 9), because he believed such economics to be antithetical to what he conceived in his own terms as a just and increasingly interdependent society. Here the comparison seems relevant, since, for Leacock, apparently Adam Smith is the kind of theorist that embodies everything he criticises in the sketches. If Adam Smith has argued that it is the will of the market that ensures the production of the right goods and services, Leacock, the economist, believed in the opposite. Leacock saw in the government the responsibility for situating the basis of the market, and Adam Smith, on the other hand, understood the market as the regulator of itself mainly through free market competition.[32]

Adam Smith is a historical figure with unrivalled importance for the establishment of perhaps most of the basis of contemporary financial politics. The Scottish thinker, who was born in 1723 and died in 1790, is deemed the pioneer of capitalist politic economy for having written what many critics affirm to be the most important treatise on the modern structure of global economics: *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (1776). Much time after its publication, the *Wealth of Nations* is still read and considered hugely influential for the maintenance of capitalist ideology.[33] Working endlessly on the issue of economic prosperity through the means of capital production and accumulation, Smith would be turned into the symbol of contemporary capitalism;[34] it is such symbol that Mr. Smith, in the *Sunshine sketches*, seems to be likewise aimed at embodying. On the other hand, Leacock did not seem to endorse most left wing policies, even though the author was indeed more critical against the exaggerated importance given to market by the industrial and marketing enterprises gradually introduced in Canada – mainly through the pressure of England and France, and later, more intensely, by the U.S.A. partnership. There is actually a poem in *Hellements of Hickonomics* (1936) where Leacock lays bare his contempt concerning Adam Smith's theories on marketing processes: "Adam, Adam, Adam Smith, listen what I charged you with! Didn't you say in the class one day that selfishness was bound to pay? Of all your Doctrine, that was the Pith, wasn't it, wasn't it, wasn't it, Smith?" (75). Selfishness was bound to pay, and so it does in Leacock's sketches, here and there. In a seemingly innocuous excerpt, another provocation surfaces. When Mariposans are looking for a way to make money as to help the reverent pay for the debts of the church, "they got Mr. Dreery, the English Literature teacher at the high school, to give an evening of readings from the Great Humourists from Chaucer to Adam Smith" (Leacock, 71).

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[32] © 1996 The Theories of Adam Smith: http://www.bized.co.uk

[33] Before getting acknowledged for his political theorisations, it is worth mentioning that Smith had worked as a Philosophy professor in Glasgow, position that allowed him to travel overseas and gave him the opportunity to lay the foundations of what is today regarded as the classical free market theory.

[34] © 2014 Encyclopædia Britannica

Leacock, here, seems to place Chaucer and Adam Smith on the same boat; as if both were indeed *humourists* of English Literature, he is thus discrediting Smith's socio-political positioning on marketing enterprises (whereas it also puts his and Leacock's work in tandem, as a humourist himself). But, besides Adam Smith, it would perhaps also be a good idea to go a little bit further into the reference to Chaucer. If the former is considered the father and creator of contemporary capitalism, Geoffrey Chaucer (1343 – 1400) is considered the father and creator of English Literature as a literary institution, due to his extensive work as an English poet during the Middle Ages. Notwithstanding his vast work on the realm of poetry and his unhidden will to be eternally remembered as one of the greatest poets of English literature, this astronomer, philosopher, and fiction writer is currently globally known for his unforgettable short stories in *Canterbury Tales* (1383). Just as Leacock tries to do his *Sunshine Sketches*, in the *Canterbury Tales* Chaucer provides a very critical picture of the late XIV century Britain through the usage of ironic descriptions of its features.[35] Even though some things might indeed appear by chance in a fictional piece, others are there for a reason. One could thus interpret from this excerpt that both Chaucer and Smith – the former marking the *beginning* of humour and the latter its *end* – play a significant role for Leacock to expose his view on both their intellectual legacies, and everything that surrounds them.

What is also interesting here is that, like Leacock, Chaucer reflected upon complex things in a sort of text that is generally not given much credit, whereas Adam Smith wrote about political, financial, and serious issues in a scientific genre that is generally bestowed with more manifest credit than humorous literature (as it still is). This kind of dual motion in Leacock's literary treatments of the references he brings marks his domain over the ironic usage of analogies, immensely meaningful for the text as a whole. It is irony, and, in this specific case, his control of ironic devices, that allows the narrator to turn what is not instantaneously amenable to cause laughter into something funny. It is in this sense important to understand that, when dealing with those things which are made ironic, the ironist cannot escape from identifying that there are inherent "limits on irony (as it relates to dramatic technique) along these lines. All these things could be ironically treated or disposed of, but they are not, in themselves, ironic" (Rourke 27). Scorning Adam Smith is not naturally ironic, but it is the inventive manner whereby Leacock decides to disclose his despise that turns it into irony. In this sense, none of his ironic jokes is, in itself, ironic. The author has to see to what extent the limits of irony can be perceived and thus transgressed, as for him to make out how he can transform those not inherently ironic things from unlaughable into laughable. The fact, though, that nothing is essentially funny and/or ironic per se might erroneously look as a hindrance for those aiming at causing laughter through irony, but it may actually mean the very opposite. It is exactly because everything is essentially serious that comic discourse is inherently able, in the end, to make fun of everything.

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[35] © 2014. BBC History: http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_figures/chaucer

3.2. The city and the City:[36] Drowning the boat of national identities

Within the novel, conflicts like the one represented by the supposed opposition Smith vs. Mariposa emerge and are solved in rather unorthodox forms which end up ironically problematising such conflicts, as well as the oppositions causing them. A very good allegory for us to understand another of these conflicts, which is the discussion on the local (Mariposa) versus the national (Canada), takes place when some Mariposans are spending their Sunday together in a boat and the boat starts to sink. When the narrator sets forth such event, he seems to be willing to put his readers' views on greatness and levels of importance into question, for he is likely aware that many of them might be thinking something like: "why is Mariposa important? There are many larger, greater, prettier regions around the globe". Here s/he attempts to convince us this is not the case whatsoever, for the greatness of Mariposa cannot be compared to anything else. A contradiction, nonetheless, accompanies his/her will to enhance our respect and admiration towards the town, ineffectively portrayed as a great place, in size and importance. There are many other occasions when the narrator or other characters discursively affirm that they belong to or are hugely satisfied with living in Mariposa but, when they act, such discourse falls apart. The following excerpt, regarding the boat tour, allows Leacock to elaborate upon such idea: "You may talk as you will about the intoning choirs of European cathedrals, but the sound of 'O-Can-a- da' across the waters of a silent lake at evening is good enough. It was just as they were singing 'O-Can- a-da', that word went round that the boat was sinking" (*Sketches* 53).[37]

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[36] The distinction done by the narrator in the original between "town" and "city" is recreated in my translated version as "*cidade*" and "*Cidade*" – not only because finding an equivalent to "town" is rather intricate, but also, and especially, to empower the hierarchical characterisation of the metropolis and its grandeur.

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[37] What I interpret here as a parallel established by the narrator between the boat and the nation indicates that s/he might be elaborating upon the intricate and multifaceted issue that has accompanied the history of Canada since the country was born: the national identity. The idea of nation as a community of sovereign congenial relatives can be traced back to its secular roots during Enlightenment in Western society. After its carefully prearranged emergence, most subjects began to look around and mistakenly assume that their national identity was a synonym of their personal freedom – even though it actually often meant the very opposite (as it still does today). The discursive role of master narratives of domestic belongingness, responsible both for shaping and for maintaining national imagery, is one that cannot be overlooked thereby; it is such discourse of the nation that persuades us to believe we share some major subjects and symbols with our fellow citizens. It is in this sense that a scene with Canadians singing "O Canada" in unison while their boat starts to sink might be telling us that there is no way to dissociate the identity of the country from its fixation on the themes of survival, of the victim, and of its "victimised sense of community". That is perhaps because "nothing brings out 'sense of community' like victimization" (130). As Atwood sees it, even though such themes are found in fictional productions of many other countries, "perhaps one of the differences is that the Canadian community is itself seen as a victim". During the excursion, people are not simply together in the boat, sharing their sense of community, they are doing so on the verge of drowning. As a result, it is not the fact that people also talk about survival or about the victim elsewhere that matters, "for we have to consider the relationship between victim and society […]; and the thing about Canadian victims is that they tend to be representative of the society" (Atwood, *Second words* 132). If Mariposa were taken as a microcosmos for Canada, it would indeed be rather difficult to deem Canadians the nation of the bravest and/or more brilliant people. We know that universally the discourse of the nation has been the channel whereby peoples were united in their specific macrostructures, and this is perhaps the main source for Atwood's worries and also for Leacock's mockery – the very idea of a Canadian nation. The universal logic, which by the way still prevails, is that groups of kinsmen and women are first concocted and later either turned against the invisible "other" to fight for their purportedly "shared interests", or simply silenced, convinced that they have no chance of winning such a fight. As a matter of fact, it is mostly through the very operational dissemination of hegemonic discourses and the suppression of marginal ones that nations are theatrically staged in the minds of "nationalised subjects". The shared interests are only shared by a privileged few, yet effectively instilled into the minds of all, through the process of patriotic brainwashing. Hence the emergence of a singular but all-embracing nation, capable of erasing any difference. There are of course destructive consequences resulting from these automatised political and social enactments, which demand the

The surfacing of a "fragmented" Canadian national anthem "O Canada" – perhaps an indication of the fragmented national identities it comprises – is symptomatic of the narrator's paradoxical experience, in this case emphasising the grandeur of a sinking thing. Such controversy is not criticised nor problematised by this narrator who, seemingly a Mariposan (there are no clear indications that s/he is surely an inhabitant of the town), sees himself inserted in the same ambivalent condition. Nevertheless, the metaphorical strength of the sinking of the boat, which happens exactly while Mariposans sing the anthem, is not to be overlooked. It is Canadian identity that is here sinking, disappearing, even though the voice of Mariposans can still be heard while that happens. They keep singing en masse during the shipwreck, unwilling to abandon their nation although it is disappearing under the river; and, once again, like in other previous occasions, they are able to survive,[38]although not as heroically as one might think. They keep

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subject's pride and confidence based on their supposed patriotic debt. Betrayed by the myth of belongingness and deceived by a bogus historical past, we have been convinced to keep singing our national anthems, every country, in unison, while all our boats continue to sink – but for how long till we get to the bottom? See, for a further analysis on that, my 2017 articles "National identity, transnational literature" and "'A social masquerade': The ironic discourse of *Sunshine sketches*(Leacock, 1912)."

[38] Here, as in many other events, one of the central motifs of *Sunshine sketches* appears, corroborating with what Atwood deems the main symbol of Canadian literature – at least up to the publication of her literary guide, during the late XX century: Survival. "The symbol is, undoubtedly, 'survival' [...]. Like 'the frontier' and 'the island', it is a multi-faceted and adaptable idea" (*Survival* 28). In Atwood's opinion (and I do not mean amiable opinion), while the frontier is the symbol of the U.S.A. and the island symbolises England, Canadian fiction is often more or less about learning how to overcome circumstances just to keep breathing for another day. Even though I am not sympathetic with Atwood's all-encompassing (and, in my view, oversimplified) "précises" of U.K, U.S.A., and Canadian fiction, in this precise chapter of Leacock's novel it does indeed seem to apply with precision. Yet, survival does not need to concern only one's response to objective risks like that of a shipwreck; "a preoccupation with one's survival is necessarily also a preoccupation with the obstacles to that survival" (27). Within the sketches, obstacles to survival are often present; and, consistent with Mr. Smith's endeavour to repair the boat, the campaign carried out by the characters to save the church, their reaction to the railway, and the construction of the café are among those events that evince this preoccupation with the obstacles to survival. Atwood's suspicion is that the fear of these obstacles might "become itself the obstacle; a character is paralysed by terror either of what he thinks is threatening him from the outside, or of elements in his own nature that threaten him from within" (Atwood, *Survival* 28). That is precisely what happens in the sketches, at least as far as my reading is concerned, as everything, metropolitan or local, represents either salvation or threat. Atwood's symbols prove to be, as one may notice, undoubtedly stimulating as drafts of literary maps for our reading; having said that, Anderson's reminder that "[a] map merely represents

singing and do not leave the boat, nourishing the idea that they depend directly on remaining therein and prefer to sink instead of departing (but do they really?), which can be read as a metaphor to the dangers of patriotism. The narrative presents the issue of “national identity” as innocuous and doomed to take us nowhere at all. The whole idea of the nation, reinforced by the existence and maintenance of the anthem as a token of political companionship, is a problem for a more ambitions idea of community. The nation is not a natural community and the anthem does not represent how we are connected to one another, they are both symbolically applied as to achieve certain socio-political interests in order for us to put into practice actions that go hand in hand with such interests. The idea of a community could never be the one shared by those who decide to remain in the boat, to live with the knowledge that they are sinking; it should give us a chance to leave, together, the boat – coming up, as a palliative, with a better transportation (at least ad referendum).

That is precisely the sort of paradox that our narrator personifies while s/he overemphasises the simplicity of his/her compatriots’ singing to the detriment of the luxurious and pompous intoning choirs of European cathedrals. Even though s/he seems to challenge metropolitan notions, indeed s/he does not offer Mariposans a less predictable role; their greatness is only achieved through their singing a song that is far from effectively representing them, about a homogeneous nation that exists only in paper. What I mean is that, as well stated by Cronin, “[o]nce more there is the trap of the essentialist conception of national identity logic where political and cultural differences are reduced to a simplistic and homogeneous version of particularism, usually to favour the material and social interests of local elites” (15). What is the anthem or the idea that all Brazilians, Canadians, etc., share some sort of national pride if not an illustration of such trap? The framework of a tool that aims at reducing our differences and even our similarities to this standardised version of particularism (a particularism that only serves to endorse the superiority of the centre) has always favoured the interests of elite. The nation is a myth in the fictional Mariposa from the early

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something which already exists objectively ‘there’” (132) is germane herein, on the other hand. I.e. to think that every British novel would be about the island, every U.S. one about the frontier, and every Canadian one about survival would be synonymic to the reversal of the primary logic of mapping (literary or geographical). When such reversal occurs, and it does rather often, the map becomes “a model for, rather than a model of, what it is purported to represent” (Anderson 134). In 2016 I have elaborated deeper on that in “Repositioning wor(l)ds in the literary map.”

XX century, as it also is in the XXI century real world. Translating, however, might be the key for us to elude it: “for translation, the binarism of macro-cosmopolitan approaches […] is hardly persuasive and can be deeply disabling both intellectually and politically” (16).

That is, an endeavour to achieve the universal, or the “macro-cosmopolitan”, is more than unnecessarily: it is undesirable, and, here, translation has much to say. To reinforce the *one* to the detriment of the *other* would be to reinforce a binarism that, in the end, does not exist; the local and the global are creations, they are a disguise of hegemonic interests universalised as archetypes to be followed. Within such picture, “theoreticians and practitioners of translation, whether from larger or smaller units, should not have to be condemned to the facile dualism of these macro perspectives” (Cronin 15). As this novel translator, I honestly aim not to be condemned to the facile dualism of these macro perspectives, even though they are enticing, for they are the very same perspectives that our narrator is unable to evade. It is curious, in this sense, to observe that, initially, s/he does not fight cosmopolitan values by demonstrating how Mariposa is a singular place if compared to regions that are more metropolitan to some extent. On the contrary, instead of exposing how interesting, intricate, and commendable those aspects that make Mariposa distinct than “the city” as to show readers that the city is not as desirable, the narrator ironically asserts that if there is a distinction it is one that makes his/her town actually even more metropolitan. S/he does not oppose the notion that central values are better, at least assumingly, but alleges Mariposa possesses much more of these values if compared to the city. Ironically, the dichotomy the narrator defends does not seem to be working for him/her, since the values of Mariposa are everything, but metropolitan.

> Busy? Well, I should think so! *Ask any of its inhabitants if Mariposa isn't a busy, hustling, thriving town*. Ask Mullins, the manager of the Exchange Bank, who comes hustling over to his office from the Mariposa House every day at 10:30 and has scarcely time all morning to go out and take a drink with the manager of the Commercial; or ask – well, for the matter of that, ask any of them if they ever knew a more rushing go-a-head town than Mariposa. *Of course if you come to the place fresh from New York, you are deceived. Your standard of vision is all astray, You do think the place is quiet. But live in Mariposa for six months or a year and then you will begin to understand it better*. (Leacock, *Sketches* 6-7)

Mariposa is this small town with only one bank, one church, one barbershop, etc., but the narrator insists in describing it as a very busy place. S/he is of course not successful in effectively convincing us of that through *facts*, since his/her single argument is, anew, that we could simply ask Mariposans if what s/he says is not true. But this is not where the worst incoherence seems to be; what is illogical is actually his/her connection between what is "busy" and "hustling" with what is "thriving". Why can't one see Mariposa as a thriving, but small, simple, and nonmetropolitan region? Is the fact that towns are not cities a token of their inferiority? One would be tremendously mistaken if s/he thought so; and the sketches' narrator can be read as if s/he were aware of that, inasmuch as contradiction is a main characteristic of his/her ironic discourse. Contradictions, by the by, pullulate. When describing "Mullins", the narrator says the city is so busy that the banker has almost no free time at all. But, actually, both the manager of the Exchange bank and of the Commercial one have a long daily break to go out and drink something every single morning, something that would be unimaginable if Mariposa were indeed a "busy" and "hustling" town. In the end of the excerpt s/he would also say that everything is simply a matter of parameters: no Mariposan knew a more prosperous town, apart from those who have actually been to other cities, which means Mariposa is the best because it is the only! After realising how impalpable his arguments are, the narrator decides the only way for readers to understand how "important" Mariposa is would be if they came to live in the town for no less than six months. That is an ultimate testimony of his/her inability to make his/her point through argumentative means, since, from a "safe distance", it is not possible to endorse what s/he says. Another clear evidence of such contradiction can be spot apropos the Church of Mariposa:

> Everybody in Mariposa remembers the building of the church. First of all they had demolished the little stone church to make way for the newer Evidence. It seemed almost a sacrilege, as the Dean himself said, to lay hands on it. Indeed *it was at first proposed to take the stone of it and build it into a Sunday School*, as a lesser testimony. Then, when that provided impracticable, *it was suggested that the stone be reverently fashioned into a wall that should stand as a token*. And when even that could not be managed, *the stone of the little church was laid reverently into a stone pile; afterwards it was devoutly sold to a*

> *building contractor, and, like so much else in life, was forgotten*. (Leacock 65)

Due to the Imperial influence of British authority in Canada during 1912, many Churches of England (another token of development) were constructed to replace Roman Catholicism. As such, the churches can be seen as a physical representative of a more encompassing replacement, as obsolete epistemes are being exchanged by more modern ones. Leacock elaborates therefore on the rather complex religious process of readapting Christian Catholicism into Christian Anglicanism due to Canadian connection to England, which has been indeed an event of major importance for the history of Canada. At that time, the contact of England and Canada was only there to reaffirm the doctrines of the stronger nation (in this case through religious authority) to the detriment of Canadian, in this specific case Mariposan, values. Such process resulted in the creation of The Anglican Church of Canada, whose official name is in French: *L'Église Anglicane du Canada*. Today, the population of Canadians who are self-identified as Anglicans represents 6.9 percent of the country's inhabitants, which makes Anglicanism the third largest Canadian church (after: 1st The Roman Catholic Church; and 2nd The United Church of Canada). Where Leacock's Orillia is located most Anglicans have settled, virtually half of them.[39] Therefore, one could say that what happens in Mariposa, the destruction of the little Church for the construction of its massive replacement, represents this major change taking place in Canada, and which would ultimately generate a renovation of religious orientation of Canadians as a whole.

But, what matters here, in literary terms, is that the small church, the one every Mariposan has attended, could not be remodelled, adapted, saved. It had to be demolished for a new order to be born. This can also be regarded a metaphor for the construction of the nation, for the advent of new political and religious ideas through the obliteration of those local values that, somehow, represent a hindrance for hegemonic interests. The narrator however exposes how Mariposans initially try to keep something of the old church. Notwithstanding all different attempts, no method seems to work and, eventually, the old church is turned into nothing but a stone pile which, ultimately forgotten (as everything else standing in the path of progress). Mariposans' intentions, concerning what would happen to the "leftovers" of the

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[39] © 2014 The Episcopal: http://www.episcopalchurch.org/anglican-church-canada

Church, are indeed commendable. Ironically nonetheless all of them prove at the end far from feasible, and, like so much else in life, what is deemed a sacrilege, at first, happens in the end to be forgotten. The "little stone church" is a reminder of everything we learn to forget, regardless of how important it might have been once, and our lack of knowledge regarding the real implications of such epistemological alteration usually stops us from reconsidering. It is the symbol of a future that obliterates what does not fit therein. Like Jeff, the barber, who puts the cart before the horse and is deceived by a fraud of land trade, we value what seems bigger, what seems to grant us with more opportunities, what seems more metropolitan-like. But I have not talked about Jeff, yet, so let us put some linearity to this thesis; I am not Leacock's narrator to be foreshadowing stories.

3.3. Jeff: Mariposa's Portrait Painter

As demonstrated, most events described by the narrator prove the very opposite of what he defends as being the "truth". This would be repeated in many other cases, whence his/her discursive defence is regarded necessary for readers to think of Mariposa as they think of the city (as the city the narrator would like Mariposa to be turned in). In other moments, on the other hand, the narrator paradoxically seems to want the very opposite, which implies that heis perhaps being ironic while defending the "importance" of Mariposa, in developmentalist terms. When he realises that many of the things happening in Mariposa would not occur likewise in "the city", s/he shares with the readers a relief for being in the former and so far away from the latter. This is symptomatic of someone that has been convinced by the hegemonic narrative that s/he must admire something specific, and defend Mariposa entrance in the global world map, even though his/her daily experiences are gradually pointing the other way. This is maybe the greatest setback of a tradition wherein things are generally conceived in an ambivalent fashion, whereby issues are deemed as opposed and/or disparate, often contradicting one another, regardless of their dialogic nature. Even though within his/her equivocated imaginary there is the quarrel universal versus local, the town actually does not need to be taken as better or worse when compared to the city (nor as "a dozen towns just like it"); it is simply distinct, and special in its distinction. Jeff's barbershop is one of these places that, like a dozen other barbershops, turns Mariposa into a special little town.

> You see, in Mariposa, *shaving isn't the hurried, perfunctory thing that it is in the city*. A shave is looked upon as a form of physical pleasure and lasts anywhere from twenty-five minutes to three-quarters of an hour. In the morning hours, perhaps, there was a semblance of haste about it, but in the long quiet of the afternoon, as Jeff leaned forward towards the customer, and talked to him in *a soft confidential monotone, like a portrait painter*, the razor would go slower and slower, and pause and stop, move and pause again, till the shave died away into the mere drowse of conversation. The conversation, of course, was *the real charm of the place*. You see, Jefferson's forte, or specialty, was information. He could tell you more things within the compass of a half-hour's shave than you get in days of laborious research in an encyclopaedia. Where he got it all, I don't know, but I am inclined to think it came more or less out of the newspapers. In the city, people never read the newspapers, not really, only little bits and scraps of them. But *in Mariposa it's different*. There they read the whole thing from cover to cover, and they build up on it, in the course of years, a range of acquirement that would put a college president to the blush. Anybody who has ever heard Henry Mullins and Peter Glover talk about the future of China will know just what I mean. (Leacock, *Sketches* 28-29)

Even though our narrator has ironically asserted that the daily lives of Mariposans are as hurried, flustered, and exciting as those of more cosmopolitan peoples, and even though they are clearly far from being that, here in this excerpt we are provided with a rather distinct (and contradictory) perspective concerning such issue. Now s/he is no longer worried about exposing the values Mariposa supposedly shares with “the city”, on the contrary, s/he uses Jeff's barbershop to show how, in the town, shaving isn’t the swift event it is in the city. This lack of haste is pertinent for it provides customers a unique experience; the narrator depicts the barber as an artist: a portrait painter, devoting all his time and creative craft to the clients of the barbershop. Jeff does not assume, as a barber, the limited mechanical role generally given to those in his/her position in the city; it is a matter of aesthetic expertise. This artistic aspect of his role transforms Jeff into something that goes much further than the seemingly “sub-job” of a barber in a distinct context, the context outside the local (ample and liquid) borders of

Mariposa.However, it is not only the careful kinship that Jeff has with his profession that makes his barbershop so especial; actually, the chatting is what makes it different, the real charm of the place. If the town's barber had no time to tackle his activity less mechanically and more expressively, he would also lack the ability to turn this relationship barber/customer into something more complex than a simple financial enterprise, the common sense behaviour in other barbershops where profit is the only and primary worry.

Moreover, posing that Jefferson's specialty is information, the narrator discredits another prejudiced idea. Such is the common (non)sense that people whose social positions are far below when compared to more credited professions would be unable to establish an "intelligent" dialogue – also in consonance with the case of Mr. Smith. When the narrator compares Jeff's knowledge to the knowledge of those people in the city, s/he implies that there is no difference at all.Although in the city the access to informative pieces such as the newspaper can be considered easier, metropolitan readers are not automatically "more knowledgeable", for their reading is not as attentive (they only read little bits and scraps of news). Interestingly, in 1912 Leacock foreshadows a great drawback of social life after mechanised: controlled by the disposable and short-term goals of capitalism, access to information is enhanced at the same time as people's ability to digest such information diminishes. We have more trains and newspapers, but less time to travel or read. As time becomes money people stop "wasting" it with idle things, such as reading; but, in Mariposa, its calm and tranquil daily activities would allow newspapers' readers to look at what is written much less superficially than the urban craziness of the metropolis allow its inhabitants to. It is the required slowness to build up on experience that city life withdraws from its inhabitants, as their ability to read serenely – as the reverend Drone with his book of Greek poetry "beneath the plum blossoms" (68)[40] – and to focus on the written information is set aside by metropolitan swiftness. The secret thus is not access to information, but the quality of access, the time to access and the care when doing so. Developmentalism has granted us with a panoply of tools, put at our disposal; that, however, has proved not to be enough.

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[40] The reverend ministrations are actually so serene that they even make the other characters fall into deep sleep. As a matter of fact, his very name might be a metaphor for the boring sound of his voice and/or for the dance performed by the honeybees that live in a hive located in this same tree. Such interpretation is suggested by the definition of the word drone: "to make a low dull sound; buzz or hum"; "to utter (words) in a monotonous tone, esp to talk without stopping"; "the male of the honeybee and other bees that is stingless and makes no honey." © 2015 Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English: http://www.ldoceonline.com/

By the final part of the excerpt, the narrator also mentions Mullins, for comparing Jeff to other good readers of newspapers in Mariposa. Henry Mullins, the manager of The Mariposa Exchange Bank, can be interpreted as an analogy to another Henry Mullins,[41] an important politician contemporary to Leacock himself. Different from Smith, however, there is not enough evidence for us to elaborate on such possible analogy, besides the fact that both our Mullins were intellectuals and hard-workers, tokens of the unyielding labour Canada requires. Mullis, as a character, is however not very much developed and, when he is, he is described as a complete sceptic while the "real" Henry Mullins has never quit Methodism. It is in Jeff's discourses that most of these rich references emerge, both when he is in a good and a bad mood (bearing in mind that the latter case occurs most often by the end of his story, whereat I am about to get). Furthermore, if his good mood seems to be there most recurrently, and for no particular reason, he seems never to accept being in a bad mood, even when we would excuse him given he had all reasons. Regardless of his difficult condition, the hard work, family problems, etc. there does not seem to be much for him to complain about, he seems rather satisfied, most of the time, even though his obsession with the newspaper might sometimes give us the impression that he is always imaginatively living the lives of those people he read about. The barber is so empathetically characterised that is very painful to the reader when s/he finds out the results of Jeff's plans concerning the Cuban land trade he gets involved with. Jeff makes such plans secretively, not to alert his fellows and make them start asking questions, but would not be as fruitful as one would imagine (at all).

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[41] The manager of Mariposa Exchange Bank might or might not be impersonating a symbolic reference to this Canadian politician, farmer, and exporter, born in 1861 and died in 1952 (two years after he retired from his post as a senator), having lived most part of his life in Lindsay, Ontario. If the fictional Mariposan Mullins appear as the manager of the town's Exchange Bank, the real Mullins have begun his professional life firstly as the director of Monarch Life, secondly as the director of Royal Canadian Security Company, and thirdly as the director of United States Fidelity and Guarantee Company of Baltimore. Elected as the Conservative candidate for a Canadian electoral district, Mullins had also been a Colonel during World War I. Well-known as an involved Conservative with a very active voice concerning Canadian political issues, Mullins started his career in 1899 – having occupied several distinct positions in the country' politics – and resigned in 1950. Among all these positions, the most notorious ones were when he was elected to the House of Commons for Marquette in 1925 (re-elected in 1930) and when he was called to the Senate, in 1935. © 2014 Manitoba Historical Society: http://www.mhs.mb.ca/docs/people/mullins_ha.shtml

The narrator explains he had no idea concerning how Jeff has gotten into the Cuban land sale to foreign entrepreneurs, but begins to suspect as s/he observes that he had received a package from the Cuban Land Development Company. The narrator describes the package: “Jeff received the first big packet from the Cuban Land Development Company: coloured pictures of Cuba, fields of bananas, and *haciendas* and *insurrectos* with machetes etc. They heard of him, somehow, it wasn't for a modest man like Jefferson to say how” (Leacock, *Sketches* 35). Despite his supposed “modesty”, Jeff tells no one about his adventure, “[a]fter all, the capitalists of the world are just one and the same crowd. If you're in it, you're in it, that's all” (36). Curiously, when the benevolence of such crowd of capitalists is put into question, even by the narrator (notwithstanding his usual support regarding their activities), it is always their philanthropy and their supposedly selflessness that is emphasised as a response. Readers learn that, when he deems it important to reaffirm the generosity of these figures, Jeff always has something good to say about their character, something emphasising their kindness, such as Andrew Carnegie’ donation to an observatory. However, Mullins brings Jeff rather bad news: the total disappearance of his investments in Cuba. Placed onto the boat of those who were deceived by the frauds[42] regarding the sale of Cuban lands to foreign investors, Jeff sees the opportunity of evolving, of developing, growing, fading away in front of his eyes. Prior to that the barber daydreams about the day when he would work less and enjoy life, but the news gets him unprepared, and he is forced to do the very opposite.

> *That was Jeff's money* – part of it. Mullins got the telegram, from a broker or someone, and he showed it to Jeff just as he was going up the street with an estate agent to look at a big empty lot on the hill behind the town – the very place for these incurables. And *Jeff went back to*

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[42] Here there is a reference to frauds that were indeed rather common by the time Leacock’s sketches were published, when it was still indeed normal for Canadians (North Americans as a whole) to invest in Cuban lands. Such sort of trade would only be extinguished after the Cuban revolution, when this market would disappear for good. Before then, both the ambiguous land registration in Cuba and the foreign buyers’ lack of experience contributed to several fraud schemes that multiplied in North America until people would finally learn not to believe in them any longer. © 2014 Latin American Initiative: https://www.brookings.edu/ Phil-Peters-Cubas-New-Real-Estate-Market.pdf

> *the shop so quiet– have you ever seen an animal that is stricken through, how quiet it seems to move? Well, that's how he walked.* And *since that,* though it's quite a little while ago, *the shop's open till eleven every night now, and Jeff is shaving away to pay back that five hundred that Johnson, the livery man, sent to the Cubans,* and – Pathetic? tut! tut! You don't know Mariposa. Jeff has to work pretty late, *but that's nothing – nothing at all, if you've worked hard all your lifetime.* And Myra is back at the Telephone Exchange—they were glad enough to get her, and she says now that if there's one thing she hates, it's the stage, and she can't see how the actresses put up with it. Anyway, things are not so bad. You see it was just at this time that *Mr. Smith's caff opened, and Mr. Smith came to Jeff's Woman and said he wanted seven dozen eggs a day, and wanted them handy, and so the hens are back, and more of them, and they exult so every morning over the eggs they lay that if you wanted to talk of Rockefeller in the barber shop you couldn't hear his name for the cackling.* (Leacock, *Sketches* 40)

We are here by the middle of Leacock's book; and here, again, the narrator reminds us that we do not know Mariposa (hence the return to the incipit). That trade, this great risk Jeff decided to take, was his only chance for leaving this condition of a peripheral participant in the developmentalist tale. After learning 40.000 dollars in the mining boom, Jeff feels so self-reliant that he does not even consider to be taking a risk: he believes in the deal; guided by his wish to eat better (he just wanted to buy any meal he wanted in Smith's café), the barber ends up completely engulfed by the system. After all, he is unable to judge if he is being deceived or not, and the blame is on Mariposa and the naiveté it foists on its inhabitants. Finally digesting the ungrateful situation wherein he was put, the barber sees himself in need not only to keep opening the barbershop he believed he would no longer be required to manage, but he actually begins to open it for later hours, as to ameliorate his painful ordeal. Jeff had to pay the money he did not have, but asked as a loan. The narrator, who ironically optimistic about him, addresses his condition trying to convince us there is nothing to worry about. Readers are likely to feel pity nonetheless: towards both Jeff and the narrator, in this case, as we become gradually sympathetic for their bad luck, as well as for they are divested of the foxy attributes so common to the vaccinated members of the metropolis. For someone who has worked hard all his lifetime, however, this prospective reversal is not such a big deal – Jeff is a lenient and strong character, and shall keep fighting, as he has always done.

Ironically, the knowledgeable man that could establish clever conversations about people like the Rockefeller family would still have much to say. On the other hand, he would still have problems to be heard due to the cackling of the eggs from his chickens – a secondary business he had in order to make some more money to pay for his debts. This is a good metaphor regarding the issue of one's ability to speak and to be heard when coming from a marginal standpoint. The modern world does not listen to people unless they speak through legible means (legible in normative terms). There is, nonetheless, a lot of wisdom being produced, the noise produced around it is what prevents such wisdom from getting to us. Given his innocence, the lack of malice so common to those untrained on the harsh market interests and competition, Jeff makes stupid decisions and ends up in a worse condition than the already difficult one wherein he already found himself beforehand. Besides, if Jeff could feel the vicarious conquests of those people he so often read and talked about in the mythical environment he builds within his barbershop, the crackling of his chicken's eggs just outside the door are like intermittent reminders that he is who he is. This is why, when he believes to be rich, Jeff does not hesitate to get rid of the chicken (who would later return in an even larger number). Metropolitan values asked him to be ambitious, and that is what he tried to do, signing documents he did not imagine could be fake. Cruel as it may seem, that is exactly the way the cookie crumbles; when the game is on, those who know how to play it are given the best pieces, whereas those who do not shall remain doomed to lose. Always.

3.4. Election Day: The conservative, liberal, independent Mariposa

Even though Mariposans like Jeff do not understand these major frauds, such as the one concerning Cuban lands, the political functioning of their town is as fraudulent as it also proves to be elsewhere. People of Mariposa do prefer those candidates who grant them "favours", and tend to ignore those who fail to pay them a meal; but, in the end, they shall only vote for those who please the majority and, as such, are the right choice. Characters' perspective concerning politics proves thus to be preposterous, even though, in their exaggeration, they serve as a reminder of the dangers implied by the very logic of democracy as we have it applied throughout seemingly democratic regions; Leacock, an assumed Imperialist, was actually probably against any sort of democracy. In the words of Rourke, "[i]rony is a perspective on something, not a presence in it; hence there is nothing in all nature that cannot be viewed ironically" (225). Bearing in mind that there is nothing with an innate ironic nature, as if it were a presence in such thing, Leacock's narrator makes good use of the fact that irony is a perspective on something – in the case of the sketches, perhaps everything. It all depends on the analogical and inferential quality of his/her discourse for such perspective to be delineated, no matter who or what is the focus of his/her gaze (for everything in nature can be viewed ironically). The usage of irony indeed stands for a perspective on something, and, in the novel's chapter that focuses only on the mayor elections of Mariposa, such perspective makes all the difference. Mr. Smith (the Conservative candidate), Reverend Mr. Drone (the Independent candidate), and Bagshaw (the Liberal candidate) are the characters chosen to run the campaigns. The narrator, on his/her turn, is the one responsible to articulate an ironic (but I dare say accurate) perspective on these campaigns, exposing a sort of discourse that infers a critique on the first steps of Canadian democracy. The novel, here, exposes how the voting process was nothing but a circus, in Mariposa; a circus whose participants are willing to participate as long as they are the "winners", for whatever that means and whatever it takes, i.e. with no ideological hindrances.

> The first reports showed that Edward Drone, the Independent candidate, was certain to win. You should have seen how the excitement grew upon the streets when the news was circulated. *Everybody came up to Drone and shook hands and congratulated him and told him that they had known all along that what the country wanted was a straight, honest, non-partisan representation*. But Drone's hour was short. Even before the poll had closed in Mariposa, the news came sweeping in, true or false, that Bagshaw was carrying the county. *Everybody crowded round Bagshaw and shook his hand and said they were proud to see the day and that the Liberal party was the glory of the Dominion and that as for this idea of non-partisan politics the very thought of it made them sick*. Right away in *the committee rooms they arranged for a huge bouquet to be presented to Bagshaw on the platform by four little girls (all Liberals)* all dressed in white. But with the telegraphic despatch that Josh Smith was reported in the city to be elected the voters hesitated

> no longer. They had waited, most of them, all through the day, not wanting to make any error in their vote, but when they saw the Smith men crowding into the polls and heard the news from the outside, they went solid in one great stampede, and by the time the poll was declared closed at five o'clock there was no shadow of doubt that the county was saved and that Josh Smith was elected. I wish you could have witnessed the scene in Mariposa that evening – *such joy, such public rejoicing as you never saw. It turned out that there wasn't really a Liberal in the whole town and that there never had been. They were all Conservatives and had been for years and years, and behind them was a perfect forest of flags. They presented a huge bouquet of flowers to Mr. Smith, handed to him by four little girls in white – the same four that I spoke of above, for it turned out that they were all Conservatives.* (Leacock, *Sketches* 147-148)

The theatre of elections in Mariposa has started; and, as such, it stands as a metaphor for the theatre of democracy. All the confusion caused by the lack of coherence in the news tells much about the (lack of) political orientation of the town's citizens. Initially, when everyone believed that the Independent candidate was going to win, this was the candidate that received all attention; every Mariposan just started endorsing the ideals he defended and the features of his campaign telling him that they had wanted all along a non-partisan representation. When that news proved to be false, however, Bagshaw, the Liberal candidate, became the centre of all attention, and the values of those subjects are, likewise, inverted. As a result, Mariposans forgot their discourse concerning Drone and concluded that the Liberal party was the glory of the country, and that the idea of non-partisan politics (which, a few lines before, they seemed to support) made them sick since the beginning. The intensity of their allegations highlight the ironic tone of the narrator, as they show no signs of embarrassment for their outrageous and instantaneous changes of perception. But, more important than that is the fact that the four little girls, supposedly all Liberals, who were responsible for giving Bagshaw a bouquet, *had* to change their plan and give such flowers to Mr. Smith when the gossips began to say he was, in fact, the certain victor. The liberal girls are thus no longer liberals; they turned out to be all Conservatives.[43] It does not really matter at all for the narrator or any other Mariposans who was the candidate to win the elections, their only worry was to avoid making any error in their vote. Ideologically, it did not make any difference, having a victorious candidate was enough – if s/he is independent, conservative, or liberal… this detail is irrelevant.[44]

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[43] Characters' plasticity, which guarantees they shall be able of "adapting" to any political ideology that is required, may also be read more subjectively, in terms of alterity; after

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all, this excerpt provides us with a very clear picture of personal identification. “The question of identification is never the affirmation of a pre-given identity, never a self-fulfilling prophecy – it is always the production of an image of identity and the transformation of the subject in assuming that image” (Bhabha 43). In this sense, what is so funny about the excerpt is the fact that, depending on how intense the wish of affirming a pre-given identity might happen to be, the question of identification is inverted – and so it is, to extreme levels. As such, readers are, in the end, unable to make out the ideological category that characters belong to, precisely because they are so eager to fit in any of them. What makes us laugh is perhaps the fact that we know people of Mariposa are not that flexible due to any sort of syncretic political view they might have on matters. It is not an issue of ideological tolerance, but rather of alienation and convenience (as it is true for many politicians of our knowledge that also share such “flexibility”, not to say hypocrisy). “The concept of a single, exclusive, and unchanging ethnic or cultural or other identity is a dangerous piece of brainwashing. Human mental identities are not like shoes, of which we can only wear one pair at a time. We are all multi-dimensional beings” (Hobsbawn 1067). In this sense, wearing one pair of shoes at a time, characters also choose one dimension at a time, impersonating the delusion of affirming pre-given identities as for them to be identified as subjects, unaware that there is no prophecy to be fulfilled; i.e. they opt to exchange boxes instead of choosing one or abandoning all. Broadening the scope, one might interpret the collective project of each inhabitant of Mariposa to make the “correct” choice (i.e. the choice of the majority) when voting as a joke about the construction of their idea of nation. “Particularly in the dominant form of national identity, the project of institutionalised social life is the product of deliberate cultural construction and maintenance via both the regulatory and the socializing institutions of the state” (Tomlinson 272). However, if we are all multidimensional beings, institutionalised social life becomes nothing but a façade. This is why the process of identification could be better described through alterity, as an interchange of images: the interactive activity of transforming and allowing to be transformed. Still in the words of Bhabha, “the demand of identification – that is, to be for an Other – entails the representation of the subject in the differentiating order of otherness. Identification is always the return of an image of identity that bears the mark of splitting the Other place from which it comes” (45). I develop the contributions of alterity as an analytical lens for the reading of the novelin“The transgressive character of humour in harness: a literary analysis and translation proposal of *Sunshine Sketches*,”

[44] It is a ritual: the narrator’s description of all the excitement that was taking shape in the town, readers’ imagination of that perfect forest of flags in the background of the town’s streets and the bouquet of flowers taken to this or that candidate expose the theatrical character of the voting process in Mariposa. The circus of democracy: a circus that is there in every place we look. Here it draws our attention as readers simply due to exaggeration, due to the ironic events going on in the case of Mariposa. But, in fact, Leacock is just elaborating on a rather concrete issue: people’s ignorance towards politics – their distance from the projects of this or that candidate. The party of the candidate is meaningless, let alone when one is conscious that, at least in our context, in the following

Besides this elaboration on the nature of democracy, and advancing some of my many translation challenges, such excerpt also provides us with another idiosyncrasy of Canadian political organisation. When everybody crowds around Bagshaw and shakes his hand, they say that the Liberal party is the glory of the Dominion. This apparently innocuous sentence actually refers to something very specific to the cultural system whereto Leacock's narrative was originally designed, and which I decided to maintain in English and explain in a translator's note (same strategy I used to other contextual allusions that are far too evocative, according to my reading). "Dominion" is the word used to title those lands that are part of the British Empire – i.e. those spaces which are under British control. Any inhabitant of countries which are today ex-colonies of Britain shall see in such word a direct reference to the Imperial colonial centre, notwithstanding the fact this very same word, per se, might mean nothing at all for contemporary Brazilian readers. Furthermore, even though the word "dominion" might also be used to refer to all those spaces within Europe in possession of the British Empire, their most current usage is to refer to lands outside the continent: Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, today all "independent" nations.[45]

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year more than half the candidates will certainly be affiliated to another. Even ideologically ambivalent parties are only symbolic – nothing but a flag. It seems that, in moral and political terms, for Mariposans, candidates are ultimately all tarred with the same brush. In this sense, the ability of the town's inhabitants to change their mind just a few seconds after finding out their first option was not going to be the victorious one is in parallel with politicians' capacity to change their party, or to support the very parties or candidates they initially complained about. Moreover, it also stands as a reminder that one needs to vote in the person s/he believes in – and not in the ones who are taken as more likely to win. The theatre of Mariposa is still performed, the play it represents is still in vogue; and, in this theatre, our role is that of peripheral characters, watching, silently, masked protagonists who pretend to be honest and who shall never represent us.

[45] That the relationship established and maintained between Canada and the British crown is an intricate one is far from being a novelty; but the history of such relationship cannot pass unnoticed. Such issue came to the spotlight especially during World War I, when England "forced" (strongly invited?) Canadian troops in a battle wherefrom, to the knowledge of many, no concrete benefit could come to Canada no matter the result. Even though the matter of Canadians' identification with Canada as their nation – and their gradual questioning of British influence therein – was something common by that time, it was in 1914, more specifically, that their unhappiness approached the brink of a rebellious attitude towards their austere and far too present father. This was the year when Germany invaded Belgium; an event that has compelled Britain to fight Germany due to an alliance between the countries. All of Britain's colonies, including Canada, were then promptly coerced to take part in the dispute, eventually being drafted to fight alongside the motherland. Given such context, it was clear to everyone that Canadian soldiers were

It was specifically in 1907, in The Colonial Conference, that the self-governing colonies of two of Australia and Canada began to be collectively referred to as Dominions; the status of an Empire's dominion was, curiously, actually desirable since it meant a step forward. Most nations under British control were first colonies, then the "glory of the Dominion" and, eventually, independent states. Only after 1930 that British dominions were capable of really gaining such status of independent, and, bearing in mind that Leacock's novel was written in 1912, this was a historical moment in Canada when the British crown still exerted a rather considerable control on the ideological, political, social, and financial directions of the country. As the Second World War was finished, the word "dominion" would gradually become obsolete, inasmuch as every land under the British crown began to be referred to as part of Commonwealth, its democratic state (something like our "republic"), whereto the crown plays but a figurative role. Contextual joke are all-pervading in the sketches; apropos to the confusing historic events that are distant from the Brazilian contemporary reader, the narrator also describes the morning of elections day, after the campaign and before the elections. Mariposa looks completely different from anything one may picture:

> In any case, everybody who has ever seen Mariposa knows just what Election Day is like. The shops, of course, are, as a matter of custom, all closed, and *the bar rooms are all closed by law so that you have to go in by the back way.* All the people are in their best clothes and at first they walk up and down the street *in a solemn way*

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dragooned into World War I, notwithstanding their lack of involvement in it. For some Canadians, this has been a painful reminder that, despite the country's emerging status as one of the wealthiest, most industrialised, modern societies on earth, Canada was still nothing but a mere colonial puppet controlled by the very large hands of British empire, still unauthorised to run its own foreign affairs. As a result, both Canadian common citizens and even the country's political representatives began to grow worn-out after so many years of colonial abuse, feeling more and more sceptical about Canada's accountability for British choices and businesses. Eventually, the sacrifices of Canadian soldiers in key European fronts such as the Battle of Vimy Ridge in France (1917), where over ten thousand Canadians were killed, hardened public opinion that Canada was a mature nation in its own right, deserving to be acknowledged as such. About half a decade after Leacock's novel was published, Canada would finally (at least partially) understand the necessity to evade the shadow of its ex-colonisers, becoming much more autonomous, as the inhabitants of Mariposa wish from the onset of the novel. The nostalgic alliance to the British crown is still there, but it is now of a much more symbolic nature.

> *just as they do on the twelfth of July and on St. Patrick's Day, before the fun begins*. Everybody keeps looking in at the different polling places to see if anybody else has voted yet, because, of course, *nobody cares to vote first for fear of being fooled after all and voting on the wrong side*. (Leacock, *Sketches* 144)

My analysis shall address the issue of Canada's "national" days (such as the twelfth of July and St. Patrick's Day) in the following section, but, so far, other things deserve our attention. In the case of this excerpt, we have again the idea of democracy as a circus, through the narrator's ironic view on the matter. The process of going to vote is indeed very similar to going to the theatre or to the church, especially in what regards the performative nature of such events. Ontologically, our clothing is not important; we do not need to be well dressed as for us to take part in our democratic rights and duties. Likewise, when we go to church and/or to the theatre, the logic is the same – after all, we can pray to that God, watch that play, or vote to that party regardless of the clothes we wear. Despite of that, many subjects have always seen such occasions as an opportunity to show off – to put on their best clothing. We all know people like Mariposans, and I dare say that not one of us is that different from them.

Like everything in our life, including going to the university and/or to the wedding of a friend of ours, the vile development of our society has diluted the meanings of every sort of ritual and turned it into something else. We no longer go out *to see* anything, we go out *to be seen* by someone; and that is precisely what the narrator is making fun of herein. Even our political movements have become more like a social event than an exercise of democracy (after all, as the former it has been working, as the latter not so much). So, what the narrator of Leacock's sketches describe is not so far from many similar events taking place nowadays, actually within our very context. Given the fact that elections happen very rarely, to wear such clothes would not be enough; this is why Mariposans also walk through the streets in a solemn way, as if they were products in an exhibition. The de facto act of voting is, in the end, not only far from being the most important event of the day; it is actually not important at all. People of Mariposa do not care about parties and/or candidates; they are worried about what the day implies, and not about the day itself. Moreover, no one wants to take the risk of voting first, to avoid making a mistake – as if there were a "wrong" option, which is that of the minority. These characters' behaviour is analogous to ours. The mockery of the sketches narrator fits like a glove; and, in this sense, the joke only applies because everyone knows perfectly well that such irony also applies to our purported democracy. We are as politically hypocritical and accommodated. We share the same sin. Like it or not, we are Mariposa.[46]

3.5. Bagshaw: The ultimate traveller

The chapter of elections' day finishes with Smith celebrating his victory; but you are wrong if you think Bagshaw or Drone are disheartened by the results. As the narrator says repeatedly, if you are indeed imagining that it is because "you don't know Mariposa". These characters might have failed to be elected, but who is a genuine victor in Mariposa? Jeff, Bagshaw, Drone, Pupkin… any careless reading is already able to identify that, if Mariposans share a characteristic, it is the fact that, except for Smith, none of them win anything. Everyone is a loser, but a loser described as a winner – and that is what makes the difference. The development of the comic plot, after all, depends on the "mastered moment, or the prevailing objective, is a way of winning something when you are actually losing" (Rourke 49). It is indeed difficult to distinguish losers and winners in the narrative itself; therefore, the prevailing purpose of this mastered moment succeeds to provoke readers' indignation with their laughter, winning through the characters' losses as these are placed within such overturned prism. Actually, as the narrator describes Mariposa as a whole, one might easily perceive the many possibilities of laughter (even though it tends to happen either through the reinforcement of mainstream norms or through their ridiculing).

It seems thus that what makes my laughter different from yours is a basic division, but of paramount importance as it defines the controversial agendas that this or that joke might endorse. Those humorous writers who, like Leacock, are capable of understanding and strengthening "the rather glib idea of irony as the last refuge of the powerless against the powerful" (57) are, in my view, the ones that deserve to be commended. After all, it is this sort of humour that might empower those who had been made powerless, and disempower those who had been made powerful, transforming the moment of laughter into something very close to the tragic feeling of catharsis. In fact, such process of comic inversion "offers a good, if bizarre, insight into irony's part in the cathartic victory which is more commonly said to arise from high tragedy" (Rourke 58). It is not because its cathartic victory is marked by laughter that the irony's part in the production of comic effects makes the readers' response less worthy or estimable than that of those who are reading any higher tragedy. In this sense, and still regarding the elections, the moment when the narrator is profiling the candidates is a very ironic one and amenable to cause dozens of comic responses by the readers, given how preposterous and familiar the sensation it causes is. It is important to bear in mind here that we are talking of politicians, potential mayors of Mariposa, so that this ridiculing can well be directed to any other subjects assuming a similar position. One character whose description sounds particularly peculiar in this sense is the Liberal candidate, Bagshaw:

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[46] As well observed by Semley, "*Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town* reveals an unfortunate fundament of the Canadian character: our ambivalence. The aim of humour, Leacock wrote in 1937's *Humour and Humanity*, was nothing more than 'the kindly contemplation of the incongruities of life.' *Sunshine Sketches* follows this line, indexing the mostly charming eccentricities and modest hypocrisies of the citizenry in the made-up Ontario town of Mariposa (modelled, it is widely believed, on Orillia). Mariposa and its people, we're told, are quirky and odd and funny in their own way – naïve and simple-hearted and so are we, to paraphrase Dostoyevsky's patricidal epic *The Brothers Karamazov*" (12).

> Bagshaw owned a half share in the harness business and a quarter share in the tannery and *that made him a business man*. He paid for a pew in the Presbyterian Church and *that represented religion in Parliament*. He attended college for two sessions thirty years ago, and *that represented education and kept him abreast with modern science*, if not ahead of it. He kept a little account in one bank and a big account in the other, so *that he was a rich man or a poor man at the same time*. (Leacock, *Sketches* 130)

As the narrator sees it, the fact Bagshaw paid for having a whole bench in the church to himself means he is part of a religious group, as well as acquainted with scientific advances for having attended a few classes in the college more than a quarter of a century ago. But these are specious arguments of an ironic narrator. The evidence is clearly not good enough; all things considered, Bagshaw's characterisation does not seem make sense at all. To make things worse, readers also learn that, for him to look poor and rich at the same time, Bagshaw opens two bank accounts: one with just some money and another with a lot of it. The reason why such characterisation is still laughable is but one: the imaginary of corruption and political two-facedness permeating

Baghsaw's characterisation seems to be still effective in the contemporaneity, for this is still deemed the archetype of politicians, unfortunately not by chance. Translated or original, the joke still works; Bagshaw, with his spurious means to cause certain impressions, represents a figure whose type we know far too well. Besides the evidences brought in the previous excerpt, manifesting Bashaw's hypocrisy, there are other interesting aspects that are worth looking at. The narrator, apparently like most Mariposans, is convinced that Bagshaw is a man completely attached to the town and who could never conceive living in another place, which is the very same idea that most political candidates are still willing to sell as they highlight their deep feelings for the place they want to represent.

Controversially, everybody also know that the Liberal candidate is almost never therein. "Most of the time, John Henry Bagshaw had to be at Ottawa (though he preferred the quiet of his farm and always left it, as he said, with a sigh)." When Bagshaw was not in Ottawa, "he was in Washington, and of course at any time they might need him in London, so that it was no wonder that he could only *be in Mariposa about two months of the year*" (Leacock, *Sketches* 131). Regardless of the fact that Bagshaw assumingly "preferred" to stay in Mariposa, his supposed responsibilities and obligations forced him to be either in Ottawa, or in Washington, or in London, etc. In the end, he only spent about two months of the year within Mariposa boundaries, proving to have no attachment whatsoever to the town, which is contrary to what the narrator tells us. Regardless of such allegations and Bagshaw's explanations, Leacock's comic inversions are invitations to the attentive gaze of sceptical readers. After all, data provided makes it growingly difficult for them to conclude that this Bagshaw felt as connected to the town as the narrator tries to convince us since, in practice, he would never be there; and the fact that he always leaves "with a sigh" does not change that. It seems, therefore, that for readers to grasp the irony here, one has to know why Bagshaw would be more interested in going to Ottawa than to stay in Mariposa: the former is a large metropolitan centre filled with opportunities attractive to someone in his position, while the latter is far too insignificant.

The reader, likewise, is also aware that Washington is not only an even larger and more prominent city; it is actually the capital of the U.S. – place where important things happen. When Bagshaw is needed in London he has to travel now overseas, to the capital city of Canadian's old Empire, the pulsating heart of the Dominion, place wherefrom Canada has rooted. Britain, in this sense, can be read as the authoritative father of Canada, and the U.S.A. as its older brother; both higher in size, strength, and importance, both capable of providing Bagshaw with reasons more blatant and conspicuous for him to be there. Due to his political pretensions in Mariposa, though, he needs to be cautious. Advancing some of my following reflections, it is just worth reminding that the readers of my translated version of Bagshaw are neither from England, Canada, nor the U.S. Therefore, as to deal with the critique articulated by Leacock herein, I could either provide a spatial adaptation to the readers in my target context or simply expect them to become involved with the space of the original as to infer how humour operates thereby. In the first situation, if that was my purpose, I could easily attempt to "restage" the novel's contextual structure reconstructing Leacock's references in parallel with those references that might be more easily available for the target readers given their historical specificity.[47] Even though none of these choices are objectively neither better or worse, I have opted for maintaining the original references as they are coherent to my ambition of boosting my Brazilian readers' knowledge regarding Canada.

As evinced by the narrator's description of Bagshaw, the experience of irony is always a holistic one; after all, "[i]rony arises when one tries, by the interaction of terms upon one another, to produce a development which uses all the terms" (511). What provides the major framework for irony to be effectively built on and for the reader to, consequently, produce a development which uses all the terms is not only what is being said, but also what is left unsaid. What is hidden from the overt and objective interpretation of the reader, which is this subjective and veiled interaction of terms upon one another, is what provides the ironic discourse with its raw material. At the same time that, in humorous discourse, nothing that is said can be taken as a clear-cut and unconditional truth, nothing can be ignored or overlooked in the interpretative process. Every detail matters. "Hence, from the standpoint of this total form (this 'perspective of perspectives'), none of the participating 'sub-perspectives' can be treated as either precisely right or precisely wrong. They are all voices, or personalities, or positions, integrally affecting one another". The ironist never gives us one single perspective, but an intermingled array of them – a panoply of sub-perspectives that do not evade confusion. As we have seen through the several spatial and temporal dialogues promoted in Leacock's novel, the standpoint of irony requires things, locals, and peoples to be always in contact with one another. The narrator influences readers to ask themselves how these many sub-perspectives, constructed and erected in the background of the seemingly single story, are built. There is in this sense a cluster of sub-perspectives underlying the main perspective so that, ultimately, "[w]hen the dialectic is properly formed, they are the number of characters needed to produce the total development of irony (Rourke 512).

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[47] E.g. replacing Mariposa by some other fictional town in the Brazilian countryside and making Bagshaw travel to Sao Paulo, or some other city that would already have this meaningful link to other ideas of countryside versus metropolis within the country. That, in my view, would be pertinent for some other sort of project – I myself am afraid that, by doing such, I could be eliminating the meaningfulness of the Canadian local and its specific interactions with other spaces and also stereotyping the Brazilian local or reaffirming national binarisms. These consequences, in case they materialised, would ultimately move against my research ambitions.

The total development of irony depends on such dialectic process to be properly formed – as well as, for the humorous meaning to be constructed, readers do not need to be provided with one single and right interpretation to what is being narrated. In fact, readers are required to abandon any attempt at nourishing a single interpretation. In the world of literary translation, the only thing that is certain is uncertainty; and in the world of humour, the only thing that is clear is confusion. The advantage – if one can call it so – of translating Leacock's novel into the Brazilian context is that both U.S. supremacy and the nostalgia for the British Empire are still present in Canadian life (of course to a different extent). In this sense, talking today about how London or Washington mitigate and dwarf the importance of a town like Mariposa would not be farfetched at all, given that they keep doing so, and for the same reasons. For us to understand why Leacock's characters behave as they do, we must be aware that such intricate relationship to both the U.K. and the U.S.A. has had a strong interference in Canadians' sense of loss and of inferiority towards these places – even when they are telling a joke.[48]Having said that, it is also fruitful to analyse some of Baghsaw's cosmopolitan'" (187). One is always inclined to look for those features that give one the chance of getting a little bit more distant from the object of laughter and/or despise. We all know that being less woman, less black, less disabled, and less gay is often advantageous if we are eager to feel as comfortable as we can regarding who we are. But that, in the end, does not change who we are in essence, does it? It is in this sense that "as provinciality is seen as something irrevocably connected with being Canadian, the audience can renounce its provinciality only by disavowing its Canadianism as well." This is why it is much easier for the sketches' narrator to evaluate the story from the outside, as if s/he were able to be "less from Mariposa" for one minute or two. It is not difficult to conclude that there is nothing ethically commendable about that; analysing facts from the outside is fruitful, but doing so by simply reinforcing outside epistemes guided thereto brings us no contributions whatsoever. For someone from Mariposa, however, that seems to be expected. "The concealed self-deprecation, even self-hatred, involved in such disavowal, the eagerness to embrace the values of classes and cultures held superior, the wish to conciliate the members of those other groups by deriding one's own. These are usually attitudes displayed by people from oppressed classes or ethnic groups who have managed to make their way out of the group, alienating themselves in the process. 'Yes, they are awful', such jokes seem to be saying, 'But look, I am laughing at them. I am no longer one of them'" (189). Cognisant of Stephen Leacock's privileged background as a white middle-class Canadian born in England who went to college in the U.S.A., Atwood concludes that he is ridiculing Canadians for the sake of laughter, even though, essentially, there is nothing funny about them at all – people have just got used to laughing at the same jokes. Her reproach is severe: "Who then are these cosmopolitan Canadians, uneasily laughing at their country, their countrymen and to a lesser extent at themselves? Certainly a large number of them are members of the educated middle class, conditioned through many years of schooling to depreciate things Canadian. Is Canada really such a joke? Or is the absurdity in the eyes of the beholder?" (*Second words* 190) The irony of Leacock's narrator and the failures of Mariposa are, for Atwood, only there due to his own wish to reiterate alienation, to reinforce the idea that Canada is but a joke about victimised survivors, and to highlight that the best Canadians could do is moving as farther from the joke as possible. Maybe she is right, maybe she is not; but to me what Leacock meant with his jokes do not make any difference, for it is what they can do that has motivated my analysis and translation proposal. In my opinion, the fact that the narrator ridicules Mariposa through an ironic gaze towards its admiration towards metropolitan values can also be read as a critique against the very cosmopolitan logic. I believe his/her scorn move more often in the direction of freeing readers from their preconceived epistemes, which are much more detrimental than the joke about the nation. Laughing of one's nation is always much less damaging than venerating or fetishising it – it is when we are proud, and not when we are sceptical, that we tend to do the most stupid things. If there is something that Leacock's sketches do, is help us realise how everything is amenable to be seen as ridicule – even the very idea of the nation. People living in peripheral spaces indeed often tend to idealise what is foreign and depreciate what is local, given years of institutional and informal schooling, but that is just one of the many problems we have. The upsurge of right-wing parties and the nationalist fever that has infected both central and marginal countries (take Brazil as an example) remind us that we should not react to such indeed problematic tradition by focusing on the local, expelling the foreign, and reinforcing the national myth. Such solution sounds to me worse than the problem. Of course, I am not saying this is what Atwood's criticism implies; I am just resorting to her analysis in order to make my statement: national speeches in order to see how he himself addresses his condition, as well as the responses of Mariposa people to them, especially when they concern his political prospects.

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[48] Laughing at the other is easy; things only become complicated when we see ourselves reflected by the ridiculed other, when we identify that the joke is also about us. It is therefore fruitful to imagine three different pictures: that of a British, a U.S., and a Canadian audience reading *Sunshine sketches* for the very same time. Before you judge me for such suggestion, let me say I am not advocating any essentialised nor all-embracing nativist gaze regarding the novel; that is far from being my point. As a matter of fact, Atwood has already done such imaginative experiment in her own analysis of the sketches. In what regards Leacock's portrayal of the "quaint provincials" of Mariposa, as she sees it, "if the English audience is saying 'I am not like them, I am a gentleman' and if their American counterparts are saying 'I am not like them, I am not a dupe', Canadian audiences seem to be saying 'I am not like them. I am not provincial, I am

In just a few occasions the narrator brings the candidate's utterances in direct speech: "'I am an old man now, gentlemen', Bagshaw said, 'and the time must soon come when I must not only leave politics, but must *take my way towards that goal from which no traveller returns*'". The reader knows that Baghsaw is old and tired; and, for this reason, he is probably alerting those who support him that this might be his last candidacy because his demise is unfortunately eminent. Humour occurs herein also through inversion, for that is not, however, how his speech is understood: "There was a deep hush when Bagshaw said this. It was understood to imply that he thought of going to the United States" (Leacock, *Sketches* 140). This inference is indeed rather comic; the hush was not caused because Bagshaw's poignant statement touches Mariposans – or better, it does touch Mariposans, but not because they interpreted it correctly. When he says he would be soon go to that place wherefrom no traveller returns, people believe that he is about to move to the U.S. and, thereby, would never be back – as usual. What readers infer in response is that, probably, that what we have here is an overstated generalisation that is comic because it exaggerates on an actual fact of Early XX century Canada: most Mariposans that go to the U.S. do often stay there for good. In the last chapter of the novel, readers learn they are incorporating precisely such elapsed traveller.[49] As the narrator sees it, even when, at first, Canadians are to return, the trip is postponed, until it is completely forgotten. Besides that, the fact that here the interlocutors do not consider the possibility that Bagshaw is talking about his death is also funny for another reason: for them, it would be easier for a traveller to return from death than from the United States. There is a rather historical truth behind such joke, which points to how differently these countries have been colonised and (re)populated. Morton maintains that, "as people migrated from Europe

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identity is like God, it is disrespectful to laugh at them and much easier to believe in both, even though, in the end, none does actually exist.

[49] Even though the narrator talks directly to "us" during the whole narrative, it is only at the end that we find out in which context. For all that time we had been in the train to Mariposa, sitting by his/her side, and listening to his stories about the town. Moreover, we, readers, also seem to be from Mariposa, and had left it with the promise to go back; but, as the narrator often reminds us, that would be our first trip back home. As the story is over, we, the readers, finally get to the small town in the sunshine, where a new story is about to begin.

to North America, Canadians gradually got used to the fact that most immigrants who came first to the country, especially the richest, would never settle therein" (49); otherwise, as soon as possible, they would move on to the U.S., the country of opportunities.

Structuring irony upon the historical condition of Canada, Leacock's narrator provides readers with what Vandaele calls a "social play": "Groups may have different agreements on what or who can be targeted in social play. In other words, humour depends on implicit cultural schemes (to be breached for incongruous purposes; to be known for the purpose of comical solution)". The most thriving sphere of Canadian society becomes the target of mockery; the narrator is making fun of the prosperous immigrants, not the poor ones (for the latter would indeed, for lack of options, come to stay). Therefore, it is by providing comical solutions to situations serious to the country that the social play, as promoted within the narrative, targets those who are not often targeted in the hegemonic cultural schemes of Canadian, and now Brazilian, society. In this sense, these incongruous purposes of humour gradually demonstrate how such social play takes place vis-à-vis a dialectic process of characters' ironic positioning in certain events, as well as readers' response to such events. It is this process that "has its rules and taboos for targeting (telling what or whom may be laughed at). One has to be part of a 'comical paradigm' to even appreciate – let alone translate – certain paradigm-specific humour" (Vandaele 150). Translating humour means translating specific paradigms, not specific meanings and/or words, in spite of the interconnectedness of all these issues. To laugh is to undergo a social play, and to join a similar journey to that of Bagshaw, wherefrom no traveller returns – or, better, a journey wherefrom, when the traveller does return, s/he is no longer the same person, but a mirthful reaction to what s/he was once.

3.6. An unnamed speaker: The art of sophism

Since I am talking about travellers, let us go back a few paragraphs to the elections – well, a little bit before they happen. The literary chronotope is now that of the political social events accompanying the candidacy of some characters. As the sketches' readers can infer, this whole environment of political campaign, candidacy, elections' day, etc. serve to make us cross the fantasy threshold of Mariposa, to enter its chronotopic specificity. One of the greatest achievements of literature is indeed its capacity to alter our own space and time constraints simply by inviting us to experience other chronotopes. After closing a book we are definitely transformed, both within ourselves and in what regards our own perception of the outer world. Yes, our space and time do also change.[50] Back to the novel, however, moments before we know the results for the election we learn about the steps of the candidates, friends from Mariposa who are now competing against one another. The narrator thus presents reverend Drone, Bagshaw, and Mr. Smith to us readers. As such scenery is painted, something curious happens: the narrator observes that nobody from the town is asked to carry out the election' speeches that are about to occur. Instead of hiring someone from Mariposa for the job, those in charge of the campaigns organisation make another choice: "They had imported a special speaker from the city, a grave man with a white tie, who put his whole heart into the work and would take nothing for it except his expenses and a sum of money for each speech. Beyond the money, he would take nothing" (Leacock, *Sketches* 146).

Here the narrator is, at any cost, trying to defend the idea of having this speaker who comes from the city especially for Mariposa elections; but his/her discourse sounds absurd. Apparently, even s/he is capable of identifying that, to some level, his/her logic makes no sense whatsoever. Although it the idea of having someone oblivious to the context of Mariposa talking about the political scenario of the town might perhaps sound strange for readers, this choice is admittedly coherent with the town's idealisation of everything that comes from the city. This special speaker had been imported from the city, and is a seemingly very respectful grave man described by the narrator as a very self-sacrificing and altruistic subject. Moreover, the speaker is willing to puts his whole heart into the work even though he would be given nothing in exchange. So far so good – if only that were true. But irony once again emerges, and what comes after the narrator's allegations contradicts the whole image that the reader might have created theretofore. The speaker, we learn, would take nothing apart from his expenses and a sum of money for each speech. He would be paid, and well paid. This man would not be given just some money for his expenses, but actually for every speech he would have to address. Of course, this does not seem to be wrong, in the end it is his job, but it is not an act of magnanimity, either, as inferred by the narrator: it is simple business. "Well", the reader might ask him/herself, "beyond money what else could he take, anyways?" This is what makes irony such a crucial tool in the narrative, since the reader has to identify the narrator's bias for the sake of getting onto the stage of Mariposa campaign.

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[50] Given the importance of being part of the comical paradigm for both appreciating and translating a laughable event, I reiterate the importance of how spatially and temporally transgressing novel *Sunshine sketches* is, taking us back to the idea of the chronotope. As evinced so far, the narrator's irony can be recreated, travelling through space and time as to provide readers with renovated possibilities to appreciate the world that surrounds them. Likewise, the primary rules and taboos for telling what or whom may be laughed at, problematised, transgressed, and questioned by Leacock's novel are still pretty much what underlay contemporary society. In this sense, literature is capable of placing as many people as possible within the same comical paradigm for the paradigm-specific humour to reach a considerable audience – inviting us to its specific chronotope. It does not matter how specific the original target audience is: what marks the literary experience is its inner status of belonginglessness. As such, a literary work is always full of blank spaces waiting for the reader to fill in with their contributions: the spacelessness and timelessness of literature requires us to bring our own temporal and spatial configuration in order to make out its meanings. Literature touches our minds vicariously by using the bodies of other characters – it transforms our chronotope by describing the chronotope of others. Both translation and literature, in the end, do not have to do with showing the other to the self; they have to do with exposing another self to this very same self through the advent of the other. Self and other are intermingled, questioned, and hybridised. That is, it is not the landscape that literature changes, but the glasses we are wearing for such landscape to be gazed upon.

The narrator's drive to make his/her addressee think everyone is profoundly attached to Mariposa and are, as a result, happy to do what they can to help the town's interests without asking for anything in return permeates the story. This regardless of how difficult it is for us to believe in such thing, especially given the evidence pointing to the contrary direction. In the end, if the sense of community that exists in the atmosphere of common Mariposans is indeed a characteristic of the town and its members, this is not true for those who the narrator admires and so willingly endeavours to convince us to do likewise. Those who are making profit of the town, those who have financial and/or political interests when undertaking their philanthropic actions, none of them share this same feeling of giving without taking, regardless of the fact that the narrator is unable to acknowledge such issue throughout the book. All things considered, the grave man with the white tie, who puts his whole heart into what he is hired to do personifies the classic figure of the sophist. In the words of Rassier, from the moment it was conceived, sophism has been related to the connection established between language and power for, when it emerges in Sicilia, five centuries before Christ, democracy follows the expulsion of previous governing tyrants. Power, as a result, became a trophy, and those willing to possess it needed to master the art of rhetoric – e.g. during events when lands were passed on for new owners (58).[51] This context would be responsible for swelling the "market of sophists" – as the ability to use language with wisdom and property became a valuable item. Travellers would go from one city to another for teaching people discursive strategies in exchange for money (59).[52] Grosso modo, that is precisely what the inhabitants of Mariposa do by bringing this special speaker from the city with a contract whereby they guarantee he is going to receive proper payment for each of his speeches. It does not matter if his job is either to defend or criticise this or that candidate since, as Rassier reminds us, the strategy of sophism works for both sides.

Those who practice it can use discourse to convince others that something is good or that this very same thing is evil, depending on the interests involved (60).[53] The sophist is a classic figure, but its role keeps up to contemporaneity. Language is still an arena for power battles, and the incipit rapport established between narrator and reader is also an evidence of that – after all, the narrator him/herself is also a master of sophistic discourse, whose ironic perspective helps us build our own Mariposa based on his/her version of it. We trust the sophist, and s/he knows that. The quid pro quo is still at work: professionals who "speak better" are, for instance, better paid and/or admired by all other social spheres. Those who communicate through discursive channels far too distant from the formal ones, on the other hand, are target of prejudice and scorn. The narrator's opinion that Mariposa needs someone who is coherent with this definition of a sophist for the elections evince that his/her reasoning does not escape commonplace – i.e. endorsing the idea of hiring a speaker from the city, s/he agrees with the stereotypical logic of "speaking well". "The notion of 'commonplace' means that stereotypes are invoked without conscious awareness of their source and provenance, as an unspecific 'it is said'" (Flynn et al 4). It is said that one must master rhetoric for discourse to be effectively transmitted, but the fact that "it is said" does not mean that "it is true" – on the contrary, if something has more to do with common sense than with empirical observation, this is per se an evidence of how questionable such idea proves to be.[54]The picture is clear: it does not matter what one says, it matters how s/he says. After all, the sophist quality acts not in the rational aspect, but in what concerns rhetorical affection – evincing thereby the pragmatic character of the rapport that is constructed between speaker and interlocutor (Rassier 63).[55]

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[51] "*Sabemos que desde seu início a sofística diz respeito à relação entre linguagem e poder, pois, quando ela surgiu na Sicília, cinco séculos antes de Cristo, a democracia sucedia à expulsão dos tiranos que haviam governado e o poder era conquistado por aqueles que dominavam a linguagem e a argumentação — notadamente quando dos processos que designavam os novos proprietários das terras confiscadas.*"

[52] "*Foi esse contexto que suscitou a aparição dos sofistas, professores ambulantes, pagos para ensinar as estratégias do discurso.*"

[53] "*Ora, tal estratégia corresponde a uma técnica recorrente nos escritos dos sofistas: a argumentação in utramque partem, suscetível de ser explorada tanto para criticar quanto para defender uma mesma ideia.*"

It is a two-way road: discursive positions are a result of social stratification, but they also determine such stratification. Leacock's narrator treats the idea of sophism with sharpness and sarcasm – but, for getting his point, one must be willing to go beyond the surfaces of meaning present in the first layer of the text. The joke is there for it to be found and interpreted, the inversion is a prerequisite for the ironist to achieve its purposes – what an ironic sentence means is, generally, the opposite of what it says. In *Sunshine sketches* we can only find the comic effects if we do agree that the narrator is not telling us the truth, except when s/he does that by chance. "The ironist sees the mask for what it is, and when he shares this perception with an audience, he is on the way to becoming a dramatist. Nature is ironic (or yields irony), then, when you choose to regard her from the standpoint of unforeseen possibilities" (Rourke 227). Not only does the ironist see the mask for what it is, but s/he also helps readers do likewise by sharing this perception with them. In this sense, literature operates as translation also does: not as an attempt at showing us the face behind the mask, but by raising our awareness to the fact that there are only masks and no face.[56]The literary discourse is beneath the face: an inner discourse rather than an external one. The book is likewise not the one that is talking to us – it is only a channel for us to listen to our minds. As my translation proposal finally gets onto the train to Mariposa, I am aware that this specific conversation between book and mind has already started, and I am sure it shall keep going on. Done. I have listened to Leacock's narrative, now what I ask you is to listen to mine.

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[54] Take religion, for instance.

[55] "*Essa qualidade atua não no aspecto racional, mas no aspecto afetivo da retórica, explicitando o caráter pragmático na relação entre o locutor e o ouvinte.*"

[56] There are, indeed, many unforeseen possibilities that have perhaps never been envisaged by most subjects, and one of the roles of art is to open people's eyes to such possibilities, for them to choose how to regard what is seen with a new and less predictable array of tools to make out an image. Rourke does see pretty well how the effectiveness of humour to address what is laughable and what is cryable turns the ironist into a stance that works both as humourist and dramatist. Humour is not limited to help us talk of what can be laughed at – it also provides laughter through the readers' identification of the tragic details hidden between that which makes something be considered funny. Everything, in the end, is ironic or – at least – yields irony; and the idea is to realise and make out how to take advantage of that as, at least in my view, Leacock has done and, consequently, his readers are liable to find the means to do likewise. Literature, in the end, is not a means to teach us something about the world that

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surrounds us; it is, on the contrary, a means to provide us with the necessary tools for us to find out how we can learn all these things by ourselves.

CHAPTER IV –“ALLOW ME TO TRANSLATE”

> *Toute qualité chez l’écrivain est considérée comme un défaut chez le traducteur: si le traducteur est original, on le traite de présomptueux; s’il est audacieux, on dit qu’il est infidèle; respectueux, on le prend pour un larbin; humble, on le trouve plat. Malheur aux originaux dont les traductions mériteraient elles-mêmes d’être traduites! Pourquoi une traduction, en tant qu'oeuvre d’art, sera toujours inférieure à l’original ? Parce que la première n’est qu’une demi-vérité, et l’autre un complet mensonge.*
> (Carlos Batista 2014)

4. Translating Mariposa: How to re-call the sunshine town

Having analysed the development of Leacock’s plot, I get now to my comments concerning my version of the sketches – which also reflect on my choice for including para-texts discussing the cultural, political, and historical references in the proposed translation. Coherent to this chapter’s epigraph, I work hereinafter on the premise that literary translations shall be as daring as the original, which, on its turn, when innovative, deserves just that. Our faithfulness, in this sense, should be not to the fixed meanings that we imagine to have seen in the original, but to the ever-changing circle of meanings promoted by literature – i.e. not faithful to what we see, but to what clouds our vision. Literary translation helps such spiral circle to get even farther from its absent centre, as meanings never guide us back to the beginning, but help us envisage infinite re-beginnings. In parallel with my opening words in the previous chapter, I consider it pertinent to start this analysis with the characterisation of the town where the fictional events occur. This is so for, to start with, the very name of such town is something that already brings deep difficulties for the process of translation. Such problem cannot elude its inevitable hypertextuality, since there are two distinct places in Canada; a town named “Orillia” and a township named “Mariposa”, and the novel may direct readers’ association to the direction of both of these “real” places, notwithstanding the fact that, in terms of representation, the narrator alleges to be actually talking of none.[57] Most critics pose that the *Sunshine sketches* is based on Orillia, and this is clearly justifiable as that is where Leacock spent his childhood. Furthermore, when he gave the town the supposedly fictional name "Mariposa", his inspiration was probably the fact that many people he met in Orillia really came from the former township Mariposa; most of those who worked in the agricultural zones of Orillia, for instance, were inhabitants of Mariposa.

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[57] Historical fact: Canada became a country in 1867, the same year Orillia was founded as a village. “While growth and progress have been strong in recent years, Orillia has been able to retain its small-town charm and has learned to look to the future while celebrating its past.” The town (now city) Orillia, is situated “in the economic heartland of Central

What this seems to cause, in what regards representation, is a confusion of impressions, for in the end my reader might very well associate Leacock's Mariposa with the Canadian homonymous one, a settlement close to Orillia, but which ceased to exist even before Leacock moved into Canada. Nevertheless, it is worth remembering that although the fictional name chosen by Leacock is not fictional at all, only the name is not a literary creation, the rest is nothing but fiction; as well as Leacock's voice is the voice of the narrator. The book's title is an intricate issue, for the narrative discusses tales taking place in a "sunshine town" called "Mariposa", and this image of a sunny place is of paramount importance for the reader to construct the identity of the city. The notion of brightness, of sun, of a brilliant, vivid, and intense space for that narrative to develop its colourful scenes is crucial in literary terms. Thing is: in English, the metaphoric use of the word "Mariposa" seems to fit pretty well here, for the word means "any of several liliaceous plants of the genus *Calochortus*, of the southwestern U.S. and Mexico, having brightly coloured tulip-like flowers".[58] Readers might, thus, relate the name "Mariposa" with this colourful and glowing flower (a sort of lily), which glitters every time the sun touches its petals. However, the same word in Portuguese has a pretty distinct meaning; and, perhaps, in the metaphoric sense, one could say the very opposite one: "*Denominação comum aos lepidópteros noturnos; De coloração comumente discreta, estes insetos, ao pousarem, geralmente distendem as asas em sentido horizontal, ao contrário das borboletas, que são diurnas e geralmente pousam com as asas distendidas*

Ontario and is within a day's drive of 130 million customers". "Mariposa", on the other hand, is not a town but a township, hence much smaller and with no theatres, universities, etc.: "The whole area within its bounds is 75,102 acres. It has on the south Lake Scugog, making a deep broken front; on the east Ops and Fenelon; on the north, Eldon; and on the west, Brock Township, of Ontario County." The township's most current activity is agriculture for "the land is generally rich, with heavy clay sub-soil; and Mariposa, from a repulsive wilderness, has in half a century advanced till it now has more first class farms, fine brick residences, and good farm buildings, than any other township in the County". © 2011 Ontario Genealogy: http://www.ontariogenealogy.com/Victoria/mariphis

[58] © 2015Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English: http://www.ldoceonline.com/

verticalmente."[59]The same "Mariposa" might, therefore, resemble light and sun, in English, but darkness and night, in Portuguese.

As a matter of fact, another dictionary to Brazilian Portuguese gives us three more (no less problematic) possibilities for defining the word in its figurative usage: 1) "*estilo de natação derivado do de bruços, em que os braços são levantados simultaneamente para a frente enquanto se dá impulso com as pernas, movimentando-as juntas para cima e para baixo*"; 2) "*Espécie de draga de tração animal, empregada na abertura de açudes*"; 3) "*Prostituta, meretriz*".[60]It is thus predictable that the process of shifting languages and contexts results in the inevitable shifting of perspectives; process which needs not be ignored and/or deemed a flaw or drawback of translation, but an inherent, desirable, and actually integral aspect of the literary mobility that translating entails. There are many ways for "adapting" the town's name, perhaps using the existing "Orillia" or inventing a brand new one in my text. I however have concluded that, even though its metaphorical effects are transformed, I would appropriate my translation with the original "Mariposa". That would be just because there is already a global literary system where Leacock's sunshine city is directly associated to the word Mariposa (e.g. the title of the novel in French is *Bienvenue à Mariposa*). My town is homonymous, but the images my readers' minds are going to produce when reading such name is not something I am able to control. Fortunately or not.

4.1. Re-presenting Leacock's female characters

It is also vital to take a look at how women are brought in Leacock's novel, as for me to make out how to (re)present them in my version of the sketches. Although this might sometimes happen in a rather stereotypical manner, it is very interesting to note what aspects are related to such occurrences. These occurrences are however not so common since, mostly, the only women addressed or described by the narrator are, besides Zena Pepperleigh (whose romantic involvement with Mr. Pupkin is narrated in one complete chapter), the ones involved in Jeff's life (who, regardless of being "only the barber", is recurrently present in the sketches' chapters). There are indeed very symbolic issues in Jeff's relationship with his wife and daughter, also rich in terms of my translation, inasmuch as they inform rather well the conditions of women in the rural Canada by the early XX century. The first, perhaps, is the curious fact that, just like our narrator, Jeff's wife remains from the beginning to the end of the novel completely unnamed, she is only addressed as "The Woman", almost as if this were her name. The usage of capital letters implies a certain level of identity "completeness"; perhaps it is a reminder that, if married, no women's name during that time would be of considerable importance. She is also "doing needlework", a token of the stereotype I mentioned, which is closely associated with what would be deemed female affairs. Her being named "The Woman" is thus not something that happens by chance; there are two women, and Jeff is the only man of the family. If it were a matter of chance, in practical terms it would be much easier for Jeff to call his wife and daughter by their names, calling himself, if he wished, as "The Man". But "The Woman" universalises the characterisation of his wife (making us look at her as we "would to any woman") and attests the lack of identity, personality, and voice allowed to female subjects; especially given the fact that, even though her presence pervades one of the chapters, *she does not talk*. This is the chapter about the Cuban lands, and it provides us with a rich elaboration on the family.

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[59] © 2009 Grande Dicionário Houaiss: https://houaiss.uol.com.br/

[60] © 2016 Dicionário do Aurélio. https://dicionariodoaurelio.com/

Near him [Jeff], but away from the table, was The Woman doing needlework, and Myra, when she wasn't working in the Telephone Exchange, was there too with her elbows on the table reading Marie Corelli. (Leacock, *Sketches* 38)	Perto dele, mas longe da mesa, estava *A Mulher* com seus bordados, e *Myra*, quando não estava trabalhando na Central Telefônica, também ficava por lá com os cotovelos sobre a mesa *lendo Marie Corelli*.[61]

Here the reader might also grasp the presence of some kind of generation conflict between Jeff's wife and daughter, Myra, who, when she was not "working in the Telephone Exchange" was also there with her mother, "being a woman". First of all, different from her mother, Myra had a job for herself, and, secondly, when she is home she would not do needlework with her mother nor help her with the household chores or anything that would be common for "a woman in her condition". Misbehaving, enchanted by dreams of grandeur and mesmerised by the possibility of city life, she gets used to reading, and to read quite a lot – perhaps as to escape her (female) reality. In this excerpt we get the concrete reference to a specific author she enjoyed reading: Marie Corelli.[62] From all writers it is very curious indeed that

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[61] All translations and emphases of Leacock's sketches are mine.

[62] Marie Corelli (1855-1924) was a British homosexual novelist.

Leacock refers to the woman who wrote, for instance, *The Sorrows of Satan* (1895), a rather politic novel exposing the decayed core of the hegemonic Christian social structure, as an author who is read by someone living in such a purist and religiously motivated town like Mariposa. It is very symbolic thus to have Myra's mother undeserving to be called by her name and doing needlework, hence her reaffirmation of predefined gender roles, while the latter seems to move pretty much to the opposite direction. Perhaps this is but an ironic reminder that two different generations of women might imply two diverging possibilities for their relating to the world that hawsers them.Moreover, the fact that one has a name and the other does not, nonetheless, is not only meaningful for simply differing them. Myra's name, like any name, is per se a reference. The English word comes from ancient Greek; and it is also the name of a historic town located wherein today one would find the Antalya Province of Turkey, famous especially for its semi-circular theatre.The remodelled façade of Myra Theatre is known to have very detailed decorations with images of theatrical masks and scenes of mythological events, a recurring motif in the life Jeff's daughter, as Marie Corelli was also popular for mixing Christian myth with other sorts of mythology in her fiction.However, reading Marie Corelli or having the name of a Greek theatre does not give readers any clue concerning if or how Myra might have anything to do with such references, until we get to another excerpt, when the narrator, for the first time, indeed describes her to us.

There was Myra who treated lovers like dogs and would slap them across the face with a banana skin to show her utter independence. She was a girl with any amount of talent. You should have heard her recite "The Raven", at the Methodist Social! Simply genius! And when she acted Portia in the Trial Scene of the Merchant of Venice at the High School concert, everybody in Mariposa admitted that you couldn't have told it from the original. So, of course, as soon as Jeff made the fortune, Myra had her resignation in next morning and everybody knew that she was to go to a dramatic school for three months in the fall and become a leading actress. (Leacock,	Havia a Myra, que *tratava seus pretendentes como cães, batendo-lhes no rosto com uma casca de banana para mostrar sua independência completa*. Ela era uma menina de um talento incomensurável. Você devia ter visto no dia que ela recitou "O Corvo", na Methodist Social. Aquilo foi simplesmente genial! E quando ela interpretou a Portia na cena do julgamento, do *Mercador de Veneza*, no festival de teatro do ensino médio... simplesmente ninguém em Mariposa disse ser capaz de distinguir entre ela e o original. Então, é claro, na manhã seguinte depois de *Jeff ter virado milionário*, Myra pediu sua demissão. Já estava todo mundo sabendo que ela iria

Sketches 35)	para uma escola de teatro por três meses, no outono, e *acabaria se tornando uma estrela*.

In one sentence, readers can make a clear picture of how strong this character is. In the 1912 Mariposa, Myra did not hesitate to mistreat her courtesans, although she was cognisant to the fact that, if she wanted to have access to her inheritance, getting married was the very first step. Different from her mother, whose characterisation and role in the novel is rather limited, she seems to be in pursuit of her female independence, not aiming to accept any gentleman's impositions in the process. There was no possibility for a "good marriage" to her; she did not want to get married. Sometimes we, readers (with our male chauvinist minds), even think she is about to find someone to "really" fall in love with. It never happens, though. Rebellious Myra is also a talented stage actress who, when not at work, shall be taking part in any theatrical exhibition of Mariposa at place; and everyone in the town recognises her artistic gift as she gets on the stage. The narrator's enthusiasm is a token of the admiration s/he has for this girl, whose performances are so good that no one could find any flaws "when compared to the original". Since the narrator is talking about a play from Shakespeare, the irony here is that no one actually really *knew* the original whatsoever.[63] Anyways, when she acts Myra is set free from everything that bothers her in her life. It is only as an actress that she is given an active, exciting, and enthralling role, similar to her father, who embodies the importance of those he reads about in the newspaper. But, as usual, acting does not allow her to bring any money home; paradoxically, the place wherefrom she could make a living is the Telephone Exchange, where she had a pretty fastidious labour quotidian – and incorporated all the passivity she fought against when abruptly declining her husbands-to-be, or going onto the stage to exert her "performed independence".

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[63] Also relevant to my broader discussion on literary translation, the image we have (re)created of Shakespeare takes us back, apropos, to the need of reassessing the issue of originality as a whole in what regards the world of art and of its production and reproduction (legible or not) – and which is coherent with the tone of my critique in this thesis. In a nutshell, the literary market – if we can call it like that – wherein his texts were inserted was one that had very little control over issues such as original and/or recycled texts and ideas. "Plays were carefully preserved by the companies, and represented a considerable capital value as part of their stock. If a company was disbanded, they were divided among the sharers, and old plays thus got upon the market" (96). As it would happen to any other author, Shakespeare's company was the "real" owner of his plays – such as the music composed by classic musicians belonged to the church whereto they were sold. The notion of authorship – and, as a result, of plagiarism – would emerge much later, even though we have created the image of an author, with a legacy and a trajectory, with texts and poems of his own. It is impossible however to say how personal his words are, because the context of his writing is one that inflicted great changes to these texts – which, in the end, did not belong to anyone in particular. If we cannot talk of author's intention in the contemporaneity, let alone in Elizabethan times, when play-writers had to accommodate their texts to the stage-structure and to the available actors of a given theatre at a given date – redistributing speeches, and redirecting performances. The time granted for a play to be set would also be altered and, consequently, impinge upon the textual material; even the audience itself had an impact on its endless rewriting. As a result, we do not know how much of Shakespeare's

From an intertextual perspective, the previous excerpt also brings two references to other works: one is to Edgar Allan Poe's "The Raven" (1845), which is among his most well-known poems, and the other is to Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* (1596-1598). Both references are meaningful, but the latter gives us more room to reflect upon this binary and compulsory controversy where Myra finds herself, imposed by gender roles, which is analogous to the one that Portia suffers in the play. The latter, however, is granted with much more autonomy to come up to decisions by herself and to get the things that she wants if compared to former. That specific trial scene Myra adroitly interprets in the High School concert indicates that this is indeed a pertinent reading. This, at least in my reading, is one of best scenes regarding Shakespeare's tackling of gender roles, for, therein, a female character is made more ingenious and cunning than her male partners (who are, on their turn, mesmerised by her promptness). Both Myra and Portia are seemingly minor characters, willing to assume a major role in their lives even if that meant manipulating the male dominance that is imposed upon them. In their own ways, these characters, concocted in societies

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manuscripts are ideas of his own or suggestions, blunders, and requirements of those who helped, conducted, influenced, or censored him. "We may distinguish various kinds of adaptation […], and it is necessary to consider the operation of the agencies through which such adaptation was carried out and their effect upon the 'final' play" (98). Concisely, it would be fair to say that what we have today is but a subjective construction: "The material available, although it is fairly abundant, has been pieced together from many sources; but Shakespeare's bare unannotated texts are already a reconstruction, due to generations of scholars, working by patient comparison and less patient conjecture upon the discrepant and often dubious versions handed down from the seventeenth century. These are problems of transmission, of authenticity, of revision, of chronology. How far can the reconstructed text, after all, be accepted as a faithful rendering of the form in which Shakespeare left the plays? Did he himself alter or rewrite what he at first composed? Was he the sole author of what passes under his name, or in is his work, through adaptation or collaboration, entangled in the traditional canon with that of other men?" (Chambers 94) I wish good luck to those interested in answering such questions.

separated by a considerable space and time gulf (Elizabethan and Early XX Canadian), crave for a sort of female freedom that is still unavailable today, including my target context. Fortunately for my version; unfortunately for women.[64]

Now, apropos to Myra's decision to quit her job and go to drama school, here she still has no idea that Jeff's plans regarding the trade of Cuban lands would eventually fail. Her excitement and pride would all disappear as her father's fortune – her "ticket to ride", as the Beatles would say – vanishes right in front of her. Later, when she becomes knowledgeable about the fact that her family was deceived and robbed, she not only asks to have her job back, but, in anger and/or compassion to her father, gives up completely on trying the career as a real actress. Myra forsakes drama school, for life has poured cold water on all of her plans. Back she would be at the Telephone Exchange, where her colleagues would now listen to her contemptuous comments concerning the acting business. The only manner for Myra to deal with her father's fiasco is finding a way to despise that which had once been the reason for her living. Pretending to accept her "destiny", Myra abandons her personal goals, which, just like the fates of most women of that time, is more a sign of compulsory resignation than it is of authentic acquiescence. In the endgame, if most male characters of Leacock's novel are represented as having just a glimpse of freedom during the development of the novel, the female ones are actually given no freedom at all. As a matter of fact, Myra is actually lucky to be given, at least, a name, a characterisation (no matter how feeble), and a story; if her case is compared to the manner how women are generally presented in the novel as a whole, there would not be much for her to complain about.

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[64] If you will allow me to keep digressing, there are also other parallels that might be established between *The Merchant of Venice* and Leacock's sketches, besides the resemblance of Portia and Myra characterisation. Firstly, both pieces are comic and representative of their authors' legacy. Secondly, and which is related to their humorous attributes, laughter is caused with the usage of irony and sarcasm in both pieces as they expose the ridiculous features that structure the functioning of social, political, and financial questionable tenets underlying national identity. Lastly, and here I somehow return to our first comparison, the structure of those characters surrounding Myra and Portia, and their own characterisation, is curiously similar, and, again, this does not seem to take place by chance at all. The absence of an identity to Myra's mother can be thought in parallel with the fact that Portia had no mother. Moreover, Jeff's attempt to become rich and his final failure in doing so with his trade of Cuban lands is comparable to Shylock's (the moneylender rich Jew in Shakespeare's piece) failure as he tries to get his revenge when the money he lends is not given back to him. Both characters end up humiliated by their funny degradation before the others, and both situations inevitably generate laughter, but it is somehow a "sad laughter" – recollecting Freud's concept of "broken-humour": the emergence of laughter through tears. The humour entailed by the outcomes of Jeff's and Shylock's endeavours to have "a happy ending" is directed to our empathy and compassion towards the object that is made fun of, which is something difficult to be achieved but that, at least in my view, both Shakespeare and Leacock actually address with excellence.

When they got the boat lowered, it looked such a frail, clumsy thing as one saw it from the rail above, that the cry was raised: "Women and children first!" For what was the sense, if it should turn out that the boat wouldn't even hold women and children, of trying to jam a lot of heavy men into it? (Leacock, *Sketches* 56)	Ele parecia tão desengonçado e desequilibrado – as luzes emanando das lanternas dos salva-vidas agora apontavam para todos os lados, tremidas e perdidas pelo mar e pelo céu – que parecia menos seguro do que o Mariposa Belle furado. Foi aí que escutamos: “Primeiro mulheres e crianças!” O que era bastante óbvio, afinal *para que colocar homens em um bote salva-vidas antes de ter certeza que ele aguentaria o seu peso? Se tudo saísse como o esperado é claro que entraríamos no bote; mas, caso ele afundasse, afogando nossas mulheres e crianças, talvez fosse melhor pensarmos em outra alternativa.*

Motivated by either irony or pure male chauvinism, we shall never know for sure, Leacock’s text does not fondle women when they happen to appear – it is actually rather far from doing that. Here we are back to the chapter of the boat tour, when Mariposans are looking for a way out of their sinking ship (also discussed in section 3.2., in terms of national identity). At this moment, the narrator changes our expectation when the sentence “Women and children first!” is presented as implying something different from what the original message it entails. That would be: those who are more fragile and require more attention are summoned to leave the ship with safety before the men. Is the idea clear? Well, not so much. What readers might deem a gentleman’s behaviour coming from the one who utters such words is inverted when the narrator affirms that there would be no sense in sending the men to the boat if it proved unable to even hold women and children. What sounded as a selfless act is transformed in an act of selfishness (even though, all things considered, none of them is exactly “feminist”). Leacock’s male characters are in general unfair to women; and when they seem to be acting on their behalf it is just due to our mistaken interpretation of facts. Is not it how things usually work? Our attention is here raised to the issue that, perhaps, the moments when our society is seemingly worried about women’s fragility, about their weaknesses, when men are summoned to help and assist them, there is maybe something greater than pure benevolence behind such acts. The history of male chauvinism, after all, is also the history of our cyclic shift between the sanctification and romanticisation of women (the pure virgin as the prototype) and their villainisation and deprecation (now the impure whore).

Either here or there, both these poles are indications of inequality: in paradise or in hell, the place where women fit does not seem to be here – the world belongs to men. It is in this sense that, even though they seem to attest respect and care concerning the condition of women, actions such as putting them in the first boats might very well operate as to reinforce the very opposite. To treat women like equals is not to paternalise them. Therefore, and as to overstate the hyperbolic male chauvinism present in this excerpt of the novel (turning the situation into something even more absurd), I have added, subsequently, another sentence to my translation. It goes: "*Se tudo saísse como o esperado é claro que entraríamos no bote; mas, caso ele afundasse, afogando nossas mulheres e crianças, talvez fosse melhor pensarmos em outra alternativa*". For the male chauvinist implication of this logic to sound even more preposterous, and with the purpose of accruing some epistemological benefits to my readers (raising their awareness to a symptom that also persists in our time and space), I actively modify Leacock's text (unfaithfully, but creatively). The narrative is not divested of social and gender issues whatsoever; but here the issue is so thought provoking that it deserves, as I see it, to be empowered in my translation.

When it comes to this social issue, bearing in mind that we are dealing with humour, it does not matter if Leacock, instead of endorsing male chauvinism, is actually deploying irony as to put it into question. Of course "humour is a principle according to which the evolved abilities and tendencies of people to see themselves as others see them, to use ostracism to their own advantage, are manipulated so as to induce status shifts – both subtle and not so subtle" (Alexander 255). But my manipulation of the sketches is there to explore on their potential, and not simply to repeat original motives. My translation might indeed induce status shifts by exposing how things are not so different in our contemporary Brazilian context; and it does not really matter if Leacock agreed or not to this or that issue – what matters is how his book might operate and be read in the reality whereto I am taking it. It is what a text might be saying and not what its author wanted to say that motivates my translation – if the latter is inaccessible to us, the former is, as a result, full of possibilities. Leacock's book is published in a time when women are thoroughly ostracised; but the narrator's exaggeration of such ostracism might infer that, as it happens in other moments of the narrative, s/he is actually trying to raise readers' awareness to such issue. Ostracism, in this sense, emerges in my translation as Alexander suggests: an opportunity to ostracise to the advantage of those who are being ostracised. When one thinks of translation as an all-encompassing term it seems rather plausible that Leacock's writing might be unconsciously translating his spatial contingency; no text emerges out of the blue, we are part of our context and, as such, can look beyond such context – always from a standpoint, local and temporal.[65]

Bringing issues such as the representation of women in his society, Leacock has provided me with enough material to (re)address their condition, disregarding completely what he might have had in mind when he wrote about them. It does not matter what an author thinks, it matters what he writes; inasmuch as translators work not with their author's intentions, but with their productions. I am thus not translating "what Leacock thought about women", I am translating his sketches and attempting at enhancing the ambivalent character of their treatment of women – literature is not about determining meanings, but about making them even less objective. If my reading of the original has left me confused about this or that issue, my translation does not need to reorganise my thoughts – it needs, on the contrary, to turn such confusion into words. Still, I did solve some of the confusion present in the sketches, but, at least as I see it, for a good reason. Such solution concerns the novel's narrator, whose description in the text is not very deeply articulated; objectively and subjectively, the voice who tells the story only presents the town and its inhabitants, but does not care to present him/herself to us more properly as a subject. Thereby, as s/he does not talk about him/herself, nor interacts with other characters, readers do not have any clue about the colour, social condition, and sex of this narrator. Nevertheless, at the end of the story, we get to know that, for this whole time s/he had been talking to us from the next seat of the train to Mariposa (so the imagined reader, the one in the story, does know what this narrator looks like).

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[65] In this sense, "[w]riting is translation: the decoding of those symbols that have been circulating since prehistory and their recoding into one of the infinite possible versions into which they may be creatively assembled" (Leone 14). If writing is, to some level, analogous to translating, the inverse is also true. If I am (re)writing the same book in another language, metamorphosis occurs in both poles – the book and the language shall never be the same. Leone's discussion regarding Borges' concept of creative infidelity opens room for this sort of reflection, inasmuch as "[i]n Borges's criticism, translation voids the notion of definitive texts, reveals the social and historical influences that determine how texts are read and exposes myths of originality in literature" (15). The myth of originality is antithetical to the translation activity – and analogous to watching a performance of Shakespeare comparing it to its original performance, performance that no living soul has ever watched. Setting aside such myth – and putting myself in the line – I have taken Borges' idea ad litteram as for me to give a new voice to a new text.

The problem is that, since the literary realm has been traditionally constructed, and constituted, by a male, white, and middle-class society, I deem it inevitable for readers not to make the direct association of this invisible voice with a male subject, notwithstanding the absence of any indications of that. Literature was created by us and, as such, represents a battlefield where power relations are always there, and so is the silencing of peripheral voices such as female, gay, and black – which are inherently threatening for the hegemonic discourses that have, for long, dominated the literary arena.[66] Neutrality, thus, does not exist: a narrator, when not presented as a woman, is naturally taken by our minds habituated by tradition as a male character – after all, that is how we, readers, have learned to think our whole lives. Borges' critique on creative infidelity, together with some gender consciousness, has provided me, the translator, with an intrepid idea: to surprise my readers by turning the narrator into a woman. No cause for alarm. As a literary critic and translator I occupy a position not of reverence, but of critical analysis and, when needed, subversion.[67] Creative infidelity allows me thus to recreate the original narrative according to my own reading; so, going against readers' expectations herein stirs up trouble concerning the issue of representation – trouble that can be solved, as long as we, readers, supersede predictability.

There is not a single moment in the original narrative when the gender of the narrator is defined, actually not even implied. Therefore, I was careful in my translation to manipulate language as to maintain such neutrality;[68] at least until I get to the final pages, when, out of the blue, I include an extra sentence to make her a woman, leaving no doubt about it.[69] This serves as a reminder that there is no "essential narrator"; the only reason why readers tend to expect a male voice as the presenter of a story, even when gender is undefined, is due to this influent and exclusionary social construct of literature. Dalcastagnè alleges that, besides their figurative appearance in most fictional stories, women are generally given no voice – not only as characters, but also as narrators (165). Leacock is already original for placing his narrative in the countryside, not in the metropolis; as usual; my ambition, by presenting my narrator as a woman in the final chapter of the sketches, is to enhance the originality of his text to an even greater extent, despite his own personal standpoint on the matters I happen to delve into as a consequence. Moreover, if sometimes it is difficult to make out whether the sketches' narrator is being ironic when s/he manifests a male chauvinist discourse, turning him/her into a woman elevates the possibility that his/her position might be taken as clear irony. Such is another confusion that, here and then, I might be diminishing, aiming at transforming a joke that might very well be about women into a joke necessarily against a male dominant society.

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[66] See Butler's *Gender trouble*, Spivak's "Translation as culture", and Halberstam's *A queer time and place*.

[67] See Godard's "Theorising feminist discourse/translation", Flotow's *Translation and gender: Translating in the era of feminism*, and Bassnett's "Writing in no man's land: questions of gender and translation".

[68] E.g. translating "*I am sure*" as "*Eu tenho certeza*" or "*Era certo*" instead of "*Eu estou certo*" or "*certa*".

[69] In a friendly firewell, as they are getting to the train station in Mariposa, *my* (now female) narrator also says: "*estou realmente ansiosa pois já vejo ali meu filho e meu marido, Billy.*"

4.2. Robbing banks and meanings

Humour and irony are also overtly used in the novel as to problematise the illusion of temporal control, something that was already a characteristic of Leacock's period, and is perhaps even more symptomatic now of our contemporary society. Permeating the narrative, many events make it difficult for the linear logic of modern society to operate successfully, and it seems Leacock is asking us to pay attention to such details, as they take place in several occasions and varying forms. This reflection can be noticed: 1) Given the narrator's usage of terms that compress time and space (such as the ones discussed in the last section). 2) During moments when the narrator's analepses and prolepses confuse those trying to follow what s/he is uttering (when s/he forgets, or pretends to forget, what s/he has already told us and/or advance a conclusion to an issue that was not presented yet). 3) And objectively, when characters' behaviour demonstrate how illogical his/her logic seems to be (when their rationality regarding temporal issues does not seem to make any sense). Having looked already at the two techniques first mentioned, it is worth to discuss Leacock's third possibility for problematising linearity. One of these moments emerges in the novel during the supposed robbery of the bank, which becomes a huge puzzle in Mariposa, even though it is not a robbery at all, but just a misunderstanding between two officers who, scared and confused, shoot one another. The first step for trying to describe the occurrence in the bank is also a first step onto all the future disorder that shall follow the police, narrator, and characters attempt at making out the mystery, which takes a whole chapter, and yet is not solved. Even concerning the time when it happened one cannot be sure; nevertheless, the narrator seems to trust in the evidence of Gillis, although such evidence is far from being comparable to any sort of evidence at all, as demonstrated by the following excerpt.

All of this must have happened at about three o'clock in the night. This much was established afterwards from the evidence of Gillis, the caretaker. When he first heard the sounds he had looked at his watch and noticed that it was half-past two – the watch he knew was three-quarters of an hour slow three days before and had been gaining since. (Leacock, *Sketches* 116)	Isso tudo deve ter ocorrido *exatamente por volta das três horas da madrugada*. Esta *evidência* estabeleceu-se pelas contas do zelador Gillis. Ao primeiro sinal de ruído ele diz ter olhado para o *seu relógio e notado que era duas e meia* – no caso este era o relógio que ele sabia estar *45 minutos atrasado e, desde então, vinha adiantando em alguns minutos.*

The watch Gillis uses as data to situate when the scene had taken place is one that is far from reliable; so, bearing in mind that he knows he should not look at his watch without counting, he makes a senseless calculation as to interpret when the incident really occurred. Thus how can anyone just trust in his “evidence”? Evidence requires a logical substantiation for a fact to be taken as true, and, in an investigation like the one taking place in Mariposa, the first step must be a coherent and consistent approach towards *when* and *how* someone had broken into the bank, causing all that commotion in the town. One could read Leacock’s ironic perception of temporal facts, here, as a possible problematisation of the usual rationalising endeavour to control time – to situate meaning and boundaries to it as if no deviations and interactions occurred in the process, a metaphor for linear temporality. Like the police and every other character, the narrator collects data and attempts to put all such data together into a logical and sensible history to solve the mystery. My translation of this excerpt is guided then by my ambition to enhance the character of this confusion, especially by turning the sentence “[…] happened at about three o’clock […]” into “[…] *ocorrido exatamente por volta das três* […]” – inasmuch as the word “*exatamente*” implies even more certainty for the event. The irony in Leacock’s tone is responsible for showing how “the evidence of Gillis” does not prove anything; much on the contrary, no one has any reason to believe he really knows when the occurrence has taken place within the bank. This is what defines irony, the process of asking readers to go beyond what is being said and provide a distinct interpretation to it, for our understanding here of how ridiculous our belief to "know time" seems to be. In the end "every understanding is actively interpretative. Even the most literal statement (what, actually, is a 'literal' statement?) has a hermeneutic dimension. It needs decoding. It means more or less or something other than it says" (Steiner 280).

More to the point: there are no literal statements; no word has a meaning that does not transcend the interpretative sphere. Meaning therefore does not exist without the reader, such as no term can be understood without connecting such word to the other ones that had been said, or to the other ones that are veiled in the process – idea that approximates Steiner's critique to Berman's notion of the *letter*, much more useful and fruitful than his tiresome and useless deformations. Even the most literal statement has a hermeneutic dimension; i.e. if even the simplest information depends on a whole set of interpretations concerning what surrounds it, one shall eventually assume that indeed every understanding is inherently interpretative. Here the narrator knows Gillis' evidence is no evidence, and that it would be preposterous to rely on it. The reader and translator thus cannot endeavour to make sense of the literary information without opening their eyes to the ironic load such information carries. One must interpret what is said by the narrator (who is either unable or, more likely, pretending to be unable to see the facts "as they are") aware of the fact that such descriptions need methodical decoding. During his/her ironic portrayals of the facts, they usually – if not most often – mean more or less or something other than what is said ad rem. This hermeneutic dimension, which provides the basis for us to understand how important it is to read and interpret every linguistic instance that is produced, is also responsible for allowing readers to establish a new set of frames to receive the translated version of the novel in such a distinct temporal and spatial configuration. The interpretative sphere is now another one; if that which was textualised is now re-textualised, that which was read, as a result, has now to be reread. The contemporary tools for decoding Mariposan events are distinct from the ones that source readers (if I can generalise) could rely on; so it is important thus for the reader to grasp those issues hidden in the hermeneutic dimension of the facts taking place in Mariposa. Apropos, afterwards, during the investigation, eyewitnesses start to be briefed, and the issue of inconsistency among their versions of events emerges anew.

There was Pupkin's own story and Gillis's story, and the stories of all the people who had heard the shots and seen the robber (some said, the bunch of robbers) go running past (others said, walking past), in the night. Apparently the robber ran up and down half the streets of Mariposa before he vanished. (Leacock, *Sketches* 118)	Havia a estória de Pupkin e aquela que contou Gillis, e além delas existiam as estórias de todas aquelas pessoas que tinham *escutado os tiros (ou tiro) e visto o ladrão (ou ladrões) passando correndo (ou andando) durante a noite (ou madrugada).* Por razões ainda desconhecidas aparentemente o criminoso havia *passado por mais da metade das ruas de Mariposa antes de desaparecer*.

There seems to be a pervading incongruence regarding what is heard and seen by those Mariposans who allege to have information concerning the incident, for they do not agree on rather simple information such as the quantity of robbers or if these robbers walked or ran after the crime. The narrator emphasises how important it is to listen to everyone who had (seemingly) been able to see or hear the action of the robber. This is, indeed, a rather funny moment which I decided to potentialise in my translation by inserting other discrepancies besides the existing ones. The inconsistencies of the source text are: some Mariposans said they saw one robber while others saw more than one; moreover, some saw the robber walking whereas others saw him running. In my translation I not only repeated the original inconsistencies in the excerpt, but also added two more ones: “*tinham escutado os tiros (ou tiro) e visto o ladrão (ou ladrões) passando correndo (ou andando) durante a noite (ou madrugada)*”. Bearing in mind that there are moments in the novel when Leacock’s funny and ironic insights might not be so successful in causing laughter, given the contextual difference between source and language audience, here I am concretely granted (by myself) with the occasion to do the opposite. Ergo, facing the possibility of adding information that could reinforce the irregularities in the discourse of Mariposans, I saw myself as apt to boost the ironic hermeneutic dimension of the narrative and, supported by creative infidelity, that fits like a glove over here, decided to embrace such opportunity. In this sense, and just like any reader naturally alters any text from the moment they read and make sense out of it, translation is a process of metamorphosis: a process of my conscious and unconscious judging what is best and worse based on my goal of allowing Leacock’s irony to get to my readers. As it has been mentioned, any reading is, in itself, a meaning transformation; in this sense my translation is the combination of both author and translator’s ideas; it is the combination of what Leacock says and the idiosyncratic manner I interpret it.

But let us return to the issue of the bank robber, for it is about to come to an end. Regardless of how unfeasible it would be to put all the pieces provided by each witness together, clearly the narrator looks eager to believe in all of them (people do not lie in Mariposa!). These several eye-witnesses, whose portrayals and descriptions of the robber and of his/her acting are extremely incompatible, would also require something very unlikely to have taken place: which is for the robber, motivated by no particular reason, to have taken a stroll around Mariposa before he left the town. How likely the idea that "the robber ran up and down half the streets of Mariposa before he vanished" is? It is of course much more likely that these eye-witnesses were not witnesses at all, they are probably just inventing stories and alleging they have seen or heard things that did not actually occur, just so that they can live their fifteen minutes of fame while providing police with their testimonials. However, the narrator's connection to Mariposa, his/her admiration for the town and its people, makes him/her unwilling to look beyond what is being said. This is the reason why s/he becomes so obsessed about extracting a logic unit out of purported facts and evidences which can never make sense if other supposed facts and evidences are not taken as lies, inventions, or, at least, misunderstandings in return. The huge and evident atmosphere of illogicality surrounding the bank robbery is a channel for the narrator's irony to get to those readers who cannot believe in how blind the narrator is to the impracticality of the supposed evidences he comments upon. Leacock himself would probably be laughing at our attempt at making sense out of that event. After all the lengthy investigation both by the police and by Mariposans, after they were capable to identify the "unsub" for them to finally look for "the right man", taking into account all the collected data and information (which, the reader has to agree, was far from being conclusive), the supposed robber is finally arrested. The narrator, relived with the information that the town is saved, shares the discovery with the readers.

One man was arrested twenty miles away, at the other end of Missinaba county, who not only corresponded exactly with the description of the robber, but, in addition to	Um homem foi preso a vinte milhas de distância, na outra extremidade de *Missinaba County*. Ele não só *correspondia exatamente com a descrição do assaltante* como também, *além disso, tinha ainda uma perna de pau*. Vagabundos com uma só perna que vagam por aí são sempre vistos com desconfiança em lugares como Mariposa, e *sempre*

this, had a wooden leg. Vagrants with one leg are always regarded with suspicion in places like Mariposa, and whenever a robbery or a murder happens they are arrested in batches. (Leacock, *Sketches* 122)	*que um assalto ou assassinato acontece, eles são os primeiros a ir para a cadeia. Nisso, assim como no que tange diversas outras questões, Mariposa já está tão avançada quanto a Cidade. Isto porque a polícia local finalmente aprendeu com a grande metrópole que, independente do crime cometido, é sempre mais fácil culpar aqueles não podem lutar por seus direitos. Desconhecidos, mancos, negros, índios, mendigos… não interessava. Por fim o caso estava resolvido.*

Counting on the possibility that there might still be readers who have not realised yet there was no robbery, and that the two employees actually shot one another, more inconsistencies emerge. Is not it at least suspicious that the man who tried to rob the Mariposa bank would be at the other end of Missinaba County so soon? Even though he matched the description (wouldn't anyone match the description?), how could he be twenty miles away from Mariposa in such a short time? Moreover, besides the lack of this single pattern for concretely identifying any suspect, no witness had mentioned that this man had a wooden leg, and the narrator talks of this detail as if it were not a hindrance, but actually helpful for police officers to be assured that this was, indeed, the right person. That is, notwithstanding the fact that from the several descriptions of the robber none included a wooden leg, the fact that the arrested man had one is taken an evidence of his guilt – simply because wooden legs would be symptomatic of criminals, for some reason. Curiously, what should prove his innocence attests he is the one the police are looking for. The narrator is most likely not trying to convince readers to be suspicious towards vagrants or people with wooden legs; if that were the case, his/her technique is ridiculous, for s/he gives us all signals that the arrested person is not guilty of anything. The narrator's ironic logic makes the reader laugh while s/he exposes in a farfetched exaggeration how preposterously justice works when looking for a villain – strategy deployed throughout the novel. The police just wanted to arrest someone, and vagrants are much easier to be arrested (especially if they have a wooden leg!); the idea is not to stop the crime, but to stop the commotion of Mariposan population.

Through irony, our narrator opens up a very rich and deep discussion. Here prejudice emerges as vagrants with wooden legs are made responsible for a crime no one knows if they committed, they are simply the most likely suspects, for some reason. In this sense, one could easily exchange these subjects for other ones, such as poor, black, and/or foreign individuals, of course when they come from peripheral countries. Bearing in mind that a prototype is defined as: "a set of inaccurate, simplistic generalizations about a group that allows others to categorize them and treat them accordingly"[70], it is easy to notice that here the narrator is playing with such an idea. Justice has a conventionalised mould wherein criminality fits; and those who resemble the according inaccurate and simplistic generalisation are doomed to be regarded as potential criminals. As well posed by Repsiene, "collective stereotypes are passed from generation to generation, ideologised and hardly susceptible to transformations, but their evaluation horizons can be broadened by forming and changing the direction of thinking" (18). Such broadening of evaluation horizon might occur also through humour, as far-fetched as this may seem; and, by making fun of the whole justice system, the fact that Leacock's joke still makes sense is an evidence that, indeed, collective stereotypes are passed from time to time, and from space to space.

As Filmer suggests, the process of deploying stereotypes as a literary artifice activates readymade pictures in our heads, moulded by previous ideas assimilated through objective events and/or reinforced by the discourses that pervade our social environment. So, within literature, the stereotype would work as "a visual short-hand of mental images that circumscribe our experiences in the world – they are culturally constructed and employed to involve the reader, reconfirming the reader's expectation" (258). No passivity is expected; for these images to be effectively formed, readers are summoned to take part in the process. This is precisely what Leacock's narrator does, by making fun of a sort of social stereotyping (the stereotyping of criminals) that can be found in many social organisations questioning, as a result, the idea that certain subjects are most likely to be inherently guilty for robbing banks. Every characterisation occurs through the intermingling of what people expect from a certain sort of character and what the writer wants to express through such characterisation, which might take place for the reinforcement of a previous stereotype or for its problematisation. In what regards this possibility either to reinforce and problematise stereotypes, the process of translation plays a crucial role as a tool to maintain or invert such logic. Unfortunately, "relatively few studies have examined the more specific ways in which images, stereotypes, and clichés of ethnic communities have been propagated, subjectively filtered and sometimes blocked and/or recreated in translated literary works" (Dimitriu 202). Throughout its passage from sociocultural, ideological, and linguistic borderlines, literary information is liable to undergo drastic changes, which are also triggered by translators' conscious and unconscious decisions – and it is high time they were put in the spotlight. Hence the advent of an integral part of translation decisions: the direct and indirect manipulation of stereotypes (social, ethnic, political, etc.), regardless of the translators' intention. Dimitriu alerts us however to the fact that this usually unconscious process of stereotype transformation sometimes have actually consisted in the very purpose of a translation project:

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[70] © 2015Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English: http://www.ldoceonline.com/

> In translation projects focusing on the import of ethnic stereotypes through translations from foreign literatures, historico-political circumstances have triggered different attitudes – concretised in translation norms of faithful reflection, blockage, or recreation and ensuing strategies with regard to images of dominating political allies: from their literal translation to distortion and refraction culmination in the downright erasure of the other's negatively stereotyped cultural representation. These image manipulations have, obviously, remained largely unknown to the target readers. If clichés do not rely on a first hand observation of reality, but almost always on existing reputation, then translators of such images have drawn, in their turn, on existing clichés in the source texts in order to either perpetuate or build new reputations, or suppress them – if contextually inadequate. (212)

Conscious of my autonomy either to reflect, block, or recreate the stereotype present in the previous excerpt of Leacock's narrative, I decided not only to "import" it, but actually to enhance the ironic tone of the narrator when s/he explains how the bank robbery has been solved. Distorting the original, I deploy the negatively stereotyped cultural representation of the purported perpetrator to boost the novel's problematisation of this existing reputation – as to suppress such reputation and contribute for the building of new ones. If "by creating new ethnic images translators increase and diversify their role as cultural mediators" (Dimitriu 213), the stereotypes emerging from the original draft are simply there to be elaborated on – and there are diverse manners whereby the translator might do so, creating new ethnic images, and diversifying their mediating role. There are as well many clichés in criminology that have been so strongly transmitted throughout time and space that no observations of reality are able to convince us of something that happen to deviate from the norm. That is precisely what the situation of the bank robbery in Mariposa manifest, as, even though every fact observed point to a rather different direction, the crime is solved as it generally is: police officers push evidences aside and arrest an individual that had no chance of being involved with the robbery whatsoever despite the fact that he fits perfectly in the role. Bearing that in mind, and as to make Leacock's irony a little bit more ironic, after the end of the scene I have proposed the following addendum: Mariposa has proved with this situation that, as in many other matters, it was already as developed as the City. The local police have finally learned with the metropolis that, regardless of the crime that was committed, it is always easier to blame those who cannot fight for their rights. It did not matter if they were disabled, black, natives, beggars, or simply unknown, what did matter was that the case had been solved. None of these ideas are uttered in the original, but I have decided to make them available as for eliminating the chances that readers interpret that the narrative is coherent with the stereotype discussed – my purpose has been to make Leacock's criticism even more robust, as I do not refrain from expanding the assets of his insights every time I might have a chance of doing so. After all, translation is also about "preventing negative ethnic clichés from spreading from one culture to another through manipulation and self-censorship" (Dimitriu 206). If my manipulation contributes for enhancing the possibilities of such prevention, such factor per se proves it is worth it.[71]

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[71] Apropos, it actually does not matter at all to me if Leacock had or not the intention of using irony, through his narrator, to make such references – the event is potentially capable of doing so, and that is the only thing that I am worried about. As alleged throughout my thesis, the intentions of the original are irrelevant for the translation. If I am provided with material that has the potential of being further developed, according to my interpretation, I am always going to do so – notwithstanding my ignorance concerning what "the author would expect me to do" – translators are interpreters, not prophets. The excerpt discussed before does disclose the bias of crime control, and it demonstrates how punishment is much more applied for vengeance than for correction – reason why it does not make any difference who is the subject being punished inasmuch as s/he is just being used to serve as a lesson to others. Dimitriu is right to say that rather complex reflections emerging from the usage and manipulation "of stereotypes may be retrievable at the level of almost insignificant details" (207). There is indeed much more to Leacock's joke than one might imagine in a first moment. The life of vagrants with a wooden leg is already damned; arresting them makes no difference whatsoever, that is the logic – which is also operational in what regards every marginalised subject. But, thinking of a less subjective aspect of the excerpt (beyond this social critique against criminal stereotypes), the idea of the wooden leg, in itself, is much more absurd than it

4.3. Re-creating humour: "Similarity between dissimilar things"

As demonstrated so far, Borges' concept of creative infidelity is not summoned ad hoc to excuse and/or endorse this or that sentence that I decide to eliminate, elongate, and/or invent out of the blue, and the concept fits my task not only when content notes are proposed. The concept, in my view, might be an operational excuse, translating with precision what the task of bringing any text to another context demands. It is also true that, in some occasions, it might be even more adequate than it would in others (such as when Leacock's jokes depend on linguistic references to surface). This is so for, when it comes to language, "[i]n short, we do not see the actual things themselves; in most cases we confine ourselves to reading the labels affixed to them. This tendency, the result of need, has become even more pronounced under the influence of speech" (71). Meanings are never as straightforward as they might seem, and, therefore, translators can and need to manipulate them as for word effects to be reclaimed and reconstructed. Regardless of our general benightedness concerning such fact, "[t]he word, which only takes note of the most ordinary function and commonplace aspect of the thing, intervenes between it and ourselves, and would conceal its form from our eyes, were that form not already masked". Masked beneath the veil of language, abstract meanings are concealed, and interpreting a text requires us to train our gaze to move in the direction of the space they occupy, whereas translating, which would be moving a step forward, demands us to bring such meanings up to the surface. Through language, "[n]ot only external objects, but even our own mental states, are screened from us in their inmost, their personal aspect, in the original life they possess" (Bergson 72). Both texts, source and target, possess an original life – and

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may seem. What I mean is that, besides the social, ethnic, and political problems of how the crime is solved, there is also a considerable problem of coherence and rational logic. This is so for, if so many people of Mariposa had alleged the man had run through half the streets of Mariposa before he vanished, how on earth could one person who had only one leg and who was found so far away from the crime scene be considered the major suspect? This is a simple question that the narrator should raise naturally while s/he tries to solve the mystery of the bank robbery, but s/he pretends s/he is unable to think logically and to judge out from the facts – process which makes his/her ironic positioning even more interesting. The narrator alleges, instead, to trust not only in those who are telling what they have supposedly seen and heard (why would he be suspicious towards a Mariposan?), but also, and perhaps especially, in the law – which proves to be as ineffective in Mariposa as it is elsewhere. Someone has to pay, no matter who such person happens to be. Yes, that still makes a lot of sense.

translating means retrieving the autonomy of language as for it to assure us that the spiral journey of literature shall proceed, this time through a brand-new path.

"The Church would be all right if that old mugwump was out of the pulpit." It went to his heart like a barbed thorn, and stayed there. You know, perhaps, how a remark of that sort can stay and rankle, and make you wish you could hear it again to make sure of it, because perhaps you didn't hear it aright, and it was a mistake after all. Perhaps no one said it, anyway. You ought to have written it down at the time. I have seen the Dean take down the encyclopaedia in the rectory, and move his finger slowly down the pages of the letter M, looking for mugwump. But it wasn't there. I have known him, in his little study upstairs, turn over the pages of the "Animals of Palestine," looking for a mugwump. But there was none there. (Leacock, *Sketches* 69)	"Os cultos seriam muito bons *não fosse aquele pastor claudicante no púlpito*"; aquele comentário entrou como uma facada no seu coração. Você deve imaginar o quanto uma frase como essas te inquieta e te faz desejar escutá-la uma vez mais para estar seguro de que foi isso mesmo que disseram – ou para descobrir que não foi obra da sua cabeça, vai que ninguém tinha dito aquilo? Assim talvez você tivesse a chance de transcrevê-la e relê-la posteriormente. Sr. Drone saiu em busca de uma definição para "claudicante" em vários dicionários e enciclopédias, mas não sei se ele chegou a encontrar.

This excerpt provides us with enough evidence for one to conclude that it would not be wise for a translator to operate through adamant refusals regarding supposedly equivalent words when dealing with literary texts. Refraining from assuming unflappable and determined positions when grappling with intricate issues, Mr. Drone, the church minister, has often to face prejudice from those who take part in his services. Preferring not to set forth any political assumptions that would place him in either one side or another regarding his ideological positioning, Mr. Drone is called a "mugwump". The word comes from an Amerindian origin used by that time in Canada to designate someone who generally decides to "sit on the fence", making no categorical decisions (or hiding such decisions from those who surround him/her). What is funny in this excerpt is that Drone has no idea what the meaning of "mugwump" is, but that does not stop him from feeling completely outraged when called that; and, as a result, he would later try to find its definition. Aware that there are no words in Portuguese that could function accordingly, but also taking into account that I needed something with a similar meaning and not so commonly used, I relied on Borges' concept of creative infidelity here to propose the usage of a thoroughly distinct word. I chose in this case not for providing the excerpt with a footnote or to reduce and/or amplify a sentence or paragraph such as I have done in other moments.

In my version of Leacock's text, the congregation accuse Mr. Drone of being "*claudicante*", which, in Portuguese, is a more luxurious and less common word to designate a hesitant and tentative thing or person, incapable of making up his/her mind upon the most varied issues. The word, of course, is not the same; but it allows me to maintain the idea that Drone is given a nickname whose meaning is one that he might very well be ignorant about, even though, here, I lose the reference to Amerindian culture. Luckily for my purposes, the chosen theoretical scaffold for this thesis has been helping me out when justifying changes such as the one just described. I have mentioned already that Borges' notion of creative infidelity has heretofore been generally (and unfortunately) set aside when critics and researchers "talk seriously" about translation, even though it fits the task perfectly. Opening up a space for interference and autonomy (when it goes to the translated piece), it is common to spot people whose ideas on translating go considerably against what Borges used to postulate. Notwithstanding our free will to keep dividing translation from adaptation and/or to believe one can either "foreignise" or "domesticate" a text – ideas whose premises and everything they entail I regard unnecessary, farfetched and, if you will, useless – there is (as I hope to have demonstrated so far) much sense in Borges' ground-breaking critique.[72] The obsession with equivalence is unfortunately still alive and kicking. Notwithstanding such fact, I shall pretend, for the nonce, that what Borges has written so long ago is now common sense for us, and my research envisages such critical onrush since Leacock’s narrative provides the underpinnings for that to occur, as one might deduce also from the following excerpt:

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[72] Such critique permeates Borges' production and, therefore, might be one of the consequences of his intense reading and writing. Borges' experience has given him a chance of "not merely considering a translation to be as good an original, or simply acknowledging the impossibility of creating in translation a mimetic copy of the original, but of advocating translation as a site of innovation and creativity" (Leone 41). One might believe that Borges takes the idea of translation as a site of innovation and creativity far too seriously; but – forgive me – so do I. That the translated piece could never operate as a mimetic copy of the original is second nature in the contemporaneity – but criticism still has a long path to go through as for us to be provided with more studies on translation worried about privileging analysis to the detriment of judgment. That is to say, even though we know now that translating as an endeavour to produce mimetic copy of the original is impossible, many of us still sound as if we were trying to do so – whereas others still criticise translators who "fail" to do so. Discourse has changed, behaviour not so much; "perfect projects of translation" are still proposed, mine is just a translation project, but not perfect, as I leave perfection to the Gods – so perfect that they do not exist.

Of course the excitement was when Henry Mullins at the head of the table began reading out the telegrams and letters and messages. First of all there was a telegram of good wishes from the Anglican Lord Bishop of the Diocese to Henry Mullins and calling him Dear Brother in Grace the Mariposa telegraph office is a little unreliable and it read: "Dear Brother in grease," but that was good enough. The Bishop said that his most earnest wishes were with them. (Leacock, *Sketches* 71)	A coisa foi ficar animada mesmo quando Henry Mullins começou a ler os telegramas, cartas e mensagens na ponta de uma das mesas. Primeiro foi aquele telegrama de boa sorte enviado pelo bispo da diocese, no qual ele dizia orar para que *Deus desse graça* à vida todos – mas, devido a um pequeno erro na versão telegrafada a mensagem dizia, originalmente, que o bispo orava para que *Deus desgraçass*e a vida de todos.

This part of the narrative occurs in the chapter when Mariposans are trying to come up with solutions to save their church from ruin by raising funds to pay its debts – accumulated due to irresponsible management. Before getting to the “best idea” for money to be made,[73] many possibilities emerge. As to manifest his support to one of this ideas, the Whirlwind Campaign (which I could explain, if only I understood – but even the narrator does not), the Anglican Lord Bishop of the Diocese sends a telegram to Mariposa. The joke here lies in a mistake made by the town telegraph office whose interference transformed the sentence “Dear Brother in grace” into “Dear Brother in grease”, i.e. in his exchanging the word “grace” (*graça*) for “grease” (*graxa*, *banha*, *gordura*, *unto*).[74] Mishaps like these are not usually inherently funny; what causes laughter in this case is the fact that we are dealing with a figure purported to be very polite and sophisticated; expectations are, through irony, thus opposed to what we read, hence the emergence of such reaction. Taking into account that a linguistic pun is here the source of humour, in my translation I manipulated the full sentence; therein I pose that what the Bishop wished to say was “*Deus desse graça a vida de todos*”, utterance transformed in “*Deus*

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[73] When Mr. Smith decides to set fire to the church – as to activate its insurance – pretending that the arson was actually an accident and, by demonstrating how he was actually “trying to help”, convincing legal authorities that he eschews arsonist actions and would never take part in such criminal activity.

[74] © 2017 Oxford Dictionary: http://oxforddictionary.com.uk/translation/en-pt /grease

desgraçasse a vida de todos”. It is true that I could have opted for more “equivalent” solutions if my ambition were to provide a more faithful translation (which has not been the case heretofore, and shall not be the case hereinafter) – e.g. “*Prezado Irmão na Graxa*”; “*Deus desse graxa a vida de todos*”.

As “[t]he joke, if properly constructed, allows the listener controlled and safe access to images and thoughts which would otherwise be repressed by the internalized structures of society” (Wilcox 84), my choice has been to move in another direction. That because, notwithstanding the fact that replacing “*graça*” by “*graxa*” would indeed result in a perhaps funny choice, operating against readers’ expectations, the character of such joke would be as innocent and simple as the original excerpt might sound nowadays, and I wanted something seemingly more laughable, if you will. Even though today it is rather common to find jokes about religious figures (ridiculing such figures, once a dreadful activity, now does not surprise anyone) that is not true when we consider works from the beginning of the XX century, like Leacock’s *Sketches*. My endeavour has thus been to enhance the puissance of the Bishop’s assertion, for it to sound as if he were asking God to curse the lives of Mariposans. To me that sounds funnier (the figure of a Bishop saying such a thing), and, as a reader, I deem myself one of the available prototypes given voice for proposing such “alteration”. Make, however, no mistake; there is no such a thing as “choosing to change” or “choosing to keep words the same” when translating, and this is why I keep using quotation marks when saying things such as “alteration”, “modification”, “unfaithful”, “different”, “equivalent”, etc.

Every translated text – not only those tackling with humour, not only poetry, not only lyrics, etc. – is a completely distinct text; i.e. there are no “equivalences”, there is never “the same word” in another language. It is true that you, reader, might come up with several examples of terms that to you seem to have rather straightforward meanings. Take the word “book”, for instance: seemingly, this word might have a clear equivalence in Portuguese, which is “*livro*”. The former and the latter, though, shall never be deemed the same thing; they are formed by different letters, belong to distinct linguistic realities and have been operating within dissimilar contexts. Moreover, what you think of when you read the word “book” is not identical to what goes on in my mind when I read the same thing; even I myself imagine several different versions of such book, depending on my mood, depending on the sentence wherein such word happens to be inserted, and depending on which day today is.[75] Borges’ concept of creative infidelity suggests that, if the passage of a text from one language to another has much in common with the passage of a text through time, both time and translation act upon a text in a similar fashion. The passage of time means, among other things, the passage of diverse readings – and such readings, particularly the registered ones, are responsible for ultimately modifying a text (Costa, *Original da tradução* 180).Borges’ ingenious elaboration upon literature and translation is tantamount to an admission of guilt; it is not that his opinion effected upon his texts; his texts have effected upon his opinion (i.e. there is no problem in modifying a text through translation if one accepts that his/her reading has already modified such text). Modifications, in this sense, do not surface as possible; in the case of literature, as also shown by the following excerpt, they are simply unpreventable.

Sometimes he would go down at night to the offices of the bank below his bedroom and bring up his bank revolver in order to make an end of himself with it. This, too, he could see headed up in the newspapers as: BRILLIANT BOY BANKER BLOWS OUT BRAINS. But blowing your brains out is a noisy, rackety	Ás vezes ele descia até os andares de baixo do banco e trazia seu revolver para defesa pessoal decidido a dar um tiro na própria cabeça e acabar logo com isso. Nesses momentos ele também conseguia imaginar os noticiários anunciando a seguinte manchete: *EXÍMIO EX-BANCÁRIO ESTOURA SEU ESTAFADO ENCÉFALO.* Mas Pupkin sabia que estourar o seu próprio encéfalo consistia numa tarefa árdua; e logo

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[75] What I am trying to say here is that a word is like a mirror, but the images produced by such mirror are untrammelled: as if every brain translated such word differently. In the end, languages operate through mobility – decoding a linguistic sign, in one language or in another, is already an act of translation. There is, therefore, no concrete significance being carried by abstract signs – every sign only provides us with another sign, because language operates through subjectivity rather than objectivity. Hence the images portrayal in our minds: we can very easily imagine what words might be saying, but we shall never be able to know exactly what they mean. Translation, in this sense, is a blatant demonstration that there is nothing about language that might be considered objective; reading or listening to a word is like watching the landscape of waves moving on the sea – for a careless observer such movement might seem to be always the same, even though it is never repeated. The further we are from the sea, the less mobile it seems; and as soon as we get closer, we realise it is never devoid of motion – being such motion provoked by always original waves, never the same, even though deeply connected with one another. Within the sea of language, words are waves that, through translation, might take us to different directions. Careless observers, the same who ignore the movement of these waves, are also amenable to believe that equivalent words are always identical and that translations are simply saying the same thing in another language. The conclusion then is that this is also true of literature, whose inexorable fate, like that of language, is to be transformed repeatedly. Enormous as the sea, the flow of meanings never stops.

performance, and Pupkin soon found that only special kinds of brains are suited for it. So he always sneaked back again later in the night and put the revolver in its place, deciding to drown himself instead. (Leacock, *Sketches* 114)	percebeu que seria necessário um encéfalo bastante específico – o qual ele não fazia ideia se era ou não como o seu – para que tal objetivo fosse alcançado com sucesso. Então, cedo ou tarde, ele acabava descendo novamente, no meio da madrugada, para devolver o revólver ao seu lugar de origem – decidido, agora sim, a se matar afogado.

This excerpt of *Sunshine sketches* is another one that reminds me bringing any text to a context different of its own can only be addressed if the close rapport between writing and translating is taken into account. Once again Borges' elaborations upon such task serve me perfectly well; in his texts, writing and translating are taken as indissoluble compounds of a single element – that of creation, of a hermeneutic quest and aesthetic/ethic deliberation (Bueno 117).No matter how true this is of any text, in some cases such hermeneutic quest proves to be more palpable than in others, and this excerpt is one of them. In this chapter Mr. Pupkin falls in love with Zena Pepperleigh; both develop a strong friendship, but, due to his insecurity, he hesitates to propose. Once he realises, when visiting her as he would often do, that there is a poet reciting verses close to her house (and that many young women, Zena included, listen carefully to what such man has to say), his world collapses. Pupkin's romance bliss is replaced by a feeling of intense jealousy; and, unable to look at facts judiciously, he ultimately capitulates to the pressure of his heart and eventually decides to kill himself. Unable to do so, for he is far too poltroon, Pupkin prefers simply to envisage suicidal possibilities; his desire to think carefully, deceived as caution for it to work properly, might also be read as an ironic symptom of his pusillanimity – the same irresolution that had prevented him from proposing to Zena in the first place. His obsession to plan and programme everything, the same that was detrimental for his romance, is now making things difficult for him to die properly. All the same, and given the fact that he lives in the bank wherein he works, one of the options he has is to go down to the offices, when everyone else is asleep, and collect his bank revolver as to bring his misery to an end by putting a bullet in his brain.

Not brave enough to carry this plan through he would easily forsake such idea later on (with the excuse that perhaps his brains were not fit to be blown) nourishing now the possibility of drowning himself. Once again, he gives up, and, as readers have probably got used to so far in the narrative, everything remains exactly as it was before.[76] Before all that, however, Pupkin imagines how the newspapers would announce his death, in case he were successful, and – motivated by his opponent (the poet) – he excogitates a way to die "poetically", as to beat his adversary post-mortem, at least. He could see his death headed up in the newspapers as "Brilliant Boy Banker Blows out Brains" – a sentence lyrically garnished with an assonance, which consists, in poetry, in the repetition of consonants or consonant sounds (here the first letter of each word, "b"). For me to translate such sentence, and promote the maintenance of Pupkin's poetic ambitions, a challenge emerges, and it is one that indeed evinces the dialogue between translation and creativity, advocated by Borges. I hope Pupkin will forgive me for having replaced his assonance with an alliteration – that was the best I could do, Mr. Pupkin. Translating the sentence to "*Exímio Ex-Bancário Estoura seu Estafado Encéfalo*" allowed me to have the same number of first letters (five) repeated, even though they are now vowels, and of also having just one different word, like in the original: "out" – "*seu*". The meaning is considerably distinct, especially for those who opt to disregard how form affects such meaning; but I have chosen a possibility that sounded pertinent to serve as the poetic varnish that Pupkin's reverie, in my view, required. Perhaps you can die now, mate, if that sounds good enough to you.

What Leacock's text as well as my attempt at translating it lead us to believe is that, perhaps, one really has to take seriously the idea that translating and writing, both requiring originality, are indeed indissoluble compounds of a single element. That element is literature, whose discourse, to keep on its way, travels through language, carrying along not always the same thing (that meaning which was "originally" taken with it), but actually being loaded and reloaded in every place it stops by. Just as it is true of the source context, the target one thus surfaces not merely as a place where the literary meaning of the original is dumped, it is actually also the place where such meaning is replaced, interpretations activated, imagination summoned, discourses changed – where literature happens. This natural path, inherent to literary quests, a journey with no beginning and no end, becomes even more flagrant when one needs to deal with humour, laughter, and irony – instances that are, at the same time, constrained and boundless, limited by a limitless language, handcuffed by invisible mobile chains. This is so inasmuch as, even though to operate properly jokes depend on the context wherein they are conceived and whereto they are designed, at the same time the "power of humour rests on its ability to transform. The success of a joke turns on its invocation and then resolution of a sense of incongruity, on the ability to find similarity between dissimilar things" (Wilcox 82). The literary evidence upon which I have elaborated my analysis and critique in this thesis seems to be directing us through such a path. Humour operates in Leacock's narrative as if permeated by an atmosphere of incongruity, which has given us the opportunity to, creatively and unfaithfully, eventually find similarity between dissimilar things, such as my interferences, I hope, demonstrate. Ok, then. So what?

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[76] Humour is often about breaking expectations; and, in Mariposa, that means every time we think something is about to happen what we shall have is a preservation of the status quo, with no sign that it is under any sort of threat. All characters (despite Smith, of course) seem to lack the courage for real change; even though they are always approaching the brink of a cliff, as soon as they get there they inexplicably decide to turn back. In her brief analysis of *Sunshine sketches*, Atwood highlights such distinctive feature, elaborating upon the role played by incipit plus anti-climax in the novel (the things that are always about to happen): "One amusing thing about the inhabitants of Mariposa is that they think they are important. They take themselves seriously, and the narrator pretends to do so too. Leacock's method is to make mock-epics out of trivia, thus deflating both the epic manner and the trivial events. The typical Mariposa event is the anti-climax: the Mariposa Belle sinks while the excursionists are singing 'O Canada', but it lands on a sandbank. Peter Pupkin plans to kill himself for love, but he can't work up to it. It is a place where pathos is possible but nothing really tragic is allowed to happen. It is silly, muddle-headed, and harmless. Even politics, although taken seriously by the inhabitants, becomes a laughing matter for Leacock during the elections" (*Second words* 187).

CHAPTER V – FINAL REMARKS
"ON THE EDGE IN MARIPOSA"

> If what is announced as literature never gives itself as such, that means, among other things, that a purely self-referential work would immediately be annulled. It is this experience of the nothing-ing of nothing that interests our desire under the name of literature. On the edge of metaphysics, literature perhaps stands on the edge of everything, beyond everything, itself included. It's the most interesting thing in the world, maybe more interesting than the world, and this is why, if it has no definition, what is heralded and refused under the name of literature cannot be identified with any other discourse. (Jacques Derrida 1992)

Time to finish my thesis, then, even though that depends entirely on you; this (final?) sketch no longer belongs to me. *Res ipsa loquitur*! Well, more or less; but this work does mean what you make of it, for it is unable to define itself on its own. Hence my choice for this epigraph, which, coherent with the thesis remarks, concerns Derrida's idea of literature as an object devoid of a self-identity. That is it, then. Goodbye! Ok, just kidding. As the excerpt demonstrates, the literary work always refers to something that does not concern itself, but regards attributes that go beyond its own configuration as an object to be identified. Translation, as a result, does not emerge to provide a literary piece with such identity, but to expand the array of references, and give the text an opportunity to keep talking about things that go beyond it. Standing on the edge of everything, the literary discourse may free us from the social and political chains that prevent our physicality from moving on spontaneously from one episteme to another – turning physics into metaphysics. Precisely, what my findings suggest is that identification in itself shall always be a tricky thing. Analogous to the process of translation, the process of ironic meaning making is one whereby there are no clear-cut significances – for a word or sentence might mean the opposite of what they say.

Translating is extending the possible and impossible horizons of experience, as for the translator to look beyond such horizon and consider its transgression. Flexibility is required for bodies to evade the seemingly restricted clothing of linguistic matter – to translate is to dodge matter and transcend corporeality, to overstep meanings, providing readers with new versions of such meanings. The extremes of narrative substance are in the line of sight of the translator and, between such extremes, his/her choices shall never reach none exclusively; curiously, to translate is per se an ironic activity. The sine qua non of irony and literary translation is that their "natural standpoints" are not incontrovertible; we step forward during artistic interpretation, but we do so walking on a thin and vaporous ground.In literature, every ground is inherently vaporous – we are never sure of where we are about to step onto as "pages go by". In the specific case of my research object, the literary devices whereby Leacock's fictional town is characterised as, at the same time, both a verisimilar and an indelible spaceseem to be carving for a chance to make the reader ask him/herself about the temporal and spatial configuration of the sketches, about what is and what is not.

What town is this Mariposa? How do I define it? How do I translate it? Interpretation is a circle game where what has happened is still happening; process already crucial for the narrative itself and which shall be empowered by the fact I proposed to translate it more than 100 years after its publication. Translations are, in the end, also a reminder that the past never abandons us, that if something has existed it shall always be there (translation is a present perfect tense, never a simple past). Through temporal commotion, the real and unreal are, repetitively, inventing and reinventing one another; just like every word is inherently metaphoric (a sign loaded with other signs) such as every discourse is likewise amenable to suffering varying and abstract interpretations. Hence the intricacy of spatial linearity: all is contextual, and everything is liable to be constructed by the experience of the subject. The clock and the map are evidences that there is no objective time and space, only our subjective representations of such issues: desperate endeavours of our need to believe we do master them. The paradox lies in the fact that, if Leacock's Mariposa and its inhabitants are there due to their permanence within the continuity of change, the effective concoction of the narrative, in each wave of insight, seems to entail, in a certain way, the opposite condition.

My analysis and translation of Leacock's novel is in this sense well aware that there is no reality to be escaped, and no truth to be reaffirmed; if literature is about transcending contexts, so is translation, and that is what guides my critique and my choices. A translation is inherently and essentially a transgression of frontiers, a temporal and spatial repositioning, operating the possibility for exposing the objectified self and for liquefying what is purportedly palpable.

Literature, as translation, is an artefact for swelling imagination, for mitigating our dependence to reality, for making us less limited to our supposed concreteness.[77] Sorry for the mist, but to translate is to provide the previously mentioned vaporous ground with even more smoke, and not to make images less blurred – if the identity of literature is a foggy instance, the same is true for literary translation, and for everything it concerns. The lenses offered by literature and magnified by translation are thus analogous to the lenses that deconstruct the linearity of time/space. Transforming the straight line that divides past, present, and future into a buckled bubble where what came first matters no longer, translation unveils what the clock and the calendar are unable to acknowledge. In this sense, my version of Mariposa is not an attempt at making available what was absent – literary constructed spaces have always been "available in absentia"; and literary translation is thus more about reinventing such spaces than about merely transporting them.

5. Final remarks: Every book is a library

Given the referential status of original and translated literature, one can, from Borges' reflections upon creative infidelity, get to the following conclusion: when one translates, it is not possible, regardless of his/her ambitions, to crave for the writing of a completely different text, nor of an equal one. The original story is an incipit, and its translation is just part of its development, both targeting the apex. My will as a translator, therefore, is to keep writing a text that is already in motion – and I thereby am as distant from my bona fide readership as I am from the ideal meanings purportedly enclosed within the original text. There is nothing better, if you will, than to be restrained by invisible chains, chains that I can simply ignore as much as my negligence allows me to. If nonetheless there is something I feel compelled to respect as elementary for my translation choices, such thing is the flowing of the narrative, not its supposed source nor its supposed target – my only worry is literature in itself.After analysing and translating *Sunshine sketches,* I have endeavoured hitherto to discuss how Leacock's narrative may contribute to a reflection upon humour and its effects. For that end, identifying how his narrator summons socio-political issues regarding Canada was crucial for my pondering upon translation possibilities. Reflecting upon the content of his/her jokes and the ironic tone applied thereby, I got to the conclusion that I should prevent my reader from remaining aloof during reading. My translation is an endeavour to recreate the effects of laughter also providing, thereby, my target context with socio-political enrichment.

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[77] Excuse me for the lack of scientificity; as you may have noticed, there is nothing concrete about anything addressed in this thesis, but only because it is in-between the liquefied spaces of meaning making that literary translation operates. Texts provide us with abstract albeit mutational experiences, personally and collectively, that aim at no definitive outcome – but only at one more step in the continual cadency of our own lives. Our readings are thereby only rehearsals of future readings, just as our lives are simulated performances of what we deem our real lives. But there is no final reading, just as there is no exit to our living matrix. About five hundred years ago Shakespeare already knew that the world was but a stage, "and all the men and women merely players" (*As you like it* 17). In theatre or not, people only exist through mimesis; living is emulating life, what we believe life to be. Thereby, both literature and translation trigger the emergence of further sketches, drafts, and outlines for ultimate structures that shall never be ready, although they need to be – and this is why the work of the literary translator, as well as of the literary piece per se, shall always be incomplete.

This is not to say my translation looks for an essence in the original: I do not believe in essences – only in those used for the fabrication of perfumes. Elaborating on the ideas triggered by the sketches' narrator, as the translator I tried, in my version of the novel, to come up with an enlargement of its literary effects rather than with their restitution. "The reading" is, through such process, replaced by "a reading" and "the book" is replaced by "another reading of another book". And, all things considered, the object of my research has provided this thesis with a panoply of possibilities to elaborate a critique on translation and reflect upon humour as an acute means for constructing and deconstructing epistemes. Putting into question the traditionally peripheral status of Canadian literature and of laughter has proved to consist in a pivotal step for us to achieve higher levels of substance in terms of analysis, interpretation, translation, and knowledge (re)construction. Therefore, I could say my overall objective to articulate a critique upon Leacock's sketches, and upon its usage of humour as a stance amenable to be (re)created in my Brazilian translation, has shed a light on many issues. After reviewing the theoretical scaffold of my analysis, I have confirmed both hypotheses during the analysis and translation. 1) Humour, in *Sunshine sketches of a little town*, serves to address and reconsider critical issues for the XX century Canada. 2) It is possible to refabricate such humour in the XXI Brazilian context if, sensu lato, Borges' concept of creative infidelity (1936, 406) is deployed.

My first analytical chapter elaborates upon how Leacock's humour aesthetically responds to the social consciousness of the community whereto he designed it. In the second, I set forward how my source text is redesigned to a completely distinct social consciousness, that of my target audience. There is no way to translate a text "exactly how it is", because no text, no author, and no reader is *only one*. That is coherent with the problematisation of literature as lonely experience; a book is all books, every text is hypertextual and refers to something that has been said a priori. When s/he chooses this or that text, the reader sees him/herself enveloped by this invisible, but overwhelming library, and this is why literature is in itself a social process: after all, no one ever reads in isolation (notwithstanding how schizophrenic this might sound). The notion that there is no single text, but actually versions of versions of other texts, is ontologically foundational for both my reading and translation of Leacock's novel. Therefore, Borges' concept of creative infidelity cogently informs and is informed by my elaboration upon translation as a means to provide the original with continuation, with more room to keep "moving and changing in Mariposa". Such line of reasoning also helps me duck what I see as an institutional mania regarding the quest for the final version, final reading, best translation, ultimate interpretation, etc.

What is the problem in admitting that there is no perfect reading, translation, and interpretation of a text? No translation is definitive; such as no thesis is definitive, including my own. As historical victims that have learned to behave defensively in order to guarantee their place in the sun (no matter how small), translators and translation researchers often tend to justify their own works by diminishing the works of others. Preserving and vindicating our metiers would gradually become synonymic to the condemnation and excoriation of those who we seem to take as our contenders, even though they are nothing but our partners. Notwithstanding their projects, historical backgrounds, editorial censorships, and personal purposes, for the most varied reasons we feel this need to question the choices of other translators, asserting that our work (or the work we appreciate) is superior because it does not domesticate, or deform, or adapt, etc. – or precisely because it does, depending on our opinion. Wishful thinking. I myself am aware that my work is not the ideal, nor the last, nor unique. The only thing I can say for sure is that my translation of Leacock's novel into Portuguese is, by far, the best you can find today – at least until it is retranslated. Remember that the final performance is never set to happen, although the rehearsals shall go on and on forever. Translation, in this sense, operates as one more molecule of a liquefying re-signification, an opportunity not to close the reading of an original text, but to provide the library of babel with another book.

When translation is summoned onto the arena, the library is remodelled and amplified; paradoxically, the close reading of the translation is an opening one, i.e. my interpretation of the novel is particular, but at the same time infected by the ideas I share with my community. Everything is original and everything is translation, because no text could be written if it were completely new – nor if it were a total repetition of what has been written so far. New meanings depend on prior meanings, what is original depends on what is translated, what is written depends on what has been read. In a nutshell, and as contradictory as it might seem, my reading of Leacock's text and my endeavour to translate it evince that the more I allow myself to transgress the limits of translator's creativity the less I am likely to limit the original creation. Creativity is faithfulness – faithfulness to literature. So creative infidelity raises our awareness to what regards the fact that craftsmanship never stops taking place. Subjects are always recreating and editing pre-given information and manufacturing new literary icons, and the translated piece is nothing but the most blatant evidence of that. Literature, in the end, encompasses an amalgam of discourses that touch and influence one another; the literary discourse is an amount of versions of a same story, whose beginning (the "original") is forever lost and unachievable. Writers objectively edit previous texts and symbolically translate their ideas concerning what to claim in their own; and translators are given an opportunity to keep doing so, although in a slightly different way.

Understanding their task as one whose basis resides in transformation, creation, innovation, and, perhaps especially, in originality is a pivotal path for translators to be extricated from their existential drama, from their ubiquitous sense of onus, and from the burdens of an infidelity that have actually never taken place. To translate is to ingrain literature, and to hamper translation is to stop the literary chain. The literary discourse is per se an evidence that transformations are inevitable, but one's fear to transform is not. Literature, in the end, has always been about transgression; and, if the literary translator prevents him/herself from transgression, literature consequently ends up having no sense whatsoever. Creative infidelity is thus not a possibility of translation; it is its natural and unavoidable premise. Given the inner features of Leacock's literary treatments of those issues he addresses in *Sunshine sketches*, all these intricate connections provoked by the advent of humour can be said to constitute the unit of the narrative. As I recreate such hypertext, if humour happens to work for the Brazilian contemporary audience, both Leacock and myself are to blame, not to mention the reader him/herself. As soon as a text is read, meaning is both lost and found – after all, without the transformation entailed by interpretation, meaning ceases to exist, for good. It is when I materially and consciously touch a text (manipulating such text to make it work in my own means) that meaning is recalled.

When I go back to my parents' house and take a look at our family's piano, I simply cannot stop wondering it works basically as literature; and the experience of this thesis has proved I am not that insane (even though I might be a little). The piano, like the book, is a lifeless and meaningless object, as long as there is no one to play it and no one to listen. One can look at its technical attributes: open, disassemble all the pieces and put them together once more – just as one can select chunks of a narrative and analyse its formal structure; both processes, however, would not help any artistic meaning to emerge. Sitting in front of an instrument and playing the first chords is like opening a book and reading the first lines; the keyboards and the words activate meaning and, once "these buttons" are pressed, no one is able to control what shall happen later. The experiences are synonymic, for they deal with our subjectivity, with the abstract connections done by what goes beyond our consciousness. My experience playing a song is unique: the song shall never be repeated, regardless of how hard I try. My listeners' response to it is also unique, and, oblivious to my intentions, they are going to interpret, from that song, meanings that belong only to their minds – to the singular connections of their brains. I cannot control the music, let alone their imagination. What matters here is that both the piano and the book simply do not "exist" when they are in their most concrete condition: on the corner of a room or the shelves of a chamber. It is when we kidnap their concreteness and turn them into metaphysics that their existence makes sense. Art, it seems, can only be touched at the moment it is made untouchable.

As an atheist, however, I would never say that everything is metaphysics; language, literature, humour, and translation, all work just because of physics. Played or not, read or not, the piano and the book are still there, waiting to be activated. Devoid of a "supernatural" essence, each player and each reader shall contribute differently, and the narratives emerging from both objects is unique precisely for that reason. If the piano provides us with a fruitful metaphor to literature, the same is true for us to think of translation. To translate, in this sense, would not mean simply to replace the pianist; it is true that the performance and performer are altered, but, more importantly, the very music sheet goes through transformation. Let us go back to the image of my playing the piano; when translation gets onto the scene the song keeps on going, slightly transformed, for it is as if another hand was added to the piano keyboards. The original player has now even less control on what is happening – the interference entailed by translation starts taking the song through diverging directions, providing it with new chords, thinking of other harmonies, and creating a distinct, unheard, melody. Experiences are still unique, and the original player is still there – but the music is more intense, louder, reborn, and walking towards eternity. Both musicians are now influencing their next move; and the best of all is precisely that none of them are able to infer what their listeners might be thinking. The story that is written, played, and/or told is only imaginable because those players have provided their respective audiences with such performance. But, what really makes a difference is if and how this story is going to be recalled by this audience – the best way to judge a song is not looking for the most carefully written nor the best performed one, but actually, and simply, for the one that we never forget.

5.1. Implications: The omnipresence of creative infidelity

Analysing *Sunshine sketches* in the third chapter and reflecting upon my translation choices for bringing the novel to my target audience, in the fourth, has given me enough room to test my hypotheses and pursue my objectives; and, therewithal, it would not be advisable to set aside what such pursuit implicates. Understanding literature as a possibility to confer my readers with a more critical lens for beholding the reality surrounding them, making out what Leacock achieves through his deployment of a humorous (and seemingly anodyne) narrative evinces the relevance of such text even when appraised within a different time and space. That is, if the potentiality of the novel emphasises the contributions it entails for both source and target readers, unveiling such potential and providing it with the necessary means for its continuity has proven to be a rather fruitful decision. Hence my personal goal to publish the translation and give Brazilian readers a chance to understand what I am talking about. I myself shall never look at humour as I did prior to writing this thesis; even though in my personal life I have always had a tendency to make fun of everything, I could never have imagined that laughter is such a complex thing. Now I know that behind the curtains of a joke there is a whole world hidden. Precisely, undertaking the task of analysing and translating Leacock's sketches was an attempt at finding out what is there to be disclosed.

The first implication of this study is, perhaps, the fact that, through the partnership established between humour and creative infidelity, Leacock's narrative has an opportunity to keep summoning his readers to become whole, free, sane, and fully alive. After reflecting upon the role given to translation as the means to temporally intersect source and target texts, I have presented Borges' concept of creative infidelity as to ratify any interferences such text might have suffered. Everything I propose is to the sake of laughter; and, in this sense, if I “disrespect” in any way the original meaning it is because I do not dissociate such meaning from its humorous effect. Like any other challenges, it is exactly the paradigm case of untranslatability that makes my task so rewarding: the idea that humour can survive the time and space travel of translation. My attempt at reconstructing this seemingly non-transposable vacuity of meaning-making elements has been an exceptional experience; and it is gratifying for me to be in the position of that subject who is assisting the unknown Mariposa to become as notorious to my readers as it is for the novel’s narrator. The translator operates indeed as a door attendant that opens up the gates of meaning, with no caveats; the building of the original is there, but, without such interference, many readers’ would never have an opportunity of entering. If literature makes everything eternal, it behoves those who work with it to provide the literary text with enough room for eternity to keep its flow.

It is worth reminding here that, even when the dramatic actors of Elizabethan period tried to follow the narrative they had rehearsed strictly, as the clowns entered the scenery with no warnings the logic was completely reversed. The trained attempt at mimesis is thus confused, and an unplanned quid pro quo is established. There were no guidelines for the clowns to act, they were free to perform and improvise as they wished, and, through their spontaneous actions, humour also emerged. Provoking catharsis in the audience, these clowns are reminders that it is also important to care about the ridiculous, about the failure, the losses – notwithstanding how obsessive our contemporary society might be about triumph. Through many other channels, the comic still depends on such lack of chains; and, as soon as a set of rules is invented for humour to operate, it loses for good its ability to go beyond expectations. This is not to say that those who work with humour have no responsibility; it is important to distinguish between a contesting, politicised joke (e.g. ridiculing politicians) and the one that reinforces pre-given stigmas (e.g. ridiculing immigrants). Although the latter is the most common, the former is, to me, the most commending. After all, if humour has the power to set us free from our prejudices, chauvinisms, and arrogance, why on Earth would it be working for their maintenance? Art may be merry and jocund, but it is also serious politics.

We have the clowns of our times (take stand-up comedians, for instance) and, no matter what they might think, they are as responsible as any one for the discourses they reiterate and/or problematise. Freedom is a weapon that must be used with caution, for, even though it is effective in defending us from those who have attacked us throughout history, it can also be deployed just to help them. In the toxic environment of contemporary society, full of so many questionable jokes that keep poisoning us against one another, the humorous discourse of Leacock's text might still be used as an effective antidote. Therefore, at least in the way I see it, one of the greatest implications of this thesis is the development of an attempt at doing the impossible through the redemption of humour; if not for laughter, we would not be able to overcome many of our life obstacles. How many jokes have you ever told to relieve the tension of someone? Hence my ambition to show why laughter matters; so I wish this research contributes to the field of literary creation, humour, and to the field of the literary translation of humour. The comic, due to the prejudice of those who underestimate its strength, is an arena still in need of researches. In my specific reading of this thesis object of research, I have learned that the apex of Leacock's masterpiece is the acid tone of its narrator, who is ironically placed in a vantage point: as an observer who is both close and separated from the actions s/he narrates.

An audacious narrator requires an audacious translator; so the autonomy that summons translator to dodge from his/her eternal debt with the original and from the inferior position where s/he had been forced in by tradition consists in another possible implication of my study. As does Borges, I also advocate for an idea of translation not as maintenance of the original, but as the invention of a new original. An idea of translation as (re)invention is precisely what I have tried to propose throughout my thesis. Many readers might find indeed the strangest alterations when reading my version of Leacock's text, which suffers severe changes (inclusions, exclusions, adaptations, etc.) when going through the journey of translation. The imperceptible gradations inherent to the functioning of humour end up affected from top to bottom because of such journey, and my crazy way of driving it. Nevertheless, literature, humour, and translation entail, by definition, the strangest metamorphoses – *all* these instances operate through metamorphosis. Apropos, using creative infidelity as an effective translation tool, my study might also be helpful in bringing Borges' reflections to TS more often and consistently. Since Borges has not developed a concrete theory on translation, but only talked about it casually, in informal contexts, it behoves us, researchers, to articulate a more robust critique upon his reflections and rethink our activity.

5.2. Limitations: The challenge of theorising upon a non-theory

Regardless of everything I think I did here, it would be far too farfetched to assume my thesis and translation proposal are per se enough for a new view on translation to be institutionalised (if only I was that powerful). Moreover, a new gaze upon the comic depends on much more than a single study like this. My research has shown me what kind of translator I like to be, and it has also provided me with enough material to get where I am now. I have nonetheless been unable to provide this thesis with an interface between Leacock's academic writing and his humorous ones. A deeper discussion upon his legacy as a political scientist would provide my readers with a more thorough background regarding his opinions on economics and politics, which is of paramount importance for a more encompassing gaze on his literary productions. *Sunshine sketches* deals with many issues that I, in my research, felt compelled to analyse; the space and time constraints of such research have nonetheless convinced me that, for the sake of consistency, it would be necessary to choose some of these issues and overlook others. I have thus focused on humour, to the detriment of other aspects of the novel – e.g. national identity, neo-colonialism, stereotypes, and cosmopolitanism.

Creative infidelity, as my main translation tool, has given me enough freedom and autonomy to recreate Leacock's humour and to advocate for the construction of a new perspective on translation – one that impinges upon the debt of the translator and of his/her obligation to provide the maintenance of the original. However, for Borges' concept of creative infidelity to really influence the institutionalised idea of translation, much is still to be done, and I hope my study contributes to such agenda. After all, the idea of creative infidelity is, prima facie, a legitimate statement; as it embodies, without any sort of embarrassment, the inherent character of any translation practice: the conscious manipulation of the original text. Even those who attempt at proposing the most neutral, passive, and/or submissive version of a text in another language are, due to the very nature of their task, incapable of carrying out such project. When translation occurs, literature enters other literary systems, and, theretofore, a series of transformations and adaptations is required.

However, I could have scrutinised Borges' development of creative infidelity more diligently than I did; given that it is my main theoretical framework, I did not examine the concept as I think I should. In this sense, another limitation of my thesis is the fact that it fails to acknowledge Borges' legacy as a writer and critic before he even thought of creative infidelity. Many of his fictional texts inform his critique upon artistic (re)creation; and, even though an analysis of such narratives from the lenses of translation studies is required, my study has focused on the analysis and translation of Leacock's text, unfortunately taking Borges reflections (and his path towards them) completely for granted. I am aware of this limitation, especially in what regards my ambition to refrain translators from their burden. I know, in my heart of hearts, that those who translate, such as those who analyse translation, are still going to deal with the problems that I claim not to exist. The debt of that subject who translates is immense, and s/he needs a large amount of patience and perseverance to work for such debt to be eventually torn apart. I expect, therefore, to be part of this new generation of translation researchers whose focus would be more injected in the realm of reinvention, recreation, and literary continuity rather than in the realm of maintenance and equivalence. Equivalence does not exist – no word can be translated without a decoding, kidnapping, and ultimate reenactment of meanings.

If there is no way for the translator not to betray, the only thing I envisage is the possibility of a future where we no longer care if we are still sinners or not; on the contrary, instead of avoiding, dodging, and/or hiding our texts' metamorphical nature, we as translators should *be* the metamorphosis. The translation, by the way, could be seen as a chameleon; regardless of how farfetched such metaphor might seem, to me it makes total sense. Chameleons, such as translations, are generally believed to change their colour passively, only as a natural and genetic response designed to blend their skin with the forest surroundings; this is just as it happens in the case of translated pieces, as we tend to eliminate an active agent from the process. Notwithstanding such initial belief, science has demonstrated that, besides their surroundings there are actually many reasons for chameleons to change their colour. As a matter of fact, sometimes their colour has nothing to do with their background, especially when its changes are stimulated by their emotions (e.g. when they engage in a contest against a rival or are willing to attract a mate). Like chameleons, translations are indeed affected by their surroundings, but they are also a response to what surrounds them; there are many reasons for a translation to have this or that colour – and it is high time we understood there is no way to limit it to its contextual circumstances. If a work is translated it is going to change colours – and it is not going to change colours for the will of God, but because there is someone actively holding and manipulating the brush: a translator.

5.3. Suggestions for future research: Humour to be dissected

As implied by the clear limitations of my study, there is still much to be done for the development of creative infidelity as the translation concept that it is not considered to be yet. Therefore, studies focusing on Borges' ideas on coauthorship, creativity, representation, imitation, etc. all should help us have a clearer approach on this view of the original as draft and on the translation as an autonomous work. This, however, would require such study to harness its analytical focus towards Borges' texts themselves, as the object and the scaffold for the elaboration of the study. My choice for using him as a "theorist" did not allow such a deeper analysis of how his fiction and his ideas on fiction might (or not) enter in a dialogue. There is in this sense also a lot one could do in what concerns the intricate dialogue of humour and translation, no matter what media we might be grappling with. As a fundamental part of society, every subject is affected and affects the continuity that constitutes such society; and, within such continuity, humour emerges as one of the cornerstones for its social functionality and development. To understand the impact of laughter for the social development of society (how it affects its state of affairs) more research is necessary, and accepting the challenge of looking deeper into the essence of humour is of paramount importance for that to feasibly occur. To talk of humour, to translate it, and to use creative infidelity theretofore have proved not to be an easy thing – hence the drawbacks of my research. I have nonetheless accepted the contest, and I am proud of doing so, concluding my reflection with the hope that more researchers will move on from the point where I have stopped. It is the challenge that has guided me: the idea of turning the impossible possible is the dream of every translation researcher who wants answers be less predictable than simply "yes" or "no". I myself am aware my study does not provide all the answers; but, understanding humour as mobile and continuous, I imagine it is much more applicable to enhance the array of questions than to provide my readers with any sort of answer. Moreover, I am myself someone who appreciate a good laugh and who acknowledge the importance of humour; as a translator, I thus see the possibility of bringing the politically motivated humour elaborated by Leacock to new readers as something that is worth the trouble. Laughter, as interpretation, is spontaneous – and I hope to have demonstrated heretofore that translating such laughter might only be possible if such spontaneity is emulated, instead of avoided. The object translated is there to be transformed, as one can only see it through the very lenses of metamorphosis. Translation, in this sense, could be compared to the mirror Perseus uses to behead the Gorgon Medusa; it is by displacing perception, by addressing the matter from a distinct standing point (as the sketches narrator also does during his/her descriptions), that an effective reaction towards the source narrative can be concocted. The image shown by the mirror is not more deceptive or fake than the "real Medusa"; and, through such representation, it is possible for Perseus to get actually closer to her.

The first forms of communication produced by us, after we are born, consist in the tears and the laughter that we use to give our progenitors a clue about what we are trying to say. Humour, thereinafter, shall prove to be crucial as one of those things we do not really understand, but simply know it is there, all the time. There is no community where humour is not present – every society learns and teaches those who are part of it how to laugh, and every society laughs at distinct issues. Analysing such issues, reflecting upon them, and ultimately recreating them in my target text has been a crucial step for Leacock's humour to be translated as acutely and originally as it deserves. Future research would do well if it narrowed down the analysis of humour, as to take into account its distinct manifestations. Humour operates through irony, jokes, sarcasm, cynicism, exaggeration, disdain, inconsistencies, etc.; and each of these incongruencies produce the most varied sorts of comic effects. For laughter to emerge, the narrator of Leacock's sketches harnesses the most varied techniques, which, on their turn, never produce the same effects. Putting such effects in the spotlight with more precision and care is a crucial step for evading the shallowness wherein my study has often fallen – especially when it seems to treat all these issues as if they were analogous. Every aspect of human existence is inherently amenable to become a joke; we act in a stereotyped fashion, and accepting how preposterous our condition might be in this or that context gives us the necessary tools to put into question what – notwithstanding how ridiculous it may be – has always seemed clear, straightforward, and sensible in terms of our ridiculous existence. In this sense, society is not a pre-given mould, not a concrete and well-established episteme to which we provide no contributions. Every subject is a passive receiver of meanings and an active creator of new ones; as we insert ourselves in society we learn how to deal with something that has never operated through stasis.

Perceiving what is inert and/or stereotyped in our civilisation – as I believe Leacock has done – is a necessary process for the surface of a living society to be effectively reflected upon and possibly transformed. Humour, in this sense, emerges as another mask in the social masquerade of human existence – a mask that, in many ways, is much more representative than the faces it covers might have ever been. If everything in society is liable to be made fun of, it is amenable to transformation – and if irony touches an issue, it is because such issue is inherently amenable to be touched. Turning humour into something else stands, in this sense, for the will to let it work as it has always done: as liquefied and hence predisposed to assume distinct forms. When one laughs, therefore, it does not mean s/he is ridiculing the image suggestive of the notion of a society disguising itself – it might also mean such disguise is bestowed with a brand new image. Such image is one that, besides it depends only on itself, it has also nothing to hide and, in many events, it shows us much more than we are generally able to see. Therefore, regardless of how ready-made many aspects residing on the surface of our social configuration may be, understanding which of these aspects are laughable and trying to find out why they are laughable helps us see through the surface. The advent of such lenses, on their turn, helps us get closer to the meanings that have been embalmed by alienation, and that only a humorous gaze might give us a chance to disclose. I finish this thesis thus with three basic expectations: 1) that my study triggers a new array of investigations on the issue of humour; 2) that it empowers the study of Canadian literature, 3) and that my analysis and comments shed a light on the applicability of Borges' notion of creative infidelity as an effective translation tool. As the remarks, implications, limitations, and suggestions of my research stress, even though this thesis is ready, the work is still to be continued. So: is anyone there willing to rewrite upon my draft?

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