

## Extra material for chapter 8

### Brazilian cannibalism<sup>1</sup>

Another important postcolonial movement in translation has come from Brazil. It is based on the metaphor of anthropophagy or cannibalism which emerged in the 1920s with Oswald de Andrade's *Manifesto Antropófago*, drawing on the famous story of the ritual cannibalization of a Portuguese bishop by native Brazilians. From the 1960s, with the poetical work of the de Campos brothers, the metaphor has been used by the strong Brazilian translation-studies community to stand for the experience of colonization and translation: the colonizers and their language are devoured, their life force invigorating the devourers, but in a new purified and energized form that is appropriate to the needs of the native peoples.

A summary of the Brazilian cannibalist movement and its debt to Haroldo de Campos is given by one of its leading proponents, Else Vieira, in her paper 'Liberating Calibans' (Vieira 1999):

Cannibalism is a metaphor actually drawn from the natives' ritual whereby feeding from someone or drinking someone's blood, as they did to their totemic 'tapir', was a means of absorbing the other's strength, a pointer to the very project of the Anthropophagy group: not to deny foreign influences or nourishment, but to absorb and transform them by the addition of autochthonous input. Initially using the metaphor as an irreverent verbal weapon, the *Manifesto Antropófago* stresses the repressive nature of colonialism ...

In the overt attempt at freeing Brazilian culture from mental colonialism, the *Manifesto* redirects the flow of Eurocentric historiography. The New World, by means of the permanent 'Caraíba' revolution, becomes the source of revolutions and changes; the Old World is pronounced indebted to the New World because without it 'Europe would not even have its poor declaration of the rights of man.'

(Vieira 1999: 98–9)

Once again, then, the postcolonial world is one of change and struggle. However, in this case, it is former colonizers who are strengthened by the energy of the struggle. In terms of translation this means a 'translational project' (Vieira, p. 106) that is marked by creation and re-creation, absorbing the ST and revitalizing it through nourished TTs that employ an energized and different form of the colonizer's language that belongs to the postcolony.

The way that the Brazilian cannibalists, notably Haroldo de Campos, set about achieving this was, somewhat ironically, strongly influenced by Western thinkers, especially the experimental work of Ezra Pound and Walter Benjamin, and the concept of the transformational strength of 'pure' language (see chapter 10). For the moment, however, it is important to be aware that these different postcolonial writings on translation have found their echo within Europe, specifically in the Irish context.

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<sup>1</sup> In the first edition this appeared as section 8.3.1, within the chapter on varieties of cultural studies.

## **References**

Vieira, E. (1999) 'Liberating Calibans: Readings of Antropofagia and Haroldo de Campos' poetics of transcreation', in S. Bassnett and H. Trivedi (eds) *Post-Colonial Translation: Theory and Practice*, London and New York: Routledge, pp. 95–113.