



CONFETTI

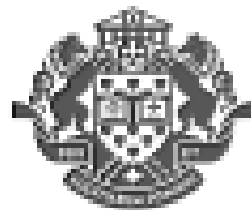
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et cultures du monde**

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Cultures Journal**

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CONFETTI

Un journal de littératures et cultures du monde
A World Literatures and Cultures Journal



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BIENVENUE/WELCOME

We are already celebrating the second issue of *Confetti*, created by another very talented cohort of students in the Masters program in World Literatures and Cultures. This is a wonderful sign of the vitality of the program and the intellectual energy of its participants.

La Maîtrise est un programme d'études interdisciplinaire et bilingue en sciences humaine qui offre une formation centrée sur la recherche et l'évaluation des formes de contacts, de relations, et d'échanges multiculturels, interculturels et transculturels. The students in the program and the faculty members involved with it come from a broad range of academic disciplines and cultural backgrounds. Our shared passion for studying cultural expressions from around the world complements our immense diversity of approaches, and this combination leads to exciting and often unexpected synergies. Dans l'atmosphère intime de nos séminaires, nous apprenons les un(e)s des autres et nous nous posons des défis intellectuels et mutuels. In one short year, the faculty and student members of the program get to know and collaborate with each other in the development of the students' individual research programs, and some of the fruits of that labour are presented here.

So let's bring out the multicoloured stuff that the journal takes its carnivalesque name from and let's celebrate and congratulate the authors and editors of this excellent endeavour.

Joerg Esleben
Directeur du département
Department Chair

Ce deuxième numéro du journal, tout comme le numéro inaugural publié en 2015, est entièrement le résultat du travail fort et dédié des étudiantes de la Maîtrise ès arts en littératures et cultures du monde / MA in World Literatures and Cultures, un programme unique au Canada : bilingue, interdisciplinaire et dynamique. It is my honour and great pleasure as program director to write a few introductory remarks to this exciting second volume of *Confetti*, created entirely by our students, which brings together works that encompass different critical approaches and methodologies to analyze a variety of narrative expressions, from poetry and novels to film and lesser-used languages. Ce volume est organisé selon deux axes thématiques qui expriment bien les sujets étudiés au sein de nos séminaires : *Transition and Transposition / Traduction et Transposition* et *Power and Desire / Désir et Pouvoir*.

The first part, *Transition and Transposition / Traduction et Transposition* consists of five papers. Dans « Pendant que... », Line Bissonnette présente les défis de l'adaptation en français canadien d'un sonnet par le célèbre poète baroque espagnol Don Luis de Góngora y de Argote. The following paper, “*Twenty Sonnets to Mary Queen of Scots: Eternity, Death, and Parallels Between Joseph Brodsky and Mary Queen of Scots*” by Alessandra Leake also explores poetry and its translation(s), this time by Russian American Nobel laureate in literature Joseph Brodsky who lived between cultures and languages. Myriem Nadia Sahouli in “A Self Multiplied: Culture and Identity in Relation to Place in Zadie Smith’s *White Teeth* and Salman Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children*” looks at transculturality, hybridity and transgenerational memory in two different postcolonial contexts as expressed in the two novels. L’oeuvre de Joseph Brodsky est à nouveau examinée par Violène Dauvois dans « AQUA VITAE, AQUA MORTIS : Le système

atemporel de l'eau dans l'œuvre *Watermark* de Joseph Brodsky ». Le dernier chapitre de cette première section, “La représentation spatio-temporel d'un Berlin mélancolique dans *Les Ailes du désir*” par Marie-Catherine Allard nous emmène vers un autre genre : le cinéma, et le contexte culturel allemand.

The second section, *Power and Desire / Désir et Pouvoir* comprises three chapters. Narayanamoorthy Nanditha in “It's Official: Maori - The 'Indigenous' Official Language of New Zealand” looks at the important project of the Maori language revitalization. From New Zealand, we are taken to Japanese post-war society as explored by Ren Ziyue in the work of another Nobel Prize laureate, “Father, Where Are You Going: The Image of Father in Ōe Kenzaburo's Short Stories”. The concluding chapter by Alicia Niemann, “An 'Innocent' Desire: Food in Günter Grass's *The Tin Drum*”, offers a multilayered analysis of the German Nobel literature laureate's world famous novel.

En somme, on trouve ici une riche collection des expressions culturelles variées à travers du monde. In the name of the professors who have taught and supervised these creative and dedicated students, I would like to extend my sincere congratulations to the editors and the contributors.

Agatha Schwartz
Directrice, Maîtrise ès arts en littératures et cultures du monde
Director, Master of Arts in World Literatures and Cultures

Transition and Transposition / Traduction et Transposition

« Pendant que... »

Par Line C. Bissonnette

Résumé:

Don Luis de Góngora y de Argote, poète espagnol, a laissé en héritage au monde littéraire espagnol et aux littératures du monde en général, une œuvre marquante d'une importance majeure. Créateur du « gongorisme » à l'époque du baroque, Góngora se distingue par les difficultés qu'il pose sur le plan stylistique et au niveau de la compréhension, un style souvent qualifié d'obscur. Les jeux de mots ou calembours, les successions de concepts, d'antithèses, d'hyperboles, d'allusions mythologiques, de cultismes, de références humoristiques et de métaphores abondent dans l'œuvre gongorine, une œuvre qui ne peut être aimée par tous puisqu'elle nécessite de ses lecteurs certaines connaissances, en d'autres mots, une certaine culture.

Dans l'article qui suit, nous proposons d'adapter en français canadien contemporain le magnifique sonnet « Mientras por compatir con tu cabello » dans le but de le faire lire et apprécier par une génération bien spécifique, soit la génération jeunesse des 13 à 19 ans. Nous croyons qu'il est primordial que cette génération soit exposée au génie et à la poésie gongorins. Trouver une façon de vulgariser l'œuvre du grand poète espagnol est une façon de lui rendre hommage à l'approche des célébrations qui marqueront dans une dizaine d'années les 400 ans de sa mort. Mais, c'est d'abord et avant tout un moyen de faire connaître sa poésie aux jeunes d'aujourd'hui, qui, nous pourrions croire, portent plus d'intérêt et d'attention aux nouvelles technologies qu'à la poésie baroque espagnole. Adapter Góngora représente donc un défi à relever.

Mots-Clés: Góngora, poésie baroque, traduction, français canadien, adaptation, vulgarisation

Pourquoi ce sonnet?

À sa mort en 1627, Don Luis de Góngora y de Argote, âgé de 66 ans, a laissé en héritage, au monde littéraire espagnol et aux littératures du monde en général, une œuvre marquante d'une importance majeure. Lorsque nous nous référons à l'époque du

baroque¹ en général, et plus particulièrement au mouvement qui prit forme en Espagne, le nom de Góngora apparaît sans équivoque dans la majorité des écrits sur le sujet.

Inventé par Góngora, le gongorisme est synonyme de « préciosité »², c'est-à-dire un style qui s'adresse à un public cible et, de préférence, cultivé. Ce style est à la base même de l'œuvre gongorine. Celui-ci se distingue par les difficultés qu'il pose sur le plan stylistique et au niveau de la compréhension, un style souvent qualifié d'obscur. Dámaso Alonso, un fervent critique de Góngora, décrit sa poésie de la façon suivante : « Toda la poesía no es más que una sucesión de ingeniosidades, conceptos, antítesis, hipérboles, alusiones a adagios, alusiones mitológicas, cultismos, notas de humor, etc.; y toda ella está expresada en un lenguaje casi exclusivamente metafórico. » (Alonso cité par Gornall – 312). En résumé, cela signifie que les jeux de mots ou calembours abondent chez Góngora sans compter le « jeu d'esprit » (Gornall– 314), les successions de concepts, d'antithèses, d'hyperboles, d'allusions mythologiques, de cultismes, de références humoristiques et de métaphores. Figure privilégiée de Góngora, les métaphores sont présentes dans toute son œuvre, des premiers sonnets aux Solitudes³, son œuvre magistrale. L'œuvre gongorine est donc une œuvre qui ne peut être aimée par tous puisqu'elle nécessite de ses lecteurs certaines connaissances, en d'autres mots, une certaine culture.

¹Définition tirée du Petit Robert 1 : qui est d'une irrégularité bizarre. Se dit d'un style qui s'est développé aux XVI^e, XVII^e et XVIII^e s. d'abord en Italie, puis dans de nombreux pays catholiques, caractérisé par la liberté des formes et la profusion des ornements.

²Définition tirée du Petit Robert 1 : (1842; de Góngora, poète espagnol, 1561-1627). Préciosité, recherche dans le style (abus des images, des métaphores, etc.)

³Tiré de l'Encyclopédie Universalis : Des quatre poèmes qui devaient constituer l'ensemble des Solitudes, Góngora (1561-1627) ne composa que le premier, en 1612 (1 091 vers), évoquant la campagne, et, en 1617, une grande partie du second (979 vers), célébrant les rivages. Les poèmes suivants devaient faire apparaître les forêts et le désert.

C'est au tout début de la vingtaine, et deux ans après avoir terminé ses études à l'Université de Salamanque, que Góngora compose le sonnet amoureux « Mientras por competir con tu cabello »⁴. Nigel Griffin décrit cette période de la vie de Góngora de la façon suivante : « ... he had gone to Salamanca and there had a brilliant and carefree university career, distinguishing himself for his precocious learning, his ability with words, his capacity for getting through money, and, it seems, his tendency to fall in and out of love...Now, at this time, Góngora seems to have had no religious vocation. » (Griffin – 845). Ce sonnet, non titré comme pour la plupart des poèmes de l'époque, fait l'objet du présent travail. « Mientras »⁵ est cité dans pratiquement toutes les anthologies espagnoles comme l'un des poèmes amoureux gongorins les plus populaires. Il reprend des thèmes baroques communs tels que le *carpe diem*⁶, la jeunesse qui passe, la vieillesse qui s'installe, puis, la mort, le « nada »⁷.

Dans le travail qui suit, nous tenterons d'adapter en français canadien contemporain le magnifique sonnet « Mientras » dans le but de le faire lire et apprécier par une génération bien spécifique, soit la génération jeunesse des 13 à 19 ans. Nous croyons qu'il est primordial que cette génération soit exposée au génie et à la poésie gongorins. Trouver une façon de vulgariser l'œuvre du grand poète espagnol est une façon de lui rendre hommage à l'approche des célébrations qui marqueront dans une dizaine d'années les 400 ans de sa mort. Mais, c'est d'abord et avant tout un moyen de faire connaître sa poésie aux jeunes d'aujourd'hui, qui, nous pourrions croire, portent

⁴Le sonnet n'est pas titré. Nous allons donc utiliser le premier vers du sonnet « Mientras por competir con tu cabello » pour y référer.

⁵Nous utiliserons parfois le mot « Mientras » tout court pour référer au sonnet dans le but d'alléger le texte.

⁶Tiré du Merriam-Webster : the enjoyment of the pleasures of the moment without concern for the future.

⁷Mot espagnol qui signifie « rien », « néant ».

plus d'intérêt et d'attention aux nouvelles technologies qu'à la poésie baroque espagnole. Adapter Góngora représente donc pour ce travail, un défi à relever.

Survол de la vie de Góngora pour mieux comprendre sa poésie

Pour mieux comprendre et apprécier l'œuvre d'un écrivain, il est utile d'acquérir quelques connaissances sur sa vie, de connaître son cheminement et son école de pensée. Ne souhaitant pas répéter le premier exposé fait en classe, nous tenons tout de même à souligner quelques moments charniers de la vie de Góngora qui, à notre avis, ont contribué à le définir comme homme et poète.

À Cordoue, ville andalouse de sa naissance et de sa mort, Góngora est exposé, dès son jeune âge, aux esprits éclairés puisque ses parents (son père est un juge des biens confisqués par l'Inquisition⁸) accueillent dans leur foyer les intellectuels de la ville. Sa famille est de bonne lignée et sa maison est située tout près de la mosquée des Califes, l'actuelle cathédrale de Cordoue, soit un joyau de la ville. Cordoue aura une influence importante sur sa vie puisqu'il composera un sonnet en son honneur. Il grandit entouré de deux frères et d'une sœur.

À neuf ans, Góngora rencontre le roi Philippe II en visite à Cordoue. On dit que cette rencontre n'aura eu aucun impact significatif dans la vie de l'enfant. Il poursuit son éducation primaire au Collège des Jésuites jusqu'à ce qu'il soit accepté, à l'âge de 15 ans, à l'Université de Salamanque en droit canonique. Même à cette époque, les études

⁸Tiré du Petit Robert 1 : (1260) Tribunal de l'Inquisition; juridiction ecclésiastique d'exception instituée par le pape Grégoire IX pour la répression, dans toute la chrétienté, des crimes d'hérésie et d'apostasie, des faits de sorcellerie et de magie.

universitaires sont dispendieuses et c'est son oncle maternel, Francisco de Góngora, qui contribue financièrement à son éducation. Il participe alors à des joutes littéraires, sorte de tournois, où son esprit triomphe à tout coup. De plus, on dit qu'il était un joueur de cartes redoutable. Il démontre nettement un intérêt plus marqué pour les belles lettres plutôt que le droit. On dénote chez lui la recherche constante du mot savant et une inclination personnelle à la poésie savante et difficile. « Il acquiert dans les cercles littéraires et aristocratiques de Salamanque une réputation d'excellent poète; il écrit alors des sonnets pétrarquaisants⁹ et des pièces en mètres courts qu'on appelle en espagnol des « letrillas » et « romances ». (Sesé - 141). Miguel Artigas, un critique, dira de son séjour à l'Université de Salamanque ce qui suit : « Libre et sans souci, au service de l'amour et de la poésie à quoi l'inclinait sa nature, il laisse couler sans emploi sérieux ses jeunes années. » (Artigas cité dans Darmangeat – 37).

À la fin de ses études universitaires, il revient à Cordoue et devient prébendier¹⁰ de la cathédrale, une charge qu'occupait son oncle et que ce dernier lui lègue. Il s'acquitte si bien de ses nouvelles tâches qu'on lui confie des missions. Pendant ses voyages, il écrit plusieurs poésies. « Les multiples observations et expériences dues à ces déplacements alimenteront l'inspiration satirique, comique, tragique ou lyrique du

⁹Tiré de l'Encyclopédie Universalis : L'adjectif pétrarquaisant fait référence à Francesco Petrarca ou en français Pétrarque. Définition : Père de la poésie moderne et de la culture humaniste, auteur en langue vulgaire de cet immortel Canzoniere (Rerumvulgarium fragmenta), qui a suscité des foules d'imitateurs en Italie et dans toute l'Europe et qui a marqué la poésie amoureuse en Occident jusqu'au romantisme et au-delà, et d'une œuvre en latin, impressionnante par sa masse et qui, de son temps, lui valut la couronne de laurier et la gloire, Pétrarque se présente comme une sorte de Janus regardant à la fois vers le passé et vers l'avenir, l'Antiquité et la chrétienté, la frivolité et le recueillement, le lyrisme et l'érudition, la turbulence et le repos, l'intérieur et l'extérieur.

¹⁰Définition tirée du Petit Robert 1 : prébendier : ecclésiastique servant au chœur au-dessous des chanoines.

poète. » (Sesé – 141). Si les voyages forment la jeunesse¹¹ comme le prétendait le grand philosophe français Montaigne, dans le cas de Góngora, on peut dire que les voyages forment sa poésie. Un nouvel évêque du nom de Francesco Pacheco ouvre une enquête sur son comportement et l'accuse de ne pas vaquer à ses occupations comme il le devrait, de parler quand le silence est de mise, de se joindre à des groupes, d'assister à des combats de taureaux, de s'occuper de choses frivoles, de fréquenter des acteurs et enfin d'écrire des vers profanes. (Darmangeat – 38). À partir de ces accusations, Góngora riposte. Grâce à son intelligence, à sa rapidité d'esprit et à son sens de l'humour, caractéristique andalouse, il triomphe. Il est « prompt à la riposte, enjoué, libre de propos, de mœurs plaisantes, mais non point scandaleuses dans une société plutôt relâchée, sympathique d'ailleurs à son entourage et à ses pairs. » (Darmangeat – 39). L'évêque finira par lui interdire d'aller aux courses de taureaux... En 1593, soit une dizaine d'années après ses études universitaires pour lesquelles il n'obtient aucun diplôme, il retourne à Salamanque par affaires où il rencontre Lope de Vega, un autre grand écrivain espagnol de l'époque. Malheureusement, aucun lien ne s'établit entre les deux hommes. Ils deviennent, on pourrait dire, des adversaires et leurs polémiques furent nombreuses. Góngora fait également connaissance d'un autre poète espagnol, Quevedo, avec lequel il n'aura, comme pour de Vega, aucune affinité. En 1603, il passe un long séjour à la Cour qui est installée à Valladolid où il trouve de l'inspiration pour ses compositions

¹¹Tiré du Larousse : proverbe attribué à Michel de Montaigne. Définition : Écrivain français (château de Montaigne, aujourd'hui commune de Saint-Michel-de-Montaigne, Dordogne, 1533-id. 1592). Né dans un siècle politiquement troublé, Michel de Montaigne consacra la plus grande partie de sa vie à la rédaction de ses Essais, sans cesse remaniés, dans lesquels, tout en se peignant lui-même, il s'attacha à démontrer la faiblesse de la raison humaine et à fonder l'art de vivre sur une sagesse prudente, faite de bon sens et de tolérance. Ni stoïcien, ni épicurien, ni même sceptique pur, Montaigne ne se réfère aux grandes doctrines de l'Antiquité que pour jouer en définitive des unes contre les autres en une forme ouverte et dialogique, qui rend possible l'émergence d'une libre parole d'auteur.

poétiques. (Sesé - 142). De retour à Cordoue, il écrit en 1604 une série de compositions à caractère religieux et populaire. Ses voyages se poursuivent. Entre 1612 et 1614, Góngora écrit trois œuvres marquantes de la poésie espagnole : Polyphème, la Première Solitude et la Seconde Solitude. Initialement, il avait songé à écrire un cycle de quatre chants ou quatre Solitudes, qui seraient consacrés « à la solitude des champs, des rivages, des forêts et du désert; seul le premier chant (1091 vers) et une partie du second (979 vers) furent achevés ». (Sesé - 143). Les troisième et quatrième ne seront jamais rédigés. Ses œuvres sont présentées à la Cour et le scandale éclate « départageant adversaires et admirateurs du poète; partisans du *cultisme* ou partisans du *conceptisme*. La dispute est passionnée dans les deux camps. » (Sesé – 143).

En 1617, à l'âge de 56 ans, il est ordonné prêtre. Il fait face à des difficultés financières, son salaire de chapelain ne suffisant pas à combler ses besoins et ne répondant pas à la qualité de vie à laquelle il est habitué. Il est toujours à court d'argent, emprunte et finit par exaspérer ses amis. Il est à l'image même de l'époque, un homme baroque puisqu'il vit constamment entre « l'espoir et l'angoisse, priant et quémendant » (Darmangeat – 49). Faute d'argent, il doit renoncer à certaines missions, dont des voyages en compagnie du roi. C'est à ce moment-là qu'un projet d'édition des poésies prend forme. Cependant, insoucieux face à la possibilité de voir ses œuvres imprimées, Góngora ne conserve aucune copie originale de ses écrits. L'hostilité de ses ennemis ne cesse pas. (Sesé - 145). Il est éventuellement expulsé de sa maison par un nouvel acquéreur, nul autre que Quevedo lui-même, cet ennemi juré de Góngora qui qualifia son œuvre de « jargongora » (Darmangeat – 77), terme qui fait référence au mot jargon. La maladie le frappe et il retourne à sa ville d'origine où il s'éteint en 1627.

En faisant ce survol de la vie de Góngora, nous pouvons d’ores et déjà tracer un parallèle entre sa vie et son œuvre. En fait, mieux qu’un parallèle, nous pouvons faire l’analogie suivante. Sa vie ressemble étrangement à la structure de son sonnet baroque « *Mientras* ». D’abord, les deux premiers quatrains de sa vie, soit son enfance, son adolescence et sa vie de jeune adulte, sont essentiellement synonymes de joie de vivre, de beauté, de confort et de jeunesse. En opposition, les deux derniers tercets de son existence, soit à partir du moment où il décide de joindre les ordres en partie pour s’assurer une protection financière, se résument à une série d’événements menant peu à peu à la déchéance, la maladie, la perte de prestige et, finalement, la mort, le nada.

*Analyse littéraire et comparative du sonnet « **Mientras por competir con tu cabello** » et du sonnet « **Soneto XXIII** »*

La section qui suit cherchera à analyser le poème « *Mientras* » d’un point de vue structurel, thématique et comparatif. Avant de procéder à cette étape, il serait sage de prendre connaissance du sonnet. Il importe de le lire et de le relire plusieurs fois, d’abord intérieurement, puis à voix haute, dans sa version originale, peu importe si on possède ou pas une connaissance de la langue espagnole. Cet exercice permet d’acquérir un sens de la rime, du rythme et de la musicalité du poème. Par la suite, il est possible de consulter l’annexe I qui contient deux versions du sonnet traduites vers le français aux fins de compréhension pour le lectorat non hispanophone. La première traduction remonte à 1964 et la seconde à 1980.

- | | |
|--|----------|
| 1 Mientras por competir con tu cabello | A |
| 2 Oro bruñido al sol relumbra en yano , | B |
| 3 Mientras con menosprecio en medio el llano | B |
| 4 Mira tu blanca frente al lilio bello ; | A |

- | | |
|--|---|
| 5 Mientras a cada labio , por cogello , | A |
| 6 Siguen más ojos que al clavel temprano , | B |
| 7 Y mientras triunfa con desdén lozano | B |
| 8 Del luciente crystal tu gentil cuello , | A |
| 9 Goza cuello , cabello , labio y frente , | C |
| 10 Antes que lo que fue en tu edad dorada | D |
| 11 Oro , lilio , clavel , crystal luciente , | C |
| 12 No sólo en plata o viola troncada | D |
| 13 Se vuelva, más tú y ello juntamente . | C |
| 14 En tierra , en humo , en polvo , en sombra , en nada . | D |

« Mientras » compte parmi les sonnets gongorins les plus populaires. Il respecte la structure traditionnelle du sonnet. Il contient 14 hendécasyllabes, c'est-à-dire 14 vers de 11 syllabes chacun; deux quatrains, soit deux strophes de quatre vers chacun et deux tercets, c'est-à-dire deux strophes de trois vers chacun. Le huitain (*octet* en anglais), c'est-à-dire les deux quatrains, présente la situation ou la question et le *sestet* (terme anglais), c'est-à-dire les deux tercets, la solution ou la conclusion.

Les quatrains ont des rimes embrassées (ABBA) et les tercets, des rimes croisées (CDC, DCD). Dans la poésie espagnole, la rime est très importante et on y porte une attention particulière : « La versification espagnole est fondée sur la rime, et l'accent tonique appliqué à un nombre déterminé de syllabes. La sonorité des vers espagnols est particulièrement remarquable, elle tient à la force de l'accentuation et à l'éclat particulier des voyelles de cette langue, qui ne connaît pas de muettes. » (Imago Mundi – 8). La répétition du mot *Mientras*, une locution conjonctive de temps qui marque l'opposition dans la simultanéité, est utilisée pour renforcer l'idée du temps, la notion du temps qui file. À la lecture du poème, on entend une certaine musicalité, un certain rythme. Plusieurs mots sont des attributs féminins, d'autres des attributs de la nature.

Les thèmes soulevés dans « Mientras » sont le reflet des thèmes du baroque. Dans son sonnet, Góngora s'adresse à une jeune femme. Il la prévient que la beauté, la jeunesse ne sont qu'éphémères. Il l'incite à profiter de la vie, reprenant ainsi le thème du *carpe diem*, avant que la vieillesse et, ultimement, la Grande Faucheuse¹² vienne la visiter. À ces égards, il est juste d'affirmer que Góngora reprend un thème classique de la littérature. Un thème exploité par plusieurs grands écrivains avant lui dont un compatriote espagnol, Garcilaso de la Vega¹³, de qui Góngora aurait, semble-t-il, eu son inspiration. Certaines critiques affirment qu'il aurait non seulement imité de la Vega, mais également d'éminents écrivains tels que Francesco Petrarca (Pétrarque), Bernardo Tasso et Luigi Groto, deux poètes italiens célèbres des années 1500. (Fucilla – 45). Cependant, « l'originalité de Góngora est d'outrepasser le langage, qui n'est plus seulement chez lui le matériau de l'imitation, mais le modèle profond du poème. »(Molho – 98).

En examinant soigneusement le Soneto XXIII de de la Vega, nous y notons des similarités avec le sonnet gongorin « Mientras ». Dans « Soneto », de la Vega attache une attention particulière à la beauté de la femme. En fait, la beauté féminine surpasse celle de la nature.

Lecture du sonnet « Soneto XXIII » :

1	En tanto que de rosa y azucena	A
2	se muestra la color en vuestro gesto ,	B
3	y que vuestro mirar ardiente, honesto ,	B
4	enciende al corazón y lo refrena ;	A
5	y en tanto que el cabello , que en la vena	A
6	del oro se escogió, con vuelo presto ,	B
7	por el hermoso cuello blanco, enhiesto ,	B
8	el viento mueve, esparce y desordena :	A
9	coged de vuestra alegre primavera	C

¹²Tiré du Petit Robert 1 : La Faucheuse : la Mort.

¹³Garcilaso de la Vega vécu de 1501-1536. Son œuvre a donc précédée celle de Góngora.

10 el dulce fruto , antes que el tiempo airado	D
11 cubra de nieve la hermosa cumbre ;	E
12 marchitará la rosa el viento helado .	D
13 Todo lo mudará la edad ligera	C
14 por no hacer mudanza en su costumbre .	E

Le Soneto XXIII est composé de 14 hendécasyllabes de 11 syllabes chacun. Les huit premiers vers forment les deux quatrains et les six derniers vers, les deux tercets. Les rimes suivent le schéma suivant : ABBA, ABBA, CDE, DCE. En comparant le sonnet de la Vega à celui de Góngora, nous nous rendons bien à l'évidence que non seulement le thème du sonnet est le même dans les deux œuvres poétiques, mais également leur structure. Il existe une légère variante dans la rime au niveau des tercets. Chez Góngora, les rimes sont comme suit : CDC, DCD; chez de la Vega, elles suivent le modèle CDE, DCE. De la Vega ayant écrit son sonnet bien avant Góngora, nous pouvons conclure que le poète andalou a bien imité son compatriote espagnol dans le but, bien entendu, de lui rendre hommage en reprenant son travail et en le rendant meilleur. Il en revient toutefois au lecteur d'en tirer sa propre conclusion. Pour faire une lecture parallèle des deux sonnets dans leur version originale, référez-vous à l'annexe 2. Pour lire des traductions françaises des sonnets, consultez l'annexe 3.

Une brève étude comparative des deux sonnets nous permet de déceler plusieurs similitudes dont en voici l'énumération. Les locutions conjonctives de temps, notamment « mientras » et « en tanto », sont utilisées par les deux auteurs; Góngora l'utilise à quatre reprises et de la Vega à deux endroits. Les attributs féminins dans « Mientras » et dans « Soneto » abondent. On notera chez Góngora les attributs suivants : cabello (cheveux), frente (front), labio (lèvre) et cuello (cou). Chez de la Vega, on y retrouve ceux-ci : gesto (visage), corazón (cœur), cabello (cheveux) et cuello (cou). Les attributs de la nature sont

tout aussi présents dans les deux œuvres. Dans « Mientras », on notera : sol (soleil), llano (plaine), lilio (lis), clavel (œillet), cristal (cristal), oro (or), plata (argent), viola (violette), tierra (terre), humo (fumée), polvo (poussière) et sombra (ombre). Pour sa part, de la Vega met en vedette les éléments suivants : rosa (rose), azucena (autre mot qui signifie lis), oro (or), viento (vent), primavera (printemps), fruto (fruit) et nieve (neige). Dans les deux sonnets, les attributs retrouvés dans les premiers quatrains sont entièrement opposés aux attributs présents dans les deux tercets. L'opposition ou le contraste, nous le rappelons, est l'une des caractéristiques principales du baroque.

Doit-on conclure ici qu'il s'agit d'intertextualité¹⁴ puisque les thèmes sont similaires entre les deux poèmes? Góngora a-t-il imité de la Vega ou s'en est-il inspiré? Il est important de se rappeler qu'une des caractéristiques des poètes de la Renaissance était d'imiter d'autres poètes. On mesurait l'originalité du poète à sa capacité de choisir de bons modèles d'inspiration. Imiter les anciens reconnus comme Horace et Pétrarque était synonyme d'un bon poète. Éventuellement, on incite les poètes à surpasser les anciens avec leurs écrits. C'est dans le but d'imiter et de surpasser le sonnet de de la Vega que Góngora a écrit « Mientras ». Il s'y prend de deux façons. D'abord, en exploitant le même thème, puis en utilisant les mêmes images.

Traduction du sonnet « Mientras » et méthodologie choisie

¹⁴ Tiré de l'Encyclopédie Universalis : Théorie de l'intertextualité : Né du grand renouvellement de la pensée critique au cours des années soixante, le concept d'intertextualité est aujourd'hui un des principaux outils critiques dans les études littéraires. Sa fonction est l'élucidation du processus par lequel tout texte peut se lire comme l'intégration et la transformation d'un ou de plusieurs autres textes. Mais, en un quart de siècle, ce concept a suscité beaucoup de controverses et ne s'est finalement imposé qu'après plusieurs refontes définitionnelles. Pour comprendre toute son importance, il importe donc de suivre cette évolution pas à pas.

La raison principale pour laquelle nous avons choisi d'adapter le sonnet « Mientras » plutôt que de le traduire mot pour mot est d'abord et avant tout pour démystifier le baroque et Góngora, puis trouver une façon de vulgariser l'époque et le poète. Nous avons choisi le français canadien contemporain afin de rendre accessible le sonnet et de transmettre aux générations futures, en particulier la génération visée par ce travail les 13 à 19 ans, le goût de la poésie. En faisant ce choix, nous avons délibérément éliminé la rime, procédé si cher au cœur des Espagnols. Nous avons choisi d'adapter le sonnet en vers libres, c'est-à-dire de ne pas suivre le décompte des syllabes et la disposition de la rime. D'abord rédigé en prose, nous avons pris en considération les commentaires reçus en classe qui suggéraient de faire des « retours de chariot » afin de faciliter la lecture de l'adaptation. Ce conseil a porté fruit puisqu'en nous prêtant à cet exercice, nous nous sommes rendu compte qu'il y avait 14 vers libres, un clin d'œil au sonnet traditionnel.

Nous avons accordé de l'importance au rythme, à la musicalité, au sens profond et au message transmis pour respecter la version originale. Nous vous invitons à faire comme précédemment et à lire et à relire, d'abord intérieurement puis à voix haute, l'adaptation ci-dessous. Nous poursuivrons par la suite avec la justification de l'adaptation.

Pendant que...

- 1** **Pendant que l'astre d'or**, en vain, étincelle ta **chevelure**,
- 2 pendant qu'au milieu de la plaine, avec dédain, ton front de **lait** caresse le lis,
- 3 pendant que plus d'yeux cherchent tes lèvres au lieu des œillets printaniers et,
4 pendant que ton long **cou** surpasse de loin le cristal luisant,
- 5 profite bien** de la **fraîcheur** de ton **cou**,
- 6 de la beauté de ta **chevelure**,
- 7 de tes lèvres et de ton front avant que ne **disparaisse ta jeunesse**,
- 8 l'or, le lis, l'œillet et le cristal**,
- 9 et **qu'argentés ils deviennent** comme la violette **défraîchie**,

10 et **toi**,
11 **tu** deviendras,
12 **poussière sous terre**,
13 qu'une **ombre de fumée**,
14 **nada**.

Titre : nous avons choisi de donner un titre à cette adaptation. En utilisant la locution conjonctive de temps « Pendant que » suivie de trois points de suspension, nous avons voulu mettre l'accent sur le temps et sur l'inévitable qui nous attend.

Pendant que : Fidèles au texte de Góngora, nous avons répété cette locution à quatre reprises dans le texte. L'ajout de la locution dans le titre vient renforcer l'idée du temps. Contrairement aux deux traductions du sonnet « Mientras » qui ont choisi la locution conjonctive de temps « Tandis que » (voir l'annexe 1), nous avons préféré choisir la locution « Pendant que » parce qu'elle nous rappelle davantage l'idée du mouvement. En effet, nous voyons une étroite comparaison entre cette locution et une pendule. La pendule de l'horloge ou le balancier fait tic-tac. Cette motion, ce mouvement, nous rappelle le baroque et ses thèmes principaux de temps qui passe avec le « tic » et de la mort qui pourrait bien frapper au prochain « tac ». L'utilisation de la locution « Pendant que » nous rappelle également les pendants d'oreilles, appelés plus communément de nos jours boucles d'oreilles, qui servent à parer la femme, la rendre plus belle et désirable. Avec la répétition de « Pendant que », nous ressentons nettement l'idée du mouvement, du temps qui file. Nous y entendons même une certaine musicalité et nous oserions même dire qu'on y entend presque une chanson.

Astre d'or : nous avons choisi ces mots plutôt que le mot soleil parce que cette unité terminologique nous apparaissait plus poétique et puissante. Elle reprend aussi l'idée de l'or que l'on trouve au vers libre 8.

Chevelure : nous avons choisi le mot chevelure plutôt que cheveux parce que chevelure signifie l'ensemble des cheveux. En fait de musicalité, le mot chevelure dégage une sensualité étroitement associée à la beauté de la femme et à sa féminité. La sensualité est à la base même des sonnets amoureux du baroque. C'est un terme beaucoup plus poétique. Baudelaire a d'ailleurs intitulé un de ses poèmes « La chevelure ».¹⁵

Lait : nous avons ajouté cet élément dans l'adaptation parce que nous croyons que le lait, qui reprend le mot « blanca » dans le sonnet original, est étroitement relié à la beauté de la femme. D'ailleurs, Cléopâtre prenait des bains de lait pour adoucir sa peau et la conserver jeune. De nos jours, on retrouve du lait dans plusieurs produits cosmétiques.

Profite bien : le vers libre 5 débute avec un genre d'avertissement. Nous allons droit au but et disons à la lectrice de bien « cueillir le jour » et de bien profiter de la vie parce que les vers qui suivent, soit les 6 à 14, ne parlent que de déchéance. On pourrait s'imaginer une femme se tenant debout au haut d'un escalier et qui, par mégarde, perd l'équilibre et déboûle les marches. Elle se retrouve plat au sol, rien devant elle, le nada.

Fraîcheur : nous avons choisi ce mot dans le but de mettre l'accent sur les oppositions, les contrastes, que l'on retrouve dans la poésie baroque. Fraîcheur est synonyme de jeunesse. Ainsi, nous trouverons au vers libre 9 le mot « défraîchie », synonyme de vieillesse.

Cou : nous avons choisi ce mot plutôt que « col » et « gorge » utilisés dans les traductions françaises afin de donner une touche plus contemporaine au texte.

Disparaisse ta jeunesse : une fois de plus, nous allons droit au but. Après avoir prévenu la lectrice de bien profiter de sa jeunesse, nous lui annonçons que celle-ci va disparaître.

¹⁵Tiré du Petit Robert 1 : ensemble des cheveux.

Nous avons adopté ce ton plutôt sombre et obscur, typique du baroque, pour la préparer à la cascade de mots négatifs qui suivent.

L’or, le lis, l’œillet et le cristal : nous avons conservé cette énumération du poème original en guise de respect pour le poète.

Qu’argentés ils deviennent : nous avons voulu inverser ce début de vers libre afin de reprendre le style gongorin et ainsi faire un clin d’œil à l’art gongorin, soit celui des inversions.

Toi : à partir du vers libre 10, nous avons voulu créer l’impression que le poète se tient debout devant la jeune femme et qu’il lui sert un dernier avertissement. « Toi, tu deviendras... » se résume à dire que personne n’y échappera. Jeunesse ou pas, la Faucheuse passera.

Poussière sous terre et ombre de fumée : commence ici la cascade de mots qui se réfère à la mort. Nous avons pris le dernier vers de Gongora « En tierra, en humo, en polvo, en sombra, en nada » et nous avons jumelé des éléments. Ainsi, « poussière sous terre » remplace « En tierra, en polvo » et « ombre de fumée » remplace « en humo, en sombra ». Nous avons délibérément inversé les mots en hommage au style gongorin.

Nada : nous avons choisi de conserver le dernier mot du sonnet gongorin « nada » pour honorer Góngora. Nous faisons donc un dernier clin d’œil au grand poète andalou. Nous présumons que ce mot est connu par la génération jeunesse étant donné que l’enseignement de la langue espagnole au Canada au niveau secondaire est de plus en plus répandu.

La coupe : nous nous sommes rendu compte qu'en centrant l'adaptation du poème, nous avons une image intéressante. Si l'on retire le titre, nous semblons apercevoir une coupe. Cette coupe, nous la levons en hommage à la vie et à Góngora.

Pour faire une lecture parallèle des traductions françaises et de l'adaptation, consultez l'annexe 4. Pour faire une lecture parallèle de la traduction française de 1964, soit celle que nous avons préférée, et de l'adaptation, consultez l'annexe 5. Finalement, pour faire une lecture du sonnet original et de l'adaptation, rendez-vous à l'annexe 6.

Conclusion : Et pourquoi pas une adaptation du sonnet?

Dans son article intitulé « Traduire Góngora », Robert Jammes met en garde les apprentis traducteurs qui souhaitent traduire Góngora : « ... pour affronter un poète aussi redoutable que Góngora, il vaut mieux ne pas se fier à ses seules forces. » (Jammes – 216). Puis, il ajoute : « ... si, une fois traduite, sa poésie doit ressembler à celle de Garcilaso, autant dire que l'opération a manqué son but. » (Jammes – 217). C'est en retenant ces deux phrases clés que nous avons entrepris l'exercice de traduire le sonnet du poète baroque. Il est vrai que l'œuvre de Góngora présente des défis de taille quand il s'agit de traduire un de ses textes. Cependant, nous croyons que ces défis ne sont pas insurmontables. En suivant les conseils de Jammes et ceux que nous avons reçus en classe au cours de la session, nous avons été en mesure de lire et de comparer des traductions. En souhaitant d'abord et avant tout, comme Pierre Somville, ne pas « ... avoir trahi le sens profond... » (Somville – 28) du texte, nous avons porté une attention particulière à ce dernier. Défier les conventions¹⁶, tel était l'esprit dans lequel nous avons entrepris cet exercice. Il ne reste plus qu'à espérer qu'il saura susciter chez la génération

¹⁶Défier les conventions, slogan de la campagne de financement de l'Université d'Ottawa, porte sur l'intelligence, la créativité et la collaboration, et sur les idées transformatrices et la mise en pratique de ces idées.

jeunesse visée le goût de lire la poésie baroque espagnole et de la transmettre, à son tour, aux générations futures afin que l'esprit gongorin soit toujours présent dans les littératures du monde.

Annexe

A.1

Traduction française de « Mientras » 1

Tandis que pour ternir l'éclat de tes cheveux,
le soleil, or poli, vainement étincelle;
tandis qu'avec mépris au milieu de la plaine
ton front blanc se compare à la beauté d'un lis;

tandis que pour cueillir chacune de tes lèvres
vont après toi plus d'yeux qu'après l'œillet précoce
et tandis que triomphe avec un frais dédain
sur le luisant cristal ton col délicieux,

cède à ce col, ce front, ces lèvres, ces cheveux,
avant que ce qui fut en ton âge radieux
or pur, et lis, œillet, cristal luisant,

non seulement devienne ou argent ou violette
flétrie, mais avec toi tout cela réuni,
terre, fumée, poussière, ombre, néant.

(Pierre Darmangeat - 1964)

Traduction française de « Mientras » 2

Tandis que pour lutter avec ta chevelure,
Or bruni le soleil vainement étincelle,
Tandis qu'avec mépris au milieu de la plaine
Contemple ton front blanc la fleur belle du lis,

Tandis que pour cueillir chacune de tes lèvres
Te poursuivent plus d'yeux que l'œillet de printemps,
Et que superbement dédaigne, triomphant
Du cristal lumineux, ta gorge souveraine;

Cette gorge et ce front, ces cheveux, cette lèvre
Cueille-les dès avant que ce qui fut hier
En ton âge doré, lis, œillet, or, cristal,

En argent ne se change, en violette fanée,
Mais plus encore, et toi avec eux même,
En poussière, en fumée, en cendre, en ombre, en rien.

(Claude Esteban – 1980)

A.2

« Mientras » de Góngora

- 1 Mientras por competir con tu cabello **A**
2 Oro bruído al sol relumbra en vano. **B**
3 Mientras con menosprecio en medio el llano. **B**
4 Mira tu blanca frente al lilio bello; **A**
- 5 Mientras a cada labio, por cogello, **A**
6 Siguen más ojos que al clavel temprano, **B**
7 Y mientras triunfa con desdén lozano. **B**
8 Del luciente cristal tu gentil cuello. **A**
- 9 Goza cuello, cabello, labio y frente, **C**
10 Antes que lo que fue en tu edad dorada **D**
11 Oro, lilio, clavel, cristal luciente. **C**
- 12 No sólo en plata o viola troncada **D**
13 Se vuelva, más tú y ello juntamente **C**
14 En tierra, en humo, en polvo, en sombra, en nada. **D**

Lecture du sonnet « Soneto XXIII » :

- 1 **A** En tanto que de rosa y azucena **A**
2 se muestra la color en vuestro gesto. **B**
3 y que vuestro mirar ardiente, honesto, **B**
4 enciende al corazón y lo refrena; **A**
- 5 y en tanto que el cabello, que en la vena **A**
6 del oro se escogió, con vuelo presto, **B**
7 por el hermoso cuello blanco, enhiesto, **B**
8 el viento mueve, esparce y desordena: **A**
- 9 coged de vuestra alegre primavera **C**
10 el dulce fruto, antes que el tiempo airado **D**
11 cubra de nieve la hermosa cumbre; **E**
- 12 marchitará la rosa el viento helado. **D**
13 Todo lo mudará la edad ligera. **C**
14 por no hacer mudanza en su costumbre. **E**

A.3 Traduction française de « Mientras »

Tandis que pour ternir l'éclat de tes cheveux,
le soleil, or poli, vainement étincelle;
tandis qu'avec mépris au milieu de la plaine
ton front blanc se compare à la beauté d'un lis;

tandis que pour cueillir chacune de tes lèvres
vont après toi plus d'yeux qu'après l'œillet précoce
et tandis que triomphe avec un frais dédain
sur le luisant cristal ton col délicieux,

cède à ce col, ce front, ces lèvres, ces cheveux,
avant que ce qui fut en ton âge radieux
or pur, et lis, œillet, cristal luisant,

non seulement devienne ou argent ou violette
flétrie, mais avec toi tout cela réuni,
terre, fumée, poussière, ombre, néant.

(Pierre Darmangeat - 1964)

A.4 Traduction française de « Mientras » 1

Tandis que pour ternir l'éclat de tes cheveux,
le soleil, or poli, vainement étincelle;
tandis qu'avec mépris au milieu de la plaine
ton front blanc se compare à la beauté d'un lis;

tandis que pour cueillir chacune de tes lèvres
vont après toi plus d'yeux qu'après l'œillet précoce
et tandis que triomphe avec un frais dédain
sur le luisant cristal ton col délicieux,

cède à ce col, ce front, ces lèvres, ces cheveux,
avant que ce qui fut en ton âge radieux
or pur, et lis, œillet, cristal luisant,

non seulement devienne ou argent ou violette
flétrie, mais avec toi tout cela réuni,
terre, fumée, poussière, ombre, néant.

(Pierre Darmangeat - 1964)

Adaptation littéraire de « Mientras »

Pendant que l'astre d'or, en vain, étincelle ta
chevelure,
pendant qu'au milieu de la plaine, avec dédain, ton
front de lait caresse le lis,
pendant que plus d'yeux cherchent tes lèvres au lieu
des œillets printaniers et,
pendant que ton long cou surpasse de loin le cristal
luisant,
profite bien de la fraîcheur de ton cou,
de la beauté de ta chevelure,
de tes lèvres et de ton front avant que ne disparaisse ta
jeunesse,
l'or, le lis, l'œillet et le cristal,
et qu'argentés ils deviennent comme la violette
défraîchie,
et toi,
tu deviendras,
poussière sous terre,
qu'une ombre de fumée,
nada.

(Line Bissonnette - 2015)

Traduction française de « Soneto 23 »

Tant que de lys et de rose
votre visage sera fardé,
et que votre regard ardent et chaste
brûlera le cœur mais tout en l'opprimant,

et tant que dans le filon d'or
de vos cheveux, le vol léger du vent,
sur la blancheur de votre cou, beau et fier,
bougera ses fils en les éparpillant ;

cueillez de votre gai printemps
le doux fruit, avant que le temps courroucé couvre
de neige votre joli minois.

Au vent glacé, la rose fanera,
le temps ailé toutes choses changera,
sans pitié, comme à l'accoutumée.

(Auteur(e) et année de la traduction
inconnus)

Traduction française de « Mientras » 2

Tandis que pour lutter avec ta chevelure,
Orbruni le soleil vainement étincelle,
Tandis qu'avec mépris au milieu de la plaine
Contemple ton front blanc la fleur belle du lis,

Tandis que pour cueillir chacune de tes lèvres
Te poursuivent plus d'yeux que l'œillet de printemps,
Et que superbement dédaigne, triomphant
Du cristal lumineux, ta gorge souveraine;

Cette gorge et ce front, ces cheveux, cette lèvre
Cueille-les dès avant que ce qui fut hier
En ton âge doré, lis, œillet, or, cristal,

En argent ne se change, en violette fanée,
Mais plus encore, et toi avec eux mêmement,
En poussière, en fumée, en cendre, en ombre, en rien.

(Claude Esteban – 1980)

A.5

Traduction française de « Mientras » 1

Tandis que pour ternir l'éclat de tes cheveux,
le soleil, or poli, vainement étincelle;
tandis qu'avec mépris au milieu de la plaine
ton front blanc se compare à la beauté d'un lis;

tandis que pour cueillir chacune de tes lèvres
vont après toi plus d'yeux qu'après l'œillet précoce
et tandis que triomphe avec un frais dédain
sur le luisant cristal ton col délicieux,

cède à ce col, ce front, ces lèvres, ces cheveux,
avant que ce qui fut en ton âge radieux
or pur, et lis, œillet, cristal luisant,

non seulement devienne ou argent ou violette
flétrie, mais avec toi tout cela réuni,
terre, fumée, poussière, ombre, néant.

(Pierre Darmangeat - 1964)

Adaptation littéraire de « Mientras»

Pendant que l'astre d'or, en vain, étincelle ta
chevelure,
pendant qu'au milieu de la plaine, avec dédain, ton
front de lait caresse le lis,
pendant que plus d'yeux cherchent tes lèvres au lieu
des œillets printaniers et,
pendant que ton long cou surpasse de loin le cristal
luisant,
profite bien de la fraîcheur de ton cou,
de la beauté de ta chevelure,
de tes lèvres et de ton front avant que ne disparaisse ta
jeunesse,
l'or, le lis, l'œillet et le cristal,
et qu'argentés ils deviennent comme la violette
défraîchie,
et toi,
tu deviendras,
poussière sous terre,
qu'une ombre de fumée,
nada.

(Line Bissonnette - 2015)

A.6

Mientras por competir con tu cabello
Oro bruñido al sol relumbra en vano,
Mientras con menosprecio en medio el llano
Mira tu blanca frente al lilio bello;

Mientras a cada labio, por cogello,
Siguen más ojos que al clavel temprano,
Y mientras triunfa con desdén lozano
Del luciente cristal tu gentil cuello,

Goza cuello, cabello, labio y frente,
Antes que lo que fue en tu edad dorada
Oro, lilio, clavel, cristal luciente,

No sólo en plata o viola troncada
Se vuelva, más tú y ello juntamente
En tierra, en humo, en polvo, en sombra, en nada.

(Don Luis de Góngora y Argote - 1582)

Adaptation littéraire de « Mientras»

Pendant que l'astre d'or, en vain, étincelle ta
chevelure,
pendant qu'au milieu de la plaine, avec dédain, ton
front de lait caresse le lis,
pendant que plus d'yeux cherchent tes lèvres au lieu
des œillets printaniers et,
pendant que ton long cou surpasse de loin le cristal
luisant,
profite bien de la fraîcheur de ton cou,
de la beauté de ta chevelure,
de tes lèvres et de ton front avant que ne disparaisse ta
jeunesse,
l'or, le lis, l'œillet et le cristal,
et qu'argentés ils deviennent comme la violette
défraîchie,
et toi,
tu deviendras,
poussière sous terre,
qu'une ombre de fumée,
nada.

(Line Bissonnette - 2015)

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Twenty Sonnets to Mary Queen of Scots: Eternity, Death, and Parallels Between Joseph Brodsky and Mary Queen of Scots

By Alessandra Leake

Abstract:

The paper examines the identification that Joseph Brodsky felt with Mary Queen of Scots, which is displayed in his collection of poems *Twenty Sonnets to Mary Queen of Scots*. The connection between the two individuals can be seen through a comparison of their personal lives, as well as through the themes contained within Brodsky's poems. The symbols present within his work are also discussed, linking back to his themes and the Queen. All four translations are used in the analysis, and each language makes a reference to a poem by another individual. These references are examined, resulting in a look at poems by William Cullen Bryant, Alexander Pushkin, and Fyodor Tyutchev.

Keywords: Joseph Brodsky, Mary Queen of Scots, poetry, time, death, immortality, William Cullen Bryant, Alexander Pushkin, Fyodor Tyutchev.

Joseph Brodsky, like Mary Queen of Scots, spent a significant amount of his life under the threat of death. In his collection of sonnets, entitled *Twenty Sonnets to Mary Queen of Scots*, the theme of death is prevalent throughout the work. It is also quite obvious that Brodsky identifies with Mary Queen of Scots on a number of levels. Through an analysis of his sonnets, I shall demonstrate the strong connection Brodsky felt to the Queen, as well as the prevalent themes of time and subsequent death. First, we shall look at a brief history of each person involved.

Mary Queen of Scots was known for her kind heart and was said to be the most beautiful princess in Europe (Hanson). She was born in 1542 and became the Queen of Scotland six days after her birth. She was betrothed to Henry VIII's son the future Edward VI, but the Catholics opposed the match and took Mary to Stirling Castle. Henry sent a series of raids to Scotland known as "The Rough Wooing," but this did not change the Scots' minds. Mary was then betrothed to the Dauphin Francis, King Henri II's heir, and sent to be brought up at the French Court. The two were married in 1558, and Mary

became the Queen of Scotland and France in 1559 after King Henri II's death. Her husband the Dauphin died in 1560 of an ear infection, and she returned to Scotland the next year. Scotland had become a Protestant country while Mary was still Catholic, but she reigned uneventfully until her marriage to her second cousin Lord Darnley. Darnley was not well liked and was the cause of Mary's secretary, David Riccio, being murdered in front of her. Shortly after this incident Mary gave birth to her son James, and, in less than a year, Darnley was also killed. People suspected that Mary was involved in the murder and that her third husband, the Earl of Bothwell, was the principal murderer. A few months after her third marriage, her Protestant Lords rose against her, and she was imprisoned in Lochleven Castle, while Bothwell fled and was imprisoned in Scandinavia until his death. Mary managed to escape in 1568 and fled to her cousin Queen Elizabeth I in England. Mary was imprisoned by her cousin for 19 years until she was executed in 1587 after Elizabeth's ministers suspected her of helping with plots to assassinate the queen (The Royal Household). Unfortunately, the executioner missed her neck on the first swing and cut the back of her head. She was heard whispering "Sweet Jesus" before her head was cut off. When the executioner went to pick up her head, it was discovered that she had worn a red wig to cover her gray hair (Hanson).

Joseph Brodsky was born in 1940 in St. Petersburg, which was called Leningrad at the time, to a Jewish family. His father was an officer in the Soviet Navy, and his mother worked as a translator and bookkeeper. Brodsky had a hard time in school due to his Jewish heritage and left at the age of 15. He started writing but was unable to find many opportunities to publish his work, so he shared his work in private gatherings with friends and other poets, establishing himself as a popular underground poet. He refused to

find a state-approved career and was harassed by the government. He was sent to a mental institution twice and eventually put on trial for social parasitism. He was sentenced to five years of hard labour in a work camp near Arkhangelsk (16.5 hours away). He spent his free time studying British and American poetry, and, after the Soviet leader Leonid Ilich Brezhnev lost power, writers and artists managed to campaign for his release. Brodsky started to publish his work abroad but was forced to leave the country a few years later. Israel had offered to have him immigrate to their country, however, he ended up visiting an English poet named W. H. Auden before moving to the United States. He continued to publish his works as well as teach at universities around the country, and he won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1987 for his “all-embracing authorship, imbued with clarity of thought and poetic intensity” (Biography.com Editors). He died in 1996 of heart disease, caused by his time in exile doing hard labour (Biography.com Editors), and his love of drink and cigarettes likely did not help.

As we saw in the brief histories of Mary Queen of Scots and Joseph Brodsky above, the two individuals shared a number of similarities in their lives: both individuals were forced to leave their native countries; they were also well educated in literature and poetry; and they were both wrongly persecuted. Mary Queen of Scots was fond of sonnets, and it is surely for this reason that Brodsky chose to write his cycle of poems to her in this form. In his fourth sonnet, he also compares one of his relationships to that of Mary and Bothwell. There are also many allusions to Mary’s sexual activity. The most vivid are contained in the first lines of sonnet V:

The number of your lovers, Mary, went
beyond the figure three, four, twenty, twent-
y-five. (Brodsky 61)

The sonnet ends with the line, “To your compatriots you were a slut” (61). Brodsky was also known for his promiscuity, so it is not surprising that he brings up Mary’s, while at the same time defending it. In sonnet XII lines seven and eight read:

It’s not his business to discuss your quotas:
who had you or who didn’t in a bed. (75)

This defence suggests that he has felt the judgement of others about his own sexual exploits and feels the need to make the point in his poetry that it is no one’s business but his or her own.

Brodsky also seems to feel that he knows Mary’s personal thoughts. In sonnet XV he claims to know the truth:

nor that Elizabeth loved England’s plot
indeed more than you did your Scottish shire
(which is the truth, though some will cry it’s not)
(Brodsky 81)

Knowing how someone feels is the pinnacle of understanding another person and involves a deep knowledge of that person. I would say these lines are the strongest example of Brodsky’s identification with Mary, as it requires an intimate knowledge of her and states that many others have tried and failed to understand her feelings.

Joseph Brodsky has been quoted as saying, “[a]ll my poems are more or less about the same thing—about Time. About what time does to Man” (Biography.com Editors). And time is most definitely brought up in this collection of sonnets, as well as the idea of what happens when we run out of it: death. The first line of sonnet III, “I, who have traveled half my earthly road” (57), suggests to us that he is already halfway through his life, and it also refers to Dante’s famous work *La Divina Comedia*. *La Divina Comedia* predominately takes place in hell, purgatory, and heaven where everyone, other than the narrator, are, of course, dead.

In the middle of the journey of our life,
I came to myself, in a dark wood,
where the direct way was lost.
It is a hard thing to speak of, how wild,
harsh and impenetrable that wood was,
so that thinking of it recreates the fear. (Kline)

It is also interesting to note that *La Divina Comedia* starts in a dark wood, while Brodsky's poem takes place in the Jardin du Luxembourg. Both places are natural areas filled with elements that are capable of scaring their respective narrators. Fear is directly mentioned in the sixth line in *La Divina Comedia*, and the fear of death can be extrapolated for Brodsky in sonnet III.

As you continue reading his sonnets the death imagery becomes more pronounced. In sonnet IX lines five and six read:

And then the corpses lie about like trash,
the endless din of crows' first-come-first-served. (Brodsky
69)

This is a vivid description, providing the reader with images of piles of corpses being picked at by crows, a generally accepted representative of death and horror. In his next sonnet he describes death's unannounced appearance and, in sonnet XI, describes Mary's death:

knocks off our crowns and bridal wreaths at will-
quite indiscriminately. And the heads as well. (73)

On top of describing the method by which Mary Queen of Scots was executed, Brodsky uses the word "our," once again alluding to his identification with her.

Just as there are parallels between Mary Queen of Scots and Joseph Brodsky's lives, there are also connections between Mary's story and the myth of Medusa. Medusa, like Mary, was a beautiful creature. Mary was known for her beauty, and, similarly, Medusa was also an attractive priestess with golden hair until her involvement with

Poseidon. They both entered into marriages that were frowned upon by others and consequently caused issues in their lives, and finally, they both had their heads removed (Medusa). Besides having similarities in their lives, sonnet III also has numerous images of stone. The first appears in the third line, “and contemplate the petrified gray curls” (57). Brodsky uses the adjective “petrified,” as undoubtedly anyone who met Medusa’s gaze would be petrified right before they turned to stone. In the tenth line “in the stone garland of your girl friends – stunned” (57) we find the same imagery of people that have been struck with fear immediately preceding the transformation to stone. Since Brodsky referenced Dante in the first line of the poem, I would argue that he has also taken some inspiration from the Greek myth of Medusa for his third sonnet. As he looks up at Mary Queen of Scots, contemplating the stone described in a way that hints at Medusa, does he also contemplate his own head being cut off? A similar fate was surely to meet him if he returned to Russia.

Continuing with mythology we shall examine the significance of the sparrow. Sonnet III tells us that Mary has a sparrow in her hair, which in Greek mythology is considered a symbol of love. It was considered to symbolize true love and a real connection, not just lust. This is appropriate for Mary, as she was married three times; however, more recent folklore involving sparrows has quite a different meaning. Both Chaucer and Shakespeare used sparrows to “denote lecherous or promiscuous behaviour” (Stone). This could be the reason that Brodsky chose to have a sparrow in Mary’s hair, as he later says in sonnet V, “[t]o your compatriots you were a slut” (61). There are also a few superstitions in Europe that sparrows are an omen of death. One superstition is that if a sparrow flies into a home that someone will die. In Kent, England there is a variation

where whoever catches the sparrow must kill it, or their parents will die. Another variation is that the person who caught the sparrow will die if they do not kill it. Mary seemed to be surrounded by men who died - her first husband, her second husband, her secretary - so perhaps she never killed the sparrow that entered the house, and now it sits proudly on her head.

Just like the history of the sparrow, the Pantheon started out as a positive place of worship and therefore love of God; however, shortly after it was built it became a mausoleum to house the dead from the French Revolution. The Pantheon flipped between church and crypt status, much like how Mary flitted between countries leaving dead bodies behind, until it finally settled on a place to bury brilliant French citizens (Pantheon Paris). This has created a certain immortality for these citizens, as they are forever remembered and visited: “gods” of the literary world. Brodsky certainly dreamed of being buried amongst them, his work living on beside that of his neighbours, a complete death never occurring.

Another element that supports Brodsky’s will to be immortal is his use of rams. Unlike the images of numerous birds, who all ultimately lead to death in his collection of sonnets, the ram, mentioned in sonnets I and XIII, is frequently associated with determination, initiative, renewal, force, virility, protection, and fearlessness (Venefica). “Throughout history, rams have been important to mythological and religious concepts, associated with ancient gods from all over the world. The ram even became a symbol of Christ in ancient times.” One of the most famous accounts is in the Old Testament, when Abraham sacrifices the ram rather than his son after an angel stops him (Dunn). Gods are often considered to be immortal, and Brodsky, like many writers, wishes to find this

immortality. In sonnet I he refers to himself as having “the dull eyes of a decrepit ram” (Brotsky 53). Calling himself a ram, although decrepit and with dull eyes, is still an allusion to the godly connection of the animal and therefore its immortal properties. In sonnet XIII Brotsky writes about Mary’s head being cut off, and he starts the sonnet with the line, “[a] ram shakes out his ringlets, alias fleece” (77). This seems reminiscent of sonnet III where Brotsky is contemplating the petrified curls of the statues. Could this be his way of saying the statues keep their muses alive in stone?

Brotsky fills sonnet I with elements of immortality. In lines four and five he writes about Mary:

a statue, and bring life to city gardens-
the Luxembourg, to be precise? I came (53)

Although Mary’s body has long been buried, her figure remains erect in the Luxembourg, “bring[ing] life” to the city garden, and, as he contemplates her statue, he says, “all the dead past now lives anew in my cold heart”(53). What should have been long gone has been given new life in the Luxembourg and “untiring Mary, stand[s] and stand[s]” (57) in sonnet III. Brotsky gives her an almost living description in this sonnet and makes his desire to be with her clear in the second line: “make my appearance in the Luxembourg” (57). This verse has two meanings. The first is the obvious: he is taking a walk through the park, and the other is the symbolic: he is running out of time and wishes to join Mary and the other royalty in their immortal condition.

Even when Brotsky clearly describes a death in his sonnets, he follows it with an element of immortality. An excellent example of this is found in sonnet VI. Brotsky speaks about shooting himself and considers his options of how to go about it, but he soon brings up Parmenides. “Parmenides' poem began with a poem describing a journey

he figuratively once made to the abode of a goddess [and he] describes how the goddess who dwells there welcomed him upon his arrival” (Palmer):

And the goddess received me kindly, and in her hand she took
my right hand, and she spoke and addressed me thus:
“O young man, accompanied by immortal charioteers
and mares who bear you as you arrive at our abode,
welcome, since a fate by no means ill sent you ahead to travel
this way (for surely it is far from the track of humans),
but Right and Justice.” (Palmer)

This excerpt from Parmenides’ poem clearly states that the charioteers are immortal and suggests that Parmenides is as well, since he is “far from the track of humans.” He is also being welcomed by a goddess who would undoubtedly be immortal herself. The poem starts out with ideas of death and ends with hints at immortality, mirroring the immortality of the statues and those in the Pantheon. Before anyone can become immortal and obtain godly status, they first must surrender to death. According to sonnet XV, Mary Queen of Scots had her death forced upon her:

no, what they killed you for – let’s clear the mire –
was something to which they, in those old days,
could see no end: the beauty of your face. (Brodsky 81)

Even though she succumbed to death, the joke is on her murderers as she lives on, the beauty of her face standing proudly in the Luxembourg, immortality soaked into her porous figure.

In sonnet X Brodsky uses the reverse order of elements. The second line: “Alas, not heading the relentless lyre” (71) presents the instrument of the angels, who are, of course, immortal, although in another realm. The sonnet ends with:

The door may creak: death, having failed to knock,
will stand before you in her moth-holed frock. (71)

Death has silently come to collect, but the angels have beaten her to the punch and are already prepared to provide immortality. It is also interesting to note that Brodsky used the pronoun 'her' for death. Might he be referring to Mary as death, since she is the one he identifies with and seeks to be with? Is his desire for an immortality such as hers so strong that he wishes for her to take him?

After his exile Brodsky settled in New York, and, although it is quite far from the Jardin du Luxembourg, both locations are known for their parks. Parks are the only area in a city where renewal can be easily witnessed. The circle of life is apparent with dead leaves, bugs, and animals returning to the soil in order to create new life such as grass and trees. This shifting of status is described in sonnet XVI. Two lines in particular stand out: "a square, too, gradually becomes a sphere" and "into the humus shade, how little stays" (Brodsky 83). A square into a sphere does not require explanation, however, the word "humus" is not common vocabulary. Humus is "the dark organic material in soils, produced by the decomposition of vegetable or animal matter and essential to the fertility of the earth" (Dictionary.com). All of these images refer to the changing of states and subsequent renewal of life on earth, but Brodsky does not want to find his renewal with earthly matters. He is searching for the highest renewal: that of eternal life. He makes this clear in his last few verses:

The fountain pen now has to stick to those
that failed to head another season's message,
to squeak and echo "Melancholy Days." (83)

The pen is the instrument used by writers to solidify their immortality in the world after their death. The poems referenced in the last line of the sonnet all have the autumn as their theme. And here it depends on which translation you use in order to decipher which poem he is referencing. The English translation ends with "Melancholy Days" which

references a poem by William Cullen Bryant called *The Death of the Flowers*; the Russian and both French translations reference Aleksandr Pushkin's *Autumn*.

The Death of the Flowers by William Cullen Bryant

The MELANCHOLY days have come, the saddest of the year,
Of wailing winds, and naked woods, and meadows brown and sere;
Heaped in the hollows of the grove, the autumn leaves lie dead;
They rustle to the eddying gust, and to the rabbit's tread;
The robin and the wren are flown, and from the shrubs the jay,
And from the wood-top calls the crow through all the gloomy day.
Where are the flowers, the fair young flowers, that lately sprang and stood
In brighter light and softer airs, a beauteous sisterhood?
Alas! they all are in their graves, the gently race of flowers
Are lying in their lowly beds, with the fair and good of ours.
The rain is falling where they lie, but the cold November rain
Calls not from out the gloomy earth the lovely ones again.
The wind-flower and the violet, they perished long ago,
And the brier-rose and the orchids died amid the summer glow;
But on the hill the golden-rod, and the aster in the wood,
And the yellow sun-flower by the brook, in autumn beauty stood,
Till fell the frost from the clear cold heaven, as falls the plague on men,
And the brightness of their smile has gone, from upland, glade, and glen.
And now, when comes the calm mild day, as still such days will come,
To call the squirrel and the bee from out their winter home;
When the sound of dropping nuts is heard, though all the trees are still,
And twinkle in the smoky light the waters of the rill,
The south wind searches for the flowers whose fragrance late he bore,
And sighs to find them in the wood and by the stream no more.
And then I think of one who in her youthful beauty died,
The fair meek blossom that grew up and faded by my side.
In cold moist earth we laid her, when the forest cast the leaf,
And we wept that one so lovely should have a life so brief;
Yet not unmeet it was that one like that young friend of ours,
So gentle and so beautiful, should perish with the flowers. (Bryant)

I believe that Brodsky identifies with this poem not only because he collaborated with the translator, but due to the fact that it is quite similar to his poem: filled with death imagery. Bryant also uses birds, and certainly the crow once again, to invoke the theme of death. It too is set during autumn, and there is a beautiful young woman who is no longer with him. There is no reference to immortality or renewal in this poem unless we

are to look into the future of the poem and assume that the flowers, which perished with the young beauty, will appear once again in the spring, keeping the beautiful woman's memory immortal. I believe this was the closest poem Brodsky and his translator could find that would be a reference for the anglophone audience, but it was certainly not his first choice as his original work referenced Pushkin.

The reference to Pushkin's poem *Autumn* is unmistakable in the last line of sonnet XVI as it includes not only the title of his poem, but also his name. The poem is divided into twelve sections that speak about the seasons, a lover, and finding escape by using a pen. The poem is set in the woods with similar locational descriptions as Brodsky's sonnets. It also takes place during the fall with impending winter. Winter is often used in literature to represent the end of a cycle and the ultimate ending: death. In Pushkin's poem he refers to winter as "her" in the fourth section:

that one thought fills our minds. We miss old winter,
and having seen her off with cakes and wine,
with ice and ice-cream we recall her reign. (France)

He also speaks of "her reign" in reference to winter, however, I would say that Brodsky connects to this poem, envisioning winter as Mary. He longs for her, just as winter is missed in Pushkin's poem, and recalls her reign throughout his collection of sonnets, as Pushkin suggests everyone is doing in the last line of his poem. It is also possible that Brodsky associates Mary with all of the seasons present in Pushkin's poem, as the fifth poem contains very similar ideas to those present in Brodsky's sonnets:

People have harsh words for these days of autumn,
but, reader, they are dear to me, I love
their unassuming light, their quiet beauty.
Autumn attracts me like a neglected girl
among her sisters. (France)

In both collections of poetry there are harsh words present for the muse, in the case of Brodsky this is Mary Queen of Scots, and for Pushkin it is the autumn days. Both poets are in love with their muse and think dearly of them with their “quiet beauty” (France), as Pushkin says, and it is quite clear that Brodsky’s beautiful statue is also silent. The phrase “Autumn attracts me like a neglected girl / among her sisters” (France) is reminiscent of the verse in Brodsky’s sonnet III, “stand and stand, / in the stone garland of your girl friends” (57), and Pushkin’s collection also contains the idea of immortality through the use of a pen in his final three sections. These poems present the idea that the author is able to “forget the world, in blissful peace” (France) only to have poetry awaken another part and “receive a host of guests unseen, / old-time acquaintances, fruits of my dreams” (France). This is very similar to Brodsky who escapes to the Jardin du Luxembourg to meet his long lost love and gain immortality by writing about it. Both collections of poems contain many of the same ideas and, more importantly, sentiments that the authors felt towards their muses, making Brodsky’s reference to Pushkin quite clear.

Many parallels have been drawn between Brodsky and Mary Queen of Scots, both in the history of their personal lives and as seen in the collection of sonnets. Both individuals felt the pains of exile and wrongful persecution. Both were well educated in literature and poetry, and both of them shared a promiscuous lifestyle. Brodsky tells us of his fascination with time in his poetry, and, as we know, time must eventually run out, as it did for Mary Queen of Scots, whom Brodsky clearly identifies with. He seems to have had a connection with Mary’s history, just as her image seems to have parallels with Medusa. Both women suffered the same fate, and the imagery of death continues in the use of birds, particularly the folklore of the sparrow, and the use of the Pantheon in Paris.

However, the Pantheon in Paris serves a dual purpose. It not only speaks to the imagery of death but also to the idea of immortality. Brodsky also uses the Jardin du Luxembourg to serve this twofold idea. Like most writers, he wishes to be immortal and become part of the collection of statuesque figures found in these places. Brodsky even compares himself to a ram, a symbol of immortality, in the first sonnet of his collection. He uses the Pantheon in Paris and the Jardin du Luxembourg, as well as the symbolism of the ram, Parmenides, and Mary, to create his strong link to immortality. He even delves briefly into the idea of renewal when speaking of plants and the autumn season. Though Brodsky did not get to stand with his Queen Mary in the Jardin du Luxembourg, or with the literary gods in the Pantheon in Paris, he will remain immortal through his writing.

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A Self Multiplied: Culture and Identity in Relation to Place in Zadie Smith's *White Teeth* and Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*

By Myriem Nadia Sahouli

Abstract:

This essay examines questions pertaining to transculturality, hybridity, and imaginary homelands, as shown in Zadie Smith's *White Teeth* and Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*. Both novels deal with second generation families that have been, or are currently, processing and adapting to their respective postcolonial realities - the case for Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* - or immigrant and second generation families living in London and struggling in the relationship with their hybrid identity markers - such as in the story-line for Smith's *White Teeth*. Multiple characters in both Smith and Rushdie's novels explicitly face coming to terms with these multiple "identity markers" in relation to where they are in the present moment and from whence they and their families have come. Using Smith and Rushdie's novels as a foundation upon which to consider these issues, this essay explores the realities of hybrid identity, as well as an exploration of the following questions: how do cultural multiplicity and the after-effects of colonization reverberate in families from immediate and future generations? How do questions of identity associated with place adapt and change depending on where one is living? What is considered "home" for an immigrant family living away from their tangible - or not - ancestral place of origin? What becomes of transgenerational memory? This essay explores these questions through the chosen theory and literature.

Keywords: postcolonial literatures, Zadie Smith, Salman Rushdie, imaginary homelands, hybridity, collective memory, identity, intergenerational familial relations, transculturality, London, India.

"Once . . . places had names, it was, strangely enough, easier to find your way to them."
Margaret Atwood, *In Other Worlds: SF and the Human Imagination*

"The immigrant must invent the ground beneath his feet,"
Salman Rushdie, *Imaginary Homelands*

In her book *Writing Down the Bones: Freeing the Writer Within*, Natalie Goldberg writes of the absolute importance and necessity of a writer's relationship to his or her home: "It is very important to go home if you want your work to be whole. . . .

[Y]ou must claim where you come from and look deep into it. Come to honour and embrace it, or at the least, accept it” (182). How is it so that, according to Goldberg, a writer’s relationship with his or her place of “origin,” for lack of a better expression, should contain such weight and importance to a writer? Why is it that *place* in relation to *person* creates a certain kind of “wholeness” that is necessary in order to create a complete work? Is this *really* an indispensable part of creating? On this potentially elusive idea of “home” and the homeplace as indispensable to producing work, writer and essayist Salman Rushdie explores these ideas and others in his collection of essays entitled *Imaginary Homelands*. The essay that shares the title of the collection, “Imaginary Homelands,” is written in a retrospective light at the moment when Rushdie first realized that he wanted to “reclaim” his history upon a revisiting of his childhood home in Bombay. Rushdie writes,

Bombay is a city built by foreigners upon reclaimed land; I, who had been away so long that I almost qualified for the title, was gripped by the conviction that I, too, had a city and a history to reclaim. It may be that writers in my position, exiles or emigrants or expatriates, are haunted by some sense of loss, some urge to reclaim, to look back, even at the risk of being mutated into pillars of salt. But if we do look back, we must also do so in the knowledge...that our own physical alienation from India almost inevitably means that we will not be capable of reclaiming precisely what was lost; that we will, in short, create fictions, not actual cities or villages, but invisible ones, imaginary homeland, Indias of the mind. (10)

It is from this desire to “recall as much of the Bombay of the 1950s and 1960s as [he] could” (10) that fuelled the conception of what eventually became the novel *Midnight’s Children*, a work that has become honored to the highest literary degree. However, apart from the critical acclaim and plethora of recognition, the novel is considered to have done much more on the social and cultural plane than simply meeting the aesthetic standards on which literary prizes are won; the novel somehow managed to describe a generation and a period of time that had been needing to be written into a book (11). From this reasoning and idea, how can an “exile or emigrant or expatriat[e]” begin again (11)? What would this look like and how would the following generation relate to their parents’ history as being vastly different from their own identity in another country? A reverberated echo that permeates Jewish-Canadian writer Mordecai Richler’s work sounds faintly throughout the novel *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz*; Duddy’s mantric repeating of “[a] man without land is nobody” (49), as identity-defining goes beyond the merely physical need of land upon which one can build one’s home; it is a psychological need to recognize oneself .

With these questions of “home,” and the reality that three-quarters or more of the world population have been colonized or have experienced colonialism, in some way or another, I was propelled to examine what critics and writers alike have written on the issue (Ashcroft 1). In this essay, I will use Salman Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children* and Zadie Smith’s *White Teeth* as bases upon which to relate and interweave cultural studies issues and theories on overriding themes of transculturality and hybridity, namely concerning the relationship between self and place. The first section of this essay will be theory-based. I will synthesize articles and discussions that have been written on the

cultural studies angle that can be used to better understand issues that are present in Smith and Rushdie's works, not to mention to provide a basis for which to consider works that are deemed transcultural. The second section of this essay, I will primarily consider the novels in the context which I have mentioned above, while building on existing theories with my own ideas and what I found to be overarching and pertinent ideas in the book.

Before bringing in my chosen theory, it is necessary that I state a caveat from the top of this work: debates and questions of identity, multiculturalism, transculturality, and hybridity assume an existence of a "whole" state of identity based on place and ethnicity. This essay does not assume a reality of "pure" states of ethnicity as existing at all in any form. I do, however, find it important to talk about non-theorized and real-life issues stemming from immigration and multicultural or multiethnic hereditary makeup. By means of introduction to such discussion and the difficulty to discuss such topics, I will use Wolfgang Welsch's "Transculturality—The Puzzling Form of Cultures Today" to serve as an educational and clarifying tool as to what it means to write and debate about issues of culture. First of all, identity is created and is not innate; therefore, if we are to consider questions of identity and culture we could, theoretically, argue that we are fluid beings and able to begin anew, so to speak, many times over. This is not, of course, the case in the lives of real people living their lives in this now very globalized world of intersections and cross-overs that occur on a day-to-day basis.

In his essay, Welsch uses the term "transculturality" as a means to have a more inclusive name to replace the terms "interculturality" and "multiculturalism." On this same matter, and in his collection of essays in *Imaginary Homelands* entitled "The New

Empire Within Britain,” Salman Rushdie writes, “[m]ulticulturalism is the latest token gesture towards Britain’s blacks, and it ought to be exposed, like ‘integration’ and ‘racial harmony’, for the sham it is” (137). Welsch also finds that these terms do not suffice, and, therefore, the critic created “transculturality” as a term to bridge the gap between past terms that promoted an eventuality of ghettoization and stereotypes that stem from claiming the existence of a single and uniform “ethnic group,” a concept that is not only outdated but plain incorrect in assessing today’s multifaceted collective society. As there exists no real homogeneity, Welsch’s term “transculturality” reconfigures and revolutionizes the ways that “the traditional concept of culture proves to be factually inadequate: it cannot cope with the inner complexity of modern cultures.” Despite this term, there nonetheless remain holes in his argument, namely, the idea that one cannot simply begin anew and erase collective and individual memories of any given person.

Nestor Garcia Canclini echoes a similar sentiment but carries it further in the essay “Hybrid Cultures in Globalized Times.” The critic writes of the term “hybridity” as being a “sociocultural [process] in which discrete structures or practices, previously existing in separate form, are combined to generate new structures, objects, and practices” (114). The critic believes that the term is an overused one and, like Welsch, that it assumes “the pretense of establishing ‘pure’ or ‘authentic’ identities [while] in addition, [demonstrating] the risk of delimiting local, self-contained identities or those that attempt to assert themselves as radically opposed to national society or globalization” (116). Canclini explores the idea of doubling and writes of critic Cornejo Polar’s work and use of the term “schizophrenia” to describe some processes of hybridization:

On some occasions . . . one transfers elements from one discourse to another metonymically or metaphorically. In other cases, the subject accepts being decentered from his or her own history and takes on different “incompatible and contradictory ‘roles’ ‘in a nondialectical way’: the there and the here, which are also the yesterday and the today, reinforce the subject’s enunciative competence and can concoct narratives and –even if you like, exaggerating somewhat—schizophrenically. (117)

These issues of hybridization and schizophrenia are precisely where I will eventually lead this essay, when I begin to talk of Rushdie and Smith’s novels.

On the topic of Rushdie and his novel, in his essay entitled “Salman Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children*: National Narrative as a Liminal Voice,” critic Mark Mossman explains that the works of postcolonial writers are oftentimes diminished as not being exemplum of a single voice, that of the work of the novel itself, for instance, but instead as allegorical for a collective voice that the work is “supposedly” putting forth. This is, of course, not the case for Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children* as the novel is, in fact, written allegorically. Mossman synthesizes ideas by other critics, such as Homi Bhabha, Aijay Ahmad, and controversial postcolonialist critic Fredric Jameson, to name a few. Mossman then engages with certain aspects of Jameson’s work, notably and most importantly the latter’s controversial statement regarding his division between “First World Literature” and “Third World Literature”, the latter in which he classifies Rushdie’s work.

In Rufus Cook's article "Place and Displacement in Salman Rushdie's Work," the critic writes of *Midnight's Children* and Rushdie's novel in general, not as being part of what Jameson called "Third World Literature," but instead being exemplum and a voice for all postcolonial countries' writing of itself. Cook continues to write that Rushdie is the ideal "persuasive spokesmen" on the matter of transcultural writings, if I may synthesize terms here, this one from Welsch (23). Because of his position as being not only a successful writer but also a widespread and critically acclaimed author, Cook writes that Rushdie finds "new ways of being human" in his works, that come along with issues of hybridity and "cultural displacement," as the critic calls it (23). Rushdie has said, Cook writes, that "the immigrant or expatriate is in a better position than the rest of us to appreciate the pluralistic, contradictory nature of contemporary experience: to accept that 'reality is an artefact'"(23). Cook cites an explicit example from the novel *Midnight's Children* to underline his previous statement:

In *Midnight's Children* [the protagonist] Saleem Sinai's displacement from his "Bombay roots" results in a "haze of unreality," in his being completely "emptied of history" and plunged, like India itself, into a state of moral amnesia. "Nothing was real; nothing certain," Saleem observes of the "diseased reality" of his Pakistani years. (24)

This displacement and removal from one's roots, as explained above through the character of Saleem, is an idea that Cook continues to pursue, as Rushdie's narrator describes the desire to see his past not as being a "diseased reality" but instead as reborn or, as the author writes, new again, as well as to "[r]estore the past to [himself], not I the

faded greys of old family album snapshots, but whole, in CinemaScope and glorious Technicolor” (qtd in Cook 25). It is this desire of the “expatriate writer” to “reclaim . . . a lost city” that is a main motivation for writing in the first place” (qtd in Cook 25). Again in reference to *Midnight’s Children*, Cook writes, “Saleem Sinai is aware that, “inside himself,” he is “anything but a whole, anything but homogenous; all kinds of everywhichting are jumbled up inside him, and he is one person one minute and another the next” (283).

Besides these struggles with self and identity, language is also a dividing and identity-laden factor, and a reality that immigrants must face in their transition into a new environment. In terms of criticism that I’ve chosen about Zadie Smith’s *White Teeth*, in her essay, ““We are a divided people, aren’t we?” The politics of multicultural and multitudinous languages present and spoken and the dialect-crossing throughout Zadie Smith’s *White Teeth*,” critic Jarica Linn Watts focusses on language present in Smith’s *White Teeth* and in doing so highlights “an impressive linguistic repertoire” that paints a “compelling portrait of modern London” while underlining the importance of “inter-racial relationships and multiculturalism” presented in the novel (852). Watts, and other critics that the latter cites, supports Smith’s inclusive and “optimistic vision of racial easiness,” although this view is considered to be reductive, as critic Molly Thompson points out in her essay “Happy Multicultural Land?” wherein the latter writes that multiculturalism, or “transculturality” and “the possibility of feeling at home” is, ultimately, “unlikely” (852). Watts underlines the challenges faced by characters with insecurities in their discourse: “[t]hat both Samad and Abdul-Mickey – indeed, all of the characters within this novel – harbour a sense of linguistic anxiety is not surprising as

they each recognise the ways that language use signals class and ethnic status” (868). Watts also highlights the inability to move out of societal unease due to lingual “give-away” of a non-native English speaker:

implications which suggest that the borrowed tongue of the immigrant will continually be heard as imperfect to native English speakers, implications that tell us that someone without teeth is really someone without ‘roots’ – and that someone without roots is necessarily uncertain and insecure about their position in society, particularly when their external environment continues to privilege white Western culture over the coloured Orient. (869)

On language, Rushdie himself has commented on the use of English by a non native speaker, writing that the latter would do so “in spite of [his] ambiguity towards it . . . To conquer English may be to complete the process of making [himself] free” (*Imaginary Homelands*, 17).

In the article “Affirming Complexity: *White Teeth* and Cosmopolitanism,” critic Katina Rogers writes of the city of London being used in the novel as being “a backdrop that Smith constructs[:] a narrative that continually and unabashedly comments on its own tendencies, shortcomings, and idiosyncrasies” (46). Rogers postulates that in *White Teeth*, Smith produces a “convincing critique of cosmopolitanism and other similar post-colonial perspectives on hybridity” (46). Rogers begins her article by describing “cosmopolitanism” as defined by critics and scholars alike, but specifically relies on the term suggesting “a sloughing off of history and cultural identity in order to ensure harmony and guard human rights” that can either have positive ramifications in the

conflict-rifled globalized reality, but does not, Rogers argues, do less to promote patriotism (46). Nevertheless, as stated above by Welsch, concerning the terms “interculturality” and “multiculturality”, “cosmopolitanism” as a term has a similar problem in that, according to Rogers and other critics she cites, the term presupposes an

increas[e] in cultural hegemony [that it] sets out to eliminate [because] rather than [a] re-valor[ization] [of what] has been marginalized, cosmopolitanism has a tendency to merely commodify the local while continuing to observe through a Western lens, [as] the understanding of cosmopolitanism is rooted in and depends on a particular cultural perspective, which has been created by national and cultural understanding.

(48)

What, then, can be done on the matter? Is this an issue and reality that is only lessened with the passing of time, with generations to come, and as the globalized world becomes more and more amalgamated, so that there will be no basis upon which one could qualify “them” differing from “us”? Writers have written and continue to write on this duality and of the struggle to have a consistent sense of self and identity.

Now that I’ve presented some theories that I found to be pertinent and indispensable in my consideration of these texts, I will now bring in concrete and explicit examples from Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children* and Smith’s *White Teeth* for my analysis of the works in the context of the theory. Considering the notion and feeling of belonging, what does it really mean to “be at home” and to “belong” in general? This is a question that has been building from the onset of this essay and recapitulated by theorists

that I have included, and by Rushdie himself, the latter writing of the desire to either “restore the past” or to start anew in a new city and place (*Imaginary Homelands* 10).

Though both Smith and Rushdie have lived and experienced different cultural realities, if I may, Smith having grown up as half Jamaican and half English in North London and Rushdie having emigrated from India to North London as an adult, both writers are writing from the same vantage point: from their respective desks overlooking North London while being considered, for different reasons, as being culturally “other”. In the introductory pages of his essay collection *Imaginary Homelands*, Rushdie writes, “[w]riting my book in North London, looking out through my window on to a city scene totally unlike the ones I was imagining on to paper, I was constantly plagued by this problem [of imaginary homelands and Indias of the mind]” (10). Rushdie continues and writes, “what I was actually doing was a novel of memory and about memory, so that my India was just that: “‘my’ India, a version and no more than one version of all the hundreds of millions of possible versions” (10). Smith’s *White Teeth* does not face the same predicament per se, as the novel is about transgenerational issues of characters—like the author herself—who had been born into the country as a second generation immigrant. Despite these key differences between the authors, in terms of from what point looking out onto North London they differ, both (potentially) deal with the same problem of creating identity in a world where classifying people who are considered to be the borderline derogatory term “ethnic” in relation to the overriding norm of the place in question is, unfortunately, a reality. How do these two authors, in particular, write of experiences they have lived and felt in their works? Without overstepping and attempting to guess at any sort of authorial intent, it is striking, I have found, to see how authors and

their characters face hybridity, multiculturalism, or transculturality - whichever name suits the elephant-in-the-room-*sans-nom*.

Rushdie's characters struggle with identity qualms of their own. In *Midnight's Children*, Rushdie writes of his protagonist's struggle as having been born in the author's own unease over how to write about his mother country:

I made my narrator, Saleem, suspect in his narration; his mistakes are of the fallible memory compounded by quirks of character and of circumstance, and his vision is fragmentary. It may be that when the Indian writer who writes from outside India tries to reflect that world, he is obliged to deal in broken mirrors, some of whose fragments have been irretrievably lost.

(Imaginary Homelands 10-11)

Midnight's Children is a novel that values, and is based upon, the appreciation and importance of one's past and one's future. The novel is written allegorically and set to show manifestations of what the independence of India could do to a people. The novel was therefore named after the children born at the stroke of midnight at the moment of the country's independence. With this base, Rushdie writes of the ramifications that, although heavily shrouded in elements of magical realism throughout, becomes the country for the new generation of children. These children born at the stroke of midnight have magical powers that enable them, through Saleem's mediation, to communicate between themselves. This idea in general calls to mind theory that I have cited above, notably questions of place, rootedness, and "home": "To understand just one life," the unborn Saleem is told, "you have to swallow the world," and the idea that we all contain fragments of our country and past is depicted throughout the novel in various ways (121).

Rushdie's example of place is literally tied to the land. Being at one with India's independence and "birth," so to speak, Saleem is so connected to his land that, when his family move to Pakistan for a few years, he suddenly is not able to "hear" the other children of midnight, nor does he have memories of his name and his experiences before the move; all memories become hazy when he is removed from India. When Saleem begins to remember himself, after a complicated spiritual ordeal and a coming-around-to-self, Saleem asks himself:

Why, alone of all the more-than-five-hundred-million, should I have to bear the burden of history? . . . Tonight, as I recall my rage, I remain perfectly calm . . . Who what am I? My answer: I am the sum total of everything that went before me, of all I have been seen done, of everything done-to-me. I am everyone everything whose being-in-the-world affected was affected by mine. . . . Nor am I particularly exceptional in this matter; each "I," every one of the now-six-hundred-million-plus of us, contains a similar multitude. I repeat for the last time: to understand me, you'll have to swallow a world. . . . I realized that I had begun, once again, to feel. (440-441)

This strong and primordial connection, as described above, to the land and to one's identity and memory is fascinating. The allegorical idea that one's essence is completely removed, to the point of forgetting one's name and memories, once one leaves one's country of origin, is conflicting, for the following reasons; however, before I begin this interjection of a critic's work into my reading of the novel *Midnight's Children*, I want to underline that I do understand the novel is written as an allegory, as previously mentioned. However, I think it interesting to consider the text in light of what my chosen

theorists have said on the matter, all the while remembering that the novel is not to be read and considered on a “real-life” basis, a basis upon which I would not hesitate to consider Zadie Smith's *White Teeth*. For instance, I can read the novel as an allegory and not over-theorize on the fact that, if Saleem represents India, what could his impotency have to do with my overall analysis of place and person? I would not be overstepping, but instead be manipulating the text in order to benefit my own personal analysis of the work aligned with my views. If we are to consider Cook's comments about Rushdie being able to find “new ways to be human” (23), how does Saleem's episode living in Pakistan undermine the critic's comment? It is true that reality is constructed, as is identity, but I find Cook's comment does not hold water in this particular circumstance given that the character Saleem was so connected to his country that he was completely erased and diminished while not being within the country's boundaries. Rushdie himself writes, again in “Imaginary Homelands,” that the overarching and all-encompassing existential question that an Indian writer faces is the following: “How are we to live in the world? . . . What does it mean to be ‘Indian’ outside India [and] [w]hat are the consequences of embracing those ideas and practices and turning away from the ones that came here with us?” (18). Though I see what Cook is insinuating, I find that Saleem's journey, at least during this section of the novel, undermines the adaptability that Cook and Rushdie both consider to be present in the latter's work. Rushdie says this adaptability is an advantage for the Indian writers, who have “access to a second tradition quite apart from their own racial history. . . and it is perhaps one of the more pleasant freedoms of the literary migrant to be able to choose his parents. My own . . . include Gogol, Cervantes, Kafka, Melville, Machado de Assis; a polyglot family tree . . .” (*Imaginary Homelands* 20-21). It

is this idea of creating the self and having access or creating a “second tradition” that is reality for the characters. This discussion begs the following question: are we better off without history? To be wiped and cleared of it if we are to start over somewhere new?

The idea of a “double” self is also echoed in Zadie Smith’s work and life. Smith has had similar experiences in her life in London, and, as a first-generation Londoner, the writer explains that the ideas in *White Teeth* dealing with “unrootedness” are born from second-generation immigrants who sometimes find it equally difficult to integrate in the first place. In Kathleen O’Grady’s “*White Teeth: A Conversation with Author Zadie Smith*,” Smith cites experiences in her youth as being formative in how she came to conceive *White Teeth* in her early twenties:

If you take the whole of human history as a body or as a person, then there are events within that which are like trauma, like childhood traumas. The Second World War is a trauma like being abused as a child, being slapped over the head with a brick, or whatever. It's a trauma, and it's something that takes generations to get over. And as you know any abuse in the family can be passed down again and again and again. My mother used to work in social work and she definitely saw that process of passing on and how desperate and depressing that is when families pass on their traumas from one generation to the next. (O’Grady 105-106)

Smith goes on to say that she does not know any peer writers of hers who, at the time, had written a book without any mention of the Holocaust, an experience that had been passed down and collectively felt *in utero*, if I may. She goes on to say “[t]hat whole kind of 60s, 70s, liberation ethic that will be released by knowing your roots, that you will

discover yourself . . . [is] a crock basically, and it's partly true, but your roots come with baggage" (106). Smith continues and explains the difference between white Western families compared to families in the eastern part of the world: "[White children] always think of themselves as separate individuals and they get very far that way. . . . But for people from the East every person is their family. . . . That between one void and the other people kind of construct something that makes sense to them" (106, 107). The novel as a whole depicts this beautifully, especially the cultural divide between second-generation children of immigrants, their parents, and overall issues of transgenerational strife, namely, how the second generation chooses who to be, given that they "straddle" cultures.

I found that in my reading of the novel, the work did not force the reader to decide on what has meaning and what does not - instead it seems to flow as would conversation with others in "real life" would; we pick and choose what is important and of essence for ourselves. Smith writes poignantly on complicated issues of hybridity, as demonstrated in Iqbal and Alsana's twin sons, Magid and Millat. The first generation immigrants seem to prefer assimilating with the English culture in London, where the novel takes place, however the younger generation depicted in the novel shy away from assimilating like their parents had, as shown in the following example in an example between parents and son: "Samad growled, '[Magid], [w]hy are you always trying to be somebody you are not? . . . A few months earlier, on Magid's ninth birthday, a group of very nice-looking white boys with meticulous manners had turned up on the doorstep and asked for Mark Smith. 'Mark? No Mark here,' Alsana had said . . . 'Only the family Iqbal in here]'" (Smith 126). Upon discovering that her son had changed his name outside of his home,

Alsana yells, “I GIVE YOU A GLORIOUS NAME LIKE MAGID MAHFOOZ MURSHED MUBTASIM IQBAL . . . AND YOU WANT TO BE CALLED MARK SMITH!”(126). After this tirade, Madid thinks angrily to himself:

But this was just a symptom of a far deeper malaise. Magid really wanted to be *in some other family*. He wanted to own cats and not cockroaches, he wanted his mother to make the music of the cello, not the sound of the sewing machine; . . .he wanted a piano in the hallway in place of the broken door off cousin Kurshed’s car . . . (126)

This is just one example of the novel’s pages that are riddled with generational strife.

The twin brothers Magid and Millat are interesting as a literary device in that they exemplify a response to the question “what if”? The boys are meant to be mirror images of the other in terms of being connected. Magid’s interest in rejecting his cultural heritage saddens and hurts his father to the point that the latter sends his son off to Bangladesh, where he hopes his son would be raised in a more traditional manner that would not have been possible had he remained in England. Magid ends up becoming the opposite of what his father wanted him to become, and Millat, who remained in England, becomes a fundamentalist; this situation is expressed in the following passage:

There are no words. The one I send home comes out a pukka Englishman, white-suited, silly wig lawyer. The one I keep here is fully paid-up green-bow-tie-wearing fundamentalist terrorist. . . . These days, it feels to me like you make a devil’s pact when you walk into this country. You hand over your passport at the check-in, you get stamped, you want to make a little money . . . but you mean to go back! Who would want to stay? Cold, wet,

miserable; terrible food. . .who would want to stay? In a place where you are never welcomed, only tolerated. . . . But you have made a devil's pact...it drags you in and suddenly you are unsuitable to return, your children are unrecognizable, you belong nowhere. (Smith 336)

Millat, on the other hand, seems to handle his duality well, as "in his mind he was as much [in Bengal] as he was in [Willesden]. He did not require a passport to live in two places at once, he needed no visa to live his brother's life and his own (he was a twin, after all)" (183).

This example and idea of "twins" is present in Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* as well, as shown in the character of Shiva. Shiva is not exactly Saleem's twin, but the characters are nevertheless connected from the beginning of the novel, as they had been born the same night and switched at birth, an incident that enables Saleem to live a lavish life with a rich family and for Shiva to be a poor, homeless child. This dichotomy is similar to *White Teeth* in that the two boys mirror one another and are connected, all to demonstrate that one is pulled between what is and what could have been, hence the mention of schizophrenia: a being pulled between two selves, essentially, and two parts of a whole, for some. This notion of "twinning" and a doubling of characters demonstrates hybridity and issues of duality in identity. These issues accomplish a visualization process of reconciliation and restorative elements that exemplify the experience of an identity straddled between two identities, cultures, and above all, one's identity and conception of self, given the environment in question.

In conclusion, I would like to repeat and underline the fact that *White Teeth* ends openly and without any large pronouncements other than the feeling of having read about

characters who very well could live in one's own neighbourhood. Smith herself claimed that she was unable to wrap up the novel as she had wanted because she was overwhelmed by the size of her varied content: "I couldn't resolve a lot of the issues that the book brought up. In the end I kind of threw up my hands and so do all of the characters really" (O'Grady 107). Rushdie echoes a similar feeling in *Imaginary Homelands* in responding to his own existential question of "How are we to live in this world?" by writing "I do not propose to offer, prescriptively, any answers to these questions; only to state that these are some issues with which each of us will have to come to terms" (18). This statement mirrors my own thoughts on the matter. I have not broken any new ground in this work, although I had not anticipated that I would, or could. True, I was able to read and learn of writers like Rushdie and Smith who not only *live* "transcultural" existences but also *write* of them, however implicitly or explicitly in their texts. Like them, I have not come to any conclusions - though I have a hunch there are none to be had, nothing "prescriptive," anyway. The idea was to think about one's place in the world and how people interact with one another. I suppose we have to live fluidly and hesitate to define ourselves, lest we become reduced merely to the words that define us, or that we let ourselves be defined by, and then, perhaps, eventually acting out in accordance to said defining words. How *are* we to live in this world? To return to writer Natalie Goldberg's advice to writers, which I mentioned in my introduction, one must "claim where you come from and look deep into it . . . [i]t is very important to go home if you want your work to be whole" (182). I argue that Rushdie and Smith, looking out their respective windows in North London, demonstrate that "home" is malleable and where one chooses to hang one's multiple hats.

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**AQUA VITAE, AQUA MORTIS: Le système atemporel de l'eau dans l'œuvre
Watermark de Joseph Brodsky**

Par Violène Dauvois

Résumé:

Joseph Brodsky, poète russe de renom, n'a pu retourner sur les terres de son enfance. Loin de Pétersbourg, l'homme ne cesse d'y retrouver ses paysages, ses ressentis, son fleuve, son eau. Dans son œuvre *Watermark*, Brodsky propose un nouveau système temporel *atemporel*, celui où les souvenirs sont aussi présents dans le passé, le présent et le futur, c'est-à-dire dans l'instant. Comme les ondes d'une goutte de pluie qui tombe dans la lagune vénète, les souvenirs se propagent vers le Neva et forment un va-et-vient perpétuel que la mort ne saurait arrêter. *Aqua vitae, aqua mortis.*

Mots-Clés: Atemporalité - Instant - Eau - Passé - Souvenirs - Mélancolie

Joseph Brodsky a souvent répété que sa poésie ne parle finalement que du Temps, le temps qui passe, ses conséquences sur l'Homme, démunis. L'être humain fait face à une force encore plus puissante que n'importe quelle menace à laquelle il peut être confronté : le temps, de notre naissance à notre mort. Nous naissons, nous mourons, et cela est une évidence sur laquelle il nous est impossible d'agir. Cette nature est irrémédiable, autant l'accepter.

Cependant, cette précédente observation n'est valide si, et seulement si, nous restons dans notre système du « temps » tel que nous le connaissons. En d'autres termes, Brodsky qualifie ce système d'historique. Le temps est divisé en trois éléments : le passé, le présent et le futur. Le présent est conséquence du passé et le futur lui-même conséquence du présent. Nous développerons alors les effets plus profonds d'un système temporel imposé et limité au souvenir, au regret et à l'incertitude.

Ce que propose Brodsky dans ses œuvres, et plus particulièrement, dans *Watermark* publié dans sa version originale anglaise en 1992, c'est une autre forme du temps, un autre système temporel issu du flux et du reflux de l'eau.

Les vagues naissent et renaissent, pour apporter naissance à une nouvelle vague, la mort n'est donc plus une peur, mais une suite logique de naissances. La naissance et renaissance des vagues proposent que la mer, le passé, ne change pas, ne disparaît pas, il existe toujours. Où est donc la place des souvenirs ? Existents-ils alors ? (Mellor 171)

L'eau apparaît donc comme un système atemporel, où le temps est infini (Brodsky 13). Pourtant, Brodsky semble soutenir l'affirmation d'Héraclite. Ce commentaire qui dit qu'il ne s'agit jamais de la même eau ni de la même vague, car la réalité n'est pas stable. Les atomes de la première vague, bien qu'identiques dans leur composition, ne sont pas les mêmes que les atomes de la deuxième vague et ainsi de suite.

Nous pouvons ici penser à un duel entre les notions temporelles de l'eau. Dans un cas, le Temps est infini tout comme le mouvement de l'eau et le passé existe mais finalement n'existe pas. Dans l'autre, l'eau n'est jamais la même eau, elle n'est donc plus dans le présent, le passé semble exister. Peut-être est-ce, et je pose cette hypothèse comme la plus probable, notre difficulté à nous éloigner du système temporel historique qui soutient que le passé existe sous forme de souvenirs, et s'il n'existe pas, il s'agit d'oublis.

Dans cet essai, nous voyagerons donc à Venise, ville de l'eau, mais également aux origines, à Saint-Pétersbourg, la ville gelée. Nous définirons ce qu'est l'eau dans ses sens les plus scientifiques et créatifs afin de partir à la recherche d'une renaissance atomisée par un système atemporel et instable. Tout cela mêlé à la beauté d'une poésie enchantée.

Aqua vitae, aqua mortis.

Mais qu'est-ce donc que l'eau ? C'est avant tout deux atomes d'hydrogène et un atome d'oxygène (H₂O). Voilà une question que je me posais il y a de cela quelques années au secondaire en classe de chimie, à observer l'eau sous diverses formes. Un élément m'a toujours fasciné, qu'elle soit gazeuse, plate, d'Evian, de Bonafont, dans un verre, dans un lac, évaporée, liquide, l'eau revient à son état naturel, peu importe les manipulations effectuées sur elle. Intouchable, elle coule comme le temps qui file. Pourtant, elle restera toujours la même.

Le système temporel de l'eau est *atemporel*, ses flux et reflux sont infinis, tout comme ses reflets. Par l'éternité, nous voyons alors s'effacer notre système historique de passé, présent et futur. Nous devons oublier les définitions de ces trois mots, limitées dans notre esprit au seul schéma chronologique qui nous a été imposé.

[...] had life been a solely human affair, one would be issued at birth with a term, or a sentence, stating precisely the duration of one's presence here: the way it is done in prison camps. (34)

Cet éloignement est donc important, voire essentiel, car ce schéma nous enchaîne à la fois au regret du passé et à la peur du futur. N'est-ce pas plus agréable de se laisser flotter au fil de l'eau ? Bien qu'il soit difficile de s'en détacher, la beauté, aussi infinie, de l'eau, ou de sa jumelle, la musique (Brodsky 93), nous donne une seule option, admirer l'instant. L'instant n'est ni passé, ni présent, ni futur ou bien l'est tout à la fois. Les sciences elles-mêmes le démontrent. Une expérience est faite à un instant t , et l'on cherche à savoir ce qu'il se passe à $t+1$, ou $t+2$, pourtant t reste notre référence, car on ne

cherche pas à savoir ce qu'il se passe à x ou y , mais bien à $t+1$ ou $t+2$. t est le présent, le passé et le futur ; il est à proprement parlé l'instant.

Que deviennent alors Héraclite et sa théorie que l'on ne marche jamais deux fois dans la même rivière, car sa réalité -la réalité- est instable, c'est-à-dire en changement perpétuel (O'Connell 72). En continuant hors de notre schéma temporel traditionnel, il semble que les théories se rejoignent. La composition chimique de l'eau reste la même que mentionnée précédemment, mais chacun des atomes est unique en soi, tout comme un jumeau est unique, bien que sa composition ADN soit la même que celle de son frère ou de sa sœur. L'eau est donc la même dans la mer Baltique et dans la mer Adriatique et, pourtant, différente.

Je parle de naissance et renaissance des vagues, de naissance et renaissance des atomes qui les composent. Deleuze parle quant à lui d'*éternel retour*, qui pourrait impliquer un genre d'oscillation constante entre la vie et la mort (Widder 143-144). Longtemps ai-je hésité entre renaissance et résurrection. Cependant, la résurrection implique la mort, et nous ne pouvons considérer la mort de cette eau, car elle est infinie tout comme sa beauté, simplement elle renaît de sa naissance et donc ne ressuscite pas de sa mort. Un exemple concret serait la jumelle de l'eau selon Brodsky : la musique. En effet, les *Noctures* de Chopin restent les *Noctures* de Chopin qu'elles soient interprétées en Chine ou en Argentine, qu'elles soient interprétées par un étudiant du conservatoire de Lyon ou par Vladimir Ashkenazy, qu'elles soient interprétées avec un piano à queue *Yamaha* ou un piano droit *Kriegelstein*. Il ne nous viendrait pas à l'esprit de dire qu'il ne s'agit pas des *Noctures* de Chopin ; les notes restent les mêmes bien que différentes, la musique est la même bien que différente, l'eau est la même bien que différente. Le

changement perpétuel rend alors la musique et l'eau infinies, uniques et semblables. L'atemporalité des jumelles efface le passé, le présent et le futur de notre système historique, pour laisser place au passé, au présent et au futur d'un système infini, pour laisser place à l'instant.

For water, too, is choral, in more ways than one. It is the same water that carried the Crusaders, the merchants, St. Mark's relics, Turks, every kind of cargo, military, or pleasure vessel; above all, it reflected everybody who ever lived, not to mention stayed, in this city, everybody who ever strolled or waded its streets in the way you do now. [...] The music is, of course, greater than the band, and no hand can turn the page. (96-97)

Brodsky est-il finalement en accord avec les propos d'Héraclite? Dans la citation ci-dessus, il indique que cette eau est la même que celle d'antan. Je pense qu'il fait surtout référence à cette symbolique liquide, au chemin emprunté, qui mena les croisés à Venise. Une nouvelle fois, l'eau est la même, mais différente. Mon hypothèse est que Brodsky est en accord avec Héraclite, ici a-t-il simplement exprimé que l'essence de cette eau reste identique et unique. Une piste qui nous met sur la voie est la dernière phrase de la citation : « la musique est, évidemment, meilleure que l'orchestre, et aucune main ne peut tourner la page ». En d'autres termes, j'exprimerai la métaphore de cette façon : l'eau est meilleure que les vagues, et aucun atome ne peut modifier sa trajectoire.

Cet essai tente de comprendre de quelle manière Brodsky exprime la temporalité, par la métaphore de l'eau. Il y a un aspect, mentionné à diverses reprises, qui semble rester ambigu : le passé. Qu'est-ce le passé et existe-t-il ?

Je répondrai tout d'abord à cette ultime question. Oui, le passé existe. Cependant, nous avons vu par Deleuze que le schéma temporel est similaire à un «éternel retour». Le passé n'est donc pas automatiquement dans sa forme d'événement antérieur, sinon est toujours existant au sein de l'instant.

Dans notre système historique, le passé a une place essentielle en ce sens où l'être humain pour ne pas reproduire ses erreurs doit se remémorer des événements, passés. Notre mémoire est ce qui nous permet d'avancer et ne pas entrer dans un cycle infernal.¹⁷ Dans sa théorie de l'intuition de la durée, Bergson soutient que la «mémoire pure», c'est-à-dire la mémoire interne, est celle qui permet la survie de notre histoire au moyen des souvenirs. L'une des formes les plus pures du passé est le présent. (Widder 140). *Watermark* est en soi un recueil de souvenirs de Brodsky lors de ses voyages d'hiver dans la ville éphémère. Nous ne pouvons pas effacer la présence de ce passé.

On winter evenings the sea, welled by a contrary easterly fills every canal to the brim like a bathtub, and at times overflows them. Nobody runs up from downstairs crying, "The pipes!" as there is no downstairs. [...] and human traffic subsides. (92)

Sans le souvenir de tels épisodes dans le passé, la population ne saurait pas que le rez-de-chaussée est constamment inondé en hiver. Le souvenir est inévitable et important dans les systèmes temporel et atemporel.

La différence réside alors dans l'usage fait du souvenir (Mellor 171). Notre schéma temporel laisse place au regret ainsi qu'à l'inconscient, pouvant mener à des

¹⁷Il s'agit également ici d'un débat à développer, car, par exemple, Octavio Paz dans *Le labyrinthe de la solitude* précise que l'Homme est amené à toujours répéter ses erreurs et que l'histoire est là pour le prouver.

souvenirs positifs comme négatifs. Le schéma métaphorique de l'eau, atemporel, ne semble conférer que des instants de paix, le regret n'est pas possible, ni l'incertitude.

Voici un schéma avec lequel je tente de concrétiser cette vision particulière du temps en me basant notamment sur la manière dont la pluie tombe dans la rivière...

SCHÉMA TEMPOREL TRADITIONNEL (CHRONOLOGIQUE)



SCHÉMA ATEMPOREL DE L'EAU (ONDES)

Chaque ligne est un instant qui contient le passé, le présent et le futur à la fois.



Watermark est une œuvre qui relate les souvenirs de Brodsky à Venise, où il avait l'habitude de se rendre en hiver et où dorénavant il passe l'éternité. Cependant, nombreuses sont les références à son autre moitié, à Saint-Pétersbourg, sa ville de naissance et d'enfance, autrefois nommée Leningrad. Ironie du sort, un musée dédié à Brodsky¹⁸ dans *a room and ahalfa* ouvert ses portes au mois de mai, de cette année 2015, alors que lui-même n'est jamais retourné dans sa terre d'origine.

Saint-Pétersbourg est également une ville d'eau puisqu'elle se trouve sur la côte de la mer Baltique, est formée d'îles et a aussi un magnifique fleuve, le Neva. Ses ponts

¹⁸ Le musée se situe au 24 Liteiny Prospekt, à Saint-Pétersbourg; connue sous le nom de *maison Muruzi*.

se soulèvent la nuit pour laisser les bateaux s'engouffrer dans la ville, le parallèle avec Venise s'impose alors à nous. Drôle de nom dirons-nous, le Neva. Que de ressemblance avec la nieve de l'espagnol, la neige du français, ou le nivem du latin. Saint-Pétersbourg est connue pour être la ville gelée ; avec six mois de gel du fleuve par an (Bouillet 1342). Brodsky soutient que l'hiver y est magique, tout comme celui de Venise. Le temps y reste peut-être gelé...

What lies ahead, in other words, may amount not to a story but the flow of muddy water at the wrong time of year. At times it looks blue, at times gray or brown; invariably it is cold and not potable. The reason I am engaged in straining it is that it contains reflections, among them my own. (21)

Le parallèle entre Venise et Saint-Pétersbourg est constant. Les reflets de l'eau de la lagune vénète lui rappellent son enfance, avec ses parents. L'eau semble mobiliser des épisodes douloureux. Les deux villes sont un ensemble d'îles et la présence des ponts et bateaux fait partie du paysage. L'eau de manière générale est réalité des deux villes et régule la ville. Venise est l'homologue de Saint-Pétersbourg et pas seulement sur l'aspect aquatique (MacFadyen 173).

The upright lace of Venetian façades is the best line time-alias-water has left on terra firma anywhere [...] And that's why water takes this answer, twists it, wallops and shreds it, but ultimately carries it by and large intact off into the Adriatic. (42-43)

Venise est sans équivoque la ville de l'eau. Entre ponts, canaux, inondations et pluies, l'eau est partie intégrante de la vie des habitants –et touristes. Le fait que notre

poète la visite en hiver, lui donne une nouvelle dimension d'immobilité, en ce sens où l'eau semble se figer, par le froid et par le calme de la ville. Le sentiment nostalgique est particulièrement important dans l'œuvre et nous renvoie à Saint-Pétersbourg. Dans la citation précédente, nous avons l'impression d'une bouteille jetée à la mer. Quelle mer ? La mer Adriatique, celle qui mène à la mer Méditerranée et par l'ouest fait le tour de l'Europe pour arriver à Saint-Pétersbourg. Combien de courants et navires pourraient couper sa trajectoire ? Une infinité. Que de difficulté pour atteindre la ville gelée. Serait-ce alors un appel au secours ? Un appel à son pays où il ne reviendra jamais ? Pour l'éternité ?

L'œuvre *Watermark* de Joseph Brodsky est bien plus qu'un recueil de souvenirs d'une visite dans la Venise hivernale. Le poète nous fait voyager dans une autre sphère du temps, jusqu'ici peu explorée par notre conscience. Le passé fait partie du présent et plusieurs présents existent. Ce que nous vivons est l'instant. À nous de savoir prospérer vers notre paix intérieure. L'eau c'est la vie, l'eau c'est la mort. Encore faut-il apercevoir leur essence. Entre naissance et renaissance, entre vague et autre vague, entre silence et musique, entre Venise et Saint-Pétersbourg, Brodsky a su nous communiquer ce mouvement de va-et-vient aquatique si mélancolique d'un poète qui n'a pu revoir le *Neva* et ses bateaux naviguer au fil de l'eau.

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La représentation spatio-temporel d'un Berlin mélancolique dans *Les Ailes du désir*

Par Marie-Catherine Allard

Résumé:

Cet article offre une analyse spatio-temporelle de la représentation de la ville de Berlin telle que présentée par le film presque documentaire de Wim Wenders, *Les Ailes du désir*. Afin de bien discerner l'essence historique de la ville ainsi que la quête identitaire de ses citoyens les diverses techniques employées par le réalisateur telles que l'usage de la caméra déchaînée, de séquences tirées d'archives ainsi que l'insertion d'analogies sont ici explorés.

Mots-Clés: Berlin, Bréchification freudienne/Palimpseste, Mélancolie, Non-lieux, Plan aérien, Vergangenheitsbewältigung, Wim Wenders

Selon Karl Scheffler, critique et historien d'art berlinois, "Berlin est une ville à jamais condamnée à devenir sans jamais être"¹⁹ (Traoré "Berlin en 15 citations cultes"). Mais est-ce vraiment le cas? Le fait est que souvent, bien que Berlin ait une identité des plus uniques, on tend à la comparer à d'autres métropoles sur lesquelles divers plans stratégiques sont calqués afin de revitaliser l'image de la ville. Cependant, Berlin se distingue d'autres métropoles par son histoire et sa représentation artistique. Il est vrai que d'autres villes européennes telles que Paris ou Rome sont dotées d'un riche héritage historique. Néanmoins, ni Paris, ni Rome n'offrent aussi visiblement que Berlin les traces de leur passé, car c'est la dichotomie entre l'aspect physique et métaphysique de la ville ainsi qu'entre son histoire et sa contemporanéité qui rend l'atmosphère présente à Berlin incomparable à celle des autres métropoles. Comme le mentionna Martin Luther King, Jr. lors d'une visite de la ville en 1964, Berlin est " le centre autour duquel tourne la roue de

¹⁹ "Berlin ist eine Stadt, verdammt dazu, ewig zu werden, niemals zu sein".

l'histoire.... S'il y a jamais un peuple qui devrait être constamment sensible à son destin, ce devrait être le peuple de Berlin, Est et Ouest²⁰" (Traoré "Berlin en 15 citations cultes"). Dans cet essai, il sera question du caractère authentique de cinéma recherché par le réalisateur du film *Les Ailes du désir* (1987), Wim Wenders. Il sera aussi question des diverses techniques employées par ce dernier afin de présenter au spectateur la configuration de la ville, mais aussi, tel un palimpseste, les différentes strates historiques qui la composent. Afin de mieux discerner l'essence historique de la ville ainsi que la quête identitaire de ses citoyens, diverses analogies présentes au sein du film seront analysées en plus d'aborder plusieurs théories comme celles reliées aux lieux anthropologiques et aux non-lieux, aux films de décombres et à la culpabilité allemande.

L'aspect cinématographique quant à la représentation de la ville est selon moi beaucoup plus précis qu'une plume ou qu'un pinceau. Une caméra capture davantage l'essence d'une scène ou d'un paysage puisqu'elle transmet, sans biais la réalité. Aussi, la caméra réussit à transmettre les éléments qui lors du tournage avaient potentiellement échappés au caméraman. Selon la théorie de Pier Paolo Pasolini, *kino in natura*, le cinéma devrait être synonyme de réalité, dans le sens que celui-ci transmet la réalité qui lui est présentée comme s'il la filmait avec une caméra invisible (Graf 21). La réalité est donc inlassablement projetée par ces scènes. Adapté au grand public, il transmet comme nul autre médium, la réalité d'une société. Pour cet essai, plusieurs facteurs sont entrés en ligne de compte lorsqu'il est venu le temps de choisir le film représentant, selon moi, le mieux la ville de Berlin. Mon choix s'arrêta sur *Les Ailes du désir* de Wim Wenders et ce,

²⁰ "Here in Berlin, one cannot help being aware that you are the hub around which turns the wheel of history. ... If ever there were a people who should be constantly sensitive to their destiny, the people of Berlin, East and West, should be they"

bien qu'il y ait d'autres films beaucoup plus récents se déroulant aussi à Berlin, tels que *Good Bye, Lenin!* (2003) ou *Cours, Lola, cours* (1998). Cependant, je souhaitais un film dont l'objectif principal était de vraiment présenter la ville plutôt que d'adapter ses paysages au récit. En tant que réalisateur, Wim Wenders est reconnu pour son intransigeante préoccupation face à l'authenticité de l'image. Ses œuvres sont généralement décrites comme étant des films documentaires. Pour lui, la caméra doit capter une scène sans la guider afin d'éviter de polluer sa spontanéité. Il croit fermement que le scénario interfère avec la pureté de l'image. C'est en autre pour cette raison que, dans la plupart de ses films, Wenders n'utilise pas de scénario. Les premiers films qu'il a tournés ressemblent beaucoup au film des frères Lumières, *La Sortie de l'usine Lumière à Lyon* (1895) dans le sens que Wenders explore le caractère photographique de la caméra. Il est primordial pour Wenders de représenter le caractère transcendant de ce médium. Le fait que la caméra soit capable d'isoler et de transmettre des images du quotidien qui autrement auraient été ignorées le fascine. Dans *Les Ailes du désir*, Wenders a réalisé son film en s'inspirant de la ville afin de créer au fur et à mesure un scénario. Plusieurs des répliques des personnages ont été improvisées par leur acteur. Par exemple, dans la scène introduisant Peter Falk, celui-ci mentionne qu'il se dirige au tournage d'un film dont il ignore encore le scénario. Comme les scènes ont été filmées chronologiquement, ces répliques font en fait aussi allusion à sa propre ignorance face au scénario (*Les Ailes du désir* 0.04.29). En raison de la préoccupation de Wenders face à l'authenticité de la ville, si l'on exclut l'histoire d'amour entre l'ange, Damiel, et la trapéziste française, Marion, ce film pourrait être considéré en tant qu'archive historique de la ville. Aussi, comme le film se termine de la même façon qu'il a commencé, soit ouvertement, sans élément

déclencheur précis, pour le spectateur, le récit commence et se termine au beau milieu du quotidien de ses personnages. Sans être influencée, voire obligée par son réalisateur à suivre un schéma narratif prédéfini, la caméra capte les scènes qui se présentent à elle, sans se soucier d'inclure une situation initiale ou finale conventionnelle.

Au beau milieu des années 1980, Wenders eut le désir de faire un film à Berlin et sur Berlin. La raison qu'il donna fut qu'il ne se voyait pas produire son film dans un autre endroit. Le titre originel allemand du film est *Der Himmel über Berlin (Le ciel au-dessus de Berlin)*. Comme le terme *Himmel* se traduit aussi par paradis, le titre pourrait aussi être *Le paradis au-dessus de Berlin*. Cependant, comme la topographie aérienne de la ville est un thème crucial du film, je crois que le mot recherché par Wenders est vraiment *ciel* et non *paradis*. La traduction française du titre met, quant à elle l'accent sur l'histoire d'amour entre Damiel et Marion, perdant ainsi la connotation originelle du titre et l'importance vouée à la ville.

La ville est majoritairement présentée sous la focalisation omnisciente de deux anges, Damiel et Cassiel. Comme les anges de Wenders ne peuvent interagir avec les humains, le caractère transparent de la caméra est justifié par la présence de ces êtres immortels. Damiel se promenant dans les rues de Berlin capte des scènes banales du quotidien qui, juxtaposées à d'autres prennent une tout autre importance. Témoin des pensées des Berlinoises, Damiel perçoit leur mélancolie. Mélancolie qui tend plus vers la dépression profonde que vers un spleen passager. L'isotopie dépressive des Berlinoises est tellement ubiquiste qu'elle crée une sorte de symphonie des préoccupations humaines. Le sentiment de culpabilité les accable à un point tel que certains paraissent à jamais inconsolables. Par exemple, Cassiel tente, par la pensée, de sauver un jeune homme du

toit de l'immeuble Mercedes qui souhaite se suicider. Sa souffrance est telle que les efforts de l'ange sont vains (*Les Ailes du désir* 1.08.42). La présence de cette séquence tournée du haut de cet édifice démontre que financièrement la ville est prospère, mais qu'intérieurement, les Berlinoises sont loin de l'être. Le fait qu'ils n'arrivent pas à surmonter la dichotomie entre l'innocence et la culpabilité suggère que la tradition allemande tendant à passer sous silence le passé est vouée à l'échec. La solution insinuée par Wenders dans *Les Ailes du désir* est d'incorporer le passé nazi dans la mémoire collective, et ce, de manière alternative. Par exemple, l'ajout de scènes fictives reproduit l'époque nazie tout en se différenciant des plans documentaires référant aux autres époques. Le fascisme hitlérien est donc abordé par l'histoire de façon à ne pas y être complètement intégré. Wenders a choisi d'inclure au sein de son récit l'histoire d'un ange devenu réalisateur de long-métrage. Incarné par Peter Falk, le réalisateur reproduit sur son lieu de tournage, l'église du Souvenir de l'Empereur Guillaume, l'Allemagne Nazi. Dans les scènes présentant le tournage du film de Falk, Wenders exploite l'omniscience des anges afin de, délicatement juxtaposer la représentation historique de la ville et sa représentation fictive. Il y a une séquence où mentalement Falk se questionne à savoir si les figurants de son film, ceux portant l'étoile jaune, auraient pu, lorsqu'Hitler était au pouvoir, être des victimes de l'holocauste. Cette interrogation en plus des voice-overs provenant des pensées des figurants en question -certains ont froid, d'autres ont faim- accentue le caractère réaliste de la scène. Les voice-overs s'entrecroisent, mélangeant les réflexions des figurants juifs aux pensées antisémites des figurants incarnant des soldats nazis, rendant la relation entre culpabilité et innocence évidente.

Dans *Les Ailes du désir*, en plus d'avoir inséré le tournage fictif du scénario de Falk, le producteur a introduit des séquences documentaires tirées d'archives afin de rendre plus authentique l'historicité de son film. Les images choisies, lesquelles montrent l'omniprésence de cadavres et de ruines, dévoilent au spectateur les conséquences de la Seconde Guerre mondiale. Il est important de souligner que dans *Les Ailes du désir*, aucune scène documentaire provenant de la période nazie ne fut incorporée au film. L'ombre de ce passé plane sur le récit grâce à la nostalgie d'Homère et aux séquences présentant l'après-guerre. D'autres scènes appartenant au passé de Berlin ressurgissent de temps à autre. Par exemple, au travers d'une séquence présentant les rues de Berlin, une scène montre plusieurs femmes nettoyant les décombres et d'autres secouant leur duvet dans ce qui semble rester de leur appartement. Par la nature de cette scène, Wenders fait allusion aux *Trümmerfilme*²¹. Oscillant entre réalité et fiction, ces films utilisaient de manière esthétique les ruines afin d'arriver à une sorte de médiation historique et culturelle. Les insertions documentaires ainsi que les allusions cinématographiques et historiques démontrent à quel point le passé est toujours présent à Berlin.

Après la dénazification de l'Allemagne, et par le fait même de Berlin, il était difficile pour les citoyens de composer avec l'atrocité de leur passé. Le terme *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* est crucial afin de comprendre la quête identitaire individuelle et collective des Berlinois. Littéralement, ce mot allemand veut dire surmonter le passé. Généralement ce concept est employé dans un contexte d'après-guerre. Il suggère d'essayer de comprendre le passé afin d'apprendre à l'intégrer moins honteusement à son propre passé. Le danger, si l'on ne parvient pas à accepter le passé,

²¹ Traduction littérale: Films des décombres.

est, tout comme l'exprime l'aphorisme du philosophe George Santayana, que "ceux qui n'ont pas la mémoire du passé sont condamnés à le répéter". De sorte que, bien que les traces de Germania²² soient dorénavant presque imperceptibles -les édifices construits selon les plans d'Albert Speer furent détruits ou incorporés subtilement à la configuration de Berlin, il est important de consolider passé et présent afin de forger l'identité de Berlin. Comprenant cette nécessité toujours présente en 1987, Wenders incorpora à son récit les diverses époques constituant l'identité de Berlin, y compris celle caractérisée par le nazisme. Afin de ne pas omettre l'importance historique de chacune des périodes historiques de la ville, il choisit même de retourner jusqu' à la genèse de la ville utilisant le caractère immortel des anges dans une scène où ceux-ci se rappellent la formation de la région, à la suite de la fonte d'un glacier. Son film est en quelque sorte une façon de proposer une alternative au vide et à la honte ressentie, après la Seconde Guerre mondiale, par les Allemands.

Les techniques cinématographiques employées par Wenders afin de donner un caractère céleste à ses prises de vues sont remarquables. Pour arriver à reproduire la mobilité de l'ange, Wenders devait trouver un moyen de créer l'impression que la caméra volait. Afin d'y parvenir, il fit appel au cinéaste français Henri Alekan²³. Ce dernier, était reconnu pour sa capacité à rendre poétique²⁴ la prise de vues afin d'émouvoir et faire méditer le spectateur, et ce, tout en maintenant son essence originelle. Ensemble, ils

²² Hitler et Albert Speer conçurent des plans architecturaux afin de reconstruire Berlin et d'en faire la Capitale du Troisième Reich qu'ils nommèrent Germania.

²³ Le nom du cirque pour lequel travaille Marion fait un clin d'œil au cinéaste en lui attribuant son nom de famille.

²⁴ L'aspect poétique fut fondamental à la réalisation du film. L'idée commença à germer en Wenders lorsque celui-ci lut *Les Elégies de Duino* écrit par Rainer Maria Rilke. Plus particulièrement, lorsqu'il lut le poème *Das Lied Des Blinden*. De plus, les quelques dialogues écrits avant le tournage furent produits par Peter Handke, un auteur et scénariste dont la poésie se situe entre la banalité du quotidien et le rêve.

eurent l'idée de représenter la mobilité des anges grâce à une version moderne de la caméra déchaînée²⁵. Conçue par le réalisateur allemand Karl Freund en 1924, et présentée pour la première fois dans le film de Murnau, *Le Dernier des hommes* (1924), cette technique prônait l'usage d'une caméra légère, placée sur un support mobile ou encore sur un harnais afin d'offrir une plus grande mobilité à la caméra. En s'inspirant de cette méthode, Wenders et Alekan purent utiliser une plus grande variété de prises de vues et représenter la perception particulière choisie pour le film.

L'incorporation de plans aériens est facilitée par le caractère angélique du film. Tout au long du film, la caméra se déplace autant de manière horizontale que verticale. Verticale car les plans aériens sont aussi présents sinon plus que les plans terrestres de Berlin. En plus de permettre de géographiquement situer l'action, ces plans jouent un rôle crucial quant à la symbolique du film. Rappelons-nous qu'en 1987, Berlin était toujours physiquement divisé par le mur. Une grande partie du film se situe dans les airs, au-dessus de la ville, et donc dans un ciel qui lui, n'est pas physiquement divisé. Le ciel permet au spectateur de visuellement être témoin de l'absence des limitations physiques restreignant normalement les déplacements entre l'Allemagne de l'Est et de l'Ouest. Le ciel est donc un élément symbolique qui porte à la réflexion critique de la division des deux Allemagnes. C'est donc dans ce même ordre d'idée qu'une autre similarité semble relier le film de Wenders à celui de Murnau. En plus d'être le premier film à avoir introduit la notion de caméra déchaînée, *Le Dernier des hommes* est considéré comme l'un des premiers films du courant artistique ayant succédé à l'expressionnisme allemand,

²⁵ Die Entfesselte Kamera

la Nouvelle Objectivité²⁶. Prenant conscience de leur devoir politique contestataire, les artistes de ce courant sont caractérisés par leur détermination à représenter la réalité tout en offrant un regard critique sur celle-ci. Ce courant artistique né en réaction au mal sociétal découlant de la Première Guerre mondiale se rapproche du courant auquel appartient Wenders, le Nouveau Cinéma Allemand. En utilisant le ciel comme symbole d'unité, Wenders expose de façon critique la division des deux Allemagnes tout en proposant subtilement sa réunification comme solution au sentiment de culpabilité d'après-guerre.

La liberté de mobilité physique entre Berlin-Est et Berlin-Ouest fut l'une des principales raisons entraînant l'interdiction d'accès aux caméras de Wenders en République démocratique allemande. Malgré ses connexions avec le Ministre du Film de la RDA, Wenders ne réussit pas à avoir la permission d'y tourner quelques scènes. Il était impensable pour les dirigeants de Berlin-Est de collaborer à la production de ce film en raison du caractère angélique du scénario. Car en plus de pouvoir voler, les anges de Wenders sont dotés de la capacité de traverser les murs et par conséquent, *le mur* (Hoffgen 150). Vers la fin des années 1980, le mur de Berlin était encore un élément tabou. La plupart des films tournés à Berlin à cette époque n'incluent pas sa présence à leur récit, de sorte que le mur paraît absent du quotidien berlinois. Si l'on examine la signification du mur s'attardant aux théories saussuriennes sur le signe, son intégration au récit de Wenders est audacieuse et sans banalité. Selon Saussure, le signe est composé d'un signifiant, dans ce cas-ci la réalité physique du mur, et d'un signifié, son caractère prohibant. Comme une "sorte de parole silencieuse [le mur] répète toujours la même

²⁶ Die Neue Sachlichkeit

chose: halte, accès prohibé, sortie interdite, par ici on ne passe pas" (Alacevich 8). En permettant à ses anges de le traverser comme bon leur semble, Wenders conteste l'interdit et détruit par le fait même le sens du signe. Physiquement, le mur de Berlin reste le même, mais son caractère prohibant en est ébranlé. Les graffitis sont un autre élément altérant le *signifié* du signe. Ce n'est pas Wenders qui a incité les artistes à recouvrir d'images le Mur de Berlin, cependant, il souligne l'importance des graffitis sur le côté Ouest du mur grâce à diverses prises de vues. Par exemple, lorsque Daniel, la tête en sang, découvre le monde en couleur de l'humanité, il apprend à différencier le rouge du bleu, le vert du jaune, etc., grâce à un passant qui lui explique ces distinctions grâce aux graffitis sur le mur. Le fait que les graffitis soient superposés sur le mur diminue son degré prohibitif "le rabaissant à la fonction servile de simple support" (Alacevich 12). En privilégiant les plans du mur, Wenders s'en sert aussi comme support... comme support visuel, mais surtout, comme support critique. Daniel nouvellement humain doit apprendre à vivre comme tel. Sa toute première expérience en tant qu'homme concerne sa prise en compte du mur et de ses couleurs. Il examine en détail les graffitis afin de mieux comprendre le monde qui l'entoure. Selon moi, cette scène est une allégorie créée par Wenders, afin de démontrer que le peuple allemand doit cesser d'essayer d'enterrer ses tabous et qu'il doit tout comme Daniel, s'y confronter afin de tenter de les comprendre et ainsi, réussir à intégrer pleinement le présent. Un autre point important à se rappeler concerne le fait que les graffitis sont présents sur le côté Ouest du mur et non sur son côté Est. Il est vrai qu'il était impossible pour les citoyens de la RDA de s'approcher assez près du mur afin d'y peindre quoi que ce soit. Cependant, ce n'est pas l'absence de graffiti de leur côté du mur qui est remarquable, mais bien leur présence du côté Ouest... du côté

supposément libre. "La peinture du Mur fut [...] une opération cosmétique, similaire à celle à laquelle les prisonniers veulent soumettre les parois à leurs cellules" (Ibid. 12), de sorte qu'au final, si les habitants de Berlin-Ouest ont ressenti le besoin de peindre le mur, c'est qu'eux aussi s'en sentaient prisonniers. Wenders sous-entend donc qu'afin de remédier à l'isotopie dépressive des Berlinoises, il faudrait que ceux-ci, autant ceux de l'Est que ceux de l'Ouest, reconsidèrent l'importance de tabou, tel que le mur, dans leur vie.

Wenders porta aussi une attention particulière à la Postdamer Platz, un endroit marquant quant à l'image historique de la ville. La séquence introduisant l'endroit montre Homer, un vieil homme, se rappelant nostalgiquement de la Postdamer Platz d'antan. Bien que le livre de Marc Augé sur les non-lieux ait été publié une dizaine d'années suivant la sortie du film, ses explications sur le continuum possible entre les lieux anthropologiques et les non-lieux reflètent la représentation de la Postdamer Platz dans le film. Selon Augé, les lieux anthropologiques sont des endroits qui se veulent "identitaires, relationnels et historiques" (Augé 77). Ces endroits doivent donc permettre à un ou plusieurs individus de former leur identité individuelle et collective, en plus de leur permettre de sociabiliser et créer de nouveaux liens. Les non-lieux quant à eux sont définis par l'absence de ces éléments. Les non-lieux peuvent cependant potentiellement devenir des lieux anthropologiques et vice-versa. Par exemple, dans le film de Wenders, marchant dans l'espace vacant délaissé de la Potsdamer Platz, Homère se remémore l'endroit tel qu'il était durant la période de la République de Weimar (1918-1933). La Postdamer Platz de son souvenir apparaît comme le lieu anthropologique qu'elle était à l'époque, tandis que la Postdamer Platz de la scène présente un non-lieu. En effet, bien que le spectateur et l'ange entendent les pensées de l'homme, aucune relation entre eux et

Homère n'est possible. De plus, dans ces années d'après-guerre, ce lieu ne joua plus aucun rôle quant au développement identitaire. Cependant, à l'époque où l'endroit était considéré le cœur de Berlin, la Postdamer Platz était un lieu anthropologique significatif autant pour le vieil homme que pour sa communauté. Tellement, que quelques décennies après sa destruction, Homère s'y promène encore nostalgique, se rappelant à quel point, avant la Seconde Guerre mondiale, l'endroit était plein de vie. Il se remémore parfois, combien, regardant la foule, il aimait déguster un café chez Josti et fumer le cigare à la tabagie Loese et Wolf (*Les Ailes du désir* 0.41.36). Sa mélancolie face à la Postdamer Platz permet à l'auditeur d'apercevoir les différentes strates historiques qui composent le passé de Berlin. De façon antéchronologique, la séquence présente premièrement au spectateur la Postdamer Platz divisée par le mur de Berlin, rappelant ainsi le présent (1987) d'Homère. Par la suite, une courte scène en couleur est introduite montrant les bâtiments bombardés lors de la Deuxième Guerre mondiale. Se remémorant que l'endroit fut jadis tapissé des drapeaux du Parti Nazi, Homère fait allusion au nazisme et ses conséquences. Il insinue que lorsque la Postdamer Platz fut revêtue par la croix gammée, l'identité des gens changea, ils devinrent plus austères. Avec l'arrivée d'Hitler au pouvoir et les bombardements des alliés, ce lieu anthropologique devint au fil des ans un non-lieu. Comme le film fut produit avant la chute du mur de Berlin (1989), autant Wenders que le personnage d'Homère ne pouvaient prédire que la Postdamer Platz allait redevenir, quelques années plus tard, un lieu anthropologique. Toujours selon Augé, un lieu peut, dépendamment des heures, des jours, et dans ce cas-ci des décennies, alterner entre un non-lieu et un lieu anthropologique. Lorsqu'un lieu, ayant les caractéristiques précédemment mentionnées, se voit, pour une période laissé vacant, il peut devenir un

non-lieu. Dans le même ordre d'idée, Homère, pensant à la Postdamer Platz, mentionne que: "celui abandonné par son audience mortelle, perd [par conséquent] sa voix" (Wender 0:43:43). Homère ne perd cependant pas espoir. Il pense -et donc dit au spectateur- qu'il n'abandonnera jamais l'idée de retrouver l'endroit de son souvenir, car pour lui, cet espace vacant n'est pas vraiment la Postdamer Platz. L'acteur l'incarnant, Curt Bois, eut, comparativement à son personnage, la chance de voir renaître l'endroit après la chute du mur séparant l'Allemagne de l'est de l'Allemagne de l'Ouest. Le choix de Bois dans le rôle d'Homère est pour Wenders une allégorie, car "ni ange ni homme, [Bois] était les deux à la fois puisqu'il avait l'âge du cinéma" (Wenders *Le souffle de l'ange* 72). Au début des années 1990, Berlin devint la capitale de l'Allemagne réunifiée. La Postdamer Platz, étant située au croisement des deux Allemagnes, devint l'endroit de prédilection pour la création d'une nouvelle identité berlinoise. Ce lieu redevint alors significatif autant physiquement que symboliquement pour les citoyens. Plusieurs constructions furent entreprises faisant de ce lieu, le plus important chantier d'Europe. De nos jours, la Postdamer Platz est rarement au repos. Lieu de rencontre des Berlinoises et de ses touristes, l'endroit reste, malgré ses récentes constructions, un symbole historique du passé allemand.

Dans son article "Critical urban heritage: from palimpsest to brecciation" en réponse à l'analogie faite entre l'identité urbaine et le palimpseste, Nadia Bartolini propose comme alternative la notion de bréchification freudienne. Selon elle, avant de généraliser et de qualifier une ville de palimpseste en se référant à sa surimposition historique, on devrait considérer que le présent de certaines villes ne *s'empile* pas forcément linéairement de manière à recouvrir en apparence son passé, mais qu'il

s'incorpore, dans certains cas, à l'identité de la ville de façon enchevêtrée. Le concept introduit par Bartolini provient de Freud qui, en 1916, l'utilisa afin d'exemplifier l'idée du rêve et ses composantes. Il compara le rêve à une pièce de brèche, une roche formée par l'accumulation d'éléments. Je conviens que l'idée de la bréchification comme analogie est beaucoup plus adaptée à certaines villes. Cette analogie pourrait s'appliquer au patrimoine architectural de Berlin qui, tout comme une brèche, est composé par son accumulation historique: la colonne de la victoire²⁷ renvoie à la Prusse, le stade olympique à l'Allemagne Nazi, etc. Cependant, la ville en tant que telle, son identité et sa représentation, ne pourrait pas être décrite comme telle. En raison de la guerre et de nombreux bombardements, peu de bâtisses furent épargnées. Berlin est une ville dont le futur s'adapte constamment à son époque en se réécrivant et se reconstruisant: "Le futur ne s'envisage qu'à travers cette antériorité du temps: l'avenir est toujours déjà un futur antérieur" (Habib 230). Dans le film de Wenders, plutôt que de juxtaposer les différentes périodes historiques de la ville, le réalisateur choisit de faire ressurgir le passé petit à petit grâce à l'intégration de la reconstruction fictive de Falk et aux scènes documentaires. De cette façon, le spectateur peut plus facilement différencier l'univers spatio-temporel du récit de celui qui le compose. Comme Wenders emploie la caméra de façon à transmettre la scène ayant lieu au moment du tournage, celui-ci intègre des fragments documentaires afin de ne pas recréer fictivement le passé. Il insère donc des plans d'archives qui offrent au spectateur de Wenders, des scènes antérieurement captées sur le vif. Ces intégrations sont justifiées par la présence de Daniel et de Cassiel, qui, en raison de leur caractère immortel et angélique, peuvent visuellement se remémorer le passé de la ville. Pour ce qui est des scènes reliées à l'époque de l'idéologie nazie, bien que les deux anges aient

²⁷ Nom allemand: Siegessäule

supposément aussi été témoins de cette période, il était probablement éthiquement immoral pour Wenders d'utiliser et d'intégrer des archives produites sous le régime nazi. Bien que le film fût entamé en 1986, soit quarante et un ans après la chute d'Hitler, cette période historique hantait toujours la mémoire des citoyens allemands. Par conséquent, présenter l'implication de Berlin dans les plans du Führer n'aurait fait que raviver le malaise et la honte des Berlinoises. Afin de ne pas exclure cette période de son film, et d'en quelque sorte l'assumer consciencieusement, Wenders demanda à Peter Falk de participer à son film et d'y incarner le rôle d'un réalisateur américain venu à Berlin pour produire un film sur la Seconde Guerre mondiale. Le fait qu'il ait choisi un Américain afin de jouer le rôle du réalisateur lui permit d'amplifier la distinction entre la réalité et la fiction, car contrairement à lui, le cinéma hollywoodien se servait des prises de vues afin de répondre au besoin de leur scénario plutôt que de représenter de manière transparente la réalité. Donc en incluant cette touche américaine, il put incorporer le passé obscur de Berlin tout en s'en distançant. Aussi, comme Falk incarne un ange devenu homme, il est le seul à vraiment pouvoir faire le pont entre l'humanité et les anges. Produisant un film sur cette période, le personnage de Falk réussit partiellement à combler le vide historique laissé dans le souvenir des Berlinoises par la Seconde Guerre mondiale. Il crée donc aussi un pont entre l'avant et l'après-guerre. Mais réussit-il vraiment que partiellement? Bien que la représentation du fascisme hitlérien soit fictive, son réalisme peut être ambigu. Même si pour Wenders il est clair que la caméra, lorsqu'elle n'est pas guidée par un scénario, capte la réalité, il sait que le cinéma américain a perdu cette capacité. Il est donc difficile pour le spectateur de différencier le fictif du réel. En conséquence, il choisit d'exploiter cette ambiguïté, entre autres, lors d'une scène où de jeunes Berlinoises voyant Falk marcher dans

les rues de Berlin se demandent si celui-ci est bien le populaire détective Colombo. Rappelons- nous que le personnage fictif de Colombo fut incarné par Falk pendant de nombreuses années. Cette scène démontre que ces jeunes ne font pas la distinction entre le personnage et l'acteur, car ils réfutent leur hypothèse en mentionnant l'improbabilité que Colombo soit en Allemagne. Ils acceptent sans trop de difficulté son existence, mais pas sa présence à Berlin. Wenders démontre ainsi qu'il est conscient que son audience peine parfois à faire la distinction entre ces deux mondes. Il se sert de ce doute afin de permettre à Falk d'intégrer cette partie de l'histoire à son film. De façon un peu plus subtile, le choix des acteurs pourrait potentiellement avoir aidé à créer cette ambiguïté. Si le spectateur a peine à distinguer l'acteur du personnage, qu'arrive-t-il lorsqu'un acteur tel que Bruno Ganz devient protagoniste de l'œuvre? La raison de mon questionnement est reliée au fait que Ganz, l'acteur incarnant Daniel, est aussi l'acteur ayant incarné Adolf Hitler dans *La chute*²⁸ (2004) réalisé par Oliver Hirschbiegel. Un autre rôle incarné par Ganz est Jonathan Zimmermann, qui, vers la fin du film *L'Ami Américain*²⁹ (1977) réalisé par Wenders lui-même, décide d'accepter l'offre de Ripley, un Américain et de commettre un meurtre. Sachant qu'inciter par Falk, un ancien ange devenu un réalisateur américain, Daniel décide de laisser son immortalité angélique et de devenir humain, la relation entre Zimmermann et Daniel peut être faite de façon à ce que le premier laisse présager les choix du deuxième. Bref, si le choix n'est pas une coïncidence due à leur amitié, Wenders a potentiellement choisi Ganz afin d'encore une fois diminuer le vide collectif et individuel laissé par le passé nazi de l'Allemagne et ainsi délicatement intégrer l'histoire à son film.

²⁸ *Der Untergang*

²⁹ *Der Amerikanische Freund*

En somme, c'est par son souci de l'authenticité cinématographique que Wim Wenders réussit à produire un film, qui peut aujourd'hui être considéré comme un film documentaire représentatif de son époque. Inspiré par la poésie et la ville de Berlin, Wenders a su incorporer les scènes fictives aux archives historiques afin de représenter le mal identitaire de toute une génération. Qui aurait cru qu'un film, sans réel scénario ni schéma narratif, dans lequel se côtoient improvisation et innovation cinématographique, serait parvenu à transmettre de façon considérablement transparente, le quotidien des Berlinoises. Bref, c'est en observant attentivement les divers lieux et constructions formant l'identité architecturale de la ville, tels que la Postamer Platz et le mur de Berlin, que Wenders et Alekan captèrent, grâce aux prises de vues innovatrices de leur caméra, la réalité physique et émotionnelle de la ville. Ce qui par conséquent, permit à Wenders d'offrir un point de vue critique face au passé de la ville et les préoccupations alarmantes de ses citoyens.

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Power and Desire / Désir et Pouvoir

It's Official: Maori- "The "Indigenous" Official Language of New Zealand

By Narayanamoorthy Nanditha

Abstract:

Languages around the world are disappearing at an alarming rate. Language revitalization can help a "lesser used," "[m]inoritized," or "endangered" language be taken and returned to active use. The Maori are an indigenous population in New Zealand whose language, Te Reo Maori, is a lesser-used language when compared to English. The tremendous efforts put forth by the Maori people to revitalise their language has resulted in an increased awareness about their culture and has saved their saved their language from the brink of extinction. This research paper discusses the revitalization of the Maori language, specifically in the domains of education and the media. It also looks at the various social attitudes of both the Maori and the Non-Maori people towards the language and how that has affected the revitalization projects in New Zealand. This paper also briefly discusses whether the official status was just to recognize the language or to reverse language shift and help revitalize the language.

Keywords: Maori language, Indigenous, New Zealand, Language Revitalization, Education, Media, Official Status, Social Attitudes, Te Re Maori, Language Nests, Indigenous Language, Reversing Language Shift

Maori, or Te Reo Maori, is a language spoken by the Indigenous Maori population of New Zealand and belongs to the family of Eastern Polynesian languages. It is closely related to other Polynesian languages like Tahitian, Tuamotuan, and Haitian, particularly in vocabulary, though linguistic variation between the languages is also apparent.

The history of the Maori language has been one of considerable ups and downs in the past 200 years. In the 1800s, Maori was still the "prevailing language" up until the arrival of the white man (Winitana 1). The white man would bring with him the English language, which would eventually overtake Maori and confine it to isolated communities and populations in New Zealand (1). This dismissal, and eventual suppression, of Te Reo

Maori by the English language was, in fact, so subtle that “it took several years before the Maori community recognized the need to revitalise their dying language” (1). Thus began one of the biggest language revitalisation movements in recent years, which has since become an example to other languages in the same situation.

Te Reo Maori was given the status of official language alongside English in New Zealand with the establishment of the Maori Language Act in 1987. The language was, in fact, taken to the Waitangi Tribunal in 1985, which declared Te Reo Maori a *Taonga*, or “treasure”, that was to be protected under the Waitangi Treaty. A strong revitalisation project, and the persistent struggle of the Maori population to revive their dying language and their cultural identity, has succeeded in increasing the awareness of the language among both the Maori and the “Non-Maori” population. It has equally contributed to an increase in the number of Maori speakers in New Zealand. According to the 2013 statistics provided by the government of New Zealand, about 125,352 or 23% of Maori can hold a conversation in their language about everyday things.

In this essay, I will talk about the reason for the decline of the language, and the revitalization projects undertaken primarily in the sphere of education and the media. I will also briefly discuss the attitudes of the Maori and the non-Maori population towards the Te Reo Maori and attempt to briefly examine whether the “official status” of the language was given primarily to reverse the language shift or to “officially” recognize an indigenous as a national language alongside English.

According to Chris Winitana in *My Language my Inspiration*, within a few years of the arrival of the white man or the Pakeha, the Maori community “grasped the English language” (2). Particularly after the influx of different populations, including the British,

the Maori had to adapt to speaking the language of opportunities. English was seen as beneficial and Te Reo Maori was not passed on to further generations. Parents refused to teach the language to their children and Te Reo Maori was forbidden in schools. Winitana notes that, “[i]t was the Maori parents who pushed for their children to be taught in English in schools” (2). Native speakers refused to speak the language and the children at schools were punished if they spoke in Maori. However, we can argue that almost all minoritized languages face a similar plight and the language becomes “lesser-used” when there is a cultural shift in the attitudes of the population with respect to the language. Te Reo Maori was no different. Another driving factor in the decline of the language was the exodus of most of the population living in isolated Maori communities to urban cities, primarily after the Second World War. According to the 2004 statistics, about 84% of the Maori population had moved to urban centres due “to the lure of work and money” (3), and, as is inevitable, “in the cities, where people spoke English, Maori parents made a collective decision to use English instead of Maori” (Benton 16).

Even after the Second World War, statistics show that close to 25% of Indigenous children were well-versed in their mother tongue, and it was not until the 1970s that the revitalisation movement finally took off and the “petition for the language was placed before the parliament” to enable teaching the language in schools (Winitana 5). During these years, there was some crossover between English and Te Reo Maori with respect to trade and other government activities. However, the *Pakeha*, or the European settler population in New Zealand, increased over the years, the Maori did not see a reason to protect their language. It was evident that Te Reo Maori was dying, and its use was declining in both the public and private spheres of the community.

The revival of most “minoritized” languages starts with the teaching of the language in schools and other educational institutions and with the will of the community to start a revitalization project. Education was, therefore, an important and ideal starting point for the revitalization of Maori. However, I argue that simply concentrating on education and the teaching of the language means limiting the access to, and eventually the use of, the language in informal public settings. That is to say, the Maori population would not be using the language in public or with the Pakeha. Perhaps being a “minority”, they would become so accustomed to speaking only to each other that they would forget how to speak effectively to others (Fishman 19). An ordinance was introduced by Sir George Grey in 1857 stated that education needed to be carried out in English. This impacted the Maori language heavily since the beginning of the 1900’s.

In 1972, after the Maori Language Society’s petition was signed, the language began to be taught in schools. A number of teachers were trained since there was a serious dearth of teachers able to teach Te Reo Maori in the educational establishments. There were four training institutions that offered one-year course, so that teachers could immediately start teaching Maori in Senior Secondary schools in the region (Winitana 6); however, it was not until 1978 that the Maori realized the importance of reviving their dying language. It was the survey conducted by Benton that finally proved that Maori had to be saved (6). *Te Wharekura o Ruotoki* first opened its doors in 1896, to both the Maori and non-Maori population. It was the first bilingual school of its kind in New Zealand. Though 99% of the students enrolled are Maori, I argue that the school has encouraged students from the Maori community to invest in a bilingual education at the very least. It

helped in “the commitment of the Maori world to pulling back its language from the depths of the abyss” (7).

Another important step was to ensure that the education did not feel forced on the Maori population, who already resented their language, and to devise new and interesting language learning options to integrate the language into everyday use. Mothers and children needed to be taught their language and it was important to ensure a practical way of teaching it. The *Rakau Method*, or *Te Ataarangi*, was one such method that was invented by expert Katarina Mataira. It uses coloured rods as a teaching method and “remains highly popular to this day” due to its unique and entertaining character (Winitana 7). The classes are community-based and informal, with in an immersion environment. It was devised in this “non-threatening” and “unforced” manner so that learners and re-learners of the language would not be discouraged from learning. When the community realized that the New Zealand government and the Crown would do little to fund revitalisation projects in education, the idea of the *Language Nest* was born. The idea was for the older generation of native Maori speakers to enter the project to take part in early childhood education. It is, as Winitana calls it, “a philosophy in which a baby is fed with the milk of its language to produce a Maori thinking and speaking adult” (8). The Language Nests are primarily kindergartens where the children can learn their language in the presence of the elders in a comfortable and home-like environment. Several other “lesser-used languages” like Hawaiian have adapted this revitalisation model. According to Al Jazeera, the number of people speaking Maori has increased since the creation of Language Nests: about 25% of Maori can now speak and understand the language, and it has contributed to the rapid resurgence of the language and helped

the Maori from dying out completely. Despite this, I argue that it will take several years for the language to be used outside the school setting in a completely bilingual environment, no matter how formal or informal the learning has been made. This can be attributed to the still prevailing lax attitude of the population towards the language. However, the various revitalisation projects taken up by the Maori community have been successful in turning the tide towards the integration of the language, primarily in the minds of the new learners and the younger generation.

Three years after the Maori language was recognized as a national treasure in New Zealand, Maori found its way into the media. It is interesting to note how Maori language revival through the media was extremely difficult to undertake. Whether due to lack of funding or interest among the Non-Maoris and Maoris alike, it was not very well received until very recently. The revitalisation first started with a television program called *Te Karere*, a news service in the Maori language. However, this program failed to spur the revitalisation movement further. In 1983, the first Maori radio broadcast station *Te Upoko o Te Ika* began. Again, it was met with disdain, and the broadcasting was not very successful in bringing the community together to speak or practice the language. In 1989, the *Te Mangai Paho* was established to fund the Maori broadcasting, and more than 20 radio stations in Maori were born. This proves the significant lack of a positive attitude towards the language by the Maori and the Non-Maori population alike.

It would still be a few years before the notion of Maori language promotion through the media became well accepted. Many other initiatives, like the Aotearoa Television network, were put forward but failed to last longer than a few years. Gradually, during the 1990s and the 2000s, the New Zealand government began targeting

youth by broadcasting youth programs. Therefore, the government and the media worked together to bring about awareness of the language and its dire need for revitalization. Al Jazeera states that the television channels and radio broadcasts influenced more than 21% of the Maori youth who have since started speaking Maori. Therefore, although it has taken a considerable amount of time for the media to cooperate with the government, it eventually succeeded in contributing to the revival of the Te Reo Maori.

Rawinia Higgins and Poia Rewi, in their article “Right Shifting: Reorientation towards Normalization”, describe the ZePA model, which explains how the population in New Zealand has reacted in the past with the respect to their language (22). They explain that there are three major states: zero, passive, and active, wherein zero means absolutely no reaction from a section of the population. Therefore, “those in the zero are dismissive and resistant to acknowledgement for the Maori language” (23). The individuals or larger communities that come under zero are the most blatantly indifferent towards the language and are not concerned whether Maori is a part of their constitution. It is also possible to question with this point whether the concept of complete bilingualism could function in a zero society. That is to say, if there are communities that are completely indifferent to the second official language, and who do not see either the need to speak or even acknowledge that language, bilingualism would be difficult to attain in the context of New Zealand as a whole.

The second state is that of a passive spectator. Passive includes those who are “receptive to the Maori language yet have no proficiency in the language whatsoever” (Rawinia Higgins and Poia Rewi 23). “They are accommodating of the language” and acknowledge it as a part of their society (23). I believe that this includes a number of

non-Maori populations along with a few Maori who have yet to actively participate in the revitalisation movement. However, this group has supported the presence of the language, and, therefore, the community, and has helped achieve the status that Maori has attained in their community. The third state is that of active speakers who “actively strive to advance the Maori language in all arenas” (23). This could include anyone, though primarily those from the Maori community who seek to promote the language in all spheres and ensure that resources are available in the language for anyone wishing to use them.

All three types of communities exist alongside one another in New Zealand, and the public attitude is neither completely for nor against the Maori language. Do we, therefore, need new and consistent methods of language revival so that every citizen can acknowledge, recognize, and participate in the revitalization of Maori? If yes, then Maori still has a long way to go. However, it is also evident that the community and the government have successfully implemented one of the largest and most influential revitalisation movements and have contributed to the increased numbers of people willing to speak Maori.

Therefore, the question we need to ask is whether the official status of the Maori language has made any difference on how it is perceived in society? Is granting an ‘indigenous’ language the status of an official and national language enough to revive a dying language and to give it give it official and sufficient recognition?

I argue that the official status of the language has no bearing on the current situation of the Maori language. According to recent statistics, it can be seen there is a significant decrease in the numbers of speakers of Maori in New Zealand. Certain

communities still believe that Maori has “no future” and that it is a language that should “remain in the past” (Rawinia Higgins and Poia Rewi 26). Is it simply due to the fact that Maori is an indigenous language? I agree with Stephen May when he states that, “minority languages are just carriers of tradition or historical identity. Minority languages will eventually come to be seen as delimited even by native language speakers” (27).

I believe that this is the reason perhaps that Te Reo Maori has official status in the country: to glorify the past history and tradition. Even in the courtroom, the law does not permit the submission of documents in the Maori language. Moreover, there is an ever-growing need for translators and interpreters both inside the courtroom and outside, thereby making the actual need for the language redundant.

I believe that it is important to bring the revitalisation movement to the people. Maori and Non-Maori alike should be included in policy-making for the revitalisation of Maori. It would be wiser for the Maori community to focus not just on their community and the recognition they give themselves. It is also important to include the *Pakeha* in celebrating as well as contributing to the Maori language, culture, and identity. If every New Zealand citizen recognizes the need to revive a dying culture, the language would not remain “lesser used” for long. Although the number of Maori speakers has decreased after the “Maori boom” in the 1980s and 1990s, 80% of Maori youth, and about 70% of non-Maori youth, agreed in a large scale survey that the language should be made compulsory in schools to enable a higher proficiency for all children. It is important that the people and the government allow its integration into society because Maori language is a matter of public and national policy, not just something for the Maori homes.

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Father, Where Are You Going: The Image of Father in Ōe Kenzaburō's Short Stories

By Ren Ziyue

Abstract:

The father-son relationship is a recurring theme in Kenzaburō Ōe's works. In his short story collection *Teach Us to Outgrow Our Madness*, Ōe portrays several alienated and alienating fathers, which challenge the traditional images of the father. The aim is to explore the image of the father in this collection of stories in relation to their cultural and historical background. By using an existentialist approach and new historicism, this study demonstrates that the portrait of the father is connected to Ōe's traumatic experience in his personal life and reflects post-war Japanese society.

Keywords: Japan, Ōe Kenzaburō, father, son, family, Second World War, Japan in the Second World War, father-son relationships, existentialism, new historicism

Ōe Kenzaburō, the winner of the 1994 Nobel Prize for Literature, is a major figure in contemporary Japanese literature. Most of his works deal with political, social, and philosophical issues by describing family and personal matters, and expressing the disillusionment and rebellion of the post-war generation. His writings have prompted much discussion among readers on a wide range of subjects. As Ōe commented, “the fundamental method of my writing has always been to start from personal matters and then to link them with society, the state, and the world in general” (Claremont 46). Family is a microcosm of society, and difficult or morbid relationships, which are a permanent feature in his early works, are one of the most important themes. The father in Ōe's works usually challenges the traditional image of the father who is supposed to be protective and fatherly. Rather, Ōe's characters seem to have difficulties establishing a close relationship within the family. After the Second World War, people's mindset had been much influenced. Literature, as a vehicle for the representation of

history, does contain insights into the formation of historical moments. Besides, Japanese culture has also contributed to the tough situation.

Many studies have been done about father and son relationships in Ōe's works, but there have been few that focus on the image of father. This paper is to explore and analyze the image of father in Ōe's short stories using an existentialist approach and new historicism. The materials of the paper are three novellas from Ōe: *The Day He Himself Shall Wipe My Tears Away*, *Prize Stock*, and *Teach Us to Outgrow Our Madness*. An existentialist approach will be utilized to analyze and understand the way in which the characters experience and deal with loneliness and alienation. New historicism will also be used to study Ōe's portrayal of the father in historical context, and to explore politics, class, and power distribution in his works.

Keiko Kobayashi discusses William Blake's influences on Ōe's writing. He identifies two forms of the influences: one is the overwhelming evocative power of the polysemous fragments to inspire Ōe; the other is Blake's various themes with his own central preoccupation, such as father and son, family, and brotherhood. Yasuko Claremont, in her book *The Novels of Ōe Kenzaburō*, talks about the themes of shame, freedom, isolation, and existentialism in Ōe's works. She also points out that Ōe focuses instinctively on negative attitudes in the human personality as described by Sartre. Cynthia Naomi Moss analyzes the father and son relationship from a historical and political perspective. In relation to the history and Japan's international standing and prestige, she compares the father's obesity to Japan's historical baggage. Finally, Reiko Tachibana focuses on power relations in the story. Contrasting the administrative subdivisions of governmental power in the US and Japan, Tachibana shows that the Emperor's image and words are used as an instrument of control over the lives of the people and their enemies.

Ōe was born in 1935 in Ōse, a mountain village on the island of Shikoku. He was the third son of seven children. In 1944, Ōe's father was killed in the Pacific War. The experience of losing his father in early childhood has had a great influence on his early works, especially those about family relationships. When Kenzaburō Ōe was 28, and already a cult writer for Japan's postwar youth, his first child was born in 1963 with a herniated brain pushing out of his skull, the "two-headed monster baby" of Ōe's later fiction ("Japan - Kenzaburō Ōe"). As a child, Ōe had few experiences of talking with his father; as a father, he is unable to establish a dialogue connection with his mentally-handicapped son. Thus, loneliness and the sense of powerlessness is all over his works about the father and son relationship.

In Ōe's novella *Teach Us to Outgrow Our Madness*, he focuses on the relationship between a mentally handicapped son and an obese father. In the short story, the father, who is called "the fat man", gives the child the name Mori, which means "forest" in Japanese. The forest has multiple meanings in Japan's culture and history. The concept of forest, or trees, is usually associated with death, rebirth, and the cycle of life. It implies the inseparable connection between father and son. To avoid embarrassment, he gives his son the nickname Eeyore from *Winnie the Pooh*, which seems to create a barrier between the child and society. Ōe, in his book *Rouse Up O Young Men of the New Age!*, explains that his writing about Eeyore is inspired by Blake's poem *Father, Where Are You Going*:

Father! father! where are you going?

O do not walk so fast

Speak, father, speak to your little boy

Or else I shall be lost. (126)

It seems the poem is narrated from the perspective of a helpless child; however, it can also be understood as the father's longing to protect his little boy. The father assumes a role of a passive victim and drops out of society to look after his son. He takes his son to a Chinese restaurant for pork noodles and Pepsi-Cola every day, which is intended to introduce Eeyore to the pleasure of eating and then satisfy the father's own feelings.

The fat man has imagined an intimate relationship between himself and his son. By touching hands, the father believes he can feel his son's pain, and even relieve it, and help calm his son's blind panic. This portrayal contributes to a co-existing relationship. Finally, the fat man gives up his wishful thinking. He allows his wife to get glasses for Eeyore and enroll him in an institution. Once the fat man realizes that he is free, he succumbs to a "miserable loneliness": "[a]s a result, the fat man was released from the fetters of an old obsession, but the minute he found himself free a miserable loneliness rose in him and withered his already slender spirit" (*Teach Us* 130).

From an existentialist perspective, the father's behavior fits the existential theme of bad faith, which means the flight from oneself. According to Sartre, the cause of bad faith is the refusal to acknowledge absolute freedom in an amoral universe where all perceived reality dissolves into nothingness (50). The father willingly gives up his freedom and takes up his role as a "mirror" of his son. As he fails to live in bad faith, he comes back to "miserable loneliness" (131). The mother's indifference also aggravates the fat man's loneliness. The mother, who is almost absent and silent throughout the story, is unwilling to communicate with the other family members. She even denies the existence of the fat man's father. Shame, desperation, and rage caused by war have been transferred to the rejection of the people involved in the war.

With the dropping of the atomic bomb, everything changed. Psychologically, people's beliefs fell apart because of the Japan's surrender at the end of World War II. Individualism and existentialism become prevalent, and the basis for moral authority lies solely with the individual. Physically, millions of Japanese people face health threats. Many of Ōe's works address the marginal group that suffer from disease. He zooms in on their loneliness and trauma, to seek "a peripheral, marginal and off-centre existence in the world" and contribute to "a cure and reconciliation of mankind" ("Nobel Lecture").

Another novella regarding loneliness in father/son relationships is *The Day He Himself Shall Wipe My Tears Away*, a complex story about a dying man. The story takes place in a hospital where the narrator is staying. Lying in bed, he begins to dictate recollections of his childhood in an isolated village in the forest. He recalls the "happy days" (*Teach Us* 24) spent with his nationalist father who used to be part of an anti-Tojo movement in Manchuria; after the Kanzo army fails, he returns to his village in the forest and begins to live in a storehouse next to the family home, which isolates himself from the outside world. The boy brings meals to his father and tries to build a connection with his father. The mother becomes indifferent to her husband after her other son is killed in Manchuria. In the family, all members seem to stay alienated from one another. Though the son attempts to enter the father's world, he is unable to establish a closer relationship because of his inability to understand his father. The lack of communication is obvious, primarily because they lack the information of one another's stories. The father's rejection of the protagonist makes the son feel ashamed and embarrassed. Although he consistently recalls the "happy days" spent with his father, the feelings toward his father are ambivalent. On the night he is drunk, he stands by his mother's bed and speaks to her:

Mother, you and I are the sole survivors here, we must marry secretly and have many children and strangle the abnormal fruit of our incestuous marriage while they are still mewling infants and keep only the hale and healthy and provide for the prosperity of our heirs and thus, Mother, we must make amends for having killed *a certain party*.
(*Teach Us* 38)

The son's words reveal the Oedipus Complex in his unconsciousness. Nevertheless, it is not simply the Oedipus idea to kill his father and marry his mother. The idea to kill “a certain party” (*Teach Us* 18), which refers to his father, corresponds to his father's idea to kill the Emperor. In this way, family tensions are translated into social-political tensions. The political themes will be discussed in the last section. Another significant point is that the narrative of the story consists of two voices, the son's and the mother's, which makes the father's role blank and his image more alienated.

For existentialism, according to Sartre, the goal of bad faith is to put oneself out of reach; it is an escape by which a person can deny himself and take refuge in a sphere where one is no longer anything but a pure regard. The father chooses to be a defeated man, with quite limited freedom, no longer able to act. Claremont argues that in this story all three family members “find a path to what they perceive as freedom; father and son immerse themselves in their separate roles, giving allegiance to the Emperor. Yet, they remain ‘being what I am not’; self-destruction is their only fate” (51).

The father, in many of Ōe's works, represents the power and authority of a cruel adult world. The short story *Prize Stock* centers around two figures, a Japanese boy Frog and a black American pilot, and at the same time addresses the difficult relationship between the father and the child. The story takes place in a small, isolated rural village in Japan during the Second

World War. The narrator Frog and his younger brother live with their taciturn father. One night the peace of village is broken by a black soldier. Frog wants to rear the soldier like an animal, while the adults, including his father, view the black man as dangerous and finally kill him, regardless of Frog's safety.

The focus of *Prize Stock* is on the narrator Frog and the black soldier, while such is Ōe's ingenuity that all the subordinate characters surround them like pieces on a chessboard, highlighting their powerlessness and the horror they contemplate. The connection and relationship between Frog and the soldier is easily broken by the powerful group, which in this case refers to Frog's father and the villagers.

Japan is well-known for its strong sense of cooperation and nationalist sentiment, especially during the Second World War. The father, in the case of *Prize Stock*, represents the powerful party that forces Frog to obey and assimilate to the social framework. By the end of the story, he does call the black airman a “nigger”(Teach Us 129), and this signals the end of childhood, a loss of innocence, and a tragic assimilation.

The traditional family hierarchy in Japan, which places the father, who controls economics, at the top, also contributes to the father's unchallengeable authority. The small village, as well as Frog's family, shows a subset of the dichotomy between adult and child, which emphasizes the hierarchy and power relationship of the community. Frog's father, is endowed with great power and authority. From Frog's perspective, he and his brother are like “small seeds deeply embedded in thick flesh and tough, outer skin, green seeds soft and fresh and encased in membrane that would shiver and slough away at the first exposure to light” (*Teach Us* 97). While the father, is like “a beast lurking in the forest night about to spring upon his prey, his eyes bright with desire and his body tense” (*Teach Us* 98). The description is the

foreshadow of the story's ending. Though Michiko Niikuni Wilson claims that the spirit of defiance against the image of the absolute father is one of the major themes woven through Ōe's opus, in most cases, the children are too powerless to protest and revolt.

In *Prize Stock*, the father manifests his authority by keeping silent and being indifferent towards his children. His behaviour, like shooting rabbits, birds, wild boar, also contribute to his cruel, offish, and fascist image. In many instances, Ōe describes how the father prepares meals for Frog and his brother without communicating with them, which makes it seem that the father is rearing his children rather than raising them. When Frog asks if the soldier is dangerous, and if he can continue rearing him, his father “rejected him with silence” (*Teach Us* 105). Silence, according to Foucault, is a way to exercise power (46). The father establishes his authority without claiming it, since patriarchy is rooted in ideology, society, and culture.

Like many of Ōe's novels, Frog's mother is absent throughout the story, which leaves the binary father and son relationship, contributing to the image of the “absolute father”. Similarly, it seems that the whole village is like a dystopia without women. The adult villagers, who go hunting with guns, seem full of masculinity. From the description we can get a Spartan image of the village. Without femininity and the sense of childhood, the village becomes the society only for manhood, with the features of cruelty, violence, and callousness.

Frog has experienced the disillusionment and corruption through the process of “rearing the black man” (*Teach Us* 23). The relationship between the black soldier and Frog parallels the relationship between Frog and his father. The name Frog also refers to an animal, which implies the similarity. From the new historical perspective, literary works may not directly tell us about various factual aspects of the histories from which they emerge, but they

will tell us about prevailing ways of thinking and ideas of social organization at the time. The moment Frog is taken by captive by the soldier, he begins to understand that one of the ways in which human beings define their existence is through the abuse of others. And it seems that only by abusing the black man can Frog get rid of the shameful feeling being alienated. Japanese military culture was popular during the Second World War because of political propaganda. Nationalist sentiment encouraged teenagers to fight and sacrifice themselves for their nation. The violence and atrocities committed were praised in order to encourage young Japanese to volunteer for the Special Attack Corps and instill a desire in the youth to die for the nation (Earhart 596-572).

Many of Ōe's stories are set in such small villages in the forest, where the residents seem able to keep themselves free of wars and live a pastoral life. However, with certain incidents, a contradiction is gradually exposed. The administrative divisions of the village reflects the power distribution in Japan's society. In the case of *Prize Stock*, the power relation manifests itself by villagers' absolute obedience and village/town relationship. As Tachibana comments:

This apparent socioeconomic dichotomy between town and village, however, is under the sway of a more influential power: the prefecture. The control of Japan by Occupation forces constituted a situation in which people lived with constant feelings of shame and the humiliating need to defer to others to make decisions or authorize actions (43).

In these structured power relationships, Frog's father plays a role as the implementer of power's exercises. The father's power is not only enhanced by patriarchal family relationship, but also by his role in society.

Politically, first, the image of father is associated with Mikado-worship in Japanese society. Mikado, in Japanese, means Emperor. The Second World War broke out in 1939, when Ōe was four. Militaristic education extended to every nook and cranny of the country, which defined the Mikado as both monarch and a living god who reigned over Japan's politics and culture. At that time, Mikado-worship permeated all Japan's society. From 1931 onward, Japan pursued totalitarianism and military expansionism in the name of the Emperor: the takeover of Manchuria, the establishment of East Asia co-prosperity, aggression toward Asian colonies, and the attack on Pearl Harbor. As required by the imperial education edict, on a daily basis, Ōe and his peers in the village had to answer questions like, "If the Emperor commands you to die, what will you do?". The expected reply was, "I will die happily". As Ōe recalls, he was traumatized by this forced ritual (Wilson).

The novella *The Day He Himself Shall Wipe My Tears Away* is famous for questioning the Mikado system. The father in the story is a fat man with bladder cancer, who looks a little awkward and ludicrous. The impressive image that the father sacrifices himself for the Emperor and contributes to Japan's resurgence makes the son conflate the Father and Emperor. And therefore, the concept of family and nationalism are connected. The father becomes the *de facto* emperor of the family. When the Emperor conceded defeat and brought the Pacific War to a close, the father and a group of students plan to blow up the Emperor's palace in order to restore the Emperor's divinity. The plot is quite similar to that of Ōe's other novel *Death by Water*, in which the father kills himself after he fails to blow up the Emperor's palace. The similar plots of killing the Emperor make the image of emperor as well as the father symbolic. Through the desperately patriotic images of the father, Ōe explores the influence of Mikado-worship and questions its existence. According to Ōe, Japan's surrender released

conflicting emotions: a sense of both humiliation/subjugation and liberation/renewal. To a degree, the father's thoughts represents the old worship of the emperor system. Ōe has expressed his hatred of and questioned the Emperor System in public many times. In his view, the Emperor System prevents the Japanese people from thinking independently and critically: "I feel what has been suppressing the arts and the minds of the masses of Japan today is nothing other than the Emperor System" (Kushner). Having an imperial father figure makes Japanese citizens into children who never question the rules. Ōe's belief in self determination and his existential resistance to conformism lead to an immense distaste of Emperor worship and the sheeplike people who buy into it. After the father dies, the protagonist - the son - becomes a lunatic and alienated from society. It seems he inherits his father's craziness and becomes the embodiment of his father's voice, which implies the endless destructive influence of the Emperor worship.

Second, regarding Japan's history, the father and son relationship parallels the international relationship. Ōe is concerned by Japan's relationship with its neighbouring countries, and expresses his worries in his works. As a master of symbolism through his technique of layering metaphorical meaning in his text, Ōe uses both identifiable Sartrean symbolism and Japanese symbols in his work. Moss comments,

The titular story of the collection *Teach Us to Outgrow Our Madness* demonstrates his use of Japanese symbols. One of Ōe's recurring themes is an outlandishly fat man as the father of a slender young boy, often the narrator. The fat man symbolizes Japan's historical baggage, carried about because it is impossible to be rid of it. (29)

After the Second World War, Japan tucked into the shadow of the US, and began to slowly reestablish its economic power and international relations. However, its neighbors, like China

and Korea, were suspicious of Japanese movements, like 1947's Peace Constitution, viewing Japanese growth as a threat. As Moss suggests, the challenge of communication and the complicated relationship between the fat man and the slender boy reflects that between Japan and the rest of Asia (30).

Moreover, the portrayal of the father can be interpreted as the portrayal of Western countries, especially of America. Japan's history is somewhat unique as it has been both colonizer and colonized, although it was never technically colonized in the political sense. Japan has been long influenced by other cultures, such as Chinese culture in the early times and Western culture in the modern times, through which it has developed its own hybrid culture.

America during the Second World War and the figure of the father in Ōe's works, share many characteristics. They are both aggressive, authoritative, and powerful. And the trauma of the war makes the father/son, America/Japan relationship more complicated and difficult. In *The Day He Himself Shall Wipe My Tears Away*, the mother complains about her husband:

Do you know he's made me promise over again and again that I'll take our child and marry an American when he dies! He even went out and found an American deserter. We kept him at home for a long time as a member of the family, and a number of times he pretended to get drunk and started carrying on, trying to make me seduce the American. He hopes that if his child becomes an American citizen his own blood will be freed from both the emperor and the ghosts of the name of_. (*Teach Us* 91)

Here, the father wishes an American could be his son's second father so that the child with his blood could be freed. The father's image and America are combined. Similar to the view of the father, Japan's attitude towards America is also ambivalent. On the one hand, they are afraid of

its political and military power. On the other hand, they still consider American superior and ultimate idols, and can never get rid of its cultural and political influences.

The father's image in Ōe's literary works is always related to negative themes. Wilson comments that, “[h]is lifelong ambivalence regarding the 'father image' is rooted in this pre-war ideological indoctrination centered on the divine Emperor who neither saw, heard, nor spoke to his loyal subjects”. Therefore, the reader is supposed to put the image in historical context when analyzing it. A writer's works reflect his personal experience, values, and insights into history. Ōe has experienced personal frustration and witnessed the huge change of Japan; as he said, “As I grew up, I was continually to suffer hardships in different realms of life - in my family, in my relationship to Japanese society and in my way of living at large in the latter half of the twentieth century” (200). However, Ōe transfers his personal experiences and concerns with Japan into literature. A writer's task is just like Tagore's poem: “The world has kissed my soul with its pain, asking for its return in songs” (Tagore 415).

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An “Innocent” Desire: Food in Günter Grass’s *The Tin Drum*

By Alicia Niemann

Abstract:

In the original English translation of Günter Grass’ *The Tin Drum*, the “Schwarze Köchin” was translated as “witch, black as pitch.” Breon Mitchell’s new 2009 translation reinstates the “Black Cook” to her rightful place as the inescapable terror that haunts Oskar Matzerath throughout his life. For English-language readers, her reappearance helps to emphasize the importance of food in Grass’ novel. This essay explores food’s multifaceted role in *The Tin Drum*; it is by turns a comforter, a tempter, and a murderer. Ultimately, however, it stands as a warning to the reader, as food’s presumed innocence, its everyday banality, belies its potential to destroy.

Keywords: *The Tin Drum*, Günter Grass, Breon Mitchell, translation, food, death, sex, ersatz joy, innocence, desire, temptation, comfort, the Black Cook

In Breon Mitchell’s 2009 English edition of *The Tin Drum*, translated in cooperation with Grass himself, there is a set of translator’s notes at the end of the story, a sort of postscript for the reader. In them, Mitchell discusses the many hurdles of translating such a rich, multifaceted novel, as well as the differences between his translation and the previous. One of the many differences between the two is the return of the Black Cook. In the original translation she is the “witch, black as pitch” (Grass 573), thereby losing all connection with food and consumption. This is a pity because food plays an enormous role in *The Tin Drum*, and it is a constant throughout Oskar’s life. This, in and of itself, is unremarkable - everyone needs to eat, after all - but it goes beyond simply what someone has for dinner. Frankly, there are too many references to food for them to be catalogued in an essay this short, and, confounding the issue further, the role of food is mercurial - by turns a comforter, a tempter, a murderer - and refuses easy categorisation. However, the underlying theme is as old as Adam and Eve. In a

novel chronicling some of the most grotesque periods in recent European history, food stands as a warning. Just as in the garden of Eden, food appears innocent - what could be more harmless than an apple? - when, in truth, it has a several sins to its name, not the least of which is the original. Like the “innocent” neighbourhood children that force Oskar to choke down a soup made of brick and piss, food’s apparent innocence, its very banality, belies its potential for destruction.

However, while this difference in translation may explain the lack of literature in English, there does not seem to be much available in German either. While Volker Neuhaus, in his text “...über Menschen als Tiere, die kochen können,” notes that, in the topsy-turvy world of *The Tin Drum*, “...können Kochen und Essen auch töten” (17), his commentary on food, much like that of M.K. Sosnoski’s in “Oskar’s Hungry Witch,” is mostly used to support of his analysis of sexuality in the novel. Food, in and of itself, is not the central theme³⁰.

Food plays a central role in Oskar’s early life, from his mother’s conception in a potato field - under potato-coloured skirts, while Anna Koljaizcek eats potatoes - to the geography of his childhood, which shuttled between “a grocery store, a bakery, and a vegetable shop” (Grass 289). Oskar’s earliest sentient memory - at least, according to him - is listening to his mother Agnes and his presumptive father Matzerath discuss his future. Matzerath wants him to take over the family grocery store when he grows up - an idea Oskar finds so repugnant that he forces his body to stop growing at the age of three (it is perhaps worth noting that his plan is brought about through the help of a can of vegetables and several bottles of raspberry syrup and that, as he lies on the floor, he

³⁰ Tom Ratekin also discusses food in “Eat Your Fish! Eating and Perversion in *The Tin Drum*.” However, as with Sosnoski and Neuhaus, our approaches are dissimilar.

wonders “whether it was Oskar’s blood or the raspberries that smelled so sweet and soporific” (51)).

Despite his distaste for the family business, food continues to be associated with comfort and safety throughout Oskar’s life - possibly, if one cares to psychoanalyse what is arguably the most unreliable narrator in the history of literature, because of these early childhood connotations. After all, what we know as children maintains its hold on us throughout our lives, whether we want it to or not. The two most notable examples of the comfort of food are his neighbour, Mother Truczinski, and his grandmother, Anna Koljaizcek.

Mother Truczinski is described several times throughout the novel as a drinker of ersatz coffee and a maker of wonderful potato pancakes. She is one of the few people in the novel that Oskar is fond of, and it is to her he goes when he “felt the need for human company” (Grass 160) after his mother dies. However, when Mother Truczinski dies, Oskar refers to her eating habits - namely barley coffee and potato pancakes (369) and her preference for Vitello margarine (379) - rather than her person, as though these comforting foods were, in fact, what made up her comforting character.

Aside from his mother, Oskar’s grandmother Anna Koljaizcek is his favourite person. Under her four potato-coloured skirts Oskar finds peace and solace. Her skirts are “the only destination [Oskar] felt held any real promise” (Grass 553); and under them, as he is constantly telling the reader, his grandmother smells of slightly rancid butter. In one strangely touching episode Oskar imagines his whole family - the dead and the living - gathered under those potato-coloured skirts, inside his grandmother’s “butter tub” (331), happy in a way they never were in life. For a character with whom it is nearly impossible

to empathise, Oskar's longing for the peace found in the rancid butter smell of Anna Koljaizcek's skirts is particularly striking; a longing for certainty and security - no matter its smell - is a very human desire.

This association of food and comfort does not end at old women either: what woman does Oskar love who is not ascribed an association with food? Maria, his first love, smells of vanilla, Roswitha the Italian somnambulist of cinnamon and crushed cloves; his mother has her lingering association with grilled eel; and even Sister Dorothea, with her vinegar-scented room, is described to the reader in terms of smell. Notably, Frau Greff, with whom Oscar sleeps, but for whom he does not care, is given no such smell.

However, Oskar is not unique in this association. One of the most memorable episodes in *The Tin Drum* is The Onion Cellar. It is an obvious but still heartbreaking metaphor. In The Onion Cellar, food is not only associated with a sense of comfort and relief but is the necessary physical link between a person and their emotions. Patrons frequent The Onion Cellar not to buy beer or eat *Currywurst* but to cut up onions and be forced to cry. In doing so, they finally release all the shame, guilt, grief, and horror brought on either by their own lives or by the war. Without the onions these people cannot express anything. "It's like", Oskar tells us, "trying to lay an egg: you push and push..." (Grass 501), but nothing comes out until the onions burn their eyes.

While food does help to comfort the patrons of The Onion Cellar, it loses the innocence of its association with Mother Truzcinski and Anna Koljaizcek. The Onion Cellar is a for-profit outfit, its owner calculating just what his patrons need - and charging them outrageously for it. The Onion Cellar is one several overpriced nightclubs,

including The Ravioli Room, and Paprika (Grass 498), almost all of whom are named for food. It is in The Onion Cellar as well that, when patrons find themselves on the brink of an orgy, Oskar leads them away like the Pied Piper, beginning with the innocent “Pat-a-cake, pat-a-cake, Baker’s man,” which slowly transforms into the more insidious “Better start running, the Black Cook’s coming!” (510), twisting a moment of childish nostalgia into something fiercer. In *The Tin Drum*, after all, food is more often associated with darker desires than with comfort and security.

Though in The Onion Cellar, food is the physical link necessary for characters to obtain their desire (in this case for relief), elsewhere in the novel food is a manifestation of the desire itself. Throughout the story, food - more specifically sweet food - assumes the role of sex. One of the earliest examples of this is when Oskar, his mother, and his two fathers go to The Starfish for coffee and cake. His mother wants a third helping of five-layer cake and, when she gets it, “gave Matzerath a bite, fed Jan, satisfied both her men, then crammed the sugary sweet wedge spoonful by spoonful into her mouth” (Grass 98). The cake is a very literal representation of her relationship with both men, and the line between gluttony and adultery is blurred, food and sex becoming one and the same. Agnes, this passages implies, is eating too much (after all, she is constantly trying to slim down) as well as sleeping around too much. To repent for her double helping of sin, she goes to confession, which Oskar later remembers as her “pouring her grocery-wife sins into Father Wiehnke’s ear, just as she used to pour sugar into blue pound and half-pound sacks” (306). Her supposed sins are sugar-based and, in the end, rot her away like a cavity.

Another, more lengthy, example of sugar-for-sex is Oskar's visits to Frau Scheffler, the baker's wife who teaches him to read. Despite her attempts to have him tackle more traditionally edifying works, Oskar's favourite authors remain Rasputin and Goethe. It is the former, with all his women in black stockings, who sets things off. Frau Scheffler is childless and, the reader comes to learn, not very well attended to by her husband. "If only Herr Scheffler had occasionally withdrawn his fingers from the flour ... Gretchen would gladly have been kneaded, rolled, brushed, and baked by him," confides Oskar (Grass 81). As he did not, Frau Scheffler satisfies herself with living vicariously through Rasputin's orgies and, once reading lessons are over for the day, eating pastries. She brings sweets of all kinds, offering Oskar "love tarts and honey almond cakes ... and meringue kisses with whipped cream, so sweet, so sweet" (82). Even the pastries' names - love tarts, kisses, cream - shamelessly allude to their true role. Oskar, who has no desire for sex at that point, forces himself to vomit up all the sweets afterwards - they hold no interest for him.

Later, however, Oskar takes these reading lessons to heart and seduces Nurse Gertrud with cakes, despite her reluctance. "How gay young nurses can be when you bring them sweets" (Grass 430) he notes. And, indeed, when he takes her out for cake it is "one slice for me and three for her" (431). Oskar is not the partner of her choice, but Nurse Gertrud craves satisfaction nonetheless - so he provides her with an ersatz joy.

No exception to the sugary rule is Oskar's own experience with Maria - though perhaps bitter-sweet is a better word both in terms of flavour and outcome. In this case, food is both a manifestation of sex as well as a means of accomplishing the deed - a mixture of Frau Scheffler and *The Onion Cellar*. In an ongoing, and wildly unsubtle,

visual metaphor, Oskar and Maria spend one summer playing with fizz powder - a powder in woodruff, orange, or raspberry flavour, which carbonates drinks, fizzing on contact with liquid - which Maria holds in the palm of her hand and Oskar causes to bubble with his own spit. This game soon accelerates: it moves from the beach to the bedroom, the fizz powder from Maria's palm to her navel, and Oskar from raspberries to mushrooms. The subsequent loss of Oskar's virginity is couched entirely in food-based metaphors. Arguably, however, this is a case of food-as-comfort rather than food-as-sin for Oskar, despite his cornucopia of faults, loves Maria, is truly moved by the experience, and is "forced to defend it as the only true and possible love" (262) - despite the fact that, since Maria is said to be asleep during the act, this only true and possible love is, in fact, rape.

Sex is not the only desire in *The Tin Drum*, however. Even stronger than sex is the desire for death. And food, as always, has its part to play. Much like Luzie's transformation from girl to Black Cook, food shows us how the banal can become the monstrous, much like life under Nazi rule, and how the monstrous can become banal, like life after Nazi rule. Late in the novel there is a brief detour into the life of Greff, Oskar's greengrocer neighbour, whom Oskar becomes better acquainted with once he starts sleeping with Greff's wife. At the end of the affair, after years as a scout leader, Greff's homosexuality is at last found out by the Nazi party, and he kills himself. One of food's many victims, Greff kills himself with potatoes. 75 kilograms (minus 100 grams) of the world's most boring food becomes the means of his elegant and perfectly-staged exit. The very tuber that kept Greff's vegetable shop afloat, and therefore kept him alive, is what kills him in the end.

Not long after that, Oskar murders his presumptive father by means of a Nazi party pin turned bonbon. When the Russians arrive in their cellar, Oskar wants to be “rid of the bonbon” (Grass 375) and passes it back to its true owner, Matzerath, a man who “turned feelings into soups” (386). Unfortunately, Matzerath, “in spite of his often-tested imagination as a cook ... could think of no better hiding place than his mouth” (375); though perhaps it is *because* of his imagination as a cook that ingestion is his first thought. Either way, he swallows his old Nazi beliefs and their sharp metal point chokes him to death.

However, the most violent and passionate death in the novel is, of course, that of Oskar’s mother Agnes. After Matzerath forces her to witness eel-fishing on Good Friday - in which eels are pulled out of a rotting horse’s head thrown again and again into the ocean - Agnes is struck by inspiration. In a turn at once brilliant and cruel, Agnes Matzerath “driven by some mysterious urge ... started devouring fish” (Grass 146). She eats fish like a woman possessed until, finally, she - and her unborn fetus - dies. Oskar surmises that his mother wanted “to dissolve her triangular relationship in such a way that Matzerath, whom she may have hated, would bear the guilt for her death” while her lover Jan Bronski could believe she sacrificed herself for him (148). Oskar may not be far wrong in this, as Agnes’s weapon of choice is food - Matzerath’s greatest passion.

And then, finally, there is Luzie, the fox-faced girl who becomes Oskar’s dreaded Black Cook. When the reader first meets Luzie, she is eating a sausage sandwich and watching her brothers be inducted into the Dusters gang (Grass 357). A few pages later, she betrays the gang to their deaths, and there she is again with another sandwich, her face

a chewing triangle, doll, Black Cook, devouring sausages and skin, growing skinnier as she fed, more ravenous, more triangular, more doll-like - a look that left its mark upon me ... [h]ow long will it chew away inside me, chewing sausages, skin, and men, and smiling. (362)

She is there one more time at the Dusters' trial, urging the boys to jump to their deaths while she sits on Satan's lap, who "tempted her desire by handing her a sausage sandwich" (367). Luzie, described as a virgin (a measurement of female innocence apparently so entrenched that even Grass, for all his subversiveness, could not break free of it), is an innocent, whose childish desires become so twisted that she is no longer recognisable, taking on the face of the villainous old hag, the Black Cook (because what says 'evil' more than a woman who has lost her looks to time?). Like food itself, Luzie is an innocent with the power to destroy.

But just who is the Black Cook? The Black Cook, the ravenous spectre at the heart of *The Tin Drum*, embodies all the horror - and the black irony - contained in humanity and its insatiable need to consume: for, when there is nothing left to consume, we consume ourselves. As with any desire, the more one has, the more one wants. One more sandwich, one more fish, one more onion, one more piece of cake, one more game of skat before the end... As Oskar points out, "[t]oo much of any brew will make you retch at times, then turn sweet again, too sweet, so sweet it makes one relish retching" (Grass 470). And thus we eat ourselves to death.

In the end, food in *The Tin Drum* stands in direct opposition to the apple of the original sin. The apple came from the tree of knowledge and opened Eve's eyes. Food in the *The Tin Drum* tempts, to be sure, but its temptations are those of blindness and ignorance. Even when it is associated with comfort, such as in the case of Mother Trzcinski or Anna Koljaizcek, it is the temptation of returning to the womb, of

forgetting, of being taken care of, that is alluring. Perhaps Klepp, Oskar's spaghetti-slurping friend, is right and there is "a wolfish hunger lurking behind each of the world's sorrows" (Grass 489), compelling us to try to do the impossible, to fill the "void that nothing, not even those vast quantities of fried, boiled, pickled, and smoked fish could ever fill" (147). If food is offered to the readers of *The Tin Drum* as a warning against dangers of unbridled desire, it is a warning that the characters of the book are not privy to. They continue lusting after more - for surely *more* will fill up the void. For, much in the way food in *The Tin Drum* is a substitute for sex, so too is desire is a substitute for joy. But, even then, the novels offers little hope: when Oskar *does* find joy, he wonders if it is not just "a substitute, for joy too may be a substitute, may only come by way of substitution, joy always ersatz joy..."(423).

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