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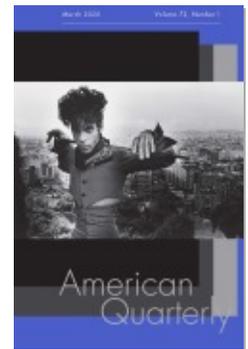
CFP: Politics of Language, Multilingualism, and Translation
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(September 2021)

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CFP: Politics of Language, Multilingualism, and Translation in American Studies

A Special Issue of *American Quarterly* (September 2021)

Edited by Vicente L. Rafael (University of Washington) and Mary Louise Pratt (New York University)

We are calling for contributions for a special issue on the politics of language, multilingualism, and translation broadly understood in American studies. Our overarching question is what difference does linguistic difference make in our—whoever we are—understanding of what counts as American in American studies? While the dialectics of diversity have long been a key concern of the field, the same does not seem to have been the case with language. The polylingualism and the creolization of American speech and writing are rarely brought up. For the most part, doing American studies in the United States means doing it in, and on, English. Where graduate studies in other humanities and social science fields usually require knowledge of one or more languages, this is rarely the case with American studies.

Yet polylingualism, translation, and their politics are profoundly intertwined with the histories of indigenous societies, settler colonialism, slavery, imperialism, native histories, and immigration in the Americas. From its beginnings to the present, US capitalism has built itself through the talent and labor of people arriving from elsewhere. Multilingualism and translation are thus permanent, if repressed, features of the US human geography, along with the mistranslations and communicative failures that these invariably give rise to. What are the effects of linguistic crossings and double-crossings in the formation of things American, indeed, in the very definition of Americanness? How is it that literature and literary history call attention to the hybridity of American languages while such linguistic complications are side-stepped more sociologically inflected research? Where does linguistic difference fit in the study of race, gender, and class? How do diasporic, immigrant, and minority writers deal with the dominance of English. How is English queered and queered in the Republic's history, democratized, deconstructed, turned into the monolingualism of the other? What role does American English play in the relentless globalization of capitalism and the commodification of everyday life

in the rest of the world? What happens to English as it is imposed in the outer reaches of the US Empire and becomes an object of appropriation and struggle?

How might American studies be conceived in languages other than English? Could it bear the weight of other civilizations and the languages that inhabit our linguistic landscape: Comanche, Spanish, Tagalog, Arabic, Hebrew, Québécois, for example? What would be required to daily deconstruct the monopolistic dominance of English?

Proposed essays may consider, among other topics:

- language and the biopolitics of empire
- language and the black diaspora
- immigration, multilingualism, and the politics of translation
- the social effects of accents and their repression
- ecology of language and the language of climate change
- language, race, and racialization
- loss, recovery, and revitalization of native language
- multilingualism, creolization, and literature in American studies
- creolization and popular culture
- the linguistic geography of capitalism
- linguistic violence, especially during times of war at home and abroad
- the dialectics of US multilingualism and monolingualism
- history and geography of US language policy in the continent and in the colonies
- the language of nationalism, white supremacy, and verbal hygiene
- translanguaging and multilingualism as verbal arts
- style, virtuosity, and the linguistics of performance
- do we own languages or do they own us?

Essays of up to ten thousand words are due August 1, 2020. Authors must address the guest editors and clearly indicate in a cover letter that the submission is intended for the 2021 special issue. Information about *American Quarterly* and submission guidelines can be found at www.americanquarterly.org.