

Landless Voices

in

Song and Poetry

The

Movimento dos Sem Terra

of Brazil

Edited by

Else R. P. Vieira and Bernard McGuirk

Compiled and annotated by Else R. P. Vieira

Translated by Bernard McGuirk



Critical, Cultural and Communications Press

Nottingham

2007

Landless Voices in Song and Poetry by the Movimento dos Sem Terra
of Brazil

Edited by Else R. P. Vieira and Bernard McGuirk
Compiled and annotated by Else R. P. Vieira
Translated by Bernard McGuirk

Cover design by Hannibal

The rights of Else R. P. Vieira and Bernard McGuirk to be identified as authors in this work have been asserted by them in accordance with the Copyrights, Designs and Patents Act, 1988.

Individual essays and poems © the contributors and translators, 2007.

Landless Voices in Song and Poetry (transcript) © CCC Press, 2006.

All unauthorized reproduction is hereby prohibited. This work is protected by law. It should not be duplicated or distributed, in whole or in part, in soft or hard copy, by any means whatsoever, without the prior and conditional permission of the the Publisher, CCC Press.

First published in Great Britain by Critical, Cultural and Communications Press, Nottingham, 2007

All rights reserved.

Publisher's website: www.cccpress.co.uk

ISBN 978-1-905510-03-0 (UK)
ISBN 978-1-60271-009-2 (USA)

First edition

Printed by Tipografia Guerra, Viseu, Portugal.

Dedicatória

Para os sem-terrinha.

A Sebastião Salgado e Lélia Wanick Salgado.

Sebastião Salgado foi “Special Professor” da Universidade de Nottingham de 2003 até 2006. Lélia Wanick Salgado generosamente recebeu e inspirou pesquisadores da Universidade no *Instituto Terra*, uma organização sócio-ambiental, não-governamental, sediada em Aimorés, Estado de Minas Gerais, que estabeleceu um ambicioso programa educativo voltado para a conservação de florestas e a consciência ecológica aos estudantes de Agricultura, funcionários municipais e trabalhadores rurais.

Agradecimentos

Os organizadores agradecem a Faculdade de Letras da Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais pelo apoio logístico na fase inicial do Projeto; ao MST (escritórios de São Paulo, Minas Gerais, Pará e Pernambuco), a Bernardo Mançano Fernandes, Sávio Bones e, sobretudo, aos cantadores do Movimento, pelo material compilado para este volume; ao “Research Committee” e a Escola de Línguas Modernas da Universidade de Nottingham pelo apoio financeiro ao projeto; e Macdonald Daly, Marco Antônio Durães, Hazel Spurr e Beverly Tribbick pela assessoria técnica.

*

Dedication

To the landless children.

To Sebastião Salgado and Lélia Wanick Salgado.

Sebastião Salgado held the title of Special Professor of the University of Nottingham from 2003 to 2006. Lélia Wanick Salgado generously hosted and inspired researchers of the University at the *Instituto Terra*, a socio-environmental non-governmental organization based in Aimorés, Minas Gerais, where an ambitious educational programme has been established to teach forest conservation and ecological awareness to agriculture students, municipal officials and peasant farmers.

Acknowledgments

The Editors wish to acknowledge the Faculdade de Letras da Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais for logistical support in the initial phase of the Project; to the MST (São Paulo’s, Minas Gerais’s, Pará’s and Pernambuco’s offices); to Bernardo Mançano Fernandes, Sávio Bones and, above all, to the Movement’s poet/singers for the material collected for this volume; to the Research Committee and the School of Modern Languages of the University of Nottingham for their financial support for this project; and Macdonald Daly, Marco Antônio Durães, Hazel Spurr and Beverly Tribbick for their editorial expertise.

Sumário

Prefácio	xix
Committing Translation or the Task of the Trans(at)l(antic)ator Bernard McGuirk	xxi
(Re)Searching the (<i>Sem</i>) Terra: The Archive of the Poetry and Music of the MST Else R. P. Vieira	xxv
Music, Poetry and the Politicization of the Landless Identity Else R. P. Vieira	xviii

Ícones, símbolos e monumentos

A bandeira do MST Pedro Tierra	2
Ao nosso jornal Ademar Bogo	4
O que pensaria Chê? Zé Pinto	6
300 anos de Zumbi Zé Pinto	8
A caminho de Canudos Zé Pinto	12
Assim já ninguém chora mais Zé Pinto	14
Ordem e progresso Zé Pinto	18
Hino do Movimento Sem Terra Ademar Bogo	20
As vozes de um monumento Else R. P. Vieira	22

Contents

Foreword	xix
Committing Translation or the Task of the Trans(at)l(antic)ator Bernard McGuirk	xxi
(Re)Searching the (<i>Sem</i>) Terra: The Archive of the Poetry and Music of the MST Else R. P. Vieira	xxv
Music, Poetry and the Politicization of the Landless Identity Else R. P. Vieira	xxviii
Icons, symbols and monuments	
The flag of the MST Pedro Tierra	3
To our newspaper Ademar Bogo	5
What would Che think? Zé Pinto	7
300 years of Zumbi Zé Pinto	9
On the road to Canudos Zé Pinto	13
So no one cries anymore Zé Pinto	15
Order and progress Zé Pinto	19
Anthem of the Sem Terra Ademar Bogo	21
Voices of a Monument Else R. P. Vieira	24

Missão da arte

o anjo esquerdo da história Haroldo de Campos	26
Voei Zé Pinto	32
Poema de sangue Zé Pinto	34
O arame é uma peste! Charles Trocate	36
O meu poema Charles Trocate	38
Poesia Aracy Cachoeira	40
A arte de gerar Ademar Bogo	42
A fala da terra Pedro Tierra	46
Coração Brasil Zé Pinto	48

Cânone da exclusão

Brejo da Cruz Chico Buarque de Hollanda	52
Debaixo do viaduto Aracy Cachoeira	56
Rua e nua Aracy Cachoeira	58
Galdino no céu Aracy Cachoeira	60

Mission of art

the angel on the left of history Haroldo de Campos	27
I flew Zé Pinto	33
Poem of blood Zé Pinto	35
Barbed wire is a plague! Charles Trocate	37
My poem Charles Trocate	39
Poetry Aracy Cachoeira	41
The art of sowing Ademar Bogo	43
The earth speaks Pedro Tierra	47
Brazil heart Zé Pinto	49

Canon of exclusion

Marshland Cross Chico Buarque de Hollanda	53
Under the viaduct Aracy Cachoeira	57
Naked street Aracy Cachoeira	59
Galdino in heaven Aracy Cachoeira	61

Quinhentos anos de farça Aracy Cachoeira	62
Aranã quer terra Aracy Cachoeira	64
Paz aos índios e ao mundo Aracy Cachoeira	66
A pedagogia dos aços Pedro Tierra	68
Candelária Protásio Prates – Tuca	72
A morte como horizonte de vida	
Receita para matar um sem-terra Frei Betto	76
A morte anunciada de Josimo Tavares Pedro Tierra	78
Cortejo Ana Cláudia	86
Ligação do infinito Zé Pinto	88
Luto(a) Ana Cláudia	90
A mulher sem-terra	
É tempo de colher Ademar Bogo	94
Nós todas Pedro Tierra	96
Constelações da luta Charles Trocate	98

Five hundred years of farce Aracy Cachoeira	63
Aranã wants land Aracy Cachoeira	65
Peace be to the Indians and to the world Aracy Cachoeira	67
Pedagogy of steel Pedro Tierra	69
Candelária Protásio Prates – Tuca	73
Death as life's horizon	
Recipe for killing the landless Frei Betto	77
Josimo Tavares's death foretold Pedro Tierra	79
Cortege Ana Cláudia	87
Phonecall from the infinite Zé Pinto	89
Mourning combat Ana Cláudia	91
The landless woman	
It's harvest time Ademar Bogo	95
All we women Pedro Tierra	97
The struggle's constellations Charles Trocate	99

Chegar ao mundo
Charles Trocate 100

Por honra e por amor
José César Matesich Pinto 102

Resgate da tradição e da cultura do campo

Saudade no norte
Aracy Cachoeira 106

Lamentos e sonhos
Zé Pinto 108

Educação

Entrevista: reforma agrária e educação
Paulo Freire 112

Plantando ciranda
Zé Pinto 114

Vai, meninada
Zé Pinto 116

Ciranda infantil
Zé Pinto 118

O trabalho gera vida
Zé Pinto 120

Pra soletrar a liberdade
Zé Pinto 122

Consciência ambiental

Martírio e redenção
Antonio Candido. 126

Marcas da erosão
Aracy Cachoeira. 128

Coming into the world
Charles Trocate 101

For honour and for love
José César Matesich Pinto. 103

Rehabilitation of tradition and country culture

Nostalgia in the north
Aracy Cachoeira 107

Laments and dreams
Zé Pinto 109

Education

Interview: agrarian reform and education
Paulo Freire 113

Planting playground song
Zé Pinto 115

Go on, kids
Zé Pinto 117

Children's playground songs
Zé Pinto 119

Work breeds life
Zé Pinto 121

To spell out freedom
Zé Pinto 123

Consciência ambiental

Martyrdom and redemption
Antonio Candido. 127

Signs of erosion
Aracy Cachoeira. 129

A natureza que eu aprendi a amar
Zé Pinto 130

Os deuses das matas
Eduardo Dias 132

Marchas, momentos decisivos, congressos

Marchar e vencer
Ademar Bogo 136

Poesia escrita durante a marcha realizada na Bahia – 1998
Ademar Bogo 140

E vamos indo
Zé Pinto 142

A terra e seus guerreiros (O dia da absolvição de Zé Rainha)
Ademar Bogo 144

O sonho e o tempo (Pelos 15 anos do MST)
Ademar Bogo 146

1999: Feliz aniversário MST pelos 15 anos
Francisco Macilom Nunes Aquino. 150

Massacres e mártires

Oziel está presente
Zé Pinto 156

O nome da violência
Charles Trocate 160

Eldorado dos Carajás
MBGC 164

Nature that I've learned to love
Zé Pinto 131

The woodland gods
Eduardo Dias 133

Marches, defining moments, congresses

To march and be victorious
Ademar Bogo 137

Poem written during the march of Bahia – 1998
Ademar Bogo 141

And off we go
Zé Pinto 143

The land and its warriors (The day of absolution of Zé Rainha)
Ademar Bogo 145

Dream and time (To 15 years of the MST)
Ademar Bogo 147

1999: Many happy returns MST on your fifteenth birthday
Francisco Macilom Nunes Aquino 151

Massacres and martyrs

Oziel is with us still
Zé Pinto 157

The name of violence
Charles Trocate 161

Eldorado dos Carajás
MBGC 165

A luta pela terra: despossessão, viagens, ocupação, despejo

Fantasia	
Chico Buarque de Hollanda	174
A história dos trabalhadores da fazenda São João dos Carneiros	
Irmã Teresa Cristina	176
Por uma nova realidade	
Zé Pinto	182
Mãe, terra	
Erlon Pérciles	184
Pedacinho de chão	
Ribamar Nava Alves	186

Acampamentos e resistência: as casas de lona preta

Uma segunda abolição	
Haroldo de Campos	190
E daí?	
Zé Pinto	192
Nos lugares onde andei	
Ana Cláudia	194
Procurando o jeito	
Zé Pinto	196
Floriô	
Zé Pinto	198
Tributo ao trabalhador sem-terra	
Eduardo Silva Amaro	200
História de uma criança sem-terra	
Rosane de Souza.	204

The struggle for land: dispossession, journeys, occupation, eviction

Fantasy song Chico Buarque de Hollanda	175
The story of the workers of the São João dos Carneiros farm Irmã Teresa Cristina	177
For a new reality Zé Pinto	183
Mother, land Erlon Péricles	185
Little plot of earth Ribamar Nava Alves	187

Encampments and resistance: the houses of black plastic

A second abolition Haroldo de Campos	191
What next? Zé Pinto	193
In the places where I walked Ana Cláudia	195
In search of the knack Zé Pinto	197
Flowerings Zé Pinto	199
Tribute to the landless worker Eduardo Silva Amaro	201
Story of a landless child Rosane de Souza.	205

Assentamentos: o afago da terra

Assentamento	
Chico Buarque de Hollanda	208
Assim vou continuar	
Zé Pinto	210
Nova cultura	
Ana Cláudia	212
Conspiração	
Ana Cláudia	214
Antes do sol se cobrir	
Zé Pinto	216

Assentamentos: partindo e dividindo o pão

Notas	220
Notas sobre os autores	236
Organizadores	244

Settlements: the caress of the land

Settlement
Chico Buarque de Hollanda 209

So I shall continue
Zé Pinto 211

New culture
Ana Cláudia 213

Conspiracy
Ana Cláudia 215

Before the sun goes down
Zé Pinto 217

Notes

Notes 221

Notes on contributors 237

Editors 245

Foreword

Else R. P. Vieira and Bernard McGuirk

This anthology brings together some of the countless songs and poems of the emerging militant culture of the MST - the Movement of the Landless Rural Workers of Brazil - officially set up in 1984, precisely at that moment when the social tragedy which still bedevils some four million families in Brazil was escalating. Landlessness festers in unhealed wounds of the nation's body politic. Five hundred years of landlessness can be traced back to successive papal bulls in the 15th and 16th centuries whereby territory yet to be discovered (but already inhabited by others) was donated to Portugal and Spain, ostensibly for the propagation of the Christian faith yet, no less, for exploitation by indissociable sovereign powers. The legacies of empire and the subsequent development policies adopted by successive regimes, notably, the military dictatorship of 1964 to 1985, encouraged multinational agribusiness, thereby aggravating the colonial condition of dispossession inherited through vast estates, Brazil's notorious latifundia. Two-thirds of the country's arable land is owned by fewer than three per cent of the population and by international conglomerates, resulting in an economy in which innumerable rural workers have been laid off, with very few, if any, compensatory social benefits.

Music, art and literature have long been sensitive to the vagaries and violence of the land problem in Brazil. Instance Glauber Rocha's *Cinema Novo* and Portinari's *Retirantes* portrait series. Important literary voices have also been heard speaking for the destitute, for example, Jorge Amado, Graciliano Ramos and João Cabral de Melo Neto. Music of the 1960s had a particularly important role in mobilizing the attention to the problem of populations national and international. Most recently, the world's gaze has been focussed on the plight of Brazil's dispossessed by Walter Salles and Fernando Meirelles through the blockbuster success of international cinema in films such as *Central Station* and *City of God*. But what of the expressions of the landless themselves? What do their own voices and sounds, poems and songs, tell us of the plight of those who go through the travails of landlessness and yet have had little or no access to any hearers at all?

Those dispossessed of land have also remained deprived of voice and of images. This anthology offers a public space, however minimal, for the expression of their anguish, their hopes and their commitment. Rosane de Souza, 14, and Francisco Macilom Nunes Aquino, 17, are also young voices who grew up with the MST and give us an insider's view. The militant poets who saw or assisted the Movement's being born and who give expression to this emerging culture are Ademar Bogo from Bahia, Ana Cláudia from Pernambuco, Aracy Cachoeira from Minas Gerais, Charles Trocate from Pará, Pedro Tierra from the centre-west of Brazil, and Zé Pinto from Minas Gerais and then Rondônia. Composers included in the anthology follow suit. The anthology also incorporates the expressions of today's intellectuals and artists who speak not quite *for* but *with* the landless people: Frei Betto, Chico Buarque, Haroldo de Campos, Paulo Freire, Antonio Candido and Oscar Niemeyer. The drawing of a ten-year old *sem-terra* from Pernambuco, Fábio Junior de Lima – a map of Brazil inside an open eye shedding three tears for those most wounded by its history: the native, the black and the female Brazilians – is but one of the illustrations in this book that render the *sem-terra*'s world visible to the reader.

The introductory statements in this first anthology, in book-form, of poems and songs produced by the *sem-terra* themselves, highlight different aspects of their expressions. Bernard McGuirk contextualizes some of the challenges faced by the translator, linguistic and cultural, in the context of poetry and song of commitment and solidarity. Else R. P. Vieira provides the background to the research; her essay analyses the major aesthetic and thematic tendencies of the music and poetry produced by this militant culture, whose first archive she compiled and organized according to categories elicited from their own voices, during her two-year field-work in Brazil (2001-2). She further explores the connections between these tendencies, the history of the Movement and the Brazilian cultural traditions, as well as the dialogue between the *sem-terra* and other dispossessed, or with those who express solidarity with them. Her claim is that a culture of opposition is not an island entire of itself – voices resonate, images are mirrored by others, elsewhere.

Committing Translation or the Task of the Trans(at)l(antic)ator

Bernard McGuirk

The translator of the poems and songs of the *Movimento dos Sem Terra* soon confronts commitment. The last few decades have witnessed the revitalizing of popular music as a vehicle for political activism in Brazil. One obvious source has been the *música sertaneja* of land-deprived migrant workers, driven towards the cities and taking with them their country music, be it traditional or, more recently, influenced by the commercial brands of the southern cultures of the United States.

No less influential has been the *pagode* movement's samba-esque registering of the violent tensions of poverty in its hardly couched critiques of repressive regimes, military or otherwise. The performances echo, consciously or subliminally, the prosodies – high and low – of Brazilian Portuguese and the broadsheet and *cordel* strains of popular imaginaries from across and beyond the nation. Brazil never ceases to explore and express its sensitivity to the ideological power of the protest song.

At the time of writing, it was the centenary of the birth of the great Chilean poet Pablo Neruda. Inspiration of politically committed poetry and song for not a continent but a world, he was described by Federico García Lorca as being closer to blood than to ink. It was on such a note – often indissociable from tears or from wine – that the anguish and euphoria, the despair and hope that suffuse the texts I translated were approached and embraced. My locus of translation is, unavoidably and unapologetically, Anglophone; it is also, though tempered, European. As a critic and translator of, primarily, literatures in Portuguese, Spanish, French and Italian, I have exploited the availability of translation alternatives from those traditions as well as from any Brazil-specific contexts that have informed the choices made. Umberto Eco has written in his *Mouse or Rat? Translation as Negotiation*:

I frequently feel irritated when I read essays on the theory of translation that, even though brilliant and perceptive, do not provide enough examples. I think translation scholars

should have had at least one of the following experiences during their life: translating, checking and editing translations, or being translated and working in close cooperation with their translators [...] Between the purely theoretical argument that, since languages are differently structured, translation is impossible, and the commonsensical acknowledgement that people, after all, do translate and understand each other, it seems to me that the idea of translation as a process of negotiation (between author and text, between author and readers, as well as between the structure of two languages and the encyclopaedias of two cultures) is the only one that matches experience. (36)

Let his words speak for me and the texts of the *MST* speak for themselves, to all.

The translations offered here do not demand any knowledge of national local lyrical forms or their echoes. However, it would be naïve to conceal or play down the impact of prominent Brazilian songwriters on the artistic production of the *MST*. For this reason, and reflecting the importance of such as Caetano Veloso, Gilberto Gil, Milton Nascimento and many others, the inclusion in this volume of my translation of songs by perhaps the most celebrated of them all, Chico Buarque de Hollanda, provides a telling counterpoint to the respective creations of the *MST* adherents themselves. My task therefore also involved not abandoning but suspending certain spontaneous choices of translation in favour of inter- and trans-action. The challenges were: differ, defer, never with indifference, always without deferance; address not only issues dear to the *MST*, primordial in this volume, but also the transactions, with and in the Movement, of Chico Buarque, Frei Betto and Haroldo de Campos and, thus, re-address previous tasks of the other – cultural inseparably from linguistic – translator(s).

These intra-cultural translators allow for the inter-action of Brazilians speaking and listening to Brazilians being listened and spoken to; in turn, they inspire that other, the trans(at)l(antic)ator whose sign/ature shuttles to and fro, ever seeking to perform intra-, but never faithful, ever faith-less, illusorily face-less, scorn-fully masking source, mourn-fully eschewing target, settling (lawlessly), for an ever extra- trans-mission of occupations, pre-occupations, needs, urgencies.

The Latin American protest-song explosions of the late 1950s and 1960s, of which Robert Pring-Mill reminds us in 1990, in *'Gracias a la vida': The Power and Poetry of Song*, have hardly left Brazil unaffected by the echoes, influences, hybridities and inter-texts of contemporary transculturations. He lists civil rights, the peace movement and the anti-Vietnam war demonstrations in the US; Italian Cantocronache; the Greece of Theodorakis; the Catalan Nova Cançó; the Portuguese Nova Canção; Irish songs of 'the troubles'; and Asian and African instances from the Philippines, East Timor and Mongolia, to Mozambique and Angola. Not least of the inter-texts of Brazilian protest song and poetry are the Cuban, Argentine and Chilean expressions which sprinkle the *MST* artists with inspirations taken from the archives of the Fidel Castro, Che Guevara and the *nueva canción* traditions.

If any one element of Pring-Mill's seminal analysis can be said to inform the texts of the *MST*, it is this evocation: 'Asked about his own songs (in 1973), the Uruguayan Daniel Vigliette said firmly that they were as much *de propuesta* as *de protesta*: designed not merely to protest but to propose – in other words not merely to “tear down fences” (quite literally so in Viglietti's own anti-*latifundista* “A desalambrar!”) but also “to build bridges” and to be constructive' (10). Pring-Mill identifies three functions of such texts: to act in 'response to an immediate environment'; to be an 'instrument of political and social change'; to communicate a 'horizon of expectations' and 'presuppositions' (12). Yet he is quick to add a vital rider on cultural difference: 'the whole rhetoric of such poems and songs is very different from ours, partly because Spanish [here read Portuguese] handles issues more violently – more dramatically and emotionally – than English (sometimes in ways which we may find indecorous)' (14). He continues:

The messages of individual Latin American songs function within the framework of belief they foster and reinforce, in that extremely different social context. In countries where illiteracy is as high as it is in most of Latin America, where censorship and repression are so often at work, and where the official media are so rarely to be trusted, the message-bearing function of *poesía de compromiso* – sung or unsung – has an importance which it is not easy for a more literate academic audience to appreciate. Its messages

perform a varied series of useful social functions [...] all of which are doubly important in the context of predominantly oral cultures. Thus they serve both to report and to record events (interpreting them, naturally enough, from specific points of view, which will strike all those who disagree with them as prejudiced); they praise or lament heroes and denounce tyrants; they protest against abuses and propound solutions (whether these are viable or not); and they teach many kinds of practical lessons, which their listeners are encouraged to put into practice. (77)

Robert Pring-Mill would hardly have been surprised not to be granted the last word. He might also have smiled at the risky certainty, in respect not only of rhetoric but also of politics, of Perry Anderson: ‘the symbolism of a former shoe-shine boy and street vendor achieving supreme power in the most unequal major society on earth speaks for itself [...] A climate of popular expectation surrounds Lula that no President of the New Republic has ever enjoyed at the outset of his mandate. Hope of relief from the misery of the last years will not vanish overnight’ (21). Nor – a mandate on – would the translated voices of the *Movimento dos Sem Terra*.

References

Anderson, Perry. *London Review of Books*, 12 December 2002.

Eco, Umberto. ‘Of Mice and Men’, *The Guardian Review*, 1 November 2003.

Pring-Mill, Robert. ‘*Gracias a la vida*’. *The Power and Poetry of Song*, The Kate Elder Lecture, Queen Mary University of London, 1990.