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SUBTITLES

MARIE DE QUATREBARBES

I would like to report a fact. To talk about the way in which a certain form of “globalized” cultural practice resonates directly with my relationship to poetry. A large part of my work consists in reading, writing, editing, and sometimes translating poetry. Many of the books I read are written by American poets. At night, before falling asleep, sometimes I also watch films and television shows. Like the books of poetry, the series I watch come largely from the United States. So books and shows meet in one point of personal practice, constituting the banal and routine basis of a situated quotidian existence, local, caught up in the circulation of globalized forms.

This is not a question of interrogating the differences and the similarities between objects, between poetry and television shows. What interests me, rather, is to see how two modes of writing are inscribed, meeting on a sort of ridge-line: the relationship to the English language that appears physically in my daily life. This is a question of a connection—material, above all—to language, and of a doubling.

In fact, for each episode I watch, I download the English subtitles (.srt) separately. Since I am not bilingual, this arrangement helps me not to lose anything (or almost anything) of the plot without disturbing the environment of the original language. Thus the words double themselves, covered by a light layer

of text that replicates the dialog heard by the ear almost identically, sometimes more synthetically. What happens in this doubling? Do the subtitles naturalize the oral form? Make it more audible? Acceptable? The .srt files are text files. They are produced and shared by fans of globalized shows and destined for other fans of globalized shows. I know neither their nationalities nor their names. But if you open an .srt file in a word processor, you can clearly see that portions of text (dialogue) are associated with temporal information (timing). The .srt file has the specificity of coupling text and time and thus, perhaps, functions in the manner of a retroactive score for mutating readers.

Trans. Lindsay Turner

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MARIE DE QUATREBARBES is a French poet based in Paris. She is the author of four books including *La vie moins une minute* (2014) and *Gommage de tête* (forthcoming). She co-founded the translation journal *La tête et les cornes*, and has developed several editorial projects, such as the new edition of the poetic work of Michel Couturier in 2016. She is also a member of the editorial board of the journal *remue.net*, in which she leads a dossier on Scandinavian contemporary poetry.