

## Translating Blake's Prophetic Poetry: The Case of *Milton*

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- 1 IN his only sojourn outside London, William Blake lived from 1800 to 1803 in the coastal village of Felpham in Sussex when he was working for William Hayley, the respected biographer and editor of John Milton. Echoes of this experience can be heard in *Milton a Poem*, which was possibly started in 1804, but not finished before 1809.<sup>1</sup>
- 2 Like Blake's other prophetic books from his mature phase, *Milton* was translated into Portuguese only after the 1970s.<sup>2</sup>

We are grateful to Juliet Attwater for the translation of this article into English, to Robert N. Essick for his bibliographic suggestions on Blake's verse, and to Paulo Henriques Britto for having called our attention to the potential link between Blake's prophetic verse and the ballad metre, as well as for his suggestions regarding the scansion of the lines from *Milton* presented here. Juliana Steil would also like to thank Walter Carlos Costa, Saree Makdisi, and Rahul Bery for the discussions about Blake, *Milton*, and translation. Needless to say, any errors in this article are entirely the responsibility of the authors.

1. It seems that Blake worked on the poem at the same time as he was composing *Jerusalem*, and that it was probably based on the unfinished work *The Four Zoas* (Essick and Viscomi 36-37). Essick and Viscomi suggest that the first copies of *Milton* were printed in late 1810 or early 1811. There are four known copies; according to Damon (276), "the first two ... [A and B] have forty-five pages each; the third [C] omits the preface and adds five new pages; and the last [D] is the same as the third, but has an extra page." A more detailed description of the differences is given by Bentley (310-11).

2. According to the research to date (Steil, "Traduções de William Blake").

In Brazil, translated excerpts from the poem appeared in the compilations *Escritos de William Blake* (1984), by Alberto Marsicano and Regina de Barros Carvalho, and *Poesia e Prosa Seleccionadas* (1993), by Paulo Vizioli. In Portugal, the short poem beginning "And did those feet in ancient time," which is part of the preface, appeared in the journal *Biblos: Revista da Faculdade de Letras da Universidade de Coimbra* (1981), translated by Paulo Quintela, and in *A Águia e a Toupeira: poemas de William Blake* (1996), translated by Hélio Osvaldo Alves; the work's first complete Portuguese translation, in poetic prose, was by Manuel Portela (2009). This paper uses a revised version of the 2011 annotated translation into Brazilian Portuguese by Steil as its base,<sup>3</sup> and discusses the translation of Blake's prophetic verse and the poem's processes of phonic harmonization.<sup>4</sup> It starts by analyzing these elements in *Milton*, then goes on to investigate strategies for a poetic translation into Portuguese.

- 3 An annotated translation (translation with commentary) is considered a fairly common form of research in the field of translation studies. The researcher translates a text and writes a commentary on the process: "This commentary will include some discussion of the translation assignment, an analysis of aspects of the source text, and a reasoned justification of the kinds of solutions you arrived at for particular kinds of translation problems" (Williams and Chesterman 9). As a result of research in this field, this article defends the use of a poetic form for the translation of Blake's prophetic poetry into Portuguese, approaching the translation of poetry as a task of re-creation that seeks to "re-create, using the resources of the target language, the effects of content and form in the original—or, again, at least a good number of them" (Britto, "Towards More Objective Evaluation" 1). Seen from this perspective, translation is also a "live critical operation" (Campos 44), necessitating a close reading of the source text and demanding contact with the elements that are part of the aesthetic functioning of that text. We aim to contribute to the debate around Blake's poetry and particularly to reflection on the compositional elements of his work that justify its creative translation into another culture and literature.

3. Unless otherwise indicated, translations from Blake are by Juliana Steil. The source text is copy B of *Milton*, available online at the *William Blake Archive*.

4. Chociay calls these "phonic harmonization processes" the "fruitful use of phonic material"; these processes do not refer to the "numerical arrangement of syllables, accents and pauses," but to "the entire order of reiterations and contrasts," such as alliteration, assonance, and rhyme (167). The term is useful for our purposes, as it means one can approach these different sound phenomena as a group.

## 1. Blake's Prophetic Verse

- 4 Just as Milton rejected “the troublesome and modern bondage of Rhyming” (Milton 45), Blake rejected the unrhymed iambic pentameter, whose “monotony was not only awkward, but as much a bondage as rhyme itself” (E 146). In his preface to *Jerusalem*, he claims to have created “a variety in every line, both of cadences & number of syllables. ... The terrific numbers are reserved for the terrific parts—the mild & gentle, for the mild & gentle parts, and the prosaic, for inferior parts” (E 146).
- 5 This is the only time he writes about the versification in his great prophecies; he doesn't actually pinpoint specific passages where he is aiming to create “terrific,” “mild & gentle,” or “inferior” rhythmic effects, but leaves room for doubt. In the introduction to *Selections from the Writings of William Blake*, Laurence Housman calls the verse in the prophetic poems a “bad metrical form” that would be better identified as poetic prose (xxviii-xxix). For Housman, any reading of *Milton* should ignore the divisions of metre in order to hear its “exceeding beauty,” an argument that illustrates the difficulties that commentators often have when dealing with Blake's prosody, as noted by Ostriker (5).
- 6 The form Blake used in his longer prophecies is often identified as a septenary or heptameter (Greene and Cushman 617, Ostriker 124). With analysis one can see, however, that these forms do not have the regularity of the metre in Chapman's translation of the *Iliad*, for example, which uses iambic meter and because of its syllabic count is known as a fourteenner. According to Northrop Frye, Blake's poetry could also be defined as “a line of seven beats rather than of seven feet” (187), since it has a varying number of syllables. Alicia Ostriker goes further and suggests that Blake did not always restrict himself to seven beats: “Alexandrines play an increasingly important distaff part in his verse, and octameter also becomes frequent. Sometimes there are lines of four or five beats, and sometimes there are lines nine beats long or longer” (137). For Ostriker, this irregularity—which gradually intensifies throughout the poet's prophecies—is a conscious move away from traditional forms (123).
- 7 In his *History of English Prosody*, George Saintsbury suggests that Blake's main models were the King James Bible and the Ossianic poems (21). Blake considered himself “an admirer of Ossian” (E 666), and one can find stylistic and rhythmic affinities between his prophecies and Macpherson's poetic prose, which demonstrates the influence of ballad metre:

When Oscar saw his friends around, his heaving breast arose. “The groans,” he said, “of aged chiefs: The howling

of my dogs: The sudden bursts of the song of grief, have melted Oscar's soul.” (Macpherson 2: 30)

When Oscar saw his friends around,<sup>5</sup>  
 x - x - x - x -  
 his heaving breast arose.  
 x - x - x -  
 “The groans,” he said, “of aged chiefs:  
 x - x - x - x -  
 The howling of my dogs:  
 x - x - x -  
 The sudden bursts of the song of grief,  
 x - x - x x - x -  
 have melted Oscar's soul.”  
 x - x - x -

Nigel Fabb posits that, “though presented in prose, at least some of [Macpherson's] prose text is scannable as loose iambic trimeter,” possibly because it is a form that is close to the ballad, “thus it weakly implies ‘folk’ (in the nationalistic eighteenth-century notion of the folk) and so connects back to the idea that these are texts somehow emerging from the spirit of the nation” (140). As Paulo Henriques Britto comments, “In English-language literature, the term ‘ballad metre’ actually represents four separate fixed forms, used not only in popular ballads—narrative poems from England, Scotland and the United States—but also in Protestant hymns” (“A tradução para o português” 25). Following Preminger and Brogan (118-20), he gives the four forms, each with a quatrain rhyming *abcb* or *abab*: long metre—4/4/4/4 (four lines with four iambic feet in each); common metre—4/3/4/3 (four, three, four, and three feet); short metre—3/3/4/3 (three, three, four, and three feet); half metre—3/3/3/3 (three feet per line). The lines from Macpherson transcribed above follow the metrical structure of the common metre. They also have rhymes, although these do not follow the most traditional rhyme schemes of the ballad. The presence of the ballad metre, even if not in its strictest sense, is clear in the Ossian poems:

The wrathful kings are lost in thought. They roll their silent eyes, over the flight of their land. The horn of Fingal was heard; the sons of woody Albion returned. But many lay, by Turthor's stream, silent in their blood. (Macpherson 2: 317)

The wrathful kings are lost in thought.  
 x - x - x - x -  
 They roll their silent eyes,  
 x - x - x -

5. In the style of Malof, x represents unaccented syllables, - represents accented syllables, and || represents pauses. He scans below the line; we use this technique throughout the article.

over the flight of their land.  
 - x x - x x -  
 The horn of Fingal was heard;  
 x - x - x x -  
 the sons of woody Albion returned.  
 x - x - x - x x -  
 But many lay, by Turthor's stream,  
 x - x - x - x -  
 silent in their blood.  
 - x - x -

"Thy strength was like the strength of a stream: thy speed like the eagle's wing." (Macpherson 1: 370)

"Thy strength was like the strength of a stream:  
 x - x - x - x x -  
 thy speed like the eagle's wing."  
 x - x x - x -

In *Milton*, lines of four and three feet found in the ballad metre appear in certain passages:

She ties the knot of nervous fibres, into a white brain!  
 She ties the knot of bloody veins, into a red hot heart!  
 (*Milton* object 17, lines 56-57)

She ties the knot of nervous fibres,  
 x - x - x - x - x  
 into a white brain!  
 - x x - -  
 She ties the knot of bloody veins,  
 x - x - x - x -  
 into a red hot heart!  
 - x x - - -

And I became One Man with him arising in my strength:  
 Twas too late now to recede. Los had entered into my soul:  
 His terrors now posses'd me whole! I arose in fury &  
 strength.

.....  
 They vanish not from me & mine, we guard them first &  
 last  
 (*Milton* object 20, lines 13-15, 24)

And I became One Man with him  
 x - x - - - x -  
 arising in my strength:  
 x - x x x -  
 Twas too late now to recede.  
 x - - - x x -

Los had entered into my soul:  
 - x - x - x x -  
 His terrors now posses'd me whole!  
 x - x - x - x -  
 I arose in fury & strength.  
 x x - x - x x -  
 .....  
 They vanish not from me & mine,  
 x - x - x - x -  
 we guard them first & last  
 x - x - x -

There are substitutions in the iambic pattern and, as in Macpherson, the traditional rhyme scheme of the ballad is not adhered to; nonetheless, the scansion of the excerpts above does nod toward the influence of the ballad metre, particularly the common metre. This means that the heptametrical structure for the prophecies could have been based on one of the ballad forms that are present in Ossian's poetic prose. However, the wide range of pauses and rhythms in the prophecies shows Blake's clear lack of interest in strict metre, as well as his desire to avoid the indiscriminate use of more "polished" verse, other than in strategic passages. The dominant factor that unites Macpherson and Blake is perhaps their adaptation of biblical parallelism.

8 In his comment on "The Six Bards," Malcolm Laing posits that Macpherson's main stylistic inspiration was Robert Lowth's thesis on the nature of Hebrew poetry (Macpherson 2: 436-42). Lowth argues in *Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews*<sup>6</sup> that Hebrew poetry was metrified, that the individual lines were of unequal length, though the lengths were not very different from each other within the same poem, and that there was a certain arrangement of parallel lines<sup>7</sup> that meant even a prose translation could retain something of the original cadences, as seen in the translation of the Bible into English (28-36). His own translation of Isaiah (1778), which sought to maintain the rhythm of the Hebrew original, is similar to the text of the King James Bible (Essick 144). Essick compares Blake's "septenary" with Lowth's longer measures, and argues that

6. The work was originally published in Latin in 1753; an English translation appeared in 1787.

7. Essick (145) calls attention to Lowth's definition of parallelism in the preface to his translation of Isaiah: "The correspondence of one Verse, or Line, with another, I call Parallelism. When a Proposition is delivered, and a second is subjoined to it, or drawn under it, equivalent, or contrasted with it, in Sense; or similar to it in the form of Grammatical Construction; these I call Parallel Lines; and the words, or phrases, answering one to another in the corresponding Lines, Parallel Terms."

the syllabic and accentual variations in both were based on the theory in vogue at the time that Hebrew versification followed the meaning of the words and not predetermined metrics (144-45). He adds that these experiments were part of an attempt to rediscover the ancient poetic form on which the Old Testament was based, just as Macpherson's prose attempted to substantiate its supposed Celtic poetic roots. For Mee, both Blake's poetry and Macpherson's rhythmic prose are grounded "in the parallelism Lowth found in the Bible" (78).

- 9 The rhythmic and numeric-syllabic variations of Blake's poetry present a problem that is very common when translating longer lines into Portuguese: for lines of thirteen syllables or more, there are not enough similar metric examples to be able to discuss a tradition or consider an effective structured or melopoeaic alternative. The term "versos bárbaros," which refers to the no-man's-land of lines with more than twelve syllables, is testament to the bewilderment of both translators and poets who are used to the uniformity that can be found in classical forms, both decasyllabic and dodecasyllabic. The greatest danger in the translatorial process is to tear apart the internal rhythm and lapse into inexpressive prose, which could lead to the destruction of the powerful pulse of Blake's "septenary." The omnipresence of the iambic metre in English, even when interrupted by trochees, spondees, anapaests, or dactyls, can on occasion be reproduced in Portuguese, but such correspondence in terms of metre and syllabic count does not always result in a poetically expressive or convincing translation.<sup>8</sup> The reason for this questionable correspon-

dence is both objective and aesthetic. It is objective because of the lexical-morphological characteristics of the two languages: while the English lexis is full of monosyllabic and disyllabic words, these are far less frequent in Portuguese. The aesthetic differences exist because premeditated aesthetic effects cannot be created with the same rhythms in English and Portuguese. Aesthetic effects are also important because, among other things, they embrace the multiplicity of form, content, and lexis. While poetic accentuation in Portuguese tends to focus on primary stresses and allows poets to leave secondary stresses to design or chance, the English use of a scansion system based on iambs, trochees, and alternative rhythms reveals an entirely different principle, founded on the concept of predominance.

- 10 In the case of Blake and *Milton*, the translator's choice of base metre should aim for a balanced number of syllables, so that the lines are neither so short that they systematically curtail the original lexical schema—thus negatively affecting the source's semantic and aesthetic effects—nor so long that they reduce the rhythmic effects that benefit from more concentrated lines. There is an advantage in avoiding free verse and in favoring a pattern in the syllabic count. If one considers that the underlying structure of Blake's prophetic verse is the heptameter, which gives a cadenced effect to *Milton* and takes on a flexible rhythmic form—possibly inspired by Macpherson and Lowth and certainly by the Bible—it follows that it is possible to achieve something similar in Portuguese with the fifteen-syllable line (pentadecasyllable) as the underlying formal structure:

Virgin of Providence fear not to enter into my Cottage  
 - x x - x x || - - x - x - x x - x  
 What is thy message to thy friend? what am I now to do  
 - x x - x x x - || - x - - x -  
 Is it again to plunge into deeper affliction? behold me  
 - x x - x - x x - x x - x || x - x  
 Ready to obey, but pity thou my Shadow of Delight  
 - x x - || x - x - x - x x x -  
 Enter my Cottage. comfort her, for she is sick with fatigue  
 - x x - x || - x - || x - x - x x -  
 (*Milton* object 36, lines 31-35)

Virgem da Providência, não temas entrar nesta Casa.  
 - x x x x - x || x - x x - x x -  
 O que vens dizer a teu amigo? O que faço agora?  
 x x - x - x x x - x || x x - x -  
 Mergulho mais fundo na angústia? Farei o que disseres,  
 x - x x - x x - x || x - x x x -  
 Mas tem piedade de minha Sombra de Prazer: vem, entra  
 x - x - x x x x - x x x - || - -  
 Em minha Casa, e alivia a fadiga que ela sente.  
 x x x - x || x x - x x - x - x -

8. For more on metrical and aesthetic correspondence, see Pereira, who discusses the translation of iambic pentameter.

The pentadecasyllabic base provides a functionally corresponding form for the long lines of the prophecy. This ap-

But turning toward Ololon in terrible majesty Milton  
 x - x - x - x x x - x x - x x || - x  
 Replied. Obey thou the Words of the Inspired Man  
 x - || x - - x - x x - -  
 All that can be annihilated must be annihilated  
 - x - x x - x x x - x x - x x x  
 That the Children of Jerusalem may be saved from slavery  
 x x - x x x - x x - x - x - x x x  
 There is a Negation, & there is a Contrary  
 x - x x - x x x - x - x x  
 The Negation must be destroyed to redeem the Contraries  
 x x - x - x x - x x - x - x x  
 The Negation is the Spectre; the Reasoning Power in Man  
 x x - x x x - x || x - x x - x x -  
 This is a false Body: an Incrustation over my Immortal  
 - x x - - x || x x x - x - x x x - x  
 Spirit; a Selfhood. which must be put off & annihilated alway  
 - x || x - x x - x x - x x - x x x - x  
 To cleanse the Face of my Spirit by Self-examination.  
 x - x - x x - x x - x x x - x  
  
 To bathe in the Waters of Life; to wash off the Not Human  
 x - x x - x x - || x x - x - - x  
 I come in Self-annihilation & the grandeur of Inspiration  
 x - x - x x x - x x x - x x x x - x  
 To cast off Rational Demonstration by Faith in the Saviour  
 x x - - x x x x - x x - x x - x  
 To cast off the rotten rags of Memory by Inspiration  
 x x - x - x - x - x x x x x - x  
 To cast off Bacon. Locke & Newton from Albions covering  
 x x - - x - x - x x - x - x x  
 To take off his filthy garments, & clothe him with Imagination  
 x x - x - x - x x - x x x x x - x  
 To cast aside from Poetry, all that is not Inspiration  
 x - x - x - x x - x x - x x - x  
 (*Milton* object 42, lines 29-38, and object 43, lines 2-8)

As can be seen in this excerpt, occasionally Blake privileges freer lines. When he does this, the parallel structures rhythmically and rhetorically sustain the lines, becoming an im-

portant poetic feature. In such cases the translation has focused on this feature, permitting greater deviations from the fifteen-syllable basic structure.

Milton, porém, com majestade atroz, voltou-se para Ololon  
 - x x - || x x x - x - || x - x x -  
 E respondeu: Segue as Palavras do Homem Inspirado;  
 x x x - || - x x - x - x x x -  
 O que pode ser anulado deve ser anulado  
 x x - x x x x - x - x - x x -  
 Para livrar os Filhos de Jerusalém da escravidão.  
 x x x - x - x x x x x - x x x -  
 Existe uma Negação & existe um Contrário:  
 x - x x x x - x - x x  
 A Negação deve acabar para salvar os Contrários.  
 x x x - x x x x - x x x - x x -  
 A Negação é o Espectro, o Poder Racional no Homem;  
 x x x - x x - x || x x - x x - -  
 É um Corpo falso: uma Incrustação sobre o meu Espírito  
 - x x - x || x x x x - x x x x -  
 Imortal; um Ego a ser banido & anulado sempre.  
 x x - || x - x x x - x x x - x -  
 Para lavar o Rosto de meu Espírito com o Autoexame;  
 x x x - x - x x x x - x x x x -  
  
 Para banhar-me nas Águas da Vida e remover o Não Humano.  
 x x x - x x - x x - x x x - x - x -  
 Eu venho em Auto-anulação & no esplendor da Inspiração  
 x - x - x x x - x x x - x x x -  
 Para trocar a Prova Racional pela Fé no Salvador;  
 x x x - x - x x x - x x - x x x -  
 Para trocar os trapos podres da Memória pela Inspiração;  
 x x x - x - x - x x x - x x x x x -  
 Para banir Bacon, Locke & Newton da roupa de Albion;  
 x x x - - x - x - x x - x -  
 Para despir sua veste imunda & o vestir de Imagination;  
 x x x - x - x - x x x - x x x x -  
 Para banir da Poesia o que não for Inspiração;  
 x x x - x x - x x x - x x x -

portant poetic feature. In such cases the translation has focused on this feature, permitting greater deviations from the fifteen-syllable basic structure.

- 11 Among the possibilities with the fifteen-syllable line in terms of rhythmic organization is a structure of two hemistiches of seven syllables each (considering that in Portuguese the poetic syllable count ends at the last stressed syllable):

A Negação é o Espectro, o Poder Racional no Homem;  
 x x x - x x - x || x x - x x - -  
 (Milton object 42, line 35)

Ser cruel com gentileza! Tendo o poder de dizer  
 x x - x x x - x || x x x - x x -  
 As coisas mais detestáveis ao modo sentimental;  
 x - x - x x - x x - x x x x -  
 Eis a Serpe traiçoeira! Assim fizemos por eles;  
 - x - x x x - x || x - x - x x -  
 E é assim que eles nos pagam, aturdindo aqueles Seres.  
 - x - x x x - x || x x - x - x -  
 (Milton object 10, lines 33-36)

As Britto argues,<sup>9</sup> the closest Brazilian Portuguese form for the English ballad metre may be the heptasyllabic verse (*redondilha maior*) of popular *cordel* poetry. In this sense, through the organization of the pentadecasyllabic line in two hemistiches of seven syllables, it is then possible to achieve a functional correspondence for the ballad structures that may appear in Blake's prophetic verse;<sup>10</sup> when not arranged in this way, the pentadecasyllable is effective for the freer prophetic lines as well.

9. See "Correspondência formal e funcional," "A tradução para o português," and "Towards More Objective Evaluation."

10. This approach is what James S. Holmes calls the analogue form, where the translation goes beyond the source poem to look at the function of its form in the context of its poetic tradition in order to find a similar function in the context of the poetic tradition of the target language (95).

## 2. Processes of Phonic Harmonization

- 12 From his songs to his lengthy prophecies, Blake used sophisticated phonic techniques. *Milton* employs several processes of phonic harmonization from the start:

Daughters of Beulah! Muses who inspire the Poets Song  
 Record the journey of immortal Milton thro' your Realms  
 Of terror & mild moony lustre, in soft sexual delusions  
 Of varied beauty, to delight the wanderer and repose  
 His burning thirst & freezing hunger!  
 (Milton object 3, lines 4-8)

Both alliteration and assonance are exploited in this invocation to the muses (of inspiration, not memory), in repeating the consonant of the name of the title character (immortal Milton-Realms-mild moony) and in helping to describe the setting of Beulah,<sup>11</sup> a place of harmony between the sexes and of "repose from the vigorous exercise of the imagination" (Apesos 383). An example is "mild moony lustre," where the suggestion of languor and rapture derives from the combination of repetition and alliteration interspersed with an oscillating vowel sequence. The translation seeks to recreate *Milton's* processes of phonic harmonization:

Filhas de Beulá! Musas que inspirais a Canção do Poeta,  
 Gravai a jornada do imortal Milton por vossos Reinos  
 De horror & moles clarões lunares, em sonhos sexuais  
 De beleza vária, deleitando o viajante e abrandando-lhe  
 O fogo da sede & o frio da fome!

New repetitions and contrasts ("moles clarões lunares")<sup>12</sup> help to reinforce the suggestive power of these lines in Portuguese.

11. Isaiah 62.4: "Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate: but thou shalt be called Hephzibah, and thy land Beulah: for the Lord delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married" (King James Version); "Já não te chamarão 'Abandonada', / nem chamarão à tua terra 'Desolação'. / Antes, serás chamada 'Meu prazer está nela', / e tua terra, 'Desposada'. / Com efeito, Iahweh terá prazer em ti / e se desposará com tua terra" (*Bíblia de Jerusalém*). According to Damon (42), in Blake's mythology this place between eternity and the material world could also be the realm of the subconscious, the source of dreaming and poetic inspiration.

12. The translator's thanks go to Lawrence Flores Pereira for suggesting this solution.

- 13 Of course, with compensations and negotiations, some effects may get lost (Britto, “Towards More Objective Evalua-

Thou hearest the Nightingale begin the Song of Spring:  
The Lark sitting upon his earthy bed: just as the morn  
Appears; listens silent: then springing from the waving  
Corn-field! loud  
He leads the Choir of Day! trill, trill, trill, trill,  
Mounting upon the wings of light into the Great Expanse.  
(*Milton* object 31, lines 29-33)

Although the translation does not match “Spring-springing,” it does manage to compensate for part of the assonance of [ɪ] (begin-sitting-his-listens-springing-Mounting-wings-into-Expanse) with its suggestive sonorous apex on the onomatopoeia in the fourth line of the excerpt. The reiteration of [aɪ] (Nightingale-silent-light), with its slight contrast with [ɪ], has a functional counterpart in the repetition of the phoneme [ɔ] (ouves-Rouxinol-pousada). The alignment “Lark-listens-loud-leads-light” is echoed in “Cotovia-Conduz-Coral” and “escuta-Conduz-luz.” The translation has not achieved the impossible goal of reproducing the same suggestive sounds of the original; it has, however, managed to offer alternative sound combinations in order to achieve similar poetic effects in Portuguese. This is an

When on the highest lift of his light pinions he arrives  
At that bright Gate. another Lark meets him & back to back  
They touch their pinions tip tip: and each descend  
To their respective Earths & there all night consult with  
Angels  
(*Milton* object 36, lines 2-5)

The translation reflects the sound suggestion of high flight (“When on the highest lift of his light pinions he arrives”) by using a feature similar to the source, alternating vowels with an analogous alliteration in Portuguese. In the line “They touch their pinions tip tip: and each descend,” “tip tip” draws a connection between sound and meaning that is particularly tricky for the translator. Given the impossibility of finding a direct alternative, the onomatopoeic effect (“pec pec”) has been prioritized, as it was considered more important than the literal sense for the construction of the image.

tion”). Take a passage full of flourishes, like the lamentation of Beulah:

Tu ouves o Rouxinol abrir a Canção da Primavera:  
A Cotovia, na aurora, pousada em seu leito terroso,  
Silente escuta; depois salta do Trigo que dança! E alto  
Conduz o Coral do Dia! Trila, trila, trila, trila,  
Nas asas da luz partindo para a Grande Imensidão.

oft-used technique in the translatorial tradition for poetry into Portuguese that had, until recently, been little deployed in translations of the prophetic poems from Blake’s mature phase.

- 14 Another example of these creative translation strategies can be found in a passage that draws attention to the image of the lark. As well as emphasizing the sacredness of all things, the lines of *Milton* that relate to the lesser creatures of nature provide a break in the narrative of spiritual battle. The lark, however, is special, because it is the messenger of Los.<sup>13</sup> These lines use the full mimetic power of the sounds to intensify the action and images:

Quando lá no alto a levam suas asas leves e ela chega  
Ao claro Portal, vem outra Cotovia & costas com costas  
Tocam as asas: pec pec, e cada uma delas desce  
À sua Terra, onde passam a noite ouvindo os Anjos

- 15 The mythology and intertextuality of Blake’s prophecies are justifications in themselves for his work to be translated into Portuguese. This article posits that the formal elements of the prophecies are just as important, and that, as in all good poetry, they constitute an inseparable relationship with the content, and thus merit equal attention in the translation. Therefore, we have proposed translatorial strategies that both deal with the meaning of words and recreate the effect of the sound of the prophecies, even if that means using alternative rhythmic and phonic solutions in the target language.

13. “The Lark is Loss Messenger thro the Twenty-seven Churches” (*Milton* object 35, line 64). Essick and Viscomi (185) note that its recurring role in the poem was probably influenced by *Paradise Regained* (“The Herald Lark / Left his ground-nest, high towering to descry / The morn’s approach, and greet her with his Song”) and “L Allegro” (“To hear the Lark begin his flight, / And singing startle the dull night / From his watch-tower in the skies, / Till the dappled dawn doth rise”).

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