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Functions and ethical Implications of ‘reverse Appropriation’ as heterolingual Strategy in P.F. Thomése’s *Izak* (2005) and Koen Peeters’ *Duizend Heuvels* (2012)

Heterolingualism, defined by Rainier Grutman (1997/2019) as the presence of foreign languages in the main language of a text, can often be observed in postcolonial literary texts. Indeed, according to Ashcroft et al. (1989/2002: 37), the postcolonial textual strategy of ‘appropriation’ brings imperial languages ‘under the influence of a vernacular tongue’ in order to subvert the former colonial power by the hybridization of its language. In the contemporary novels *Izak* (Thomése 2005) and *Duizend Heuvels* (Peeters 2012), both paratextually qualified as ‘intercultural’, a what I call ‘reverse appropriation’ takes place: Thomése and Peeters, born and bred in the former colonizing countries of The Netherlands and Belgium respectively, interweave the novels’ main language Dutch with vernaculars from the former colonized countries Indonesia and Rwanda. So far, such a ‘reverse appropriation’ has not been analysed as a heterolingual strategy in Dutch intercultural novels. I will therefore assess the forms and functions of this heterolingual strategy, drawing on the taxonomies by Radaelli (2012 & 2014), Suchet (2014) and Blum-Barth (2021). According to those, the embedded languages in a text can be obviously distinguished from the main language on the one extreme, or almost invisibly blend in with it on the other extreme. As the alterity of other languages in literary texts is not a given, but a discursive construction (Suchet 75), I will examine to what extent both novels’ ‘discursive mechanisms’ (Suchet 77-110) enhance or diminish the alterity of the featured vernaculars in relation to Dutch and to what extent a ‘reverse appropriation’ occurs. Furthermore, assuming that the way in which the vernaculars are staged in the text corresponds to the way the related cultures are viewed, I will gauge the ethical implications of ‘reverse appropriation’ induced by heterolingual strategies in the light of recent decolonial debates in Belgium and the Netherlands.

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