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Writing with Two Languages

Abstract:

Many writers speak or read more than one language, and many write in more than one. Literary critics are now trying to systematize thinking about literary texts that use more than one language. Creative Writing teachers will do well to recognize the linguistic and cultural resources available to students who know a language or languages other than their mother tongues.

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Keywords:

Creative writing – language – blogs – translingual literature – multilingualism – literary theory – literary heteroglossia

Translingual literature, despite its long history, has received significant critical attention only recently (Kelbert 2010). Both translingual literature and multilingual literary theory open fresh possibilities for the teaching of Creative Writing. This article shares my personal experience in exploring both the writing and the theorizing of literary texts that use more than one language.

On 11 December 2008 I started a blog entitled 'LOL Literatures in Other Languages,' devoted to literary works written or read in languages other than the mother tongue/s of the author/s. Although originally intended to include discussions about translation, the blog eventually focused on literary texts using more than one language and texts written in a writer's second or third language. Some lessons learned from the blog may be useful to teachers of Creative Writing.

In my first post, I wrote:

> Many literary works are read in languages other than those used by their authors. Some very obvious random examples are the *New Testament*, the *Iliad*, *Oedipus Rex*, *Don Quixote, Crime and Punishment, Noli Me Tangere*, and *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. The list is endless. But just as important to literary history are the works written in languages other than the mother tongues of the authors. Immediately coming to mind are authors like Joseph Conrad, Jose Rizal, Nick Joaquin, Bienvenido Santos, and Shirley Geok-lin Lim. Though shorter than the other list, this list is also pretty long. This blog welcomes posts about these authors and/or their works. For an epigraph/epigram, this blog could very well use the self-description of Filipino writer N.V.M. Gonzalez who grew up speaking and writing in Tagalog but became famous for his novels and short stories in English: "I write in Tagalog, using English words" (Cruz 2009).

The blog has attracted some of the literary critics currently fighting a battle to mainstream works in more than one language. Since it started, the blog has had as followers or visitors such critics, artists, writers, and scholars as Antoine Cassar, Albert B. Casuga, Mayra Lazara Dole, Michael Ducey, Eva Gentes, Tor Hershman, Peter Ingestad, Steven G. Kellman, Paulino Lim, Adam Donaldson Powell, Werner Sollors and Jacob Ward.

I have also discussed with the blog's visitors such multilingual writers and artists as Ali Abdolrezaei, John Agard, Hannah Arendt, Rudolf Arnheim, Adan Baca, Johann Sebastian Bach, Samuel Beckett, Louise Simone Bennett-Coverley, Charlotte Brontë, George Gordon Lord Byron, Brenda Cardenas, Herman G. Carrillo, E. E. Cummings, Umberto Eco, Femi Fatoba, Rosario Ferré Ramírez, Abol Froushan, Carlo Emilio Gadda, Daniel Gagnon, Ha Jin, M. J. Soetan Hasoendoetan, Havareth, Seamus Heaney, Stefan Heym, Wladimir Kaminer, Yadé Kara, Ab'ul Hasan Yamīn al-Dīn Khusrow (Amīr Khusrow Dehlawī), Irena Klepfisz, Milan Kundera, Tato Laviera, Ildy Lee, Lin Yutang, Jayanta Mahapatra, Andrei Makine, Charles Mangua, Klaus Mann, Guido Monte, Pat Mora, Alejandro Morales, Vladimir Nabokov, Michel de Nostredame (Nostradamus), Salvador Novo, Jose Nuñez, Paulette Poujol Oriol, Peter J. Oszmann, Gustavo Pérez Firmat, Martha Ivelisse Pesante (Ivy Queen), Les Podervianský, Mansor Pooyan, Jean Rhys, Taufiq Saptoto Rohadi (Tasaro), Richard Rolle, Orlando de Rudder, Jalāl ad-Dīn Muḥammad Rūmī (Rumi), Muhammad Haji

Salleh, Esmeralda Santiago, Parham Shahrjerdi, Reminisce Smith (Remy Ma), Ahdaf Soueif, Spinoza, Gayatri Spivak, Trinidad Tarrosa-Subido, Amy Tan, Anne Tardos, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Leo Tolstoy, Marie Delgado Travis, Alina Troyano, Wim Wenders, Walt Whitman, and Oscar Wilde, in addition to those cited in my first post.

I name-drop all these writers with one explicit purpose—to impress upon monolingual sceptics that there is a huge number of major writers (in the past and in our own time) writing and/or thinking in more than one language. Laviera, in her 'My Graduation Speech,' encapsulates in a couplet what could describe all of these writers:

> i think in spanish
> i write in english. (Laviera 1992: 17)

One clear advantage of writing the blog is that I am forced to have an international perspective, given the numerous languages mixed today in literary texts. Nevertheless, being Filipino, I naturally spend a huge amount of space on Philippine writing. I have discussed canonical Filipino writers[1] almost as many times as the times I spend on such canonical non-Filipino writers as Geoffrey Chaucer, T. S. Eliot, James Joyce, Ezra Pound, William Shakespeare, Sophocles and William Wordsworth.

Now and then, because it is in the nature of a blog, I talk about my own creative work, such as a series of posts about my play *Kuwadro*—translated into English as *Portrait*—and an account of how I wrote the multilingual play *Josephine*.

One of my original reasons for putting up the blog was to balance the approach by linguists to multilingual works. In general, linguists prefer to work within the concept of code mixing, mistaking the use of foreign words or sentences as mere borrowings, instead of products of deliberate aesthetic choices on the part of multilingual writers.

Multilingual Literary Theory

The approach I am developing I call, for convenience, multilingual literary theory (MLT). Similar efforts by other critics have been called many other names, such as interlingual criticism and translingual criticism. I once proposed calling it *Wikcrit* (from the Filipino word *wika* (language) and along the line of thought of the feminist *gynocritique*).

A name more often used than others is 'literary heteroglossia'. K Alfons Knauth, in his 'Literary Multilingualism: General Outlines and the Western World' (2007), has listed, defined, and illustrated what he thinks are sub-genres of multilingual literature, namely,

> intertextual multilingualism, intratextual colingualism, macaronic mixtilingualism, Occidental and Oriental multilingualism, courtly multilingualism, pentecostal multilingualism, modern diglossia, national and international multilingualism, simultaneism, globoglossia, primitivist multilingualism, futurist multilingualism, panlingualism, onomatopoetics, fascist multilingualism, postwar internationalism, poetic holography, fictional holography, zerography, conflictive multilingualism, and

mass-medial multilingualism.

I am not too comfortable with having so many sub-genres, particularly at this time when multilingualism itself has not entered mainstream or general literary theory and criticism, but the passion of Knauth more than makes up for his eagerness to rush ahead. Remember that Knauth is dealing primarily with texts in languages better known by Europeans and is, presumably, ignorant of literary texts in languages less familiar to Western critics, such as the Bicol-Tagalog-English works of Abdon M Balde Jr., the 2009 South East Asia Writers (S.E.A. WRITE) Awardee from the Philippines.

Outside of the blog, a number of major discussions about multilingual literary texts have been published in books and journals, such as *Fictionalising Translation and Multilingualism* (2005), edited by Dirk Delabastita and Rainier Grutnam, and *Reconstruction: Studies in Contemporary Culture*, edited by Angela Flury and Hervé Regnauld. Flury and Regnauld suggest that MLT is an emerging convention (Eds: despite China banning, in December 2010, newspapers, publishers and website-owners from using foreign words—particularly English ones):

> Cityscapes, landscapes, subway stations, tomato fields, universities, and bedrooms—the locales of multilingual or mixed language realities are everywhere. Yet literary and popular representations of multilingual realities as such remain largely constricted by the single language that must, in hegemonic fashion, encompass all others, especially on the printed page of a novel. The dominance of a single language also affects so-called nonliterary discourse; for instance English is now the primary language charged with disseminating scientific (and technological) words and concepts. Film, arguably, has come closest to conveying the Babeldom of public and private spheres, as its projected translation, by way of subtitles, nevertheless promises a semblance of cohesion. Perhaps this accessible rendering of multilingual fragmentation can even be regarded as one of the emerging conventions of world cinema as a contemporary global form[2].

But multilingual realities are not exactly reader friendly in any medium, including film. One wonders at the function of characters' thoughts made audible in Wim Wenders's film *Der Himmel über Berlin* (*Wings of Desire*) (1987), when commuters on a Berlin subway train can be heard thinking in German and Turkish (though the English subtitles render only the German). One wonders what Apollinaire's already fragmented conversation poem '*Lundi Rue Christine*' (1913) would look like with bits of conversation in languages other than French. Would the bits make a meaningful difference? One wonders at the fragments of French floating through Jean Rhys's *Good Morning, Midnight*. Charlotte Brontë's *Villette* (1853) continues to be published without an annotated translation of the French. One wonders how and to what extent the foreign language is immaterial (a point raised by Umberto Eco with reference to Tolstoy's *War and Peace*).

> How do single language texts, in any discourse or genre, signify mixed language realities? What is at stake in the representation of multilingual realities in a particular text, medium, place, or time? To what extent do texts at different historical and cultural junctures reflect the ideologies of their scene of writing? What are the affects

> of characters/individuals in multilingual situations, the affects of multilingual space? How do 'other' languages in a given text/situation play with questions of figure and ground, decor and inflection? How have certain authors and artists made the conventions and realities of multilingual space a central thematics? What formal innovations have writers from various disciplines and traditions produced to address such realities and what are the politics of these experiments? What are the links between language and identity, and what are the problems that may arise from these links when translation is at stake? (Flury 2010)

These are, by no means, the only questions raised about multilingual literature. In her 'Code-Switching in US Ethnic Literature: Multiple Perspectives Presented through Multiple Languages' (2005: 403), Holly E. Martin writes:

> For the multilingual author, switching between two or more languages is not an arbitrary act, nor is it simply an attempt to mimic the speech of his or her community; code-switching results from a conscious decision to create a desired effect and to promote the validity of the author's heritage language. Incorporating native and heritage languages along with English within a literary work, usually through code-switching, creates a multiple perspective and enhances an author's ability to express his or her subject matter.

Through the blog, I continue to challenge critics and writers to address the question of how the second language affects creative intentions. For example, when I write in a second language, do I know that there are certain things I cannot express? Or am I completely satisfied that whatever I want to say I can say in the second language? Again, my caveat is that I am not talking of just literal levels or communicative competence. I am talking of literature, where the entire history of the word (as the now pretty old New Critics were fond of saying) enters through the word in a text.

Globalization has had a remarkable effect on literary theory, forcing critics to pay attention to non-Western languages and literatures[3]. But while MLT is fairly new, the object of criticism is far from new—multilingual or heteroglossic literary texts have been around for centuries.

Long before macaronic verse, which is a common starting point of studies of multilingual literature, writers have been using more than one language for their creative work. The Christian Bible is perhaps the simplest example of this: Jesus of Nazareth's Aramaic words (though considered divine by believers) are brought to modern readers only in Greek or Latin or, if they are truly young and have not been through a classical education, in a younger language such as English. Biblical scholars routinely refer to Hebrew when they interpret the Old Testament, realizing that modern translations do not adequately convey the meaning of the text; just think of the word 'Adam', which is often misread as always the name of an individual male and, therefore, thought to be inconsistent with Genesis 1: 27 ('So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them').

In general, I include in multilingual literature only works that are not in languages that are already themselves mixed, such as Yiddish. Neither do I usually include work that merely includes a few words in another language as borrowings or illustrations.

The use of non-mother tongue words in a mother-tongue work does not automatically make the work multilingual. What interest me are works that use the second language as a way to incorporate a foreign culture into the mother or native culture. It is not just words that matter, but cultures. Yiddish, Taglish, and other languages that combine two or more earlier or older languages (English does, too, after all) should be considered as 'pure' languages, or at least, in the linguistic sense, dialects. As the New Critics loved to say, it is when truly unrelated or even opposing elements are yoked together in a metaphor that the metaphor attains the level of literature. When unrelated languages or cultures are suddenly brought together in the same literary text, something bigger than either language or culture occurs. Multilingual art happens.

Perhaps the biggest theoretical influence on multilingual literary theory is Mikhail Bakhtin, whose dialogics already allowed for more than one voice in any literary text. In MLT, we have to add 'the writer's language' to the 'natural' languages in a text. It is then easily seen that, in an apparently monolingual work, there are at least two languages at work—the language of the text and the writer's language. As Marina Tsvetaeva puts it for the American Comparative Literature Association seminar cited earlier, 'writing is already translating, from one's native language into another' (Kelbert 2010).

That there is a bias against multilingual literature and a neglect of multilingual literary theory is self-evident. The bias is based on history, as John Scahill points out in 'Trilingualism in Early Middle English Miscellanies: Languages and Literature' (2003: 18): 'Miscellanies containing English were trilingual until the end of this period, when the appearance of the nearly monolingual Auchinleck manuscript marks the appearance of a public whose literacy is essentially confined to English.' It was not the writers that decided to forego multilingual writing, but readers and society.

In every period in every country, there are always those that oppose any kind of mixing of languages in writing. These are, to use their very own words against them, linguistic monsters, because they try to put a limit to creativity. Similarly, in the field of literary criticism, there are those who oppose even thinking that a writer might be self-translating from a mother tongue, or from an idiolect, into what on the surface appears to be her or his main language; these, too, should be regarded as linguistic monsters, or perhaps more precisely, critical monsters.

What literary critics call 'hegemony' is at work here: the ruling class inevitably wants to recognize or legitimise works written only in their highly-educated language, rather than in the uneducated language of the oppressed classes. In the Philippines today, for example, the bestselling novels of Bob Ong and numerous romance novelists (written in Taglish, an apparently chaotic mixture of Tagalog, Filipino, and English) are not considered 'respectable' and are not taken up in literature classes.

Much of the problem stems from the blindness of critics to the multilingual character of apparently monolingual works, especially those written by writers with different mother tongues. Those who insist that second-language writers write in exactly the same way as mother-tongue writers are, to use the jargon of literary theory, complicit in hegemony (translated into a bit more transparent English, this means

'subconsciously continuing colonial or class domination'). Literature in Africa, for example, according to some, deliberately indigenises European languages in order to decolonise or recolonise their former colonisers. As Filipino poet Gemino H Abad (2009: 4) likes to put it when he talks about Filipinos writing in English, Filipinos have 'colonized the English language.' Here, for example, is an observation by Peter W Vakunta (2009):

> Linguistic creolization exists in virtually every country on the African continent. Everywhere, people of all ages are trying to jettison the yoke of cultural imperialism by indigenizing European languages in an attempt to better convey their thought patterns, imagination and lived experiences.

In other words, when a writer consciously exploits her/his mother tongue while writing in a second or foreign language, political and not just aesthetic issues enter the picture.

Unfortunately, not all discussions are conducted in polite conferences or virtual space. Some have been done with deadly weapons. For example, there were riots in Greece when languages were mixed: 'Historically, the dispute has even led to tragedy: the 'Oresteia riots' (*Oresteiaká*) of 8 November 1903 were the consequence of an attempt to stage Aeschylus in a mixed rather than classicizing idiom. Three demonstrators were killed and seven wounded' (Merry 2004: 245).

Allow me to pose five principles of MLT that I have so far identified:

The First Principle: If a literary work is written in a language other than the mother tongue, the mother tongue has to be taken into account when reading the work

This principle applies to a whole work or to part of a work (such as a word, a line, a verse, a phrase, a sentence, or a passage). For example, when reading T. S. Eliot's '*hypocrite lecteur!—mon semblable,—mon frère!'*, the critic has to ask questions of this sort: Why does the poet shift to French? What is gained or lost by using the French original instead of an English translation of Charles Baudelaire's phrase? Would a translation of the phrase into a third language be more effective or less? (This question would be inevitable if we were reading a translation into a third language of the whole poem.) If the English translation and the French original were read or spoken aloud simultaneously (which could be done by two readers or by one reader using imagination), would one serve as a counterpoint to the other in terms of meaning and/or music? These are just questions that would arise from a purely formalistic reading. A more context-oriented reading would ask questions about the poet's intention, education, audience, and so on. Clearly, despite the enormous scholarship already devoted to Eliot's line, not to mention his entire poem, there is still an open area for students of literature to explore.

The Second Principle: A work not in the mother tongue cannot be read as though it were in a mother tongue

tremely common, for example, is the mistake of reading Conrad (or anyone else writing in a language other than the mother tongue) as though he were Ernest Hemingway (or anyone else writing in a mother tongue). Most literary critics do not ignore the distinctive linguistic qualities of passages not in the mother tongue or passages that clearly echo the mother tongue, but the whole work, not just parts of it, should be read with the mother tongue in mind. Passages that appear to be in the second (or third) language are really in the mother tongue, using words in the second (or third) language. Criticism that would be valid, were the work in the mother tongue, might not be applicable to a work in a non-mother tongue.

An example that I often use is that of Bautista's rhyming of *men* with *mien* in 'Pedagogic.' Since all the other end rhymes are correct from the point of view of an American or British speaker, there is no reason to think that the two words are not meant to rhyme. They rhyme only if you hear Bautista reciting the poem in public (which he has done on occasion); he himself pronounces *mien* to rhyme with *men.* Since his mother tongue is Tagalog (in which he has written his novels) and English is his second language, it is the Tagalog vowel sound that dominates, rather than the English vowel sound. The inexact rhyme is not a mistake but a deliberate way to alert the reader to the ethnicity of the speaker in the poem—an added dimension to the situation of a Filipino teacher teaching American students in a country with four seasons (the Philippines has no fall season).

The Third Principle: A work in a mother tongue should not be assumed to be monolingual

This seems counterintuitive, but in fact, since many, if not all languages are made up of older languages, these earlier languages should be taken into account when reading a work, particularly if the writer is such a good writer (someone like James Joyce) that s/he has taken pains to research on these earlier languages. In fact, if we use the late lamented New Criticism, we have to say that a word contains within itself all the meanings ever attributed to that word, including the meanings in the language of origin. Within New Criticism, it is not necessary (nor is it even required) that the writer was/is aware of the origins of the word in the earlier languages; the word itself contains its own history.

The Fourth Principle: The multilingual work is the general case; the apparently monolingual work is the special case

I use the analogy of the relationship between Einsteinian and Newtonian physics. In treating things that we encounter every day, we do very well just using Newtonian physics, because the quantities that make a difference are pretty small. But these small, seemingly insignificant quantities are there; they are just ignored. The multilingual literary critic focuses on these seemingly insignificant items and shows why they are not insignificant after all. Still pursuing the analogy with physics, we

could say that multilingual literary criticism is the Theory of Everything. It is primarily of theoretical interest. We cannot use it all the time because we would never do anything else nor read much more than what we are reading at the moment. Nevertheless, as we know from the enormous amount of work the critics used to do in the first half of the last century, there is a place in the intellectual world for such dedication to detail. By highlighting (or foregrounding, as literary critics like to say) the linguistic elements that are normally ignored, we help the reader appreciate more deeply the writer's craft.

The Fifth Principle: The best critic of a multilingual text is one whose mother tongue is the same as that of the author of the text

In translation classes, we teach our students to translate into their own mother tongue, not only because it is faster (since they are more fluent in that language than in the other one), but also because they know their mother tongue much better than the foreign one (they instinctively know the connotations and contexts of words they use in the translation). If we apply this to multilingual criticism, we come up with a practical insight. Since we do not have world and time enough to study all the literary works in the world, we can do literature a service if we focus on works written by those whose mother tongue is the same as ours. We can then much faster and more easily catch the nuances of the mother tongue that are behind the language of the text. Using the phrase 'writing in a first language using words in a second language,' we can say that the critic, like the author of a text, can read in the first language what appears on paper as a work in the second language.

In practice, this means that, for example, multilingual Filipino critics should focus on works written by Filipinos in English or Spanish, multilingual Chinese critics should focus on works written by Chinese writers in other languages, multilingual Spanish or Latin-American critics should focus on works written by their compatriots in other languages, and so on. Monolingual critics can read whatever they want, but their ability to read will be limited by their language deficiencies. Only multilingual critics can unlock the hidden or submerged meanings in a multilingual text.

With these five principles, it should be possible (although no one has done it yet) to construct a fairly complex and useful MLT, which should join the ranks of the leading theories such as Poststructuralism, Postmarxism, Postfeminism, Postcolonialism, and others. Since MLT is by nature Postmodern, being able to use the discoveries and insights of previous literary theories, it could conceivably be called a postheteroglossic theory, but the term MLT is simpler and more immediately descriptive.

What does MLT have to do with teaching students how to write creative texts? In a country with more than one language—everything. Since all countries today have more than one language, then multilingual literary theory is important for all writing programs.

Allow me to point to some implications of both multilingual or translingual writing and MLT.

First, students should make a conscious effort to indigenise or localize the international language they are working with, if that language happens not to be their own. For example, a Filipino student who speaks Cebuano (or some other Philippine language) at home should not be afraid nor ashamed to make his or her English sound Cebuano. In fact, to me, the real test of a student's mastery of craft is the ability to mould the second language to approximate the rhythm and tone of the mother tongue. This ability requires an extremely high level, not only of fluency, but also of structural awareness (or grammatical sense).

Second, students should read literary texts written in non-mother tongues with the original languages in mind. If they do not know these languages (not too many creative writers outside Poland know the Polish that informed the English of Joseph Conrad, for example), they should at least be alert to the usages of English that are 'non-standard' or, to put it bluntly, not American nor British. These 'non-standard' aspects of their writing are not errors, but are features of their style, as linguist Andrew Gonzalez (2006) once put it in the context of varieties of English. From that informed reading, students can then write in a second language while being acutely aware of thinking in the mother tongue. The act of self-translation, rather than being an appendage to the act of creation, becomes the beginning and source of writing.

Third, students should always be aware that the use of non-English words in an English text should have an aesthetic reason. The advantage of using more than one language in a literary text (whether the use is confined to individual words or to entire paragraphs) is that two world-views are available for harnessing. One does not have to subscribe to either the strong or the weak version of the Whorf-Sapir hypothesis to realize that words do not stand in isolation from languages. Each word carries a whole culture or subculture with it.

MLT can most probably contribute to the current debate about linguistic relativism. If it is true in some way that language determines the way we see the world, then a writer using only one language, more precisely his/her own mother tongue, necessarily is able to mirror only a limited aspect of the real world (assuming, for the sake of argument, that there is indeed a real world, something some philosophers contest). If we want poetry to mirror (I am using the traditional word, which is a general synonym of the classic 'imitate') reality, then poetry that mirrors only a small part of reality should surely be inferior to poetry that mirrors a greater part of reality. In theory, therefore, assuming that some version of Whorf-Sapir is correct, a multilingual or at least bilingual poet must enjoy an advantage over a monolingual poet, in that the multi-lingual or bilingual poet sees more of the world than the linguistically-challenged one does. One way to test this is to read a poem containing more than one language and to see how it compares with a monolingual poem. Of course, sampling will always be debatable, but if we take two poems considered classic or excellent by most critics and compare them, we might be on to something.

Fourth, Creative Writing teachers should stop being language teachers. Because many Creative Writing teachers had their first university jobs as teachers of freshman language courses, they tend to be particular about grammatical rules, idioms, and things of that sort. On the contrary, Creative Writing teachers should subvert or

deconstruct the kind of correctness in language that all universities require of non-creative writers. One of the worst aspects of any writing program, particularly a Creative Writing program, is the insistence by some teachers on 'proper' language, by which they mean following the grammatical rules of the language of the text. The term 'poetic license' is often misused and abused, but the idea is sound: creative writers should be creative with language, and there is no limit to creativity, especially not the strictures and structures of languages.

Fifth, students have to write for the world, not only for their own country. I do not mean writing for New York, but for as many countries as possible. Globalisation is with us to stay, and even if it means Americanisation in many aspects, it does not have to mean that in literature (North American literature cannot compare with the more interesting writing being done today in many other countries.) As the African writers showed decades ago, there is a need to deliberately use English that is painful for Americans or Brits to hear but nevertheless pleasurable to read. That a writer need not follow any of the rules of language spoken by a country is clear even in the case of Shakespeare, whose language (now no longer used by any living person) has never been an obstacle to anyone seriously reading his work.

Finally, allow me to suggest a teaching prompt that might help with Creative Writing students in English-speaking countries:

There are two types of such students. There is the student who has no language except English, but could very well have listened to other languages at home. Ask the student to compose a short poem in another language. The first step is to get a bilingual dictionary, just to get the literal meanings of the words right. The second and more important step, however, is to demand that the poem rhyme. Remember Bautista's famous advice to beginning writers: 'Take care of the sound and the sense will take care of itself.'

On the other hand, there is the student who has a different mother tongue from English. Such students may eventually become major writers in English. A contemporary example is Merlinda Bobis, whose mother tongue is Bicolano, second language is Filipino, and third language English. She has become extremely successful in English (winning various prizes in Australia and elsewhere), but is also a major writer in Bicolano. Ask this student to do self-translation. First write a poem in the mother tongue. Then translate the poem into English. Then translate the English poem into the mother tongue. Compare the original poem with the back translation. A variation of this would be to make another student do the back translation.

The teaching of Creative Writing should follow two streams—that of actual literary practice and that of literary theory. More and more writers today are using more than one language in their work. More and more literary critics are looking at the mother tongue or the other languages present in literary texts. Teachers of Creative Writing should realize that students with a command, no matter how slight or uneven, of more than one language have a new and relatively unexplored tool on hand for producing works of art.

Notes

1. Writers such as Gemino H. Abad, Carlos A. Angeles, Fernando Bagongbanta, Cirilo F. Bautista, Abdon M. Balde Jr., Jose Dalisay Jr., Marjorie Evasco, Nick Joaquin, F. Sionil Jose, Jose F. Lacaba, Bienvenido Lumbera, Genoveva Edroza Matute, Resil B. Mojares, Alfred Robles, Rolando Tinio, and Jose Garcia Villa.

2. A call for papers by Flury and Regnauld—May 2010—which offers an idea of what multilingual critics are currently concerned with.

3. For example, 'Motion Events in Chinese Novels: Evidence for an Equipollently-framed Language,' (Liang Chen & Jiansheng Guo, *Journal of Pragmatics* September 2009), 'Text Messages: A Tale of Two Songs: Singapore versus Hong Kong,' (Kirkpatrick A & Moody A, *ELT Journal* 2009). A year earlier, Lawrence Alan Rosenwald published his definitive *Multilingual America: Language and the Making of American Literature* (2008). There have also been conferences circling around the topic, such as the conference on 'Immigrant Literature: Writing in Adopted Languages' (Brussels 2008), and 'Jain Narratives in Multilingual Early Modern North India: Apabhramsa Texts from the 15th–18th Centuries' (The School of Oriental and African Studies, London 2008). A Google egroup has even been set up for scholars interested in multilingual writing—*Translingual Writing*.

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