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Wanderwords: Language Migration in American Literature. By Maria Lauret. Pp. 342.

London: Bloomsbury, 2014. Hb. £74.

English as a Literature in Translation. By Fiona J. Doloughan. Pp. 162. London:

Bloomsbury, 2016. Hb. £74.

Both of these publications from Bloomsbury investigate the poetics of bilingual and multilingual writing from a contemporary and fresh theoretical perspective. Although their respective introductions initially hint at slightly different approaches, both Lauret's and Doloughan's work stress the reconceptualization of English as a language and as a literature, and what it means to be living and writing as well as reading in more than one language today. In both volumes, extended discussions of the theoretical framework are followed by a series of case studies probing what Lauret terms 'heterolingual writing', that is, literature inflected, informed, or haunted by the presence of languages other than – in this case – English. Lauret, who specializes in American Literature at the University of Sussex, places American migrant writing at the centre of her project, while Doloughan, who works for the Open University, surveys literature in English produced across the world, from James Kelman's Scotland to Sandra Cisneros' Hispanic-American Chicago.

Lauret opens her study by introducing the concept of 'wanderwords' – foreign phrases punctuating a text that have 'wandered into English' from other languages and therefore pose something of a problem for (implied monolingual English) readers who, as Lauret puts it, simply 'tend to ignore them'. In contrast, Doloughan begins with an exploration of how the very definition of English has changed over recent years within, as well as outside, academia. For example, she mentions how the increasingly widely accepted notion that English belongs to all its users as opposed to an elite circle of native speakers is indicative of a radical

transformation of previous linguistic and cultural hierarchies. While Lauret takes an apparently more schematic approach in ‘positing the English of American literature as fixed and other languages as immigrants wandering into it’, Doloughan emphasizes the deterritorialization of English and emerging new concepts such as ‘communities of practice’ rather than ‘speech communities’, and ‘European English’.

However, Lauret’s starting point only seems less democratic. Her stated interest in depictions of otherness and narrow definitions of migrant writing are counterbalanced by her ultimate goal of learning and showing how to read multilingual texts creatively as a monolingual reader. As her introduction progresses, she acknowledges the relational nature of the term ‘foreign’ and argues against an essentialist celebration of native or ethnic identities. The ‘wanderwords’ turn out to be more than lexical manifestations of foreign languages and cultures, since Lauret, like Doloughan, conceives of linguistic influence as a broad range of possibilities that includes, for instance, intonation and sentence structure.

While Lauret’s aim is to develop a poetics of bilingual and multilingual writing primarily for readers who, like herself, cannot fully engage with the non-English components of texts in denotative terms, she also recognizes that not all multilingual writing is aimed at a monolingual English audience – and it would, in fact, be presumptuous to assume so. She therefore includes in her set of texts a number of works that were created specifically with smaller, bilingual readerships in mind, such as the journal and letters of Truus van Bruinessen, a Dutch woman who emigrated from the Netherlands to Canada in 1950. This reflects a different balance from Doloughan’s careful consideration of a variety of scenarios and eagerness to avoid generalizations about linguistically and culturally heterogeneous target audiences. Despite coming to bilingual and multilingual writing from different angles, both scholars are ultimately in search of what is sometimes referred to as ‘the third code’: language that generates meaning through, and not in spite of, its multilinguality. Thus, in line

with Edwin Gentzler's description of heterolingualism, it is shown to be constitutive of culture as opposed to mediating between cultures.

Lauret and Doloughan's exploration of this kind of meaning-making is both historically informed and rooted in contemporary practice. In setting the scene for the close reading of their primary texts, both authors comment on the experience of walking around in multilingual American cities and being struck by the cohabitation of various languages. Lauret, who applies a literary methodology while also drawing on other disciplines like ethnic studies and psychoanalysis, gives a historical overview of America's changing 'linguascapes', a linguistic terrain that includes political and sociological dimensions. As part of this survey, she addresses the Americanization movement of the early twentieth century which sought to affirm the USA as monolingual and English, superior to immigrant languages and cultures. An understanding of the consequently often uneasy relationship between languages, and a complication of the simplistic paradigm of migration as settling in and assimilation, are essential to Lauret's project.

Doloughan, who describes herself as a comparatist, takes an admittedly eclectic approach informed by Translation Studies and Comparative Literature, with arguments about the changing status of English based on surveys and hard data as well as current education policies, among other factors. Like Lauret, Doloughan is interested in the various ways in which languages meet and combine in literary texts, such as code-switching (although Lauret is sceptical of the usefulness of this term), code-mixing, blending, and translanguaging, where the influence of one language on another is less explicit but still detectable. All this, the authors argue, contribute significantly to the meaning of a literary work, and the reader-critic's job is to be receptive to the heterolingual textual universe in order to fully appreciate its richness.

While neither of these studies resolves all the difficulties surrounding today's international linguistic landscape, which include persistent hierarchies in some areas of linguistic production, some right-wing political rhetoric, and often inadequate language policies, they are hopeful about the future of the co-existence of languages and generally have a positive attitude towards multilingualism, emphasizing both creative and increasingly obvious cognitive benefits. When viewed with a mindset predisposed towards gain rather than loss, obsession with the latter of which has plagued Translation Studies for a long time, phenomena traditionally classified as errors, or at least infelicities, take on a new meaning. Hence the challenging of established concepts like 'mother tongue' or 'mastery' of a language (Doloughan) – implying perfect, exclusive familiarity and control, respectively – and first language 'interference' (Lauret). *Wanderwords* also highlights the benefits of a psychoanalytical approach, whereby grammatical and stylistic mistakes are re-constructed along the lines of Freudian slips, the study of which is worthwhile and revealing in pursuit of a fuller understanding of the aesthetic and intellectual experience of reading multilingually.

This willingness to construct a positive narrative is perhaps why both authors begin the textual exploration with Eva Hoffman's 1989 memoir *Lost in Translation*, an appropriate starting point for analysis wishing to move from a 'zero-sum game of language acquisition' to 'radically insurgent bi- or multilingual play'. Hoffman, who emigrated with her family from Poland to Canada when she was thirteen, describes her initial sense of shock and displacement and subsequent prolonged efforts to learn to make sense of the new linguistic and cultural universe and to reinvent herself as an American subject. Her emphasis on language loss and its impact on her sense of self as she struggles to come to terms with the arbitrariness and subjectivity of linguistic codes is noted in both *Wanderwords* and *English as a Literature in Translation*. Lauret contrasts Hoffman's narrative of loss and longing with Mary Antin's less painful and more enthusiastic autobiography titled *The Promised Land*

(1912), and finds an explanation for the difference in tone in the writers' personal circumstances as well as the historical setting, arguing that America was more multicultural and multilingual at the start of the twentieth century than at the time of the publication of *Lost in Translation*. Doloughan, also reading comparatively, traces Hoffman's journey from exile through acculturation to the embracing of a postmodern, fractured, and changeable identity in *Exit into History* (1993).

In what follows, the authors examine through their respective selections of non-fiction as well as novels and poetry the aesthetic and ideological consequences of the interplay of languages. Lauret devotes a chapter to English texts with varying degrees of Dutch influence, from the autobiographical *Americanization of Edward Bok* (1920) to the more obscure, Dutch-Canadian personal archive of Truus van Bruinessen, before proceeding to discuss the work of the Mexican-American essayist Richard Rodriguez. In a chapter titled 'Fusion Writing', Indian-born Bharati Mukherjee's attachment to her native Bangla and the subversive power of her transliterated wanderwords are affirmed, while the chapter 'Words Cast to Weather' looks at the multilingual and multimodal experimental piece *Dictée* (1982) by Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, an American novelist of South Korean descent. In the final chapter, Lauret's proposed method of reading heterolingual literature reaches its most holistic form. She explores 'Spanish/English and Spanglish' literature through, for example, Rosario Ferré's self-reflexive self-translations, Gustavo Pérez-Firmat's poem 'Son-sequence' from his 1995 collection *Bilingual Blues*, which plays on the different meanings of the word 'son' in English and Spanish, and Gloria Anzaldúa's bilingual poetry, which capitalizes on the non-Spanish-speaking reader's sense of absence in reading. Mindful of the limitations of translation, Lauret comes to the conclusion that culturally embedded meaning is often better mediated through heterolingual writing.

Doloughan's second case study, similarly to the chapter about Hoffman, is a narrative of 'acceptance of ambivalence and multiplicity in language'. The life of Ariel Dorfman is presented as even more traumatic and lacking in stability (linguistic and otherwise), as he moves around a turbulent Latin America, USA, and Europe, trying to negotiate between English and Spanish in pursuit of a sense of wholeness and an ability to articulate his unique experience usefully. If Hoffman's post-emigration relationship with language is uneasy, Dorfman's is downright problematic for much of his career, since he refuses to express himself in English and Spanish at various points before 'marrying them both' and embracing his bilingual condition and role of cultural mediator.

Moving on to translation in a more abstract sense, Doloughan next discusses James Kelman's oeuvre, where experience and (self-)representation occur in different semiotic systems despite the lack of interlingual exchange. Writing as a working-class Scot in an unequal linguascape where Scottish English is defined against mainstream varieties spoken in England, Kelman is concerned with language and belonging, clashing cultures and issues of representation, all of which are pertinent to the study of 'translation proper'. With this in mind, Doloughan explores the subversive power of *Translated Accounts* (2001), a novel masquerading as a translation. The next chapter is dedicated to migration and mobility, with Chinese-British novelist Xiaolu Guo's *Concise Chinese-English Dictionary For Lovers* (2008) framed as an example of larger twenty-first century trends of literal and literary migration. While Guo's retrospectively (re-)constructed 'broken English' is seen as an important cultural marker and thematic device, Doloughan also points out that the multimodal production allows for the difficulties of moving between different cultural contexts to be explored.

Remarkably, in the last chapter of *English as a Literature in Translation*, published two years after *Wanderwords*, the two works conspicuously intersect once again. Doloughan

also ends her discussion with Latina literature represented by Gloria Anzaldúa's 'visibly bilingual' *Borderas/La Frontera* (1987) alongside Sandra Cisneros' *The House on Mango Street* (1984). Doloughan also directly references Lauret's work, arguing that her colleague's declared preference for 'reading in difference' over translation is what distinguishes the two monographs. Instead of focusing on new ways of reading multilingually, Doloughan's main aim is the expansion of the notion of translation, which, she claims, is 'both substance and form, story and discourse, critique and intervention'. This relatively subtle difference in conceptualization and terminology will likely matter only to the most specialized reader of these two volumes, which clearly revolve around similar issues and repeatedly overlap in terms of textual selection. Although Doloughan's expression may occasionally seem more succinct than Lauret's philosophically denser discourse, both studies make valuable contributions to the study of English literature in its broadest sense by reappraising in cognitive, hermeneutic, and aesthetic terms a wide range of heterolingual writing.

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