

The Poetics of Multilingualism

– *La Poétique du plurilinguisme*

Edited by

Patrizia Noel Aziz Hanna and Levente Seláf

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One of the most fascinating aspects of the poetics of multilingualism is that it reveals national literatures to be an outcome of transcultural reflection. This kind of reflection can surface in lexical borrowings and inventions, in attempts at imitating foreign language features, and in combining and improvising stylistic and linguistic devices. The experiments presented in this book range from idiosyncratic and “forced” solutions to the partly unconscious creation of new genres from situations of cultural contact. Multilingualism, as such, turns out to be basic for the emergence of vernacular literatures.

While research on the poetics of multilingualism is usually restricted to specific authors, languages, genres or epochs, this book addresses the issue from the perspective of its general systematics, and reflects the diversity of the phenomenon. It provides facets from individual authors’ poetics to conventionalised features of poetics, and from written to oral and sung products of multilingual creation. By focusing on the topic’s ontology, its basic categories and relations, the volume demonstrates the fundamental importance of multilingualism for literary and linguistic theory with studies on a number of European countries and regions, including multilingualism in the literature and literary traditions of the Alsace, the Basque Country, England, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Ireland, the Netherlands, Russia, Sardinia, and Spain.

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PREFACE

The Poetics of Multilingualism – La Poétique du plurilinguisme is the third volume in the series “Ars Metrica et poetica”, dedicated to the typology of poetical systems.

We would like to thank all participants of the International Colloquium “The Poetics of Multilingualism – La Poétique du plurilinguisme”, held at Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest in April 2013.

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Bamberg and Budapest in December 2015

Patrizia Noel Aziz Hanna and Levente Seláf

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INTRODUCTION

PATRIZIA NOEL AZIZ HANNA AND
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The poetics of multilingualism plays a central role in literary and cultural history. In *The Poetics of Multilingualism – La Poétique du plurilinguisme*, this issue is approached from an ontological perspective, with emphasis on the emergence of genres, styles and vernacular literatures, as well as on the influence of cultural factors.

One of the most intriguing aspects of the poetics of multilingualism is that it reveals national literatures to be an outcome of transcultural reflection. This kind of reflection can surface in lexical borrowings and inventions, in attempts to imitate foreign language features, and in combining and improvising stylistic and linguistic devices. The poetic experiments presented in this book range all the way from idiosyncratic solutions to the partly unconscious creation of new genres from situations of cultural contact; multilingualism turns out to be fundamental to the emergence of vernacular literatures.

While research on the poetics of multilingualism is frequently restricted to specific authors, languages, genres, or epochs, *The Poetics of Multilingualism – La Poétique du plurilinguisme* reflects the diversity of the phenomenon. It provides facets from the poetics of individual authors to conventionalized features, from written to oral and sung products of multilingual creation, from past to contemporary performances. By focusing on the topic's ontology and its basic categories and relations, this volume demonstrates the fundamental importance of multilingualism for literary and linguistic theory with studies from the following countries and regions: Alsace, the Basque Country, the Czech Republic, England, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Ireland, the Netherlands, Russia, Sardinia, and Spain. It reveals the complexity of the topic by bringing together approaches from various disciplines and subdisciplines in order to paint a more detailed picture of literature as a result of present and past cultural contact.

Despite the different methods employed and objectives set in the articles of this volume, a common research question surfaced: the aesthetic stylization of both foreign language patterns and cultural patterns. This question is directly tied to the cognitive status of language itself. Aesthetic stylisation may be the most reflected and thus most approachable representation of the perception and adoption of non-native patterns. It surfaces either in poetics as explicit theoretical treatises or, more implicitly, in the performance of poetics. Multilayered aspects of medieval, Renaissance, modern, and contemporary multiculturalism are therefore mirrored in this volume's analyses of transcultural text corpora. A great range of literary texts which were composed based on the poetics of at least two languages is presented – multilingualism turns out to be both poetical intention and poetical need.

The structure of this volume reflects the ontological approach to the poetics of multilingualism. **Chapter 1** deals with multilingualism in medieval times and is dedicated to the questions of multilingualism in a period when Latin written culture dominated the literary and intellectual scene of all Western Europe. BOGNÁR AND BARTÓK, CERQUIGLINI-TOULET, DRASKÓCZY, GUTIÉRREZ GARCÍA, HORVÁTH, RODRÍGUEZ VÁZQUEZ, SELÁF, and WOLFF discuss the bilingualism of Latin and the vernacular – from the emergence of vernacular literatures and their zenith in courtly culture to the appearance of the new system of Humanist values.

Chapter 2 focuses on the poetics of multilingualism in poetry. CHEVRIER and SCIARRINO provide accurate overviews of national literary traditions; BORIES explores the performance and range of individual interpretations of multilingualism. The imitation of foreign features in these poems does not stop at lexical borrowings, figures of speech, or imitation of style, but also reflects the perceived features of non-native systems. EYMAR, MANZARI, and NOEL AZIZ HANNA demonstrate that the structure of poetic genre can be traced back to multilingual contexts.

Prose texts in multilingual contexts display a use of multilingualism quite different from multilingual influences on poetry. **Chapter 3** provides evidence that the immersion in the 'other' language is generally less structural in prose texts, but at the same time more explicit, and thus often sophisticated, as the contributions of NIEDDU CRIX, ROUBAUD, VICHNAR, and WEISSMANN illustrate. ANOKHINA, BENERT, and PADILLA-MOYANO illustrate the central issue of code-switching in prose texts, with its many implications tied to language choice and its various connotations, including playful distance on the one side and language-based social discrimination on the other.

Multilingual literature is linguistic and cultural knowledge in practice. From diachronic, linguistic, and structural perspectives, *The Poetics of Multilingualism – La Poétique du plurilinguisme* treats the question of how the imitation and stylization of the ‘other(ness)’, its language and culture, is achieved in order to function effectively.



1. POETICS OF MULTILINGUALISM IN
MEDIEVAL TIMES /
POÉTIQUE DU MULTILINGUISME AU MOYEN ÂGE

