

Rethinking European plurilingual identities in Caroline Bergvall's collective project “Language Stations”

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Caroline Bergvall

- « Monolingualism is Dangerous » (King's College London 2019)
 - Double identities
- Caroline Bergvall (born 1962)
 - French-Norwegian artist and poet
 - Old and contemporary languages
- « Sonic Atlas »
 - Cycle of performances
 - « [sound] multiple languages, their migratory and historic paths »

« Language Stations »

- « Language Stations » (2016-2020)
 - Old and new minoritized languages in Europe (Punjabi, Romanche, Arabic, Berber, Farsi, Andalus-Arabic, Medieval Hebrew, Galician, Ladino, Provençal, Occitan, Sicilian, Anglo-Saxon, Welsh, Scottish Gaelic, Icelandic, Groenlandic, Nightingale)
- Medieval lyric poetry
 - « Poetic I » → expression of identity
 - E.g. Ladino poetry 13th c. (J. Weiss)
- Process → travel and encounters: languages and identity
 - 40 plurilingual language-activists (poets, translators, scholars...)
 - Discussions, performances, translations (« Dawn Chorus of Languages »)
- Traces available (project summaries, testimonies, mini podcasts, recordings of sessions)
- Outcome → plural, moving identities in Europe

Plurilingual European identities

- Plurilingual European identities
 - From « monolingual paradigm » to plurilingualism (Yildiz 3, 7)
 - European paradox « united in diversity » → plural identities
 - European plurilingualism & identities → national, standard languages ? (Gal 13-4, Robustelli p.6, 7, 17-8)
- Why minoritized languages ?
 - Rethink paradox and modalities of articulation of diversity

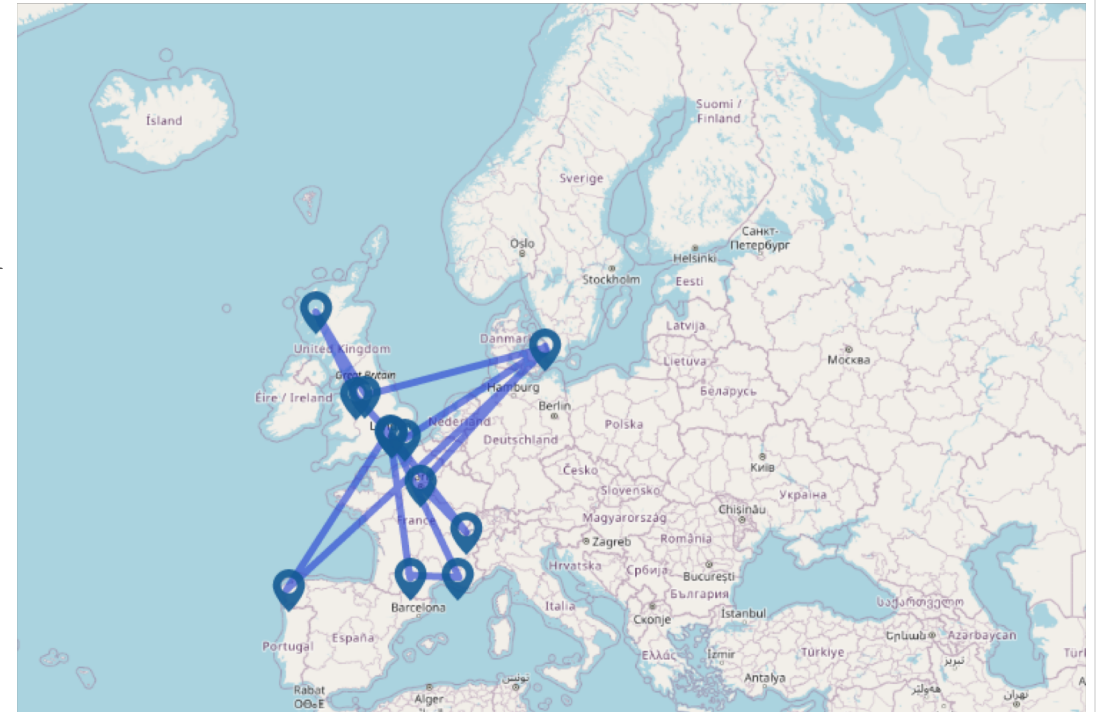
- Methodological framework: « poetics of relation » Edouard Glissant (*Poétique de la Relation, Introduction à une Poétique du Divers*)
 - Encounters and articulations of cultures → reaching towards Otherness (PR 23)
 - Homogeneous totality VS irreducible heterogeneity (PR 201)
 - Identity: monolingual root VS plurilingual movement (PR 23, 31)
 - Identity: essence VS movement (PR 201)
- Outline
 - Identities in a flux
 - Sedimented, plural identities
 - Translocal identities
 - Opaque identities

Identities in a flux

- Identity as movement
 - Root VS movement
- Movement of minoritized languages
 - Migration
 - « Language traffickers »
- What kind of movement? (*PR* 27-30, *IPD* 130)
 - Straight nomadism VS circular nomadism
 - Erring // Exile
 - From lack of identity to openness of identity towards Otherness

Identities in a flux

- Performing paradigm shift in the present
- Moving languages and identities
- Bergvall's route



Sedimented, plural identities

- Histories of languages
- Geological metaphor (Bergvall, Glissant)
 - Language as « midden ground » (*Meddle English* 6)
 - Sediments = « particulars » (/ particularities of a given culture)
 - Heterogeneous totality
 - What is behind « top-soil » of vehicular languages?
- Alba Cid and Galician
 - Influence on other languages in medieval time
 - Participation of minoritized languages in European identities
 - Already plural identities
 - Abolishing hierarchies between languages

Translocal identities

- Sediments → translocal scale (*ME* 9)
 - Remap identities → new future?
- Language-Activists' perspective
 - Welsh poet: Karen Owens // Poets from Yemen
 - Alba Cid → Circumvent the center VS peripheries
- Survival → right to difference VS assimilation (Raasch 28, Bal)
 - Transnational → national → classic Euro plurilingualism (Robustelli)
 - National scale → dangerous for the « Diverse »
 - Divers = « the totality of possible differences » « the fuel of universal energy » (*PR* 42)
 - Exchanging with other cultures + protect particularities

Opaque identities

- Minoritized languages → resistance VS assimilation
- « Right to opacity »
 - « not being shut off as a self-sufficient, unapproachable entity, but remaining as an irreducible singularity » (*PR* 204)
 - « Dawn Chorus of languages » → cacophony
 - « passengers we are passages we are passengers we are passages we are passengers » (2016)
- Imagine « transparency of Relation » (*PR* 68, 129, 204)
 - Teaching
 - Translation: process in which « the [first] language does not disappear, and the second does not refuse to be present » (*IPD* 46) → paradigm for European plurilingual identities?
 - Necessary paradoxical dialogue

Conclusion

- Minoritized languages through Relation → emblematic of potential European identities
 - Fundamental movement
- Towards creolization ?
 - Mixing of elements of culture → « mutual valorization » (*IPD* 18)
- Mieke Bal (« Un rêve culturel: l'Europe au pluriel », leçon inaugurale au Collège de France , Octobre 2022)
 - Identities in movement
 - Plurality of identities + plural identities
 - From identity to identification ?

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