

**Piotr Gwiazda**

**"Ghosts and Anchors: Translingualism in Contemporary U.S. Poetry"**

**ABSTRACT**

This lecture considers translingualism as a distinct category of multilingualism, “a significant political-aesthetic formation in U.S. literature” (Juliana Spahr). When practiced by poets who are first- or second-generation immigrants to America, “codeswitching” often becomes “code-stitching,” as Jahan Ramazani argues, as it attempts to bring together languages and cultures through an assortment of formal and verbal effects. However, in poems like Eduardo C. Corral’s “In Colorado My Father Scoured and Stacked Dishes,” Cathy Park Hong’s “All the Aphrodisiacs,” and poetic sequences like Mark Nowak’s “The Pain-Dance Begins” (from his book *Revenants*) such fusions are not easily attained. While they express and document the legacies of migration, these poems insist on the incompatibility of languages and cultures, with non-English elements (Spanish, Korean, Polish) marking spaces of conflict rather than contact. Through disruption and dissonance, they capture languages themselves in the not always completed process of migration. Translingualism in contemporary U.S. poetry is essentially a creative experiment; the prefix “trans” implies a dynamic but strained relationship with the medium.

**BIO**

Piotr Gwiazda is Professor of English at the University of Pittsburgh. He is the author of two critical studies, *US Poetry in the Age of Empire* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2014) and *James Merrill and W.H. Auden* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2007). His articles and reviews have appeared in many



journals, including *Asymptote*, *Chicago Review*, *Contemporary Literature*, *Jacket2*, *Journal of European Studies*, *Modern Philology*, *Modernism/Modernity*, *PN Review*, *Postmodern Culture*, the *TLS*, and *XCP: Cross Cultural Poetics*. Professor Gwiazda has translated into English two books by Grzegorz Wróblewski, *Zero Visibility* (Phoneme Media, 2017) and *Kopenhaga* (Zephyr Press, 2013). He has also published three volumes of poetry: *Aspects of Strangers* (Moria Books, 2015), *Messages: Poems & Interview* (Pond Road Press, 2012), and *Gagarin Street* (Washington Writers’ Publishing

House, 2005). His poems in Polish translation appear in Borussia, FA-art, Fraza, Helikopter, Odra, minimalbooks and Przewodnik po zaminowanym terenie.