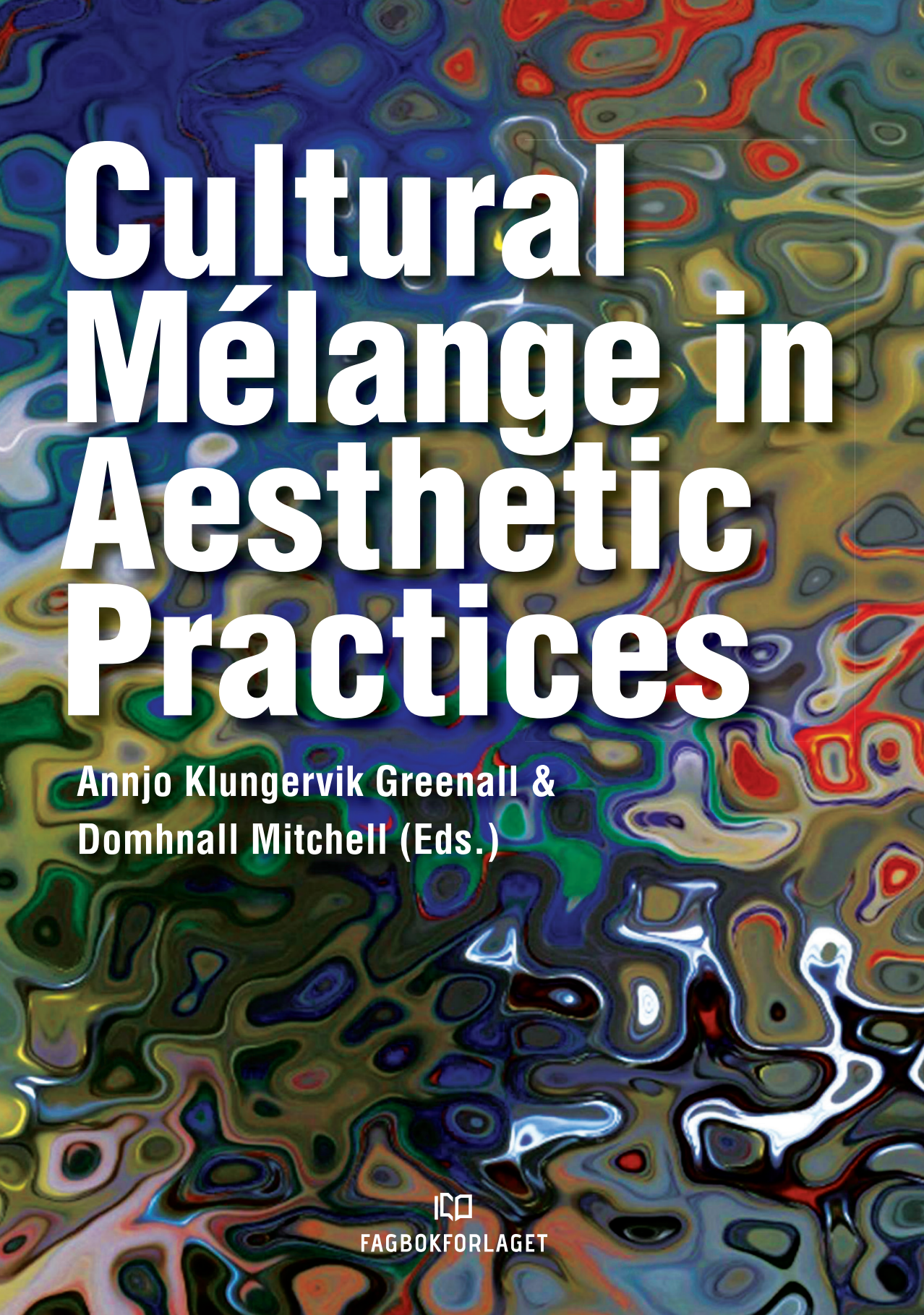

Cultural Mélange in Aesthetic Practices
Annjo Klungervik Greenall &
Domhnall Mitchell (Eds.)
FAGBOKFORLAGET

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FAGBOKFORLAGET

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# Preface

The chapters in this volume are revised versions of papers given at a workshop entitled "Cultural Mélange in Aesthetic Expressions" held at the (former) Department of Modern Foreign Languages at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU), Trondheim, Norway, 11–12 February, 2013. The initiative for the workshop was taken by members of Translating Cultures, one of three prioritised research groups based at (what is now known as) the Department of Language and Literature at NTNU. The workshop aimed to draw on group members' collective research interests in addressing and sharing views on a topic that - also in Scandinavia - is becoming increasingly relevant in today's globalized society, namely the cultural-linguistic mixing and blending that is an increasingly significant part of our daily experience. In addition, the workshop saw the beginnings of a sustained process of networking with international scholars working on similar issues: three distinguished colleagues, Christiane Fioupou, Henrik Smith-Sivertsen, and Riitta Oittinen, from France, Denmark and Finland, respectively, were invited to contribute to the workshop and subsequently to the volume. The fact that they come from fields as different as African studies, musicology, and translation studies testifies to the interdisciplinary nature of the workshop as well as of the current volume. Mélanges of a broadly cultural (linguistic, generic, discursive) kind have been discussed, in this work, using a variety of literary, theatrical, musical, linguistic and translational approaches, and it is our belief that the topic at hand benefits greatly from – or perhaps even requires – such a diversity of treatment, it being the case that all of these aspects are often intertwined in one and the same (textual or non-textual) aesthetic practice. A single angle will just not do.

We would like to extend our thanks to the members of the Translating Cultures research group and to the invited contributors of this volume for

their hard work, enthusiasm and endless patience. Thanks are also due to the Faculty of Humanities at NTNU and the Department of Language and Literature for hosting and helping to fund the workshop and this publication, and to the editorial team at Fagbokforlaget for their kind input and guidance.

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# 1 Cultural mélange in textual and non-textual aesthetic practices: Some considerations

*Annjo K. Greenall*

The OED defines *purity* as 'The state or quality of being free from extraneous or foreign elements, or from outside influence; the state of being unadulterated or refined; clarity'.[1] The concept is of course deeply value-laden: while the first part of the definition emerges as relatively neutral, bar the possible negative connotations of 'foreign' and 'outside', the latter part is a distilled expression of centuries of desire: who wants adulteration, non-refinement, non-clarity? Still, the history of human creation is replete with examples that purity is an illusion. Dictionaries showcase languages as entities often composed of other languages; local literatures from all over the world are framed by genres hailing from ancient cultures such as those of Greece and Italy, France and Spain; musical expressions such as jazz and blues have African roots. A large majority of aesthetic practices tend to constitute *mélanges* of form and content, emerging either as smooth ensembles or as collections of sharply defined, even discordant components.[2] Decades of modern and postmodern aesthetics accompanied by accelerating globalization have caused a situation where non-purity, as it were, is now both generally accepted, and nothing less than ubiquitous: to find an example all you need to do (in very many cases) is grab the

1 'purity', *Oxford English Dictionary Online* <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/154916?redirectedFrom=purity#eid> [accessed 6 January 2014].

2 Mélange is italicised here because this is its first appearance: since it is a word that has now more or less passed into English usage, it will be represented in roman type for the rest of this volume.

book nearest to you. For me, this social-media-inspired experiment provided me, for the purposes of this chapter, with Norwegian author Heidi Linde's latest novel *Nu, jävlar* [literally: *Now, devils*; in dynamic translation: *Fuck it, I'm ready*].[3] A novel about the lives of four relatively unassuming characters in the small Norwegian town of Kongsvinger, it starts out borrowing elements from the crime novel (in the form of an italicised preface depicting the quiet life in a small police precinct which is shattered when they receive a phone call from a witness giving evidence about a crime having been committed). It continues, however, as a predominantly psychological novel, exploring the effects of the past on the characters' present. Borrowing and mixing are also evident on the level of theme: Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* looms in the background throughout the character Therese's plot line.[4] Therese has two small children and is heavily pregnant with a third, and the novel finds her grieving for lost opportunities in life and longing for some untainted time she can spend exclusively in her own company. Structurally, the novel is anchored in an event involving an outside cultural figure, namely the news about Barack Obama's Nobel Peace Prize nomination. Partly as a result of this, the novel contains, in addition to the Swedish loan expression used in the book's title (*Nu, jävlar*), prominent borrowings from English: the Obama mantra 'Change', for example, heads one of the book's subsections.

This example illustrates many aspects of cultural mélange that are relevant for this volume. Above all, it demonstrates how mélange is a function of choices made at several different levels of a text and/or (other) aesthetic practice. Mixes and blends take place between genres, between and among literary works, fact and fiction, languages, and also, as one of the contributions to this book will show, between and among different textual modalities (the visual, verbal, and aural). More often than not, these blends have a cultural dimension: an intruding genre may be seen to properly belong elsewhere, intertextual references, items and events, as well as languages are often borrowed from outside. It would, however, be a mistake to approach each individual element in such

3 Heidi Linde, *Nu jävlar* (Oslo: Gyldendal, 2011).

4 Silje Stavrum Norevik, 'Denne boka bør du lese i vår: Skarpt skrevet fra søvnige Kongsvinger'. *Dagbladet*, 4 March 2011, Reviews section <http://www.dagbladet.no/2011/04/03/kultur/bok/litteratur/litteraturanmeldelser/anmeldelser/16033544/> [accessed 6 January 2014].

blends with the expectation that they should be somehow original and pure. Academic literature past and present abounds with an insistence that cultural and/or textual purity does not in principle exist: postcolonial theorist Edward Said's much quoted claim that no culture 'is single and pure, all are hybrid, heterogeneous'[5] is echoed by more recent theorists such as Marwan Kraidy's 'all cultures are to some extent hybrid'.[6] Cultural historian Peter Burke draws our attention to the fact that 'Martin Luther, anticipating modern linguists, once remarked that '[a]ll languages are mixed',[7] and we recall Russian literary scholar Mikhail Bakhtin's insistence that the word is always half someone else's.[8] Thus, any element of a given mix is also always in itself a mix, and so on, indefinitely. Despite this, an artistic work or practice is still, borrowing some terms from gestalt psychology, often perceived in terms of figures (extraneous elements) against grounds (more – to perception – unified home bases). In Heidi Linde's novel, for example, the genre of crime fiction, which plays only a small part in the book, is likely to be perceived as a figure in a predominantly psychological novel constituting the ground; the Swedish and English language insertions will be perceived as figures against a Norwegian-language ground, and so on.

The current volume contains eleven empirical studies that together richly illustrate the multi-level nature of mélanges and the complex ways in which the various elements are interwoven. The contributions discuss the historical points of departure for, the political repercussions and the aesthetic functions of, a number of artistic works and practices from different parts of the world, with the main focus on Europe. Before introducing these studies further, however, it is necessary to take a closer look at the leading concept of this book, namely mélange.

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5 Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Vintage, 1993), p. xxix.

6 Marwan M. Kraidy, *Hybridity, or the Cultural Logic of Globalization* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2005), p. 119.

7 Peter Burke, *Cultural Hybridity* (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2009), p. 46.

8 Mikhail M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, trans. by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), p. 345.

## Mélange vs. hybridity

Above all, the choice of the term mélange needs to be discussed above all because of the existence of another, more commonly used term – hybridity – which might intuitively seem to be appropriate for discussing many of the phenomena discussed in the contributions to this volume. The latter term has its roots in the field of biology, where it denotes a cross between two different species, and where it is often used to designate something that is not acceptable (cf. impure breeds).[9] Within linguistics and discourse analysis the term has been used as a label for texts that display features of more than one genre or text type (ibid.), but most notably, it has been used extensively within postcolonial theory, social science and cultural studies as a label for the cultural blends that arise as a result of colonisation and globalization. In postcolonial studies the term is traced back to Homi K. Bhabha, who refers to hybrids as 'intercultural brokers in the interstices between nation and empire',[10] in other words people, typically expats from previously colonized countries, who live and write through and in a colonizing culture and language. Within postcolonial studies, hybridity is a deeply political concept, pointing above all to issues of unequal power, conflict and tension. This endows it with certain connotations that makes it useful, according to Haugen (this volume), for discussing blends also outside the postcolonial context, since the latter is obviously not the only context where cultural-linguistic juxtapositions can cause jarring and tension.

Two of the contributors to the present volume, Fioupou and Schmidt-Melbye, write about typical Bhabhaian hybrids – Nigerian playwright Wole Soyinka, and Cameroonian Francophone author Mongo Beti, respectively. The hybridity that is played out in their works cannot, however, be said to be solely due to the postcolonial situation of their countries of origin. Wole Soyinka's play *Opera Wonyosi*, for example, also has clear intertextual ties to Bertolt Brecht's *The Threepenny Opera*, a work emanating from Germany, a country that never colonized Nigeria. Adopting a more long-term, historical perspec-

9 Christina Schäffner and Beverly Adab, 'The idea of the hybrid text in translation: Contact as conflict', *Across Languages and Cultures*, 2.2 (2001), 167–80 (p. 168).

10 Jan Nederveen Pieterse, *Globalization and Culture: Global Mélange* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2009), p. 79.

tive on globalization,[11] we could say that the hybridity in such works is due to globalization projects, including colonialism and various other forms of cultural contact, recently intensified by increased travel and encounters through media and technology. Within the social sciences and cultural studies the idea that globalization results in cultural hybridity (understood as ongoing mixing) is now becoming the cornerstone of a leading, postmodern hybridity paradigm[12] which has displaced two older paradigms associated with modernism (the ideas of cultural differentialism (that differences between cultures will always remain), and cultural convergence (that cultures will grow increasingly similar)). Hybridization, according to globalization theorist Jan Nederveen Pieterse, is associated with notions such as travelling culture,[13] and can be defined as 'the ways in which [cultural] forms become separated from existing practices and recombine with new forms in new practices'.[14] For Nederveen Pieterse, studying hybridization becomes a matter of coming 'to terms with phenomena such as Thai boxing by Moroccan girls in Amsterdam, [and] Asian rap in London'.[15] These are examples of objects of hybridity, which Burke distinguishes according to three types: artefacts, practices, and people.[16] Within the sub-category of artefacts, Burke lists architecture, furniture, images, texts and literary genres.[17] Hybrid practices, he continues, 'may be identified in religion, music, language, sport, festivals and other cultural domains',[18] and he draws particular attention to music and language as arenas where we find many striking examples of cultural hybridization.[19] The current volume supports this observation, insofar as the entirety of the second half is dedicated to contributions that deal with song lyrics, and two of the contributions (Smith-Sivertsen, and Greenall) focus on language mixing or code-switching.

11 Ibid., pp. 15ff.
12 Ibid., p. viii.
13 Ibid., p. 44.
14 William Rowe and Vivian Shelling, Memory and Modernity: *Popular Culture in Latin America* (London: Verso, 1991), p. 231.
15 Nederveen Pieterse, *Globalization and Culture*, p. 75.
16 Burke, *Cultural Hybridity*, p. 13.
17 Ibid., p. 17.
18 Ibid., p. 21.
19 Ibid., p. 23, 26. See also Kraidy, *Hybridity*, p. 141ff.

Within social sciences and cultural studies, the term hybridity has had a neutral, even positive flavour, and has been criticized by some for offering an overly harmonious image of something that often does not deserve that label.[20] The stark contrast to how the notion is often interpreted in the context of postcolonialism draws attention to the fact that the concept's extensive use in a multitude of different contexts has made it problematically ambiguous.[21] A number of alternative concepts have been employed to denote the same or similar cultural processes and products, such as mosaic, bricolage, palimpsest, borrowing, creolization, métissage, localization, glocalization, syncretism, crossover, appropriation, accommodation, cultural translation, and so on. Most of these are, however, less overarching in nature than hybridity insofar as each tends to emphasize a different aspect of the processes and products in question: mosaic points to a juxtaposition of pieces where each individual piece retains its integrity but assists in creating a new whole; palimpsest indicates, perhaps, a more deeply integrated mix; borrowing accentuates provenance, appropriation[22] highlights receptive agency, and so on. *Mélange* does not yet figure as an established concept on this list[23] and has thus been chosen here because of its potential to yield a fresh start – it is simply intended to denote a blend of elements belonging to categories that are somehow experienced as different from each other, and functioning in relation to each other (strongly or weakly) as figures vs. grounds.

## The role of translation

Two of the contributions to this volume (Oittinen, and Mitchell and Angelsen) have translation as their main focus, and many of the remainder also touch on the role of translation in the creation of mélange, or on the challenges of translating culturally mixed source texts. Exploring hybridity (their term) in trans-

20 Burke, *Cultural Hybridity*, p. 7.

21 Ibid., p. 13.

22 Ibid., pp. 54–5.

23 Although it has been used, most notably in Nederveen Pieterse's book *Globalization and Culture*, where 'mélange' is used as a simple synonym for hybridity. In his book, the label seems mainly to have been brought in for its ability – in the context of an English-language text – to illustrate what it designates.

lation, Schäffner and Adab define hybrid texts as ones that 'show features that somehow seem "out of place"/"strange"/"unusual" for the receiving culture'.[24] Such texts can be original texts produced in a cultural space-in-between,[25] or they can be translations.[26] As regards the latter, Schäffner and Adab distinguish between true hybrids, the results of positive translatorial decisions, and texts that emerge as peculiar merely because of the translator's lack of competence.[27] According to Schäffner and Adab, not *all* translations are hybrids. This view is contested by others, e.g. Neubert,[28] who argues that a translation, any translation, cannot help containing features of the original, and is therefore, by definition, always hybrid. A similar point is made by Haugen (this volume).

For Schäffner and Adab, translation-induced hybridity is seen to reside at the levels of genre, text and/or language.[29] Within translation studies, it is generally acknowledged that the adoption of genres and text types through translation causes hybridization, which may eventually give rise to new genres and text types.[30] The challenge of genre translation emanates strongly from Stenkløv's contribution, which examines the play *Victor Hugo, My Love* and its projected translation into Norwegian. Two other major issues to do with translation and mélange are also touched upon in the volume. The first concerns original texts that are culturally hybrid: what happens to these in translation? This is one of the questions asked in Fioupou's chapter on Soyinka's *Opera Wonyosi*. It is an important question that has yet to be empirically resolved – do translators tend to function as gatekeepers between languages, or as contributors to mélange? Some scholars[31] are adamant that hybrid texts mostly if not always become dehybridized in translation, while others claim the oppo-

24 Schäffner and Adab, 'The idea of the hybrid text in translation', p. 167.
25 Schäffner and Adab, 'The idea of the hybrid text in translation revisited', *Across Languages and Cultures*, 2.2 (2001), 277–302 (p. 279).
26 Ibid., p. 277.
27 Schäffner and Adab, 'The idea of the hybrid text in translation', p. 167.
28 Albrecht Neubert, 'Some implications of regarding translations as hybrid texts', *Across Languages and Cultures*, 2.2 (2001), 181–93.
29 Schäffner and Adab, 'The idea of the hybrid text in translation revisited', p. 288.
30 This point is made, e.g. in Sonja Tirkkonen-Condit, 'EU project proposals as hybrid texts', *Across Languages and Cultures*, 2.2 (2001), 261–64.
31 E.g. Anthony Pym, 'Against praise of hybridity', *Across Languages and Cultures*, 2.2 (2001), 195–206.

site.[32] The second issue, which is represented in the contribution by Oittinen, concerns plurisemiotic/multimodal texts in translation. The complexity of these texts makes them a particularly interesting case, insofar as they contain modal hybridity as well as other forms of hybridity, adding an additional layer to the mix. They also contain elements – notably visual elements – that to a greater degree than the accompanying text tend to remain unchanged in translation, something which often causes interesting cultural mélanges to arise.

## The contributions

'Since "everything is hybrid"', states Nederveen Pieterse, 'hybridity is an avalanche and discussing examples of hybridity is like drinking from a fire hydrant. It follows that only those forms of hybridity are worth discussing that illuminate the variety, spread, depth and meaning of hybridity, or that shed light on history, past or future'.[33] Unified by their focus on globalization-induced mélange, the different case studies presented here, which deal with travel literature, theatre, picture books, music lyrics, and so on, certainly illustrate the great variety of possible objects of hybridity within the field of art and popular culture. Furthermore, they shed light on the spread of the phenomenon: studies on cultural hybridity have, because of the urgency in addressing postcolonial issues, tended to be focused on the Americas, Africa and Asia, and although a couple of the contributions to the present volume also have those areas as their focus, the majority take us into geographical regions hitherto little explored with respect to hybridity or mélange, namely Western, Eastern and Northern Europe. Especially novel is the focus on Scandinavia. This is an area with no recent colonization history, which means that it has previously been considered of little interest in regards to issues such as the ones addressed here. It is, however, an area that has been experiencing extremely rapid hybridization in the last few decades, due to more recent phases of globalization, which have brought with them, among other things, consid-

32 See Rainier Grutman, 'Multilingualism and translation', in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies*, ed. by Mona Baker (London: Routledge, 2001), pp. 157–60 (p. 160).

33 Nederveen Pieterse, *Globalization and Culture*, p. viii.

erable anglification. Another aspect that sets the book apart is its interdisciplinarity. Bringing together contributions from literary studies, discourse analysis, sociolinguistics, musicology and translation studies, it aims to illuminate the 'depth and meaning' of mélange by considering it from various perspectives.

The first part of the book, Literary and Theatrical Practices, begins with a chapter by Marius Warholm Haugen on the eighteenth-century travel memoirs of the Polish, French-speaking author Jean Potocki. In it, Haugen demonstrates that Potocki's texts are composite entities and suggests that hybridity might in some cases be genre-defining, insofar as a mixing of genres, blurring of fact and fiction, and borrowing genres and texts from a foreign source (often in translated form), seem to be recurrent features of travel memoirs. Haugen also draws attention to hybrid aspects of the practice of writing travelogues: authors would often hybridize themselves by dressing up to look like the inhabitants of the places they visited in an attempt at cultural immersion, to ensure an unhampered understanding of the culture. In chapter 3, Nelly Foucher Stenkløv examines French playwright Anthéa Sogno's *Victor Hugo, My Love* (2009), a play based on the historical love affair between the great author Victor Hugo and Juliette Drouet. Stenkløv focuses on the play's mix of genres (letters, poems, dialogue), addressing the consequences of this kind of mélange for the play's translation. Drawing on a cognitive framework, Stenkløv demonstrates what goes on in the process of intrusion of one generic form into another, and how the resulting generic cocktail necessitates *cultural* processing, which poses obvious challenges for potential translators of the play. Chapter 4 continues the focus on theatre; Christiane Fioupou discusses Wole Soyinka's *Opera Wonyosi*, a satire of inequity and corruption in Nigeria following the 1970s oil boom. The play combines various genres (dialogue, music, song and dance), elements from European theatre (*The Beggar's Opera*, and *The Threepenny Opera*) and British songs (e.g. 'Who Killed Cock Robin'; 'Mud, Mud, Glorious Mud'), in addition to a collection of cultural elements and languages stemming from Nigeria's colonial past. Fioupou highlights artistic resourcefulness as a source of mélange, showing how Soyinka founded the Guerilla Theatre Unit, a form of protest that 'was taken to the streets, markets and other open public places as *agit-prop*, "Guerilla" or "Shotgun" theatre'. Like Stenkløv, Fioupou comments on the challenges of translating a composite work, focusing on how the

translation process will add another level to the mélange. Chapter 5 examines the novel *Trop de soleil tue l'amour* (1999), written by Cameroonian Francophone author Mongo Beti. The chapter's author, Inger Hesjevoll Schmidt-Melbye, investigates the author's narrative style, looking especially at linguistic mélange, showing how Beti combines a 'constant play with French language and culture', African oral elements, and code switching between French, English and local languages. Schmidt-Melbye questions whether such a use of mélange must always have a predominantly political purpose, and sets out to investigate its aesthetic effects. In chapter 6, Sophie Vauclin extracts material from a contemporary French novel, *Les Morues* by Titiou Lecoq, using it to conduct a sociolinguistic study of the phenomenon of "Franglais", a (highly negative) term used for the borrowing of English words and expressions into the French language. Vauclin looks at a number of English loanwords in terms of their understandability among different age groups within the French population, taking understanding as a measure of a word's level of integration into the French language. Vauclin's study draws attention to two important ideas; firstly, that foreign elements are integrated to varying degrees in a language and (by extension) in texts, and secondly, that the nature and depth of a given mélange may differ among different audiences. A similar issue underlies chapter 7, which deals with the translation of multimodal texts. Riitta Oittinen looks at Finnish author and illustrator Mauri Kunna's picture book adaptation of the Finnish national epic *The Kalevala*, viz. *Koirien Kalevala*, and its translation into Swedish (*Hundarnas Kalevala*) and English (*The Canine Kalevala*). In both translations cultural mélange is the result as the original illustrations have been retained while the actual text has been adapted to the new culture. The contrasts between illustration and text are less marked, however, for the Swedish readership than the British, since the familiarity with Finnish culture is much greater in Sweden than in Britain. In the words of Oittinen: '[a]ll in all, verbally, visually, and aurally, the different versions depict and form different cultural mélanges'.

The second part of the book – Textual-Musical Practices – opens with a chapter by Priscilla Ringrose, who looks at the re-territorialization and interpretation of US hip hop culture in France in the 1980s and 90s. Ringrose looks at the extent to which the two main community-forming strategies used in the USA – black militant nationalism with an Islamic thrust

and Afrocentrism – were deployed on French soil. She shows how these movements were transposed from American inner cities to the French *banlieues* by virtue of imitation of their proponents' cultural-historical styles, but also by virtue of indigenization, in the form of a focus on recent, French colonial history, expressed in the discourses and lyrics of various French rap groups. Chapter 9 revolves around cultural and linguistic hybridity in Scandinavian popular music. Henrik Smith-Sivertsen takes as his point of departure modern technologies which lead to increasing cultural contact and Anglophone dominance within popular music in Denmark and Scandinavia. Smith-Sivertsen traces the development of different kinds of cultural-linguistic mélanges (German/Danish, English/Danish) in the period from the early twentieth century up until today, demonstrating the deeply complex nature of hybridity within this field – involving, for example, the frequent co-presence in Danish charts of original artists singing in English and Danish artists singing the same songs in English or Danish (with original or translated lyrics). Anglophone dominance within popular music and code-switching between a Scandinavian language and English is also the topic of chapter 10. Here, Annjo K. Greenall shows how the use of code-switching in Norwegian song lyrics has evolved from its early emergence in the 1960s up until today, relating these developments to changes in the status and role of the English language in Norway during the same period. Greenall analyses a number of lyrics, showing that while the earliest instances of code-switching are sparse, with English insertions first and foremost playing a role as part of the narrative, later examples show English serving more of a text-structuring and/or identity-building function, with artists aiming to connect with audiences both intranationally and internationally. In chapter 11, Anne Karine Kleveland continues the focus on song lyrics. However, in this study, the lyrics are not embedded in a socio-musical context, but in a literary one. Kleveland shows that song lyrics (real-life or made up, translated or untranslated) in the prose fiction of Norwegian author Kjartan Fløgstad often punctuate the text, causing cultural and linguistic compositeness. English is the most frequent language inserted, but other languages, such as Spanish, German and French, are also represented. Kleveland shows how these insertions contribute to Fløgstad's literary language in causing high semantic density, providing a ludic element, and creating an overall estranging style that forces a specific kind of reading, perhaps