

PERHAPPINESS ¹: THE ART OF COMPROMISE IN TRANSLATING POETRY OR: ‘STEERING BETWIXT TWO EXTREMES’²

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Abstract: In the following article I will debate the possibility (or impossibility) of poetry translation and give an overview of historical approaches to the translation of poetry, as well as translational theories used for its realization and analysis. I will briefly trace the history of the Brazilian poetic tradition and treat differences in language, genre and prosody between Brazilian and English poetry before outlining the personal aims and strategies which I adopted for a commissioned translation of a sonnet by the Brazilian poet Glauco Mattoso for the on-line poetry journal *Slope*, and attempting to evaluate the resulting translation within the context of the ideas discussed in the article.

Keywords: poetry translation, brazilian poetic tradition, translational approaches and strategies.

1. Introduction

The quantity that has been written about what is lost in poetry in translation can be intimidating for a translator of poetry. The field is immense but I will try to give a broad overview of historical approaches to poetry translation and a summary of the ‘text type restricted theories’ (Holmes, 1972: 180) used for its realization and analysis. I will also touch on Brazilian poetry and its history, discuss linguistic and genre differences between Brazilian Portu-

guese and English, and assess personal strategies taken for the commissioned translation of a sonnet by the Brazilian poet Glauco Mattoso (Appendix 1).

To define what is good poetry in translation is as difficult a task as establishing a theory that provides rules on how to do it. However, to have the latter, one must have the former; it may be easier to suggest how *not* to translate poetry. It seems to be generally accepted that the translation of poetry involves more difficulties than other literary forms; so what is poetry and what do readers expect from it in translation?

A poem, a certain number of words in a certain order on the page, is a *form*, where all relation to what is other and finite -to what is true- has been suspended. [...] The poem is a means, a spiritual statement, which is not, however, an end. (Bonnefoy, 1992: 187-188)

Most readers assume that they will have a similar experience reading poetry in translation to reading poems written originally in their own language. An average reader looks to find the poetic techniques that distinguish poetry from prose, such as a greater frequency of metaphor, connotational rather than denotational language, if not an explicit then at least an implicit metre and rhyme, rhythm, alliteration, pun and form. The difference in prose is that the form does not survive the content; it is spent when the message is delivered. Prose can be summarised, but, like music, poetry cannot. The analogy of music is appropriate for a translator of poetry, as poetry is as much about silence and the blank spaces on the page as it is about sounds and words. As with the performer of music the translator reads and interprets but does not invent the score.

The translator's task is to restore the communication between poet and reader that, due to changes in language, time, place and tradition, has been lost, 'to make the source text [ST] available as a literary work of art in the target language [TL]' (Lefevere, 1975:

42). But how to translate into another language without the loss of the poet's 'breath'?

2. The (Im)Possibility of Translation

Essentially rationalist concepts of translatability believe that it is possible to express the same thought in a number of ways, and that therefore we can generally transfer anything from one language to another. However, for Walter Benjamin this type of language transfer is not a true translation but a mere transaction. He believed that in certain select texts there is a 'pure language', a *lingua universalis*: a hidden pre-Babel poetic potential force that the 'Task of the Translator' (Benjamin, 1923) is to reach, make visible and bring into force in the target text (TT), to reveal its vibration within language.

Contrastingly, linguistic relativism suggests that our culture, through our language, affects the way we think; and its more extreme interpretation, linguistic determinism, proposes that language actually *determines* thought and that as such, any kind of equivalence between two languages is impossible:

In linguistic and mental phenomena, significant behaviour...[is] ruled by a specific system of organization, a 'geometry' of form principles characteristic of each language. This organization is imposed from outside the narrow circle of personal consciousness, making of that consciousness a mere puppet whose linguistic manoeuvres are held in unsensed and unbreakable bonds of pattern. (Whorf, 1956: 257)

The impossibility of translation from an absolutist standpoint is in a sense not debatable but it is also patently obvious that in practice translation is done; 'Impossible, of course, that's why I do it' (Trask, in Hönig, 1985: 7).

There is inevitably a middle ground, that believes translation and more specifically poetry translation 'is sometimes possible, sometimes impossible, sometimes easy, sometimes difficult, sometimes a failure, sometimes an amazing success.' (Holmes, 1988: 45) In the translation of poetry there will always be aspects (if not significant ones) that will be missing, as languages do not have the same phonology, syntactic structures, vocabulary, literary history, prosody or poetics. A poem that leans towards prose may present relatively few problems, but a poem that has a highly complex structure encompassing imagery, intertextuality, idiom, ambiguity and complex tonalities will almost certainly have to sacrifice some elements in translation.

As to translating poetry, there are two main opposing camps: one that believes it is necessary to create interlingual translations of poems that will stand on their own as *poems* in the target culture (TC), and another that believes it is impossible to create a translation of a poem that within it holds the recognisable original, thus meaning that it is only possible to render the content literally in prose:

I want translations with copious footnotes, footnotes reaching up like skyscrapers to the top of this or that page so as to leave only the gleam of one textual line between commentary and eternity. (Nabokov, 1955: 83)

Nabokov's argument however does not allow the original to be perceived as a literary work of art in the TC. His strategy, though clearly well intentioned, divides the original into two separately translated parts that require constant cross referencing on the part of the reader in order to reach any kind of understanding of the text at all.

It is paradoxical that if the goal of a poetry translator were to try to translate all the facets of the original, the task would be an impossible one, yet for the translator to attempt anything less than a complete rendering of the original in the target language would be

an admittance of the impossibility of poetic translation. Lefevere tries to compile 'a tentative inventory of the competence the literary translator should possess in order to perform satisfactorily' (1975: 101-103), and this perhaps is the key to what we are looking for. A translation cannot be the original, there will always be tension between the autonomy of the former and the authority of the latter, but it can produce 'a text which is a translation of the original poem and at the same time a poem in its own right within the target language' (Holmes 1988: 50) and be *satisfactorily* analogous.

3. Historical Approaches and Strategies for translating poetry

Anxieties about the feasibility of translating poetry are ancient, and strategies for it have changed along with changing concepts of poetry itself. The mainstream trichotomy of terms that Dryden used in his 1680 preface to *Ovid's Epistles*: 'metaphrase', 'paraphrase', and 'imitation', were respectively linked with the more common terms in use today: 'word for word', 'sense for sense' and 'free translation', and he concluded that the first and the last were 'the two extremes which ought to be avoided' (Dryden, 1680: 174) and that a competent translator should aim for a compromise between the two.

It is widely accepted that 'no verse form in any language can be entirely identical with a verse form in any other' (Holmes, 1972: 95) and if one considers that 'Poetic forms [...] tend to say things even if words are not at the moment fitted to their patterns' (Fussell, 1979 quoted in Raffel, 1988: 65) the transportability of literary form from one culture to another is indeed questionable.

In the twentieth century one of the greatest influences on translation was Ezra Pound who was associated with a philosophic poetic theory that experimented with and challenged the poetic doctrine of the time and still provides inspiration for many translators and theorists. Pound saw translation as a form of criticism and

made conscious use of foreignising and archaicising strategies (cf. Pound, 1929) that influenced the Brazilian Oswald de Andrade's 'Manifesto Antropófago' in 1928. This in turn was taken up by the de Campos brothers' non-Eurocentric anthropophagic 'cannibalism' in the middle of the century.

We still remain with the question of what is good poetry translation. Nabokov was, I believe justifiably, irritated by reviewers who wrote things like 'Mr or Miss so-and-so's translation reads smoothly' (1955:71), but as is always the case, it is easier to pinpoint the factors of what is *not* a good translation than those of its elusive counterpart.

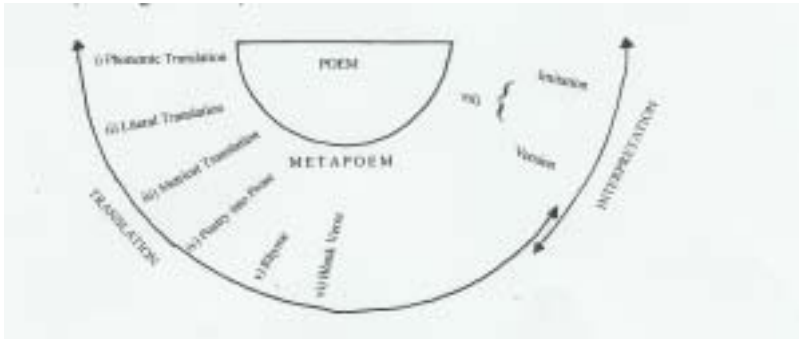
It is perhaps best to abandon notions of 'good' and evaluate from the apparently dual viewpoint of 'moderate' or 'radical' translation (Frawley, 1984: 261). However if we look more closely at this approach to evaluation we will find that it is not so far from the same mainstream trichotomy discussed above: 'Moderate' parallels both a close translation that adheres to the matrix code and a free translation that adheres to the target code. 'Radical' translation is when the third code is distinct from either the matrix or the target code with its own rules being accountable to neither one nor the other: 'free' translation.

3.1 André Lefevere's 'Seven strategies'

Lefevere's approach is more descriptive; in his *Translating Poetry: Seven Strategies and a Blueprint* (1975) he focuses on the 'translation process itself and the influence of context on the original and translation' (ibid: 4). Not only does he discuss linguistic techniques but he also adopts an early descriptive approach taking into account the external influences on translations of 'Time, Place, Tradition' (ibid: 84).

Lefevere's strategies are identified in his analysis of seven English translations of a poem by Catallus (the 'pre-selected and pre-arranged material' [1975:61] that he refers to throughout the book). It may be useful here to take Holmes' diagram describing 'meta-

literature' (1988: 23-24) (drawn from Barthes' definition of *meta-language*) a stage further to create a model that shows Lefevere's strategies for the creation of a 'metapoem', where the most extreme forms of translation are placed at each end of the 'fan'. (See diagram below)



In his study he makes a distinction between 'translation proper' and 'interpretation' (with its two subtypes: 'version' and 'imitation'). A 'version' differs from an 'imitation' in that the writers of 'versions' keep the substance but change the form. Imitators perhaps keep the title and basic elements of the ST but produce something of their own, 'original' writing.

Phonemic translation, the strategy at the opposite side of the fan, attempts to reproduce the sounds of the ST so creating the poem's phonetic image in the TL. Lefevere suggests that it is 'somewhat utopian' (ibid: 21) and that it results in 'a bilingual parody incapable of survival in the literature of the target language' (ibid: 96). However, Lawrence Venuti, who calls this kind of translation *homophonic* translation, considers it as an example of his foreignising strategy with its 'dazzling range of Englishes' (1995: 216) that challenges the TC's conventional expectations. It is possible that this translational strategy can work from line to line, but in the context of a whole work I think it fair to say it is harmful, not only in its distortion of meaning but also in its reinforcing of literary stereotypes of elevated impenetrability.

Lefevere's second strategy places an onus on fidelity to the 'meaning' of the ST, aiming for 'word for word' (then 'group for group' and finally 'clause for clause') equivalence that equates with Dryden's 'metaphrase'. However, he concludes that 'Literal translation is a myth' (1975: 96), as it 'pays an enormous price for its illusory pursuit of elusive "accuracy"' (ibid.).

The third, fifth and sixth strategies have in common a rigid metrical scheme (whether traditional or self imposed) which can result in the translator being 'forced to mutilate words in a number of ways, in order to make them fit the all-important line' (ibid: 38). The fifth strategy however also has the additional restriction of rhyme. Lefevere offers some techniques that the rhyming translator can resort to, but concludes not only that it is a double bind that is 'doomed to failure from the start' (ibid. 49), but that all three techniques run the risk of creating a heavy pedantic caricature of the ST.

He is more positive about 'poetry into prose' as it avoids 'most of the distortions and verbal antics one finds in verse translations' (1975: 42) but he concludes that even after taking into account the techniques for restoring poetic emphasis that he has discussed, this strategy 'distorts the sense, communicative value, and syntax of the source text' (ibid: 49).

Lefevere's conclusion is that it is less important to concentrate on metre than on semantic content and while I would agree I would also suggest that perhaps one should attempt to use several methods together. His discussion is obviously limited to the text examined but I find it interesting that his own summary of Catallus' poem 64 (ibid: 7-14) and criticism (ibid: 14-19) is in itself a translation that he neglects to comment on.

(3.2) Holmes: Four Traditional Approaches.

Holmes believed 'There is an extremely close relationship between the kind of verse form a translator chooses and the kind of total effect his translation achieves.' (1988: 28). According to him, traditionally there have been four possible approaches to adopt for the translation of poetry into poetry.

The first is the 'mimetic form', equated with foreignisation and poetry in translation of the nineteenth century; it is 'usually described as retaining the form of the original' (Holmes 1988: 25). Although it does not manage to be identical it shares a fundamental similarity with the form of the ST.

The next approach is the 'analogical form', which substitutes the SL poetic tradition for an appropriate TL poetic tradition and is equated with domesticating strategies and translated poetry of the eighteenth century (cf. Alexander Pope, 1715: 193). These first two forms are classed as 'form derivative' as they attempt to reproduce some kind of equivalent form in the TL.

The third approach is classed as a 'content-derivative form' or 'organic form' as it allows the TT to take on its own shape and form from the semantic material, 'since form and content are in-

separable' (ibid: 28). It is fundamentally pessimistic about the possibility of form transfer and is more often equated with the twentieth century (c.f. concretism).

Finally there is the 'extraneous form' that puts the TT in a form that bears no relation to the form or content of the ST and has been a resort for translators since the seventeenth century 'who lean in the direction of imitation' (ibid). (cf. D'Ablancourt [1662: 160] and FitzGerald [1859: 249])

Holmes describes the problems of translating poetry as being on 'three planes or levels': 'linguistic context', 'literary tradition' and 'socio-cultural situation' (ibid: 47) that perhaps were the basis of Lefevere's concentric circles of 'language, time, place, tradition' (1975: 84) mentioned above.

(3.3) Alternative Approaches

In addition to the oft-cited translation theories and approaches of Lefevere and Holmes there are of course many variations. Raffel writes 'it is precisely on approximation that good translation of poetry must be built' (1988: 13). As well as offering various techniques for finding alternative poetic emphasis in the TT (e.g. employing emphatic caesura in the TT in the same place as the ST as compensation for alternative prosody) he offers a list of translation decision points to consider for languages that are (or not) related in some way to one another, and for languages that share (or do not) comparable forms, genres, prosodies.

Sayers Peden sees the metre as a part of the architectural construction of a poem and she offers a formula of 'de-struction and re-construction' (1989: 14) and discusses a process that reduces a poem 'to its architectural frame: its essential communication' (ibid: 16) and that measures basic total structure and evaluates ornamentation. Focussing on a sonnet, she suggests first writing the text 'reducing it to an assemblage of words and lines that may convey minimal meaning, but no artistry' (ibid). She sees how far the work can be reduced to its basic essentials (comparable to Nabokov's

approach that suggests finding the key words and neither adding to nor subtracting from them) and demonstrates that the process of translation can show up padding and weaknesses in the original.

The question remains to be answered as to whether theory can help actual translating or if is merely academic retrospective analysis. Certainly it is unrealistic to expect that a definitive theory will be formulated to solve the problems that a translator confronts. Everything in the world is of uneven quality and it is this that makes shining examples so bright and something as tenuous and intangible as 'good' poetry so beautiful.

(4) The Brazilian Poetic Tradition.

There is a long history of English poetry translation into Portuguese, but very little Brazilian poetry translated into English despite the fact that translations of foreign poets have contributed greatly to the history of English poetry (cf. Tomlinson, 1989: 258). When the Portuguese first came to Brazil they brought with them a European poetic style as a part of their colonial heritage. This was followed by the Romantic tradition, *Modernismo*, the neo-traditionalist generation of 1945, concretism and the mid-century avant-garde, neo-concretism, political poetry, the poetry of song, *Tropicalismo*, *poesia marginal* and the variety of styles that are grouped under the general umbrella term of Post-modernism.

An element that much of these styles share is their melopoeic lyricism. Even in the free verse of Manoel Bandeira that blurs the frontiers between poetry and prose, musicality and speech rhythm are present. There is still a strong link between music and poetry in Brazilian popular music today which has a lyrical level of literary quality and reminds one again of Nabokov who talked of the transposition of the melody of language with regard to poetry (1955: 75).

Brazilian *modernismo* officially began in 1922 with the modern art week in São Paulo and offered a mode to create and stimulate

new cultural forms, express the national psyche and reject 'staid literary convention and empty pomposity' (Perrone, 1996: 2). It was fuelled by de Andrade's 'Manifesto Antropófago' in 1928 that was (after a backlash in 1945 which showed renewed interest in metre, rhyme, metaphor and classical forms like the sonnet) the inspiration for the 'Noigandres' group in the early fifties and the de Campos' digestive metaphor of 'Cannibalism', which in its ideological infidelity to the ST has echoes of much earlier translational approaches.

This appropriative approach to poetry and its translation does not deny foreign influences but denies imitation or interpretation in the traditional sense, choosing instead to absorb and transform, so creating: 'a violation of [...] codes and [at the same time] an act of homage.' (Bassnett, 1999: 5). It is an approach that may well create a product equal to, if not better than the original, but it does not take a great mental leap to compare it with the rewriting of FitzGerald a hundred years previously and Pope over two centuries before. Although the ideologies are opposing the end result is similar in that huge liberties are taken with the ST; Pound himself (considered in some circles as an appropriative translator) was reborn or 'regested' through the work of the de Campos brothers.

With the 'Noigandres' group, concretism developed in Brazil more than anywhere else and 'included translations of inventive poetry from the age of troubadours to the present day' (Perrone, 1996: 27). The movement managed to reverse the cultural flow and focus overseas attention on Brazil and the relationship between national and international literatures. Today poetry is not only influenced by a combination of the poetic movements of the twentieth century but also by a rich mixture of international influences.

(5) Language and Prosody in Portuguese and English.

Such international influences have meant that 'Brazilian culture emerges as a focus of tensions between the rustic and the

industrialised, the acoustic and the electric, the national and the foreign' (Vieira, 1999: 101), and the concept of the role of literature and the relationship it has with the social system is very different from an English one. It would be the subject of a thesis to pinpoint if and how the poetics (genre, symbols, leitmotif and prototypical situations and characters) of Brazilian and English poetry differ, but I will briefly outline the primary problems that an English translator faces.

Languages have either a syllabic prosody (like French) or are stress phonemic with a stress-based prosody. Whereas in Portuguese there can only be one stressed syllable in a word, there can be a secondary accent or two accents in English (e.g. n'ation'ality). English and Portuguese are both stress-based languages; the rate of utterance does not remain the same. This is felicitous as it is virtually impossible to transfer prosody interlingually. In both languages shifts in stress can change lexical meaning: in English 'content is very different from con'tent and in Portuguese 'séria has an altogether different meaning from ser'ia. 'Verse rhythms are determined by language rhythms' (Raffel, 1988: 81) and the prosody of a sonnet form in both Portuguese and English is similar. In English the iambic pentameter allows the unaccented syllable at the end of a line to be dropped thus turning a feminine rhyme into a masculine one, though it is very rare to find both ends of the line unaccented in English verse line after line. However the *decassilabo* of Portuguese tends to adjust to only four feet in English thus making it sometimes necessary to 'pad'.

'English gains energy by embarking the main noun immediately and the verb soon after' (Bly, 1983: 22) and the foregrounding of pronouns contributes to making a work more concrete and heavy. In Portuguese 'mudei': a preterite verb with a first person ending used without the pronoun, does not have the same weight as 'eu mudei' and the English translator faces a problem of harnessing the compressions and deliberate syntactical omission that is perfectly acceptable in Portuguese.

There are also phonological peculiarities in both languages such as the voiced and unvoiced 'th' in English and the nasal 'ão' in Portuguese that are not possible to transport from ST to TT. In Haroldo de Campos' terms (Vieira, 1999: 105) the translator should decide whether to *aportugesar* the English language or *inglesar* the Portuguese.

(6) Personal aims, strategies, and evaluation of commissioned poems.

Both Holmes (1988) and Moffet (1989) compare poetry translation with games: The former gives the analogy of Chess or Patience, and the latter Scrabble (without a board!). For myself, I would perhaps choose the related analogy of a complex riddle in which there are many problems that need to be solved. As we have seen, merely to render the sense of the ST is the minimum requirement, communicative value is transmitted through sense, stylistic spheres, sound, metre, time, place, culture and tradition that all need to be taken into account. As the sonnet under discussion is contemporary I am fortunate that I did not have to concern myself with the problem of historical distance. Glauco Mattoso is a poet whose work began with the interdisciplinary *poesia marginal* in the seventies which used experimental formulae that developed into a sort of intersemiotic return to lyricism. He has now turned to the sonnet form, which 'tends to imply a particular, highly personal, usually somewhat puzzled or worshipful attitude towards experience' (Fussell, quoted in Raffel, 1988: 64). However this sonnet along with the others that Mattoso has recently written cannot be compared with those of the 'Generation of 1945' who were preoccupied with a more conventional mysticism. His poems are very physical and often sexual, although dressed in a sonnet's garb.

Within the ST as a whole there is a tangible reality of a voice ringing true through the sounds of Babel and there is an ease and

naturalness of syntax behind the calculated metrification and semantic manipulation of the original. 'In any poet's poem the shape is half the meaning' (ibid), and as I felt the metrical arrangement is essential I decided to at least attempt to preserve the same tensions between content and form in the translation.

The rhyme scheme also presented problems as it follows neither a Shakespearean (abab cdcd ef ef gg) nor Petrarchan (abba abba cde cde) sonnet form but is a variation on the latter: abba abba cdc dcd. I was forced (after agonising) to alter the rhyme scheme of the last sextet to a different variation of the Petrarchan form: abba abba cde ced. The metre of the ST was not as hard to transfer, with the addition of a little padding, in the TT and the iambic beat itself with help from alliteration actually helps the reader to pass over tautology and syntactic parallelism with relative ease as well as sidetrack the reader from other minor faults. Because English allows secondary or double accents the occasional use of a 'modulated line', in which the accent falls on a normally unstressed syllable of a polysyllabic word or of an unstressed monosyllabic word such as 'the or 'a' is possible, although only as a last resort. I did not want to subordinate the frame of the poem to metre or rhyme.

My first stage was to memorise the poem. I noted the hissing sibilance of the onomatopoeic alliteration of 's' and 'z' sounds that contributed to the sonority of the sonnet (Bly, 1983: 40) and that through a felicitous cognate alliteration I was able in part to create in my translation. I then tried to reduce the sonnet to its essential parts and find its structural frame (Sayers Peden, [4.3]). I subsequently wrote a literal trot (Attachment 2), which immediately highlighted the problem of 'Balzaquiana' (Attachment 1: 1.9). As can be seen in the final draft (Attachment 3) I eventually resolved to keep it in the TT; a 'borrowing' in the sense of Vinay & Darblenet in order to introduce 'an element of local colour' (1958/1995: 85).

Although I have fallen in to some of the traps of a fairly traditional rhyme translation (cf. 4.1) I felt unable (within the context of producing a commissioned translation for a poetry journal) to opt

for other more disruptive strategies or tamper with another's work. Yet, in spite of managing to preserve more or less satisfactorily the semantic meaning, metre, a similar rhyme scheme, architectural structure and the alliteration of the ST, in Nabokov's terms I am forced to conclude that my translation is a failure due to its use of padding (e.g. ll.1 & 2), tautology (e.g. ll.2 & 10) and crude enjambment (e.g. ll.3-4).

(7) Conclusion

The extent to which the TT represents the original is paradoxical if it is accepted that poetry in translation can only really be judged by similarly bilingual readers who have no need for translation in the first place. Evaluation cannot only be based on equivalence (dynamic or otherwise) but on consistent translational aims that try to avoid concentrating on one aspect to the exclusion of all the others. An emotional involvement or affinity can also contribute to the quality of the TT although unless the translator has direct access to the poet it is virtually impossible to be able to say categorically what the poet's intention is. But, 'as Socrates relates in *The Apology*, readers are often more informed than authors, and the meaning of a poem lies not with the author but within the text itself and the reader's interpretation of it'. (Connolly, 1998: 173)

Poetry has a multiplicity of meanings and a richness that means that retranslations, reworkings, and retellings will always be relevant to a new audience. A metapoem 'can never be more than a single interpretation out of the many whose image it darkly mirrors' (Holmes, 1988: 30) and this conclusion is positive for translators of poetry. Each translation will give the ST "'after lives" [...] new approximations to the hidden underlying purity of the poetic unspoken:' (Bush, 1998: 195) and this in combination with Bly's belief 'that a great poem should be translated freshly every twenty years' (1983: 25) suggests that perhaps the best solution is to have

‘several translations [that] present more facets of the original than any one can do.’ (Holmes, 1988: 51)

Notes

1. Taken from the Brazilian poet Paulo Leminski’s work; ‘an isolated portmanteau word conveying uncertainty and felicity’ (Perrone, 1996: 145).
2. (Dryden, 1697: 174).

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ATTACHMENT 1

GLAUCO MATTOSO
SONETO SONORO [2.376]

1 As vozes das vizinhas são distintas,
2 algumas estridentes, outra mansa.
3 Adultas ou com timbre de criança,
4 ninfetas, quarentonas, velhas, trintas.

5 Talvez não imagines nem consintas,
6 mas meu ouvido cego não descansa:
7 rastreia, pelo prédio, a vizinhança;
8 permeia portas, tetos, luzes, tintas.

9 És tu, balzaquiana, que me passas
10 total tranqüilidade no teu tom,
11 poupando-me de dores e desgraças!

12 Não sei se és linda, pálida, marrom.
13 Não penso em estaturas, pesos, raças.
14 Só penso em tua voz, calor tão bom!

ATTACHMENT 2

TROT FOR 'SONOROUS SONNET' [2.376]

- 1 The voices of the neighbours are distinct,
2 some strident, others gentle.
3 Adults or with a child's timbre,
4 nymphets, middle-aged women, old ladies, thirties.
- 5 Perhaps you don't imagine nor consent,
6 but my blind ear does not rest:
7 tracks through the neighbours in the building;
8 permeates doors, ceilings lights, paint.
- 9 It's you, worldly woman, who passes to me
10 total tranquillity in your tone (of voice),
11 keeping me from pain and disgrace!
- 12 I don't know if you're beautiful, pale, brown.
13 I don't think about stature, weight, race.
14 I think only of your voice, such good warmth!

ATTACHMENT 3

SONOROUS SONNET [2,376] (Final Draft)

1 The voices of the neighbours buzz resounding,
2 some strident brassy, others muffled muttered.
3 Sounds of children, sounds of adults uttered by
4 temptresses, matrons, pensioners, thirty-somethings.

5 You may not be consenting nor imagining
6 my sightless restless hearing as it flutters,
7 permeating lights and ceilings, doors and shutters;
8 as it searches through the voices in the building.

9 It's you, balzaquian woman, you who pass me
10 a tranquility and peace within your tone
11 safeguarding me from suffering and disgrace!

12 I know not if you're pale or brown or pretty,
13 I think not of your size or weight or race.
14 I think of your warm voice, of it alone!

Translated by Juliet Attwater