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AQUELES DOIS: THE MULTILINGUAL CARTOGRAPHIES OF NÉSTOR PERLONGHER AND CAIO FERNANDO ABREU

> Público: Ana Cristina, você usa muito inglês, não é?
> Ana C.: É, atravessa, de vez em quando.
> Público: É, as vezes, atravessa até o leitor, que fica meio embananado, não sabe onde fica... É um meio de afastar o leitor, um meio de afastamento, ou é uma coisa natural?
> Ana C.: Mas eu acho que é tal coisa do primeiro contato. Acho que intimida no primeiro contato. Mas depois... o inglês está tão dentro da vida da gente. Letra de música, o rock, "baby"... O inglês se incorporou um pouco, ele entrou na vida da gente.
>
> Ana Cristina Cesar, *Escritos no Rio*

> Este livro de poemas, que ia se chamar O EX-ESTRANHO, expressa, na maior parte de seus poemas, uma vivência de despaisamento, o desconforto do *not-belonging*, o mal-estar do fora-do-foco, os mais modernos dos sentimentos.
> Nisso, cifra-se, talvez, sua única modernidade.
>
> Paulo Leminski, *O ex-estranho*

LET US BEGIN in this most vertiginous of linguistic spaces; it is here that language resurfaces continually, not from within the established territory of any single ethnic group, but from the dispersed and unstable points of cross-cultural contact. In this intersticial space, communication arises out of difference, as part of a translingual practice which predates the transition to transnational economic blocs common both in this corner of South America and elsewhere. This language is different, as it is precisely this sort of interlingual literary work which renews not only a discussion of cultural difference in Latin America, but also points toward the challenges of mediation in this period of increased intercultural transit.

Of course, one could argue that this is the same with any text, even those written within the strict confines of the grammar and literary tradition established by any national academy of language. Indeed, multilingual writing is a sort of "aesthetic information" (Campos), one which serves in late 20-century Brazil not merely to add a touch of cosmopolitan erudition to academic discourse, but often, as the poet Paulo Leminski states in his introduction to the collection of poems *O ex-estranho*, to underscore a deepseated sense of "not-belonging," a term which, although foreign in this context, needs no translation beyond that already provided in the original, and one whose combinations and variations continue to multiply exponentially with continued global migration and intercultural transfer. It is within this theoretical context which I wish to explore an "other" Brazil, one not completely Brazilian, whose putative linguistic and cultural cohesiveness is undercut in a corpus of recent writing in which any interpretation would act as negotiator not of a uniform Brazilian literary idiom, but also of overlapping cultural spaces whose heterogeneity is manifested through markers of ethnicity, race, class, gender and sexuality which can only be defined as "migrant"; recognizing and dialoguing with these migrant markers of alterity is an essential part of the projects of translation and transcultural critique.

In this context of multilingual, transcultural contact I wish to discuss the work of two authors writing in São Paulo in the 80's and early 90's: Néstor Perlongher and Caio Fernando Abreu. Perlongher: gay activist and poet in his native Argentina, essayist, translator, sociologist and urban anthropologist in his adopted Brazil. Abreu: self-described "ex-hippie" and "ex-punk," not only an author of novels and short stories, a journalist and translator in his native Brazil, but also a squatter and migrant worker in Europe, occupying those vacant spaces in the economy, urban landscape and intellectual discourse of metropolitan culture. It is said that the two knew one another, a fact not surprising given the ways in which their spatial, literary, linguistic and sexual itineraries seem to continually overlap and complement each other, not only in their exploration of the margins of normative sexuality, but also of esoteric spirituality (in Perlongher, the syncretistic Santo Daime sect with its ritual use of the drug ayahuasca; in Abreu, Afro-Brazilian religious rituals and astrology); a shared fascination with alternative urban cultures, and multilingual literary imaginations which continually link South America with the real and imagined spaces of faraway foreign cultures, ones which might satisfy a shared desire for escape from the officialized spaces of national language and culture during a period of transition in the wake of military rule. Multilingual writing marks not only a common experience with other languages, but also essential differences: in contrast to Abreu and his contact with the English language and culture shared with other writers of the period, such as Ana Cristina Cesar and Paulo Leminski, Perlongher kept a curious distance from English; when asked in an interview in which languages he reads, he responds: "En castellano, portugués, francés. A

contragusto, en inglés." In Perlongher's delimitation of his own linguistic preferences, one might begin to discern how each author traces a different personal relationship to a translatable foreign, forming a continually varying set of intersecting multilingual coordinates to create a map of multilingualism both fluid and unique.

In this reading of literary crossed paths of Perlongher and Abreu in the São Paulo of the 80's and early 90's, one might note that both seem to exemplify what the French philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari called "devenir autre", a desire to surpass the limits of one's own identity in an act of cross-identification. Although the traces of Deleuze and Guattari's thought are explicit in Perlongher's writings, one would be mistaken if one were to assume that Perlongher is a mere transferral of French post-Structuralist thought to South America; as is evident as far back as Oswald de Andrade, the deterritorializing vocabulary of migration, flight and itineraries was in circulation in Brazil long before their incorporation in the work of Deleuze and Guattari, a fact which may have nonetheless facilitated their work's reception in South American intellectual circles in the 1980's and 90's. Such movement is legible in Perlongher's self-imposed exile from Argentina to Brazil in 1981, in his almost immediate adoption of the Portuguese language, writing essays for Brazilian journals and newspapers only a year after his arrival, and in his work in translation; one might even say that, much like his chosen literary precursor Gombrowicz, Perlongher himself is his own most accomplished work of translation. His continuing dialogue with Deleuzian concepts in Brazil is evident in the essay "Devenires minoritarios," in which the elliptical list of "becomings-other" from *Mille plateaux* ("devenir-intense, devenir-animal, devenir imperceptible") is extended in the Brazilian context to implicate a whole series of "other becomings":

> "Delínease [...] el mapa de otro Brasil: Brasil de devenires minoritarios--devenir negro, devenir mujer, devenir homosexual, devenir niño, etc.--, de procesos de marginalización, de movilizaciones de sujetos 'no-garantizados' (lo que clásicamente se llamaría de 'no-integrados') en tentativas de fuga que recorren y agitan el cuerpo social." (67)

As Perlongher points out, there is no need to "integrate" these minoritarian becomings, as the marginal is in constant motion through the very center of what already has been mapped out as Brazil, constantly redrawing its boundaries and complicating the distinctions which keep official conceptions of national identity intact. One might also see in Perlongher's first book of poetry *Austria-Hungría* (1980), with its overlay of Central Europe onto the lived space of the poet, as a prefiguration of his own transnational nomadism between Argentina and Brazil. Argentina-Brazil: a personal fiction of a dual state which, like its historical

counterpart, maintains two official languages. From those spaces which evade the market and the state, however, a multiplicity of minor linguistic registers resistant to incorporation emerge, and it is precisely these registers which are of greatest interest to Perlongher.

One of the most intense explorations of suppressed spaces of language might be found in the poem "Cadáveres," written in a bus between Buenos Aires and São Paulo in 1981. The poem takes shape out of fragmented scenes of violence: dead bodies seem to be hidden within all social institutions (schools, hospitals) and every possible scene of human contact, and communication appears impossible by the fear of being the next dead body, with each scene punctuated by the inescapable refrain: "Hay Cadáveres." Although the condemnation of military regimes is the most immediate layer of interpretation, one might also read in this denunciation the impulse towards the creation of a post-authoritarian culture in his later work, such as in poems from the collection entitled *Alambres*, where he uses words from Spanish and Portuguese which look alike, but with different meanings in the two languages.

Perlongher is not the only outsider in transit here: "O gaúcho Caio Fernando Abreu", as he is called on the back cover of *Os dragões não conhecem o paraíso*, although no foreigner in the official sense, remains a cultural border dweller long after his departure for São Paulo in 1968: a listener not only to Brazilian popular music from Nara Leão to Caetano Veloso and international stars such as Janis Joplin and the Beatles, but also to the boleros and tangos of the Spanish-speaking countries to the South. He combines a gaucho vocabulary and grammar common on both sides of the southern border of Brazil with the English phrases of an increasingly international pop culture. This disparate set of cultural references is embodied in the narrator/protagonist of his novel *Onde andará Dulce Veiga?* (1990), a journalist who, in searching for a popular Brazilian singer from the 1960's, is confronted with the fragmented narrative of his own life:

> Entregando jornais em Paris, lavando pratos na Suécia, fazendo *cleaning-up* em Londres, servindo drinques em Nova York, tomando ácido na Bahia, mastigando folhas de coca em Machu Picchu, nadando nos açudes límpidos do Passo da Guanxuma. Minha vida era feita de peças soltas como as de um quebra-cabeças sem molde final. Ao acaso, eu dispunha peças. Algumas chegavam a formar quase uma história, que interrrompia-se bruscamente para continuar ou não em mais três ou quatro peças ligadas a outras que nada tinham a ver com aquelas primeiras. Outras restavam solitárias, sem conexão com nada em volta. À medida que o tempo passava, eu fugia, jamais um ano na mesma cidade, eu viajava para não manter laços--afetivos, gordurosos--, para não voltar nunca, e sempre acabava voltando para cidades que já não eram as mesmas,

> para pessoas de vidas lineares, ordenadas, em cujo traçado definido não haveria mais lugar para mim. (56)

These pieces of life--places, times-- appear to be part of a puzzle (a world map? an acid trip?), but the pieces do not fit together, appearing to be in fact from a number of different puzzles from different places with instructions in different languages. The attempt to map out (or "clean up"?) the narrative of one's own life with the help of these random pieces is thus made nearly impossible by the fact that the disparate places on this personal itinerary are not connected by any kind of conventional, "linear" logic. The non-linearity of such experience suggests that it fragments the text which results from it to such an extent that, were it to appear, it would be illegible, incomprehensible, not "literature" in the customary sense. This is nonetheless the way in which the personal cartographies of the multilingual writer appear to come into being: with a limited range of possible mappings, given that much of one's personal experience proves untranslatable into a single language or impossible to transpose to a single place. The narrator thus attempts to give one possible explanation for the incomprehension of multilingual, nomadic border-crossers within the series of sedentary, national and monolingual spaces through which they inevitably pass. It is interesting that Abreu associates this sense of spatial diffusion with a flight from affective and discursive connections as well, as if his disconnected relationship with space were the very model of that with writing and feeling.

Within this migratory fascination with divergent cultural spaces, there is also a continual return home; in the story from the collection *Ovelhas negras* entitled "Introdução a Passo da Guanxuma," Abreu attempts his own personal cartography of a small town on the pampas whose identity is continually marked by the proximity of the border. Imagining it photographed from above, the town appears as "uma pequena aranha inofensiva, embora louca, com suas quatro patas completamente diferentes," with legs stretching not only towards the national borders of Argentina and Uruguay, but towards other more invisible borders with other equally foreign spaces: the red-light district, or poor neighborhoods. These incongruous borders of national and sexual identity are also underscored in the story from the collection *Morangos mofados* entitled "Sargento Garcia," a portrait of a military recruitment officer in Rio Grande do Sul during the dictatorship whose life has been dedicated to policing this national border, one complicated nonetheless by the eruption of his own homosexuality in his encounter with a boy called for military service. The language used by the officer during their sexual encounter attempts to draw a clear distinction between them: "Seu puto--ele gemeu. Veadinho sujo. Bichinha louca." (84) His apparently abusive language is also intended to police a border, that between the "faggot" and the real man, one which is also considered to be under continual threat. In spite of this official language, however, the scene is much different, one which belies those clear

distinctions which the border cannot maintain. Although the boy's first sexual experience emerges from an act of apparent institutional violence, he nonetheless appears to take some pleasure from revealing, if only to himself in a fleeting moment, a break in the flawless image of state power and its ability to exercise absolute authority over people and space.

Thus in this transit between the dispersed references of Abreu's stories, one is at once in/between the "real-and-imagined" spaces of Brazil and off the map entirely; this is no doubt the closest one ever comes to fulfilling Abreu's wish expressed in the biographical note to *Morangos mofados:* "descobrir um jeito de mudar, rapidinho, de planeta." That is, if it is not that moment near the end of his semi-autobiographical London diary *Lixo e purpurina,* published in *Ovelhas negras*, when the narrator records his reactions aboard an Aerolineas Argentinas flight home to Brazil:

> Peço a aeromoça algumas revistas ou jornais brasileiros. Ela me traz uma *Manchete*. Misses, futebol, parece horrível. Então sinto medo. Por trás do cartão-postal imaginado, sol e palmeiras, há um jeito que me aterroriza. O deboche, a grossura, o preconceito. (134)

The space to which he returns, Brazil, is dominated by a standardized mass-media bloc (Bloch?) whose images, although apparently innocuous at first glance, are often as violent as the society they claim to represent. In comparison to this officialized media simulacrum of an authoritarian Brazil, a beauty pageant and sports spectacle which has yet to be interrupted, Abreu is literally "off the map," flying in a holding pattern in a tenuous cultural airspace that cannot sustain him indefinitely. Perhaps one might find this sentiment reflected in the words of Abreu's friend, the poet and translator Ana Cristina Cesar: "é sempre mais difícil ancorar um navio no espaço." (1982: 57)

It is within this context of operating around, above and beyond the border, complicating its terms and questioning its permanence, that one can also situate Perlongher's approach to language and minor registers of urban culture in his study on male prostitution in São Paulo's "Boca do Lixo" entitled *O negócio do michê*, presented as a master's thesis at the University of Campinas and published in 1987. This literal "mouth of garbage" is by no means the discriminating orifice of the urban Modernist cultural cannibal which transforms the great works of European culture as it devours them; on the contrary, it is where the city's human refuse is collected, chewed up, devoured and spit out again--in short, the epicenter of urban marginalization. Perlongher's "cartografías deseantes" are mappings of this otherness, and in this way he performs an act of translation at its most radical and subversive, one which, by operating at the very limits of the possible and making legible voices never before recorded, reveals its potential of

crosspollination between the disciplines of urban anthropology and translation, if not also between the world of the academic and that of the urban *lumpen*.

Perlongher stresses the multiplicity of this nomadic urban space, and the complexity of its encoded spaces. He maps out the differences in the kinds of prostitution practiced in the various zones of the city center (111), and finds at least 56 linguistic distinctions in use to denote differences between michês based on age, social stratum and gender identification (147). Many of the terms of Yoruba origin, such as "Okô," "erê," "monokô" etc.,[1] actually need to be translated by Perlongher for his Brazilian readership: this terminology, moreover, underscores once again the relationship between race, culture and economic inequality fundamental to this cross-cultural transit, as Perlongher notes that many of the *michês* in the areas studied were Afro-Brazilians from lower-class families who had migrated from the Northeast, whereas their clients were overwhelmingly white, upper-class Paulistas. (In Abreu's work, one might see a parallel in *Onde andará Dulce Veiga?,* in the protagonist's neighbors: a young black transvestite called Jacyr/Jacyra who frequents São Paulo's gay *bas fond*, and his mother Jandira, whose Afro-Brazilian religious beliefs not only allow her to tell the narrator's fortune, but even offer explanations for her son's sexuality.) In any case, what is most important in this recognition of African cultural influence is how the idea of "minoritarian-becomings" is put into practice through multilingual writing; in making the Brazilian reader more familiar with non-Western elements of his/her own culture, which exist not in some distant, impoverished part of the interior or in some unknown border region, but at the very center of an all-too-familiar urban cartography, Perlongher and Abreu both illustrate how Brazilian culture continually both affirms and belies its putative place within the limits of the West.[2] In this context, the question of Brazilian identity is no longer the Oswaldian Tupi or not Tupi, but perhaps Tupi *and* not Tupi, a variation which might allow the possibility for continual transit between categories of cultural identity once considered mutually exclusive.

What is perhaps most illustrative of the interplay between language, power and sex in this continual remaking of sexual difference, however, is the attitude of one *michê* to his professional persona, also echoed in the statement of a customer:

[1] Eng. "Macho," "boy," "femme", etc.

[2] In comparison with the terminological diversity which Perlongher uncovers in his study, the *Dictionary of Colloquial Brazilian Portuguese*, although it lists at least 42 different terms for male homosexuals, it often treats them as synonyms; for example, the term "o bofe" is defined as "the male homosexual, 'gay' (same as 'a bicha')" (69), when in fact few Brazilians of any sexual orientation would consider these two terms synonyms; "o bofe" is considered more masculine, "active", whereas "a bicha" is associated with effeminacy and the "passive" role. This lexical conflation illustrates the constant danger in any translation of cultural data from minority linguistic registers: the tendency to reduce distinctions of identity, thereby erasing the subtle distinctions which are at the very core of its signifying system.

> "Eu não existo, michê não existe como pessoa. Só existe como fantasia do cliente. Eu jamais estou sendo eu, estou sendo o personagem que o cara quer que eu seja. O que eu faço é captar o que ele quer e representar esse personagem. Existe uma tática para isso, é ficar frio, mentalmente branco, sem pensar em nada, aí você vai pegando o que ele quer."
>
> "...quando eu estou pagando um michê, não estou pagando uma pessoa, estou pagando uma fantasia. Por isso é que eu pago, para viver uma fantasia."(225)

The words of this *michê* echo a figure well-known in the history of translation: that of the self-effacing, "invisible" translator. In Perlongher's study, another operative metaphor for cross-cultural contact surfaces: as a kind of prostitution in which the cultural subject only exists insofar as s/he fulfills the desires of his/her imagined clientele. Here, however, gender identification is multiple, surpassing the conventional male-female dynamic and casting the relations of power, economics and sexual politics in a radically different, potentially disturbing framework of disidentification, in which the characteristics of the translator resemble those of an apparatus, "cold, mentally blank," invisibility functioning here not as a mere self-effacement, but also as a vital means of self-protection in a potentially violent cultural milieu. As Perlongher's work in this other São Paulo affirms, the metaphors of cultural identity are not always employed with the aim of definition, but once again in an alternating and mobile strategy, a simultuaneous being and not-being (Tupi *and* not Tupi?) which allows greater space to maneuver in the violent encounter with societal norms and values while evading, if never completely, the repressive compartmentalizations of marginality. Obscurity is thus not necessarily disappearance, but perhaps, if only at times, a tactic of recovering and preserving one's own voice as well.

In his essay, "Estado, mercado, quem manda na arte?", Paulo Leminski points to the increasing commodification of art: "Entre o dirigismo ideológico do Estado e a sutil dominação do Mercado, não sobra um lugar onde a arte possa ser 'livre'. A não ser nos pequenos gestos kamikazes, nas insignificâncias invisíveis, nas inovações formais realmente radicais e negadoras." (1997: 54) Once again Leminski formulates the essence of his thought in foreign terms, this time in Japanese: this feudalistic act of divine sacrifice is however no longer subordinate to the imperial desire for capitalistic expansion, for its mission has now become invisible to state and transnational market forces. For Leminski, the notion that art can ever be truly "free," as these ironic quotation marks may indicate, seems out of the question, bound as it is to many of the same social and market forces which shape translations. What Leminski foresees in this metaphor of the divine suicide

artist, whether "kamikaze" or "kamiquase," (1981: 137) is that within this ever-increasing commodification of human activity, the artist, both as a potential creative force and body in crisis, can only trace an escape route through potentially violent danger zones: the only integration possible here, disintegration. In this context the words of the poet and translator Ana Cristina Cesar take on a even darker meaning: "E suicidaram-se os operários de Babel." (1982: 52)

Does multilingual writing truly border on the self-destructive? Despite the globalizing trends in language visible in common usage and the media, the offical line, enshrined in the ideologies of national academies and institutions, has never strayed far from that notion: foreign language, when not confined to quotation marks in displays of cosmopolitan erudition, breeds contamination, decay, death. And death indeed reappears--all too often, all too soon--on this tableau of multilingual urban literary activity: not only Ana Cristina Cesar's suicide in 1983 and Leminski's premature death from cirrhosis in 1989, but those of both Perlongher and Abreu, of Aids, in 1992 and 1996 respectively. Like the bodies in transit on Perlongher's nomadic sexual cartographies, or Abreu's contaminated cultural migrants in the story "Linda, uma história horrivel," or the novel *Onde andará Dulce Veiga?*, the intersection of multilingual writing and sex in the 80's and early 90's is likewise transformed into a suicide mission, played out against the backdrop of the most desperate years, first of South American dictatorship, and then of the Aids crisis.

In his book *O que é Aids*, Perlongher reminds us of Guattari's observation that if Aids had not surfaced upon a social body beginning to liberate itself from the control mechanisms imposed upon it, something similar would have to have been invented (92), seropositivity being perhaps only the most recent addition to a series of future "minoritarian becomings." In Brazil as elsewhere in the late 90's, however, it is Aids itself which is slowly being reinvented, as medical experts, scholars, people with Aids, and those involved in the retransmission of cultural signals, whether as authors, cultural critics or translators, begin to transform how this disease and others are experienced through language (Bessa 1997). One example is found in the Caio Fernando Abreu's collection *Ovelhas negras*, one which he himself calls in a 1995 interview a "posthumous work," given the fact that the press had chosen to ignore the content of the book and focus almost exclusively upon the author's Aids diagnosis; he also views the book as a sort of "literary suicide," precisely because of the fact that many of these works had been rejected from earlier collections because of editorial choices or press censorship. As in *Dulce Veiga*, they were precisely those pieces of his literary life which did not belong to any larger picture. In one story, entitled "Depois de agosto" ("After August"), two lovers, both HIV-positive, trace out the possibilities of an imagined future:

> Talvez um voltasse, talvez o outro fosse. Talvez um viajasse, talvez outro fugisse. Talvez trocassem cartas, telefonemas noturnos, dominicais, cristais e contas por sedex, que ambos eram meio bruxos, meio ciganos, assim meio babalaôs. Talvez ficassem curados, ao mesmo tempo ou não. Talvez algum partisse, outro ficasse. Talvez um perdesse peso, o outro ficasse cego. Talvez não se vissem nunca mais, com olhos daqui pelo menos, talvez enlouquessem de amor e mudassem um para a cidade do outro, ou viajassem juntos para Paris, por exemplo, Praga, Pittsburg ou Creta. Talvez um se matasse, o outro negativasse. Seqüestrados por um OVNI, mortos por bala perdida, quem sabe.
>
> Talvez tudo, talvez nada. Porque era cedo demais e nunca tarde. Era recém o início da não-morte dos dois. (257)

In mapping out the possible beginnings of "non-death," Caio signals what is at stake, not only in literature, but also in intercultural transfer, in the continued dissemination of possibilities too precious to be lost or obscured. This ever-elliptical series of culturally divergent spaces which form the basis of a future itinerary no longer appear as pieces of a nonexistent picture or map; on the contrary, they are connected by an ever-quickening communications network, one not only technological, but mystical as well, one which reaches beyond the control of any officialized monopoly to touch the limits of human knowledge: be it in marginal cultures, in outer space, or in the truth told by one's own living body.

This horizon of possibility is also suggested in the climactic scene from *Onde andará Dulce Veiga?*, in which the narrator/protagonist, possibly HIV-positive, finally catches up with the aging star in a town in the North of Brazil. Here, once again off the conventional map, solutions appear in the most unimaginable of forms; not only pure ones, but also in continually evolving cocktails and combinations:

> Espiei um líquido amarelo, frio, denso, meio dourado. Tinha um cheiro que lembrava tangerina, amêndoas, terra molhada, e a palavra exata que me ocorreu foi: pungente. De alguma forma, doía.
> --O que é isso?
> --Um chá, só um chá. Toma, vai te fazer bem. [...]
> Eu bebi. Como se tivesse cola, visgo, o líquido escorregou com dificuldade pela garganta. Fechei os olhos, e senti os dedos de Dulce Veiga fazendo o sinal da cruz na minha testa. Não como se eu morresse, mas feito uma bênção, batismo. O gosto amargo permanecia na boca.
> Abri os olhos. Ela tocava meus pés.

> --Você está muito tenso. Estende o corpo, vou fazer uma massagem.
> Ela tocou a planta dos meus pés descalços, na ponta dos dedos. [...] Onde pressionavam, doía terrívelmente.
> O pior gosto do mundo. A pior dor do mundo. [...]
> [O]uvi sua voz cada vez mais baixa, [...] aquela voz meio rouca, densa como o veludo verde daquela poltrona que agora parecia remota, perdida num quarto imundo de uma cidade do sul, a voz talvez da minha mãe, ou a mistura de ruídos que chegavam da estrada lá embaixa da colina, da mata além da casa, do rio ao longe, da noite sobre as coisas, ou talvez minha mesmo, minha própria voz vindo de dentro e do fundo do meu cerebro exausto [...] essa voz que não sabia mais de quem era, repetiu assim:
> São tudo histórias, menino. A história que está sendo contada, cada um a transforma em outra, na história que quiser. Escolha, entre todas elas, aquela que seu coração mais gostar, e persiga-a até o fim do mundo. Mesmo que ninguem compreenda, como se fosse um combate. Um bom combate, o melhor de todos, o único que vale a pena. O resto é engano, meu filho, é perdição. (202-4)

Dulce's therapy is multiple: medicinal, physical, linguistic, spiritual. Her voice is also multiple, without fixed coordinates: simultaneously his own and that of his mother, a familiar landscape from home recorded in his memory. As Dulce's herbal/verbal remedy suggests, somewhere, in the biological and cultural diversity that is Amazonia, there may be a plant, person or language capable of curing every human illness--that is, if they haven't yet been burned or persecuted into non-existence by the advance of national "monoculture." Diversity, whether biological, cultural or linguistic, in contrast to conceptions of it as contamination, may in fact be the key to continued human survival. What remains is not the aftertaste of the liquid remedy, but the words which underscore the possibility of intervention in any process of historical transformation, be it out of the figures of popular culture, or more esoteric sources of inspiration: here both appear united in a single figure, one which is, for a brief moment of contact, closer than any other.

Although most would willingly concede that the tenuous promise of a literary afterlife is a poor replacement for life itself, there are at least those among the living which continue to return to the works of Perlongher and Abreu in an act of artificial resuscitation always pending, one literally "committed to memory." This "commitment to memory," which all too frequently arises only in the wake of an author's premature death, is visible in the recent resurgence of publication around the work of Perlongher in Argentina, with the publication of a compilation of his essays (Ferrer/Baigorria) and a collection of Argentine literary criticism (Cangi/Siganevich). The critical attempt, however, to "bring home" multilingual

authors (e.g., the Polish immigrant to Argentina Gombrowicz, or the Argentine Puig, who spent years in Italy, the U.S., Mexico and Brazil), often by overemphasizing their dead author's "belonging" within a national pantheon, is a risky enterprise at best, as it is precisely that which does not translate into the national language which is often the point of greatest complexity. Likewise, one example of that "other" Perlongher, the one never completely legible in Spanish, can be found in the essay "El deseo de unas islas," written originally in Portuguese and subsequently translated into Spanish for publication. In this essay Perlongher discusses the sentiment among many homosexuals that they have no homeland ("los homosexuales no tenemos patria"):

> [...] Apelación esta última que habría que pensar hasta qué punto es deseable--o qué significa su deseo. Ya que si lo que se desea es un recocimiento desde el poder, habrá tal vez que formar un bloque homogéneo que sea reconocible como tal y que delimite claramente su frontera. De ahí el enojo de cierto militante gay cuando yo confundí--¿inconcientemente?--la consigna: *no PT os gays tem* [sic] *vez* (cantada en un acto público) con otra: *no PT as bichas tem* [sic]*vez.* (186-7)

Simplified, uniform identities, like simplified translations, may initially facilitate basic comprehension, but what suffers ultimately from such simplifications is the ability to capture those subtle distinctions which are the essence of a more advanced understanding. In the Spanish version of this essay, the slogans are left in Portuguese, as if the author expected the reader/editor to have at least a basic knowledge of the foreign language. Nonetheless, when the essay is published, not only is this fragment transcribed incorrectly (as is, unfortunately, much of the Portuguese in the edition) but a translation is attached in a footnote which differs somewhat from the meaning in the original. In this footnote, the Portuguese idiom "ter vez" (Eng. to have a chance") is translated into Spanish as "tener voz" (Eng. "to have a voice"). Perhaps not a large difference, but one great enough to suggest that the nuances of what Perlongher is saying about the sexual and national identity are not being fully understood; it is clear that "Latin America" is far from being a zone of unified and transparent interlinguistic comprehension, but the only thing worse than non-comprehension in translation is the mistaken assumption, all too common in Spanish-Portuguese translation, that one does understand when in fact one does not. But this is a secondary point: more importantly, in using (accidentally on purpose?) the politically incorrect term "bicha" (Eng. "fag," "queer") instead of the more acceptable international borrowing "gay" in quoting a Brazilian gay liberation slogan, Perlongher reaffirms that any political advance limited to those who accept the rigid definitions of minority identity, be they national, sexual or linguistic, remains incomplete.

One is reminded of the two protagonists from the short story in *Morangos mofados* appropriately entitled "Aqueles dois": Raul and Saul are migrants who have come to work in São Paulo, one from the North of Brazil, the other from the South, each apparently only partially aware of a mutual attraction which to others seems obvious. Their migration to the city is thus not only geographical but also sexual, as both are "in transit" out of a more accepted sexual identity, be it an unquestioned heterosexuality or the closet, into one more "in synch with the times": perhaps the "homosexuality" of the post-Stonewall international gay liberation movement, or perhaps that fluid "bisexuality" so in vogue during the 1970's and early 80's. It hardly seems to matter which model they might choose, however, as in the final scene, with the two stepping into a taxi after being fired from their jobs, their former co-workers jeering them from the window above, it appears that no definition of sexual identity has in and of itself the power to diminish the possibilities of violence in a potentially intolerant social milieu. But then again, that is not how the story ends, as it is not over yet:

> Ai-ai, alguem gritou da janela. Mas eles não ouviram. O táxi já tinha dobrado a esquina.
>
> Pelas tardes poeirentas daquele resto de janeiro, quando o sol parecia a gema de um enorme ovo frito no azul sem nuvens no céu, ninguem mais conseguiu trabalhar em paz na repartição. Quase todos ali dentro tinham a nítida sensação de que seriam infelizes para sempre. E foram. (135)

As Caio suggests, those unhappy souls on the inside "know who they are"; indeed, they are possessed of a certainty which appears to be of little consolation.

In this study I have attempted to offer some points of reference for a more extended discussion of how authors, translators, and others negotiate the transfer of cultural material from beyond the margins of national language; some of the spaces which await transfer on this cultural map are not from historically obsolete spaces, antipodal spaces of potential escape, or even that beyond the nearest international border, but may in fact be closer to Perlongher's and Abreu's overlapping São Paulo cartographies. Even the postmodern urban conduits/barriers of freeways, interurban "air bridges," private security systems, video surveillance cameras, media oligopolies and the Internet cannot insulate cultural mediators completely from these "other" urban spaces; one can never guarantee, however, that the call to translate these spaces will in fact be answered. In a cultural milieu characterized by discussions of neoliberal globalization, the cultural heterogeneity of Latin America and beyond, studies of translation and/or transculturation in the context of race, ethnicity, class or even gender, and a renewed commitment to "subaltern studies," there is continually more potential space being created for a discussion of the sort of migrant identity I have

attempted to map out here, in spite of the fact that the role of sexual difference in the processes of translation, globalization and the creation of urban space has often remained *terra incognita* for many intellectuals. But then again, now may actually be the moment in which the expanding dimensions of this discussion might begin to make a new series of multilingual cartographies possible.

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