

Translating history and creating an international platform: Haroldo de Campos's "o anjo esquerdo da história"

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ABSTRACT:

Two translations of Haroldo de Campos's "o anjo esquerdo da história", carried out concomitantly yet independently, interacted with the broad national and international outcries at the 1996 massacre of the MST's 19 protestors in Eldorado de Carajás. This paper initially summarizes the poem's complex historicity and analyzes some of the strategies used by two translators to approximate "o anjo..." to other historical horizons: the poet's self-translated "the left-winged angel of history" and Bernard McGuirk's "the angel on the left of history". The need to go beyond the fusion of historical horizons arises from the increasingly political roles of translation in the mediation of conflict or in the creation of international platforms for oppositional groups, the latter being partially the case of these translations. Thus the last focus, on distribution circuits and potential recipients, weaves with poetics and hermeneutics in the assessment of their achievements.

Key-words: historicity, political translation, international platform, Haroldo de Campos, Bernard McGuirk

Introduction

In 1997, three long columns from three different regions of Brazil, merging in Brasília, reintroduced the ever more ragged presence of those without land – without *Kapital* – into the fabric of Brazilian history. Haroldo de Campos's "o anjo esquerdo da história" marks the occasion. The poem was first recited in a session of protest at the House of Representatives of the state of São Paulo in 1997, to denounce the year-long impunity of those responsible for the brutal murder. The two traditional print offerings of the poem incorporated other media, presumably to add to its political impact: an illustration accompanying the written text in *pt notícias* and a CD ROM with Haroldo's² recording of the poem appended to the book *Crisantempo* (DE CAMPOS, 1998), by the renowned publisher Perspectiva. The poem is constructed upon an oxymoron – the simultaneous expression of solidarity and revolt – which builds up to a climactic interpellation of history and a call for rebellion in the concluding lines (see below).

Haroldo started his self-translation in Brazil as his own tool to read the original. It was later reworked in response to my invitation, as guest editor, to include it as the epigraph to the special issue of *Interventions*, an international journal of postcolonial studies, published by Routledge, upon the quincentenary of the "discovery" of Brazil, in 2000. The other translation, "the angel on the left of history", was first presented by its author, Professor McGuirk, on the occasion of the Oxford 1999 conference in celebration of Haroldo's 70th birthday. His gesture can be seen both as a homage to and also as an engagement in literary dialogue with the poet. His translation was next disseminated in electronic format (in VIEIRA 2003). His institution, the University of Nottingham, houses a major multimedia database, started in 2001, upon my directorship, of the cultural artefacts produced for a decade and a half by the culture of the MST and by intellectuals and artists who solidarize with them, including Haroldo's "o anjo..." and McGuirk's translation of it. The latter's translation into English of "o anjo..." and of all of the poetry and most of the lyrics of the *sem-terra* compiled for the database also came out as a bilingual anthology in book form (MCGUIRK and VIEIRA, 2007a). His translation was also published in a deluxe book that was a long time in the making. He and I conceived the idea of editing it on Haroldo's 70th birthday and it kept on growing as if mirroring our friendship with the poet. It was reshaped into an *in memoriam* book on his death and came out last year (MCGUIRK and VIEIRA, 2007b).

The two translators, whether or not consciously subscribing to Walter Benjamin's "The task of the translator" (1999), foregrounded translation as a form during their several telephone

exchanges with me. For Haroldo, the translation of this particularly complex committed poem was a formidable challenge because it conveys both solidarity and indignation through the materiality of language. For McGuirk, the original was “wonderfully challenging”; he nonetheless trusted that Haroldo, as much of a free spirit as himself, would approve of the liberties he took with the original drawing upon the knowledge of engaged poetry and protest song he had acquired in his professorship of the Literatures of the Romance Languages, including, of course, Latin America. But the translators do not mention their ingenuity in re-elaborating the text’s complex historicity.

It stands to reason that the translation of a poem is indeed a form, otherwise it is no longer a poem. Yet the very displacement of the text across time and space through translation engenders historical discontinuity. As Eagleton points out, historical discontinuities endow a work of art with new significations (1984, p. 67-71). In fact, it is part of the mediating role of the translator (at times subsumed in Gadamer’s terminology under the label “interpreter”) to go beyond the level of language in the creation of “a supporting mutual understanding between different historical horizons”; this way “the separated horizons merge with each other” (GADAMER, 1989, p. 29; 38-41). The two translators, as mentioned, ever sensitive to the workings of a poem as a form, would not alienate the reader’s aesthetic expectations with translational strategies such as amplification, let alone footnotes, to clarify the poem’s complex historicity and allusions to Brazilian literature.

But, besides catering for the reader’s aesthetic expectations and achieving “a fusion of the horizon of the text and the horizon of reader” (GADAMER, 1989, p. 41), a third thread weaves into the complexities of translating this poem, namely, the “development of an international platform” (RUCHT & NEIDHARDT, 2002, p.13). This political thread demands that the translation, as Derrida would put it, be far more aware of “listening posts” or potential recipients of the message (1974). This will lead us into circuits of circulation and consumption of cultural texts and to the need of adjusting Translation Studies to the epistemological shift, triggered by Information Technology, in which we are fully immersed.

1 Writing histories into poetry: “o anjo esquerdo da história”

Many intertexts weave the poem and enact a sense of history as an unmastered past that refuses to go away. There resonates in it the centrality of a paradoxically absent land which Haroldo himself points out in his analysis of Décio Pignatari’s 1956 concrete poem “Terra”: the nuclear word *terra* mutates, rotates, is rearticulated (1987, 78-80) into the building of a climactic *terra rara* [rare land] which is inhabited by *errar* [historical error]. Another echo is João Cabral de Melo Neto’s condemnation in *Morte e vida severina* of absences, both of dignity and of the land itself attendant upon the dispossessed’s burial (2000, p. 54-60). He draws upon the popular memory of a distorted history through an allusion to Carlos Drummond de Andrade’s “Poema de sete faces”; as Achcar points out, Andrade’s crooked angel, deformed from his birth, suggests historical determinism (2000). But his *gauche* transmutes into *esquerdo*, evoking the visual allegory of Benjamin’s angel which, in Werckmeister’s view, has become a leftist formula for reversing the irreversible (1999, p. 2). In a further transmutation, the meditative angel becomes rebellious, calling for justice, without which a revolution becomes historical inevitability. Strongly reminiscent of the proud and eminent rebel in John Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, the “bad angel” now incorporates Benjamin’s revolutionary slogan from Thesis VI, “brushing history against the grain” (1999, p. 248), cast in Haroldo’s poem as “*o anjo esquerdo/ da história escovada a/ contrapelo*” armed with his “*multigirante espada*”. The demand for Brazil to reverse such a history is now enacted by the dislocated syntax of “*a patria/ (como ufanar-se da?)*”, which forces one to read the lines against the linear flow of the printing.³

I would like to suggest that an arresting illustration affixed to “o anjo...” for its publication by the newspaper of the Brazilian Workers’ Party, *ptnotícias*, provides a visual representation of Haroldo’s concept of a non-linear history. The possibility of redemption is signalled, in the context

of these rural workers, by a motif of rebirth, a growing tree, the branches of which shed the leaves of the past and are transformed into light angels moving upwards, projecting a future and extending innumerable articulations. To the branching out of history I shall return.

2 Hermeneutics: creating historical intimacy in the translations

Several questions arise in relation to the challenges of translating the historicity of “o anjo...” to an international readership. How can the historically aggravated problematics of the *sem-terra*, a phenomenon whose magnitude in Brazil may be alien to a foreign audience, be made meaningful to them within a poem’s concise language? How do the translations breed historical intimacy with the reader outside Brazil? How do they transpose the specifically Brazilian intertexts and cultural references of the original, and at the same time recreate a dynamics of local specificity? How do they attend to the readership’s sense of history and re-articulate the international and the national in the original poem? How do they convey historical error? At stake is not simply the recasting of Brazilian historical specificity but the potential impact each one may have on the reader’s sense of history. If translation is “a privileged form of critical reading” (DE CAMPOS, 2007, p. 112), can the fusion of horizons achieved by these two translations be supplemented with a “transvalorization” or a “a critical view of history” (DE CAMPOS, 2007, p. 216), which would enable their readers to deconstruct their own history?

2.1 Haroldo de Campos

Broadly speaking, Haroldo reinscribes the poem into the structures of feudalism, an economic and social system recognized across national borders. This feudal past cast upon the original makes the translation more political. His catalogue of the institutions making up feudalism’s sharp inequalities not only contextualizes the poem for a non-Brazilian readership but also draws attention to the anachronism of Brazil’s land problem. It suggests that the dialogue between today’s Brazil and other feudalisms is possible because the country remains implicated in that economic, social, political and military system transplanted, in its death throes, to it upon its discovery:

os sem-terra afinal	the landless men at last
estão assentados na	are now settled down on land
pleniposse da terra:	landing
de sem-terra passaram a	full-landed landwards:
com-terra: ei-los	from landless they change to
enterrados	landlords: look at them
desterrados de seu sopro	landlocked
de vida	in their shallow graves
aterrados	exiled from their life-breath
terrorizados	terrorized
terra que à terra	terrified
torna	from earth
plenipossesiros terra-	un-earthed
tenentes de uma	dust that to dust returns
vala (bala) comum:	plenipossessors
pelo avesso afinal	glebe-patroons
entranhados no	of a commonshared

lato ventre do

potter (butcher's meat) field:

latifúndio

downwards finally

(DE CAMPOS, 1998)

(DE CAMPOS, 1999/2000, my emphasis)

Noteworthy above is the binding of the dispossessed by the landed aristocracy enacted through the enchainment of alliteration and assonance in “landless”/“landlord”/“landlocks”. The last one in the sequence of repeated and shifting sounds is “landlocking”, highly expressive of the servitude of the dispossessed relative to the preceding – and the precedence of – the “landlords”. Such proximity reorchestrates the original’s sound pattern but, crucially, also builds oppressive bonding to a climax.

The neologism “plenipossessor” retains the feudal perspective of land tenure as the basis for privilege and power, as well as the land-owner’s exclusive control of wealth and the means of production. To this perspective he adds two other dimensions related to colonization, ecclesial patronage and mercantilism, through the compound “glebe-patroom”. “Glebe”, the European medieval endowment of land to a parish church, brings out ecclesial imperialism. “Patroom” is the incentive title given to the members of the Dutch West Indian Company who were also granted perpetual large estates and many feudal privileges for the establishment of colonies in America (*COLUMBIA ELECTRONIC ENCYCLOPEDIA*); in a way it renders profit-based mercantilism hereditary. The echo of “patron” in “patroom” adds a more audible note of power than the equivalent *capitania* system adopted in Portugal’s colonies. Colonial exploitative mercantilism and today’s oppressive neoliberalism meet in the plight of the *sem-terra*.

“Wing”, in the compound “left-winged”, makes the title in English more explicitly political. The visibly more politicized translation reveals servitude to be far from transient — *terra* becomes terror and error. The translation also more vividly reverses an outdated world order through morphology: by splitting the word “archangel” and dropping the prefix “arch” (high) to the line below, Haroldo empowers the subversive angel of the left to dismantle “arch-aic” formations:

somente o anjo esquerdo

perhaps only the angel

da história escovada a

(arch) of counter-

contrapelo com sua

hair brushed history

multigirante espada po-

with his vortex-whirling sword

derá (quem dera!) um dia

would one day (one dazzling day) per-

convocar do ror

haps summons from

nebuloso dos dias vin-

the misty mesh of

douros o dia

days to come the one (finally super-

afinal sobreveniente do

venient) day of the

justo

just

ajuste de

adjustment

contas

of accounts

(DE CAMPOS, 1998)

(DE CAMPOS, 1999/2000)

The splitting of the “angel” and the “arch” also resonates of Milton’s plea for the overriding intervention of a fallen and subversive archangel. Like Haroldo, the English poet, according to Sanders (1996), dwells on his incapacity, as a human being, “to properly comprehend [the] heavenly terms [of an unseen Godhead]”; there is a “gulf that separates an unfamiliar [...] unfallen world [...] and the familiar one of ...shame and bloodshed”; as the result of the human “failure to live according to divine order”, “the struggle to regain equity extends to Adam and Eve’s

descendants”; strikingly, Milton’s epic does not assume “a nationalistic... stance in the scheme of *Paradise Lost* (Sanders, 1996, p. 231-33). In his rebelliousness, Satan changes the course of humanity and redistributes power relations. Isn’t that what Haroldo is concretely demanding of the subversive angel inhabiting the inverted morphology and syntax of his self-translation?

2.2 Bernard McGuirk

Unlike Haroldo’s use of conjoined feudality and mercantilism to approximate historical horizons and to underpin the belated continuation of this historical process, McGuirk creates historical intimacy with the reader, *grosso modo*, by bringing in the collateral history of the British Empire’s territorial expansion and power structures and its channelling into the First World War. Laudatory discourses of the British Empire, their later interpellation by the War Poets, and several canonical and non-canonical allusions to British culture are grafted into the Brazilian voice. Without making Brazilian history cease to be strange, the dissimilar enables the British a critical view of their own structures of domination.

McGuirk’s more colloquial and alliterative translation combined with intertexts from popular culture demands of the reader instant recognition of certain meanings. His use of puns, etymological chains, words graphically or etymologically linked also makes his discourse vivid for both the senses and the intellect. The translation also plays with erudite and popular registers. The playfulness of punning, humorous word-building, and a greater musicality compared to Haroldo’s harsh sounds and fractured words and syntax to convey indignation can be seductive to the reader. Yet a discernible tone of belligerence and a style equally laden with irony or even sarcasm constantly defeat the reader’s expectations. The translation both involves and alienates the reader, thereby creating a distancing effect and a critical view of history.

When side-stepping into British history, his strategy is to change Haroldo’s harsh interpellation of patriotism — through a bracketed question and a delinearized syntax, both breaking the flow of the text — into an ironic insertion of a laudatory line from the last stanza of what became the anthem of the British Empire:

enver-	shame-
gonhada a-	faced in
goniada avexada	agony
– envergoncorroída de	– shamecorroded by
imo-abrasivo re-	inmost abrasive re-
morso –	morse –
a pátria	landless
(como ufanar-se da?)	(“how shall we extol thee?”)
apátrida	homeland
pranteia os seus des-	laments its dis-
possuídos párias -	possessed pariahs -
pátria parricida:	parricide <i>patria</i>
(DE CAMPOS, 1998, my emphasis)	(MCGUIRK, 1999, my emphasis)

“How shall we extol thee?” comes from the coronation ode for King Edward VII, “Land of Hope and Glory”, written by A. C. Benson in 1902. The lines were set to rousing music as one of the themes in Edward Elgar’s march “Pomp and Circumstance” (HYAM, 2001, p. 47). The boundless empire — an epitome of exploitative capitalism — spanned, at the time, one fourth of the globe. The increasing power ascribed to expansionism by an overseeing God is glorified:

Land of hope and glory
Mother of the free
How shall we extol thee
Who were born of thee
Wider still and wider
Shall thy bounds be set
God who made thee mighty
Make thee mightier yet (quoted from HYAM, 2001, p. 47).

“Land of Hope and Glory” then became a surrogate national anthem sung, for example, at the Commonwealth Games or in other circumstances celebrating English patriotism. This unexpected intercalation draws the attention of the English reader whose complacency and uncritical national pride McGuirk will again castigate bringing in the context of the First World War. This was felt by many to be the consequence of an unquestioned national confidence, derived from nineteenth century territorial expansionism, that England would always win. His tangential translation of the Portuguese word *pátria* not into English but into the Latin *patria* immediately evokes, for an English ear, the famous title by the war poet Wilfred Owen “*Dulce et decorum est*”, first published in periodicals in his lifetime. Owen was killed in France one week before the armistice. His poetry is an expression of death waiting to happen. In this one, after a description of the horrors of World War I, he pulls the thread of the title into a full line, “*dulce et decorum est pro patria mori*” (1968, p. 156). By virtue of its ironical placement amidst the horrors in the trenches, he negates Horace’s and, for that matter, the world’s idealization of patriotic courage and the virtues of war. Nothing is sweet in the description of a soldier choking to death from poison gas.

Other familiarizing strategies used by McGuirk are: a more colloquial rendering of the original’s erudite language (e.g. the initial lines “the landless at last/ are settled in/full possession of the land/ from landless to/landed”); more easily recognized intertexts from popular culture and memory; the short, alliterated words that have been a characteristic device of English poetry from its early days (e.g. “groomed against the grain”, “broad-bellied”); readily absorbed homophonies (e.g. “timber”/“timbre”), and so on. The translation of “sócios” into “cronies”, in the context of the connivance between the *jagunços* (hired gunmen) and the police, is perhaps the most ingenious historical approximation in the translation:

afogando os	burning the
agrossicários sócios desse	agrokilltural cronies of that
fúnebre sodalício onde a	sombre sodality where
morte-marechala comanda uma	field-marshal death commands a
torva milícia de janízaros-ja-	grim militia of janissary-gun-
gunços:	men:
(DE CAMPOS, 1998)	(MCGUIRK, 1999, my emphasis)

The neutral etymological meaning of “crony” has gradually incorporated pejorative connotations of corrupted alliances between businessmen and government. The wide-reaching popular use of the word, as in “Al Capone and his cronies”, particularly reveals the calculated choice of the word to convey the alliance between hired criminals and the authorities.

The witty word-play “agrokilltural” above is pleasing insofar as it teases the reader: it is visible graphically but not easily discernible through voice. Yet the condensation of cultivation (agriculture) through death is disturbing. His choice of “commune” to translate “comunidade” also

adds a second layer of meaning to the original's community of share-croppers. Embedded in the chosen word is an allusion to the 1971 Commune of Paris, through which the translation conveys the need for a collective spirit, not just individual(s), to organize a revolution, foreshadowing the apocalyptic concluding lines of the poem.

The original's "fec-/und" is translated by a loose "f" on a line followed by a hyphen that works as the trace of something absent. The unexpected interruption of the word after the first letter in fact makes more eloquent the non-pronounced "uck":

que de im-	land once barren
produtivo re-	so sudden-
velou-se assim u-	ly shown to be most f-
bérrimo: gerando pingue	ecund : udder-spawning profit
(DE CAMPOS, 1998)	(MCGUIRK, 1999, my emphasis)

The counter-sublime shifts into near outrage in his rendering of the idea of the *sem-terra*'s incorporation into the land only through death and of their reddening blood further increasing the land's profit. This is achieved by the inversion of the word order in "holed deep into" and by the force of imprecatory tone of "hole" achieved by the unsaid "ass":

pelo avesso afinal	outside in at last
entranhados no	holed deep into
lato ventre do	the broad-bellied
latifúndio	acres of the <i>latifundio</i> -
(DE CAMPOS, 1998)	(MCGUIRK, 1999, my emphasis)

The British Empire is like a magnified mirror that accepts and reflects the Brazilian *latifundium* and, if it does so, it is because Brazilian history is not identical to itself. Perhaps we could talk of the "slanted correctness" of mirrors, *à la* Guimarães Rosa.

3 "Listening posts": writing the *sem-terra*'s agenda into local and global receiving networks

Derrida advanced in *Glas* a sense of history as "an interminable network, branching out in listening posts to somewhere else" (1974, 136). M. Hobson has elucidated several angles of Derrida's use of the history of the postal service to convey a concept of history as transmission subject to total contingency, which does not mean that a trajectory is impossible in the network being analysed (1987, p. 109). It is Derrida's intersection of a concept of history with a "listening metaphor" that I shall explore to cater for translation's rising role of creating an international platform for oppositional groups. My attempt to harmonize Derrida's sense of history in *Glas* and the web configuration of Information Technology stems from the shifting epistemological parameter towards hypertextual interconnectivity.⁴ It also signals my departure from the limitations of the polysystem theory (EVEN-ZOHAR 1979, p. 287-310), predicated as it is on excluding centre-periphery binaries, which has been a matter of growing dissatisfaction for me since the early 1990s. For translation to be politically effective, rather than pushing other literary or semiotic systems to the margins, it needs to intersect with or be ancillary with different media (textual and nontextual material such as photos, films, etc); it needs to have easy/inexpensive access; it needs mobility to reach various contexts, it needs to increase its "google-ability" (my neologism for easily traceable and connectable keywords) and its keyword connectivity with other texts; it needs to multiply accesses to listening posts.

The two translations did not work in isolation in the creation of an international platform for the *sem-terra*. They interacted with the broad national and international outcry at the 1996 Eldorado de Carajás massacre. In either case, the translations were part of a larger phenomenon associated with such as Oscar Niemeyer, Sebastião Salgado, Chico Buarque, Frei Betto, Antonio Candido, Tetê Moraes and others nationally, as well as others internationally (see below). These intellectuals and artists put their accumulated cultural and political capital at the service of the oppositional culture of the *sem-terra*.

The *sem-terra* are just one example of those segments that, lacking all those forms of symbolic capital and being cut off from the social and institutional framework which authorizes, enables and sustains cultural practice — as posited by the lineage of theorists of cultural circulation and consumption associated with Bourdieu — organize themselves around a social movement and create links of solidarity with those who can project their platform beyond their own segment. Social movements have in fact played key roles as oppositional forces within global economies since the 1960s, to the extent that power-broking and decision-making increasingly appear to be the prerogative of transnational markets and bodies (RUCHT & NEIDHARDT, 2002, p.1-6). Hence the increasingly visible link between translators and social movements.

In which ways have the translations provided symbolic capital to the *sem-terra* internationally? Which listening posts were targeted by the two translations? Which media were used in their dissemination? With which ancillary media have the printed offers of the translations interconnected? In which ways have the listening posts transformed the meanings of the original?

At the outset, via Routledge, Haroldo's self-translation was institutionalized within academic postcolonial scholarship, which is particularly strong in the countries of the former British Empire. *Interventions* can warrant the translation's ubiquity as it is delivered both in hard copies and electronic formats, in a large spectrum of academic libraries in countries with a very high university density such as the US, the UK, and Canada. The journal's largest readership is in Asia (particularly India), presumably also an academic one. In the United Kingdom the circulation of the translation was co-terminous with Sebastião Salgado's *Terra* exhibition in a few cities over the years. The accompanying book *Terra* is prefaced by José Saramago, who later was awarded a Literature Nobel prize. In the United States the poem resonated with the voices of the luminaries Noam Chomsky and Jacques Derrida, the latter at the time moving back and forth between France and the US. In terms of "google-ability", several of its keywords or key expressions are quite widespread, particularly those related to feudalism and to Benjamin's philosophy of history. The original's structural fusion of historical horizons (Brazilian intertexts and direct and indirect allusions to Benjamin and Milton) had its worldwide reach increased by the translation's reinscription in feudalism, very much a part of the world's historical memory. But its reach may remain circumscribed to a class of intellectuals/ academics, a feature in fact germane with Routledge's profile. We can predict that Haroldo's more erudite translation will have a worldwide but horizontal impact on a more educated class.

McGuirk's translation has a greater ubiquity potential in various ways. Its insertion in a major database from the start opened the channels of Brazilian Studies and Social Movements Studies. Moreover, access to the database is free. Its bilingualism (English and Portuguese) potentially reaches the speakers of respectively the world's first and third most widely spoken European languages. Its multimedia may particularly increase the translation's interconnectivity: photography (by the *sem-terra* and by Salgado), painting, sculpture (by the *sem-terra* and by Niemeyer), music, poems, children's compositions and drawings, essays by militants, and academics, maps, a glossary, expressions by Brazilian artists and intellectuals such as Antonio Candido and Paulo Freire solidarizing with the landless, etc. The translation's "google-ability", predicated on everyday words from popular culture (eg., the anthem, cronies, etc.) is further enhanced by the "google-able" names who contributed to the database. The diversity of academic

publication channels for McGuirk's translation may make it reach a wider range of disciplines and areas. The deluxe edition dedicated to Haroldo (MCGUIRK and VIEIRA, 2007b), also containing the translation, is beginning to circulate. Whilst cost might inhibit its popularity, it opens other receiving outlets: ever-growing Brazilian Studies (including Brazilian Literature of which Haroldo is an exponent) and Translation Studies as well as the international community connected with Concretism. The bilingual anthology (MCGUIRK and VIEIRA, 2007a) carries the name of the MST in its title, hence its potential appeal to the Social Sciences and to Social Movement Studies. It is likely to be very popular and to have a vertical reach cutting across hierarchies and social classes. Conversely, its playful Irishness and Britishness (the latter derived from ironies and intertexts) may make it more gripping on the readers but also more localized.

Conclusion: Brazilian history beyond its historical horizons

In terms of history, the two translations converge in the end. It is not only in the coinciding concluding words "just adjustment of accounts". A rewording of Benjamin (1999, p.70-82) in terms of the task of the translator of history is in place. The problematics of the land in Brazil does not match that of the US Dutch colonies, of European feudalism, or of the British Empire in the smallest details. But the translations make Brazilian history and those histories recognizable as parts of a greater history of the power of land concentration, just like fragments are part of a vessel. The translations give voice to Brazilian history not as reproduction but as a supplement to that history. It was the task of these two translators to liberate in English the history of land concentration imprisoned in that wide-reaching language. Drawing upon their sense of fidelity in freedom, they touched Brazilian history in some points, but allowed the touch rather than the points to set the law according to which Brazilian history would continue on its paths to the world's listening posts for the construction of a network of political solidarity.

Both translators, in their respective ways, carried out even further the original's demand for a critical view of history. Derrida's elaboration of Benjamin's metaphor of the royal robe for translation is now resonant. The robe fits but does not cling strictly enough to the royal person. "It remains separate from the body to which it is nevertheless conjoined, wedding it, not wedded to it" (DERRIDA, 1985, p. 192-94). Such dis-simulation of the body of history, while enabling a critical view, also seems to bear evidence that inside/outside are categories that organize our references, but may be inadequate with regards to national history and translation. The possibility of a supplement is evidence that Brazilian history is endowed with a certain specificity but is not self-contained. One might speak of historical supplementarity, thinking of the two translators' shared options to cross today's national boundaries in their re-inscription of allusions and references and in the search for listening posts for the sem-terra's political agendas elsewhere. The discontinuity engendered by translation in fact brought out latent historical meanings in the original. The unfamiliar dimensions in the Brazilian weave of intertexts rearticulated by the translations of "o anjo..." can ultimately be said to add to the understanding of a Brazilian historical specificity as well as of the world's historical web.

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² References to Haroldo de Campos are hereafter shortened to Haroldo rather than de Campos to avoid confusion with his equally prominent brother and poet Augusto de Campos.

³ For a detailed analysis of this poem, see Vieira 2007b, p. 146-75.

⁴ Hypertext is “a computer supported telecommunication technology that makes possible the assembly, retrieval, display and manipulation of texts, which are realizations of a single semiotic resource or a combination of semiotic resources, some of which include visual, linguistic, phonic and music” (CHIEW, 1998, p. 133).