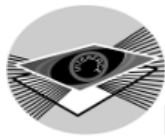# Poetry and Transculturality in Asia and Europe –
Philosophical and Psychological Aspects

Guest Editors :

Christian Soffel

Serafima Tsung–Huei Hsiung

Table of Contents

EDITORIAL:

Poetry and Transculturality in Asia and Europe

–Philosophical and Psychological Aspects

CHRISTIAN SOFFEL
Trier University

SERAFIMA TSUNG-HUEI HSIUNG
National Taiwan University

Inter- and transcultural topics are abundant in various literatures (including but not limited to Russian, Chinese, Japanese, English and German), often developing surprisingly similar characteristics even in geographically distant locations, different genres or time periods. One particular factor fostering such developments is the transformation process of a particular literary motive from one culture to another, often by the use of translation. It becomes especially apparent when depicting borderline experience, or in a multilingual context. In our temporary globalized world, such issues are not just interesting from a historian's perspective, but are relevant for reevaluating cultural contacts all over the globe. A great many of these phenomena are philosophical or psychological in nature, whether they are transcendental experiences, or mnemonic characteristics of writing, or self-reflections.

The foundation to INTERFACE, Issue 10: "Poetry and Transculturality in Asia and Europe –Philosophical and Psychological Aspects" was laid during the International Symposium "Poetry and Transculturality in Asia and Europe", held in Taipei at Taiwan University in February 2019, organized jointly with the Center for Advanced Studies "Russian Poetry in Transition" (FOR 2603) at Trier University. Our present volume addresses these issues from several perspectives.

The issue begins with an article on temporal structures in the work of Thomas Gray, an English poet and scholar from the 18th century. The

author demonstrates convincingly the intermingling of cyclical and linear time conceptions in his odes and sonnets. This lyrical configuration is connected to changes in daytime and landscape as well as the image of the author placed in the corresponding context, thus creating a transfigural piece of literature, which even extends beyond the boundaries of a single human life span.

The next paper of this issue explores the "transpoetical" œuvre by Jean-Pierre Balpe, a French scholar, who publishes poems on the internet under various pseudonyms. His engagement in literature reaches from experimental computer-generated verses to Japanese style haiku poems, thus opening up a space, in which a transgression of borders in various aspects (cultures, genres, lyrical subjectivity, cultural identity) is taking place.

Baba Yaga is the central topic of the following contribution. The famous witch from East Slavic fairy tale mythology is depicted in two "novels in poems" by the US American authors Jane Yolen and Lana Hechtman. These works depict Baba Yaga from a feminist perspective as a strong female protagonist. Parallel to the transparent connectivity of verse and prose genres, the authors develop an archetypal notion of femininity/masculinity representing the dichotomy of soul and intellect.

The theoretical background of the present volume gets interconnected by the final article contemplating on two concepts of cultural genesis that were developed by Vasily Rozanov and Sigmund Freud at the turning point of the 19th and 20th centuries. They differ on their viewpoint on physical procreation as cultural value. Additionally, the author introduces a thoughtful distinction between "transition" and "translation" in the context of cultural processuality. This theoretical foundation is then applied to a collection of lyrical pieces by the contemporary Russian poet Vera Pavlova.

These articles show nicely the common ground and the intrinsic resonances between lyrical expressions from different cultures, languages, genres and time periods, be it in terms of the poetic depiction of trans-

cendental experiences, in the field of cultural translation, the connection between memory and writing or of the author as creative self.

INTERFACE
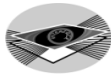
Intimations of Classical Notions of Time

in Thomas Gray's Early Poetry

KIRILL O. THOMPSON
National Taiwan University

Abstract

The present study makes the case that Thomas Gray (1716-1771) presents his poetic musings in his early odes and sonnet against the backdrop two classical conceptions of time, cyclical time and linear time, and this casts interpretive light on his *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard.* Gray's early poems (1742)—*Ode on the Spring, Ode to a Distant Prospect of Eton College,* and *Sonnet on the Death of Richard West*—open with pastoral scenes set in cyclical time as foils for ruminations about human existence in linear time. He goes from adopting a pastoral pose and viewing human life as a brief flutter in the *Spring* ode, to casting shadows over the pastoral scenes in the *Eton* ode, to lamenting the pastoral in his *Sonnet.* Gray's evolving view of life in linear time informs the *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard* (1750). The twilight opening of this poem contrasts with the morning openings of the early poems. Falling darkness throws the poet back into his private musings; the glimmering; darkening landscape stirs him to reflect on mortal truths. The *Elegy* closes with a forlorn pastoral poet whose Muse does not arrive to offer him access to redemptive cyclical time: who is this poet? Is it Gray? Is it Gray in youth? What is the message? In a later poem, *Hymn to Adversity*, Gray sees the possibility of rebirth and meaning in human life in linear time.

Keywords: classical allusion, pastoral, elegy, mortality, meaning of life

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Intimations of Classical Notions of Time

in Thomas Gray's Early Poetry

KIRILL O. THOMPSON
National Taiwan University

Thomas Gray's (1716-1771) poetry is distinguished from other verse of the mid-18th century in mastery of form, compression of feeling, depth of conception, and exquisiteness of expression. Each of his verses ponders, from shifting perspectives, charged features of human existence. The more we know of Gray and his life, the more we appreciate the emotional charge ready to ignite within the well-crafted forms. In fact, Gray's mastery of form and compression of feeling were a function of his depth of conception.

The present study sets out to examine how, in exquisite poetry, Gray expressed his dark feelings, i.e. his melancholy, his sorrow, his yearning to recover his lost love —a kindred spirit— in his odes and sonnet according to classical conceptions of time, life and death, finally finding joy in the vicissitudes and travails of life. A windfall of inspecting Gray's use of classical allusion along these lines is the light it sheds on lingering questions concerning his masterpiece, *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard.* The unique contribution of the present study lies in bringing to light Gray's allusions to classical conceptions of time that contextualize his reflections and heighten the intensity and poignancy of the poems under study.

After being largely received as masterpieces from the mid-18th until the mid-20th centuries; Gray's classical approach to poetry was questioned since Wordsworth's critique of Gray's sonenct in the "Preface" to *Lyrical Ballads* (1796), and Gray's major poems became somewhat problematic to scholars since mid-20th century in that the meaning and intent of his early odes seemed obscure and his *Elegy* stirred up inter-

pretive ambiguities for modern readers (Golden, 1964). My position is that the odes started to became obscure and questions of interpretation began to arise largely because modern readers were increasingly out of touch with Gray's classical allusions and thus the interpretive indications and clues they provide. In the present century, there is new interest in Gray's use of classical allusion, notably Lonsdale (1987) and Keener (2012). Some scholars attempt to penetrate the obscurity and answer the questions of interpretation by examining Gray's private life and relationships in eliciting a personal subtext (Downey and Jones, 1974; Gleckner, 1997; Curr, 2002). Others continue to register their intractable feeling of Gray's obscurity and his sense of isolation and disconnectedness (Hutchings and Ruddick 1993). I agree with Gleckner –who also finds intriguing allusions to Milton's *Lycidas* and *Paradise Lost* in Gray's poems– that Gray was a sensitive, emotional man buffeted by the vicissitudes of life and love. Gray was particularly conscious of the temporality and fragility of human life, having been the only child of eight to survive of a kindly mother, who died young, and an abusive father who, happily, stayed away. Gray's life was literally saved and secured by a kindly uncle who sponsored his study at Eton and made sure he had funds for life. Moreover, in youth, Gray was devastated by the death of his closest friend from Eton, Richard West. The news came as a blow because these friends had parted not long before and Gray had recently sent a package of his writings to Richard; the package was returned a few weeks later with a note attached to the effect that the recipient was deceased. Through his effective use of classical allusion, not to mention his native poetic artistry, Gray sublimated his personal tribulations and travails into eloquent verse that speaks to and moves all readers who trouble to master them. As to the specific identifications of and some of the reflections on the classical allusions in Gray's poetry, I am indebted to the painstaking work of Tovey (1898) and Lonsdale (1969), both of whom made significant contributions in this area.

1 Gray's Mastery of and Devotion to the Classics

Gray was well-qualified to make use of classical sources and classical allusion in his poetry: before venturing to write verse in English he had

already mastered the classical languages well enough to write credible verse in Greek and especially Latin, mostly as occasional verse dedicated to close friends who were also devotees of and well-versed in the classical languages and the classics. He also translated some classical Greek verse and modern Italian verse into Latin.

Gray was a versifier who sought to express himself in time-honored diction and images from classical antiquity, as well as from the Renaissance. He did this less as conscious borrowing than with the sense that this was the most appropriate, exquisite, and meaningful way to write poetry; to him, poetry should sing in suggestive, sonorous language as exemplified in the classical languages and the classics. At the same time, Gray seemingly avoided Christian sentiments and took pains to express his deeper thoughts along classical pagan lines. Much of the poignancy of his verse derives from the feeling of the inescapable human alienation and mortality that he explores and in maturity later attempts to ameliorate.

2 The Early Odes and Sonnet

In adherence to the pastoral ideal, Gray structured his earliest English verse on the Horatian polarity of cyclical time and linear time. As shown by Lowrie (1992 50-55), in Horace's odes, cyclical time is presented in the context of a self-renewing nature of cyclically recurring processes, structured around the annual cycle of the seasons. Cyclical time contrasts with the devolving linear time experienced by human beings as they traverse the path from birth to death. Moreover, as folk societies turn self-conscious and historical, collective experience transforms from cyclical to linear, as well. This shift is marked by a change in orientation from annual seasonal rites and festivals to historical national and religious holidays. Accordingly, drawing on such classical masters as Horace, Virgil, and Lucretius, Gray opens all three of his earliest verses in English (1742) —*Ode on the Spring, Ode to a Distant Prospect of Eton College,* and *Sonnet on the Death of Richard West*— with pastoral scenes set in cyclical time as foils for subsequent dark

ruminations about mortal human existence in linear time. Interestingly, he develops different ruminations in each of the poems, which reflect changes and developments in his experience and thought.

Gray opens his first poem in English, the *Ode on the Spring* —a reply to his friend Richard West's *Ode to May*— by depicting an idyllic noontide scene in Nature, then focusing on a shepherd poet reclining beneath a shade tree by a stream. This meditative posture opens up the shepherd's spirit to his Muse, who opens his eyes to this eternal moment in cyclical time —as revealed through that very perfect spring moment in human linear time. This revelation provides an occasion for him, the poet, to reflect on human life as fleeting, vain, insect-like, and generally futile. At the close of the ode, however, the poet pokes fun at himself, asking whether he, who also dwells in linear time, shouldn't *carpe diem* rather than stand back and ruminate.

In the first stanza of the *Spring* ode, Gray pays homage to the "Homeric Hymns," Lucretius (I 10ff. v. 737f) and Horace's *Odes* (I iv 5) by opening with the genesis of spring from "Venus" fair train" to "disclose the… flowers,/And wake the purple year." He then invokes the phenomena of spring, presenting spring as a vital phase in the cycle of seasons, and closes the remarkable stanza with: "The Attic warbler pours her throat,/ Responsive to the cuckoo's note,/ The untaught harmony of the spring:/ While whisp'ring pleasure as they fly,/ Cool zephyrs thro' the clear blue sky/ Their gather'd fragrance fling" (lines 5-10). Gray purposely invokes Lucretius' conception of Nature as a perpetually self-renewing process, as illustrated vividly in the annual advent of spring. Specifically, the Lucretian *Natura* provides a tangible stage for Horatian cyclical time, the eternal time associated with the cycles of nature.

The second stanza settles on a charmed spot in nature where the narrator, the sensitive shepherd poet, is stirred by his Muse to discern in the bright spring noontide a glimpse of cyclical time: Gray thus intimates his own privileged access to the intersection between linear and cyclical time and laments misguided humanity: "How vain the ardour of the crowd,/ How low, how little are the proud,/ How indigent the great!"

(lines 18-20).

Classical poetry abounds with descriptions of the sensitive poet reclining at midday beneath a shade tree by a gurgling stream. The most apropos examples include *Lucretius* (ii 29-33), Horace's *Odes* (I I 20-2, II xi 14-6), and especially Virgil's *Eclogues* (I 1-2), in which the poet reclining "by the quiet spring of some holy stream… broodest over the Muse of the woodland," or "at ease in the shade teachest the woods to echo fair Amatyllis." While there is poignancy in the poet's finding a moment of communion with his Muse in nature who intimates cyclical time, like Horace he remains keenly aware of his/our mortal entrapment in linear time.

Consequently, reposing with his hands in the shade by the stream, the poet next contemplates, by dint of contrast, linear time as he gazes at summer insects, "Eager to taste the honied spring,/ A float amid the liquid noon:/…/ Quick-glancing to the Sun" (lines 26-30). The image of herds in noontide repose also appears in Virgil's *Eclogues* (ii 8), and Horace's *Odes* (III xxxix 21-2) as well as in Pope's *Summer* (86-7). Virgil invokes the buzz and bustle of summer insects to accentuate the vitality of spring in contrast to still, silent winter in *Georgics* (iv 22) and *Aeneid* (iv 407). Gray consciously adopts the marvelous adjective "liquid" from Virgil's *Georgics* (iv 59): *Nare per aestatem lquidam* ("floating through the clear summer air").

The exquisite closing lines of this stanza are a shade anthropomorphic: "Some [insects] show their gayly-gilded trim/ Quick glancing to the sun." Although the insects are unconscious of the brevity of their lives as they frolic in the "eternal" spring sunlight, the poet attributes to them a touch of anxiety in their burst of life. As Seneca and Marcus Aurelius noted, differences between life spans, as between human beings and summer insects, in linear time are negligible in the eternal perspective of cyclical time; thus, human life is not appreciably longer than insect life. From the perspective of cyclical time, human beings too "flutter thro' life's little day,/ In Fortune's varying colours drest:/ Brushed by the hand of rough Mischance,/ Or chill'd by Age, their airy dance/ They

leave in dust to rest" (lines 36-40).

Ultimately, however, the poet realizes that he is no better off than the moth-like others: human life is a brief, meandering flutter. His life too will fly off on hasty wings, his spring will soon be gone. Gray thus has invoked the pastoral setting not just as an ironic counterpoint to vain-glorious human life, but one that reflects back with double irony on himself. In the end, he admits himself to be but a "solitary fly," which has no glittering females, hives of hoarded sweets, or painted plumage.

Gray opens *Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College* with a similarly idyllic depiction of the distant campus nestled along the wandering river Thames—described with a hint of irony in terms reminiscent of Virgil on the river Mincius (*Georgics* iii, 14-15). Yet, at the same time, mentions of fair Science, Henry's shadow, and Windsor's heights, place the scene in historical time, i.e., the linear time of collective, self-conscious experience, thus indicating that this is an unreal Arcadia. The motto: "I am a man; a sufficient excuse to be miserable," adopted from Meander casts further shadow over the sunny opening scene.

In contrast to the second stanza of the *Spring* ode, where the poet reclines with his Muse by a stream, Gray now stands far above the fields "once loved in vain" (line 12). While thinking of his "careless childhood stray'd" (line 13), he feels a momentary bliss, a second spring, from the gales blowing up from the campus below. But, the bliss is momentary and the second spring seems illusory, for the breezes are not Zephyrs and Eton is not Arcadia. Gray intimates that his initial spring itself had not been genuinely idyllic or prelapsarian. Gazing at the young boys at play, he asks, "The captive linnet which enthrall?/ What idle progeny succeed/ To chase the rolling circle's speed, /Or urge the flying ball?" (lines 27-30).

The caged finch reinforces the sense that these idle progeny are not dwelling in an authentic Arcadia, protected from devolving linear time, and change. Drawn from Seneca and Marcus Aurelius, and perhaps from Medieval Wheel of Life diagrams, the circle image suggests that

the young boys have embarked on the circles that circumscribe the set phases of human life in linear time: each start leads inexorably to a finish; the circle of childhood already implies adolescence and youth, and so on to decline, decrepitude, and death. Seneca and Marcus Aurelius similarly regarded human life as proceeding through sequences of circles marking phases in linear time (within the overarching cyclical time of Nature). While the Stoics speak of arranging one's life prudently in accordance with the proper phases, Gray is interested in the inevitability with which each phase comes to a close: each circle turns in on itself. Metaphorically, the boys' setting the initial circle into motion marks their entry onto the slippery slope of devolving linear time. This idea is continued on Medieval Wheel of Life diagrams of the phases of human life. A stained-glass window in the Canterbury Cathedral has such a diagram, which includes the images of the circle and ball: "The first of the figures, labeled *infantia*, is a baby. The second, *pueritia,* carries a curved stick like a hockey stick in his right hand and what appears to be a ball in his left… the stick and ball represent *pueritia* as the age of play" (Burrow 1986 90). Gray focuses on *pueritia* as the verge of puberty, *adolescentia,* when ambition, desire, and pride start to appear in boys (and girls) and begin to energize them. In fact, Gray depicts the preadolescent boys as already at once bold and driven, and yet as hearing troubling voices in every breath of wind as they snatch at fearful joy (*Aeneid* ii, 728-9; I, 513-4).

In the final stanzas of the *Eton* ode, Gray echoes Virgil in delineating the "Fury passions," the anxiety-ridden ambition, and the fretful desire that drive adult life as a stressful chaotic struggle. *Aeneid* (vi, 273-81) reads: "Just before the entrance, even within the very jaws of Hell, Grief and avenging Cares have made their bed; there pale Diseases dwell, and sad Age, and Fear, and ill-counseling Famine, and loathly Want, shapes terrible to view; and Death and Distress; next Death's own brother Sleep, and the soul's Guilty Joys, and, on the threshold opposite, the death-bearer War, and the Furies' iron cells, and savage Strife, her snaky locks entwined with bloody fillets." Statius also has: "Wild Passion leaps and blind Mischief and Angers flushing red, and Discord holding a two-edged sword" (*Thebaid* vii, 47-50).

Gray next draws on Sophocles in describing the fruits of the workings of the Fury Passions. He bids us look ahead to the suffering, pain, and death that accompany, "slow-consuming Age." *Oedipus Coloneus* 1229-1238, for example, reads: "For when he has seen youth go by, with its light follies, what troublesome affliction is strange to his lot, what suffering is not therein? – envy, factions, strife, battles, and slaughters; and, last of all, age claims him for her own, -- age, dispraised, infirm, unsociable, unfriended, with whom all woe of woe abides." Chastened by such reflections, Gray gradually starts to display compassion for the heedless young boys at play in the schoolyard below: "Why should they know their fate,/ Since sorrow never comes too late,/ And happiness to swiftly flies?" (lines 96-99).

The *Sonnet on the Death of Richard Gray* too opens with an idyllic pastoral sunrise with chirping birds and cheery green fields, and allusions to Virgil, Ovid, and Lucretius, all clearly indicative of Horatian cyclical time. But, Gray whose bosom friend has recently died cannot participate in the joy; the death of this precious friend has made the pastoral delights turn doubly hollow: "In vain to me the smiling mornings shine,/ And Phoebus lifts his golden fire:/…. / I fruitless mourn to him that cannot hear,/ And weep the more because I weep in vain."

Gray has gone full circle from adopting a pastoral pose and viewing human life as a brief, vainglorious flutter in the *Spring* ode, to intimating the unreality of seemingly pastoral scenes in the *Eton* ode, and finally to viewing the pastoral as empty from a personal point of view in the sonnet to *West*.

3 Newfound Appreciation of Human Life in *Hymn to Adversity*

Gray's later poem, *Hymn to Adversity,* set squarely in human linear time, illustrates Aeschylus's insight that wisdom comes through suffering. Observing human existence through eyes unblinkered by the pastoral, Gray now presents adversity as the potter of one's destiny, tamer of the human breast, and crucible of character. Adversity was

not identified with any particular god in classical antiquity, but Pindar in *Olympics* xii personifies Fortune as a daughter of Jove. Also, the image of a chain forged of unbreakable adamant derives from Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound* 6. Adversity, this tamer of the human breast, serves to counter the rise of the fury Passions, mentioned in the *Eton* ode. The manner in which we face adversity shapes our destiny—collective as well as personal. Thus, each stanza of the *Adversity* ode delineates a certain approach to adversity and its usual outcome, rotating between positive and negative approaches. Adversity spawns virtue and patience in us, just as sorrow spawns compassion. Fleeing adversity fosters weakness and dependency. To the sensitive, adversity fosters wisdom in sable garb and melancholy with leaden eyes; but, to the aggressive, adversity releases gorgon terrors. That is, adversity is viewed by the Impious as something like the Furies seen by Orestes after the death of his mother, "Like Gorgons,/ In robes of black, with serpents in their hair/ Coiling abundant" (Aeschylus, *Choephoroe* 1048). Finally, echoing *Aeneid* I 630, the sensitive poet beseeches adversity to soften, not wound, his heart: "The gen'rous spark extinct revive/ Teach me to love, and to forgive,/ Exact my own defects to scan,/ What others are to feel, and know myself a Man" (lines 45-48).

Gray now starts to see more significance in actual human life as lived in linear time—albeit a brief, uncertain struggle—than in pastoral idylls. Why then does he continue to draw on classical sources? Why does he supplicate Adversity as the daughter of Jove? Why does he portray Adversity as the fount of virtue, patience, compassion, and wisdom? As Gray poeticizes stages in his spiritual growth in the face of Adversity, especially depression, estrangement, and loss, he is keen to portray the formation of virtue, compassion, and wisdom in the context of natural process. Thus, he takes care to draw on classical Stoicism and to avoid allusion to Christianity that would conceive the moral progress of humanity as based on original sin, repentance, atonement, faith, scripture, and supernatural revelation. Gray sees a measure of greatness in the human capacity to develop, mature, and ultimately to flourish in the face of Adversity.

4 Mature View of Life and Mortality in *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard*

A proper understanding of Gray's early odes and his progress in appreciating human life in linear time facilitates appreciation of his masterpiece, *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard* (1750). Despite its stately verse and marmoreal quatrains, the *Elegy* presents a slightly different message to each reader. To critics, the poem is full of puzzles, notably about the role of the opening stanzas, the reflections on life and death comprising the main body of the poem, and the significance of the rustic poet at the end.

The opening stanzas record the poet's observations at eventide from a churchyard overlooking a rural landscape. He hears the curfew's toll and discerns a ploughman and 'lowing herds that recede into falling darkness. In effect, his consciousness empties out and he proceeds to engage in nocturnal ruminations.

Notably, this twilight opening contrasts sharply with the pastoral morning and noontide openings of the earlier poems: those were sharp, vivid daytime depictions of nature in cyclical time that served as foils to linear human life. Now Gray centers on the parting of day and people's retiring for the night, i.e., images of life's end in linear time. Falling darkness throws the poet back into his private subjective consciousness: the sublimity of the glimmering landscape stirs him to reflect on mortal truths we tend to avoid by day. Notably, unlike the young daytime pastoral poet dependent on a Muse for inspiration, the cultivated, mature nocturnal elegist looks within to discern deeper truths of life and death.

The stanzas comprising the main body of the *Elegy* convey the poet's mature reflections on life in the linear time of human experience, on human mortality. Viewing the rustic forefathers' graves around him, the poet imagines *tableaux vivant* of their lives as manifesting a georgic fullness. Echoing *Lucretius* iii 894-6, Horace's *Odes* II xiv 21-2, and Virgil's *Georgics*, Gray imagines their lives as active, productive, and in step and at-one with nature; he imagines them cooperating with their

neighbors and loving their families. He imagines their lives as good, and ventures to imagine their absence from life after death. While hinting at the "rueful" in contemplating their death, Gray also indicates something of the joy felt in Virgil's "idyllic present." Thus, when he proceeds to ask Ambition and Grandeur not to look askance at the rude graves of these obscure rustics, his point is not the bland truism that all lives are of equal worth, nor is it Horace's reminder that death comes equally to all: in light of the *tableaux vivants* of the full, georgic sort of lives led by the rustic forefathers, we are led to understand that, by saying "the paths of glory lead but to the grave," Gray indicates that devotees of power and glory are apt to lose sight of certain life essentials that oft go unnoticed until death is nigh.

Gray presents his sense of these crucial life essentials that connect the living with the dead, and make human life meaningful in the climactic stanzas of the poem on the rustics buried in the churchyard:

> For to dumb Forgetfulness a prey,
>   This pleasing anxious being e'er resign'd,
> Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,
>   Nor cast one longing, ling'ring look behind?
> On some fond breast the parting soul relies,
>   Some pious drops the closing eye requires;
> E'en from the tomb the voice of Nature cries,
>   E'en in our Ashes live their wonted Fires (lines 85-92).

Facing decline and death, one realizes that love and affection are essential to a full and meaningful life—and death. Facing death, one wants to feel an affectionate touch and see heartfelt tears. Such impulses are so natural that one easily imagines the flickering ashes of the dead crying out to be remembered in the warm embers of the living. This insight is borne out by the images of georgic life: a life of labor and toil in close touch with nature, facilitated by cooperation and interpersonal concern. Gray's perspective here is classical and humanistic.

Gray discerns a universal link between the living and the dead, and

depicts it as an intuitive bond woven of the felt dying ashes of the living and the sensed living embers of the dying. Striving for realism and truth over sentiment and edification, Gray draws on a litany of classical and renaissance sources in expressing his reflections. In 1768, Gray himself mentioned Petrarch's *Sonnet* 170 as a source: "For in my thoughts I see, O my sweet fire, a cold tongue and two lovely eyes, which after our death will remain fully embers." Also, sober *Lucretius* iv 925-6 reads: "Since, if no part of the spirit were hidden in the limbs, like fire covered in a heap of ashes." Ovid in *Tristia* III iii 42 has: "Yet do you ever give to the dead the funeral offerings and garlands moist with your own tears? Though the fire change my body to ashes, the sorrowing dust shall feel the pious care." Propertius in *Elegies* II xiii 42 warns: "Not at all unconscious and witless of the truth are the ashes of man, i.e., of the way one's memory is regarded after death." Ausonius' *Parentalia, Praefatio* 11-12 reads: "Our dead bones laid to rest rejoice to hear their names: and thus even the lettered stones above their graves would have us do." And, Pope in *Eloisa to Abelard* 54 has: "Warm from the soul, and faithful to its fires."

The identity of the rustic poet in the closing stanzas of the *Elegy* remains a mystery. Early readers tended to think that Gray was using this poet figure to contemplate his own death, particularly in the wake of the passing his dear friend Richard West. Recently, it has been argued from parallels in the *Elegy* to John Donne's *Devotions on Emergent Occasions* (1624) that Gray intended each reader to identify with the young poet; however, the consensus view remains that the poet represents Gray himself. Gray himself, however, in writing the *Elegy* (as well as the *Ode to Adversity*) drops any lingering pastoral conceits and focuses rather on human life and death in real linear time. Thus, the claim that the young aspiring poet is Gray is strikes me as contrary to reason: as author of the *Elegy*, Gray has advanced beyond the stance of the pastoral poet in understanding human life and death. At the same time, the rustic poet is remarkably like the poet in the *Spring* ode (and in earlier Latin verse to Richard West and Horace Walpole). Indeed, the setting is the same: Burnham Beeches near Stoke Poges.

What is different this time around is that the Muse does not arrive to provide access to redemptive cyclical time, and the poet feels abandoned and woebegone. Why the difference? The poem hints that that young poet cannot receive the Muse because of mental blocks borne of cares and lost love, and perhaps because the times have changed, as well.[1] Consequently, he cannot spiritually tap into the "spring" of the babbling brook, which now appears as a river of no return. Thus, heedless of other options and deluded about the significance of human life, the poet takes his own life: in this sense, Gray in these lines contemplates the life and death of his *self-projection as a poet dedicated to the pastoral ideal,* a poet dedicated to tender feelings and idyllic images.

That the young poet is buried and memorialized by the villagers shows that, no matter how alienated he had felt, the community still embraces him as one of their own and buries him in the sacred ground alongside their forefathers (and foremothers). Thus, the poet is incorporated into Gray's mature Stoic vision. In essence, the story of the poet in life and in death represents Gray's spiritual change from a sentimental pastoral poet into a mature poet of human life, appreciative of the poignancy of human life unto death as a positive struggle through adversity for virtue, compassion, and love. While Gray needed to bury his earlier poetic incarnation, it remained precious to him as a memory of his halcyon days with his closest friends, Richard West in particular.

5 Conclusion

A later fragment titled *Ode on the Pleasure Arising from Vicissitudes* (1754) expresses a further development of Gray's view. He opens by celebrating a golden spring morning close on the heels of winter, again with allusions to *Lucretius* I 10-4 & I 259-61. Indeed, this opening stanza is more lively and vivid than the opening of the *Spring* ode. Drawing on *Lucretius* v 281, "the generous fountain of clear light, the ethereal sun," the last four lines of the second stanza body forth the joy they celebrate:

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1   The Elegy was written at the beginning of the age of industrialization in England, heralding a break with rustic classical sensibilities and the rise of urbanization and modern sensibilities.

"But chief, the Sky-lark warbles high/ His trembling thrilling ecstasy;/ And, lessening from dazzled sight,/ Molts into the air and liquid light." Does Gray still hanker after cyclical time? Not at all. He is here celebrating a charmed moment nested in "real" linear time: a wizened Gray now acknowledges that our humanly life is not a simple devolution or downward spiral. Everything proceeds in cycles: pleasure to grief, misery to comfort, woe to bliss: "The hues of Bliss more brightly glow,/ Chastened by sabler times of woe;/ And blended form with artful strife,/ The strength and harmony of Life" (lines 41-44). Just as winter turns to spring and nature revives anew, a wretch (like the poet), long wracked and tormented with pain can regain his vigor and "breathe and walk again." Indeed, to the recovering convalescent: "The meanest flower of the vale,/ The simplest note that swells the gale,/ The common Sun, the air, the skies,/ To him are opening Paradise" (lines 49-52).

One who has suffered will more fully appreciate the life that remains available to him or her. At the same time, regarding how one is to face this woe-begotten life driven by circles and shaped by strife, Gray offers the Stoic counsel that the answer lies *within*:

> Humble quiet builds her cell,
>   Near the source whence Pleasure flows;
> She eyes the clear crystalline well,
>   And tastes it as it goes (lines 53-56).

"Humble quiet" is Gray's poetic expression for Stoic *ataraxia*, or tranquility, a mental state grounded in a person's cultivated virtue and wisdom that affords him or her the pleasure of well-being and at-oneness with the world. Gray at last found the pristine spring that feeds pastoral streams, the crystalline well deep within the human psyche. Not surprisingly, Gray went on to write increasingly expressive verse in diverse forms.

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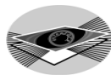
Transpoétique de Jean-Pierre Balpe.

Vers une post-culture numérique?

CHARLÈNE CLONTS
Université de Pau et des Pays de l'Adour
et
Université de Kyushu

Résumé

Jean-Pierre Balpe est plus particulièrement connu pour avoir créé des logiciels de génération automatique de textes. L'œuvre numérique ainsi générée est disséminée sur internet sous des noms divers. L'un d'entre eux est Germaine Proust dont les poèmes sont publiés régulièrement sur deux sites internet : *Mes Contre-Haïkus* et *Jean-Pierre Balpe – Un Univers de génération automatique littéraire*. De même, c'est sur ce dernier blog que paraissent des poèmes animés sous le nom de l'hétéronyme Le Poète. Les productions de ces deux hétéronymes sont le lieu d'un questionnement sur une poétique du trans- (cultures, formes, genres littéraires, arts, champs), sur le métissage créé par la littérature numérique et sur ses prolongements au travers de l'évocation d'une post-culture. Cette *transpoétique* interroge la place, la fonction et l'existence du *sujet* poétique par rapport à l'internaute, ainsi que la relation de l'homme à la machine. Elle présente simultanément et implicitement des réflexions sur l'espace et le temps mais aussi sur la création poétique et ses supports.

Mots-clés: poésie contemporaine, poésie numérique, Jean-Pierre Balpe, haiku, arts et sciences, machine, culture, identité, temps, espace, medium
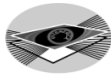
Transpoetic of Jean-Pierre Balpe.

Towards a digital post-culture?

CHARLÈNE CLONTS
University of Pau and Pays de l'Adour
and
Kyushu University

Abstract

Jean-Pierre Balpe is more particularly known for having created software for the automatic generation of texts. The digital work thus generated is disseminated on the internet under various names. One of them is Germaine Proust whose poems are regularly published on two websites: My Counter-Haïkus and Jean-Pierre Balpe - A literary automatic generation universe. In the same way, it is on this last blog that animated poems appear under the name of the heteronymous Poet. The productions of these two heteronyms are the locus of a questioning on a poetics of the trans- (cultures, forms, literary genres, arts, fields), on the miscegenation created by the digital literature and on its extensions through the evocation of a post-culture. This transpoetic questions the place, the function and the existence of the poetic subject in relation to the online reader, as well as the relation of the man to the machine. It simultaneously and implicitly presents reflections on space and time but also on poetic creation and its supports.

Keywords: contemporary french poetry, digital poetry, Jean-Pierre Balpe, haiku, arts and sciences, machine, culture, identity, time, space, medium

Transpoétique de Jean-Pierre Balpe.

Vers une post-culture numérique?

Professeur émérite de l'Université Paris 8, Jean-Pierre Balpe est plus particulièrement connu pour ses recherches sur la génération automatique qui débutent dans les années 70 pour aboutir dans les années 80 à la création de logiciels de génération automatique de textes. Alors que la génération combinatoire de textes qui apparaît après la seconde guerre mondiale donne naissance à la littérature dite «assistée par ordinateur», la génération automatique de textes est l'une des origines de la littérature dite «numérique» (Bootz, 2006). Les premiers logiciels de génération automatique de textes sont inventés par Balpe. Ce sont des générateurs de poèmes, comme le programme *Haïkus* ou le programme *Renga*. L'œuvre numérique produite par ces générateurs automatiques est disséminée sur internet sous des noms divers que le chercheur nomme des «hétéronymes» (Balpe, 2012), lui-même se considérant de la sorte comme un «méta-auteur». L'un des hétéronymes est Germaine Proust, dont les poèmes sont publiés régulièrement sur deux sites internet: *Mes Contre-Haïkus* et *Jean-Pierre Balpe – Un Univers de génération automatique littéraire*. De même, c'est sur ce dernier blog que paraissent des poèmes animés sous le nom de l'hétéronyme Le Poète. Les productions de ces deux hétéronymes sont le lieu d'un questionnement sur une poétique du trans- (cultures, formes, genres littéraires, arts, champs), sur le métissage créé par la littérature numérique et sur ses prolongements au travers de l'évocation d'une post-culture. Cette *transpoétique* interroge la place, la fonction et l'existence du *sujet* poétique par rapport à l'internaute, ainsi que la relation de l'homme à la machine. Elle présente simultanément et implicitement des réflexions sur l'espace et le temps mais aussi sur la création poétique et ses supports.

1 Migrations linguistiques et déplacement des frontières

A l'heure du multiculturel, du pluriculturalisme, du multilinguisme, de l'interculturalité, etc., le mot «transculturalité» apparaît de plus en plus régulièrement, notamment dans la critique littéraire. Partant de la définition du *Trésor de la langue française* (*TLF*, 1994) qui fait référence à un emploi journalistique, on lit que l'adjectif «transculturel» évoque une «double culture». Le *Larousse* (2009), quant à lui, précise que l'adjectif «transculturel» se dit «d'un phénomène social qui concerne plusieurs cultures, plusieurs civilisations différentes». Issu de l'anthropologie, le terme souligne les relations entretenues par différentes cultures et par différentes civilisations. Enfin, *L'Encyclopedia Universalis* (2019) met en évidence l'adjectif «transculturel» employé par Eugenio Barba lors de la création en 1979 de l'International School of Theatre Anthropology, ayant notamment pour objectif de «rencontrer d'autres cultures et (…) faire en sorte qu'elles se fécondent mutuellement». Il semble cependant encore difficile de distinguer précisément l'interculturel, le multiculturel et le transculturel dans ces définitions. Comme le montre Angela Buono (2011) en s'appuyant sur les travaux de Fulvio Caccia et Lamberto Tassinari, les préfixes employés peuvent permettre de différencier l'inter- et le multi-culturel par rapport au trans-culturel: d'une part, les cultures sont reliées mais toujours distinctes; d'autre part, les relations entre les cultures créent quelque chose de neuf qui dépasse la simple combinaison d'éléments hétérogènes. Ces quelques éléments de définition signalent ainsi que les phénomènes de transculturalité paraissent sous la forme de transferts, de fusions, de mutations et de créations. Ces processus de métamorphoses de la forme peuvent donc concerner la poétique prise dans son sens le plus large, et en particulier l'œuvre numérique de Jean-Pierre Balpe. De fait, la traduction est tout d'abord l'une des composantes de l'interculturalité (première étape avant la transculturalité) par les échanges qu'elle induit *entre* ses parties. Les poèmes animés de l'hétéronyme Le Poète s'appuient ainsi sur la traduction pour proposer au spectateur une multiplicité de langues et de voix. Ils suggèrent une rencontre polyglotte et rappellent les déplacements verbaux insolites opérés par d'autres créateurs du numérique, comme Claude Faure dans le poème animé *La Dérive des continents* (1990).

Tout d'abord, le poème « Languages wastes » (2019) de l'hétéronyme Le Poète apparaît à l'écran successivement en français, en espagnol, en italien, en allemand, puis en anglais, mais aussi à l'oral avec la lecture automatique du texte en anglais (voir figure 1). Les résidus (*wastes*) auxquels fait référence le texte sont à la fois ceux de l'espace et ceux des discours sur l'espace. En effet, le poème est généré à partir de discours issus de films documentaires évoquant l'univers. Partant du texte liminaire en français, l'auteur conçoit les autres poèmes en langue étrangère grâce à Google Traduction. Il s'agit ainsi de textes en miroir issus d'une traduction automatique. De la sorte, le poème global est un ensemble de poèmes associés selon le procédé de l'arbre : un poème en français en génère un autre en italien qui en génère un autre en espagnol, et ainsi de suite. Le discours se meut et se déroule d'une langue à l'autre. Ainsi, dès les premières minutes du poème animé, des mots en espagnol défilent de haut en bas et de bas en haut, en arrière-plan du texte français pendant que celui-ci s'affiche progressivement sur l'écran. A ses côtés, le même type de mouvements verticaux fait peu à peu apparaître le texte traduit en italien.

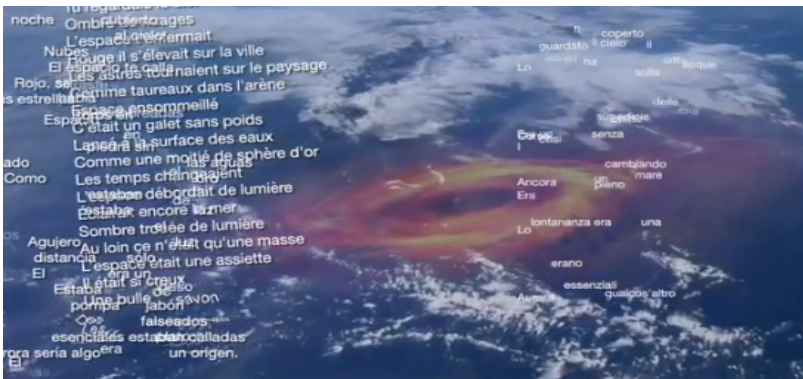**Figure 1.** Le Poète, «Languages wastes», Jean-Pierre Balpe —Un Univers de génération automatique littéraire, juin 2019, capture d'écran reproduite avec l'aimable autorisation de J.P. Balpe

La traduction et l'intrication des textes affichés sur l'écran signalent des échanges linguistiques. L'auteur expérimente le franchissement des seuils qui existent entre les langues et les cultures (Yuste, 2014):

en effet, on touche aux limites de la traduction en ce qu'elle doit habituellement s'inscrire dans plusieurs contextes culturels. Or, l'emploi de Google Traduction ne permet qu'une traduction «sans culture» ou du moins ne donne lieu qu'à une traduction sans contexte. Il semble donc difficile de parler à ce stade d'interculturalité car, s'il y a bien d'un texte à l'autre des échanges de données lexicales et structurales fondatrices de l'œuvre, la relation qui pourrait s'établir entre deux individus ou deux groupes apparaît tronquée puisque sans contexte de communication. Cependant, l'étymologie du mot «relation» signale que celle-ci est aussi «rapport» ou même «témoignage» (*TLF*, 1994). Dans une perspective étroite, la traduction automatique effectue des rapports, peu importe qu'on les considère comme erronés ou insuffisants. Elle est aussi le témoignage du brassage des langues et des cultures d'un monde globalisé. En ce sens, elle permet la circulation de l'idée d'interculturalité, sans ancrage déterminé dans une ou des cultures données. C'est ce que José Yuste Frias nomme le *métissage*, en faisant référence aux travaux de Laplantine et Nouss. Il évoque ainsi le migrant en Europe :

> L'identité-racine est ratifiée par la prétention à la légitimité qui mobilise la pensée de l'autre et celle du voyage «ensouchant» la pensée de soi et du territoire; elle permet à une communauté de proclamer son droit à la possession d'une terre, laquelle devient ainsi territoire. Par contre, l'identité-relation du migrant en Europe exulte la pensée de l'errance et de la totalité; elle ne conçoit aucune légitimité comme garante de son droit, mais circule dans une étendue nouvelle, ne se représente pas une terre comme un territoire, d'où on projette vers d'autres territoires, mais comme un lieu où on «donne-avec» et on peut tout «com-prendre».
>
> (Yuste, 2014, p. 102)

Le métissage évoqué par Yuste est plus proche des phénomènes à l'œuvre dans les poèmes de Balpe que ne l'est l'interculturalité à proprement parler. Ainsi, les poèmes animés du méta-auteur ne font pas réellement fusionner les cultures. Ils montrent uniquement que la culture-souche est indifférente. Il s'agirait alors plutôt d'une transculturalité qui transcende les échanges momentanés. D'ailleurs, le méta-auteur et la ma-

chine s'éclipsent eux-mêmes sous l'hétéronyme Le Poète, généralisa-tion absolue. Outre les cultures, ce sont les identités qui disparaissent. L'étendue nouvelle qui s'offre au lecteur est l'espace numérique ménagé par Balpe dans son poème animé. L'hétéronyme Le Poète se rapproche alors d'une identité multiple, d'une altérité, voire d'une non-identité. Le Poète est presque sans sujet ou bien un sujet-machinique qui dit l'hom-me et le monde. Il met aussi en scène une interrogation quant à l'identité créatrice de l'homme. De fait, le lecteur ne peut reconnaître une sub-jectivité particulière puisque le texte est généré automatiquement. En outre, le lexique employé n'est pas spécifiquement ancré dans un con-texte exclusivement contemporain au lecteur. Cependant, de manière plus générale, le lecteur peut repérer des éléments de liaison entre lui et le monde, entre lui et les autres lecteurs, entre son propre langage et celui employé dans les textes. Même si le langage de l'internaute n'est pas une langue romane, les images peuvent malgré tout constituer un lien. L'un des contextes à prendre en compte dans le poème « Langua-ges wastes » est donc celui donné par les images. Par ailleurs, le texte écrit et lu constitue un point de convergence pour le lecteur par-delà sa propre culture et sa propre langue, même s'il ne maîtrise pas forcément la langue employée dans l'œuvre, car le texte multilingue déplace les frontières : il représente une possibilité du discours de l'homme, dis-cours qui est toujours composite et toujours à reformer, d'où l'intérêt de Balpe pour les Grands Rhétoriqueurs et pour Raymond Queneau (Balpe, 1998) qui écrivent par combinaisons et bifurcations. Un métis-sage plus vaste réside ainsi dans la référence à une identité globalement humaine qui peut se matérialiser dans le poème animé à partir de la suc-cession de langues qui s'entremêlent et d'images prises depuis l'espace ou la stratosphère.

2 Du transfert au franchissement

Les *contre-haïkus* de l'hétéronyme Germaine Proust (voir figure 2) ne correspondent pas exactement à ce que l'on nomme la poésie animée. Comme dans le poème «Languages wastes», la poésie animée ne permet la fixation d'un texte particulier par une capture d'écran qu'au

risque d'une perte. En effet, le texte ou plutôt les textes du poème animé de Balpe ne sont pas figés par une instance énonciatrice dans l'écriture: le lecteur choisit tel ou tel chemin de lecture tout en constituant sa propre énonciation dans le labyrinthe des mots qui défilent, et ce malgré la lecture automatique du texte anglais. On trouve cependant des phénomènes similaires, à l'œuvre à la fois dans les *contre-haïkus* et dans le poème animé des hétéronymes. Tout d'abord, l'image-support sur laquelle s'inscrivent les *contre-haïkus* constitue un objet reconnaissable par le spectateur.

Figure 2. Germaine Proust, «Avoir Besoin d' Être», Mes Contre-Haïkus, mai 2019, capture d'écran reproduite avec l'aimable autorisation de J.P. Balpe

Dans les photographies d'arrière-plan de *Mes Contre-Haïkus*, on reconnaît tout d'abord les éléments naturels (fleurs, arbre, ombre, feuilles, pierres…). Immédiatement associé au mot «haïku», l'assemblage produit une reconnaissance. Cependant, l'intitulé générique des poèmes fait aussi référence à un côte à côte, une proximité, voire une opposition (*contre*). De fait, il s'agit surtout d'une re-connaissance du *haiku* en raison des différences formelles entre la forme du *haiku* et les poèmes de Germaine Proust. Ainsi, ces derniers ne respectent pas la versification traditionnellement employée pour la création de *haiku* en langue

française (7/5/7 syllabes sur trois vers). La recréation s'effectue donc davantage sur la forme que sur le fond puisque les *contre-haïkus* s'appuient toujours sur des termes évoquant la nature («terre», «acacias», «jasmin», «nature», «lune», «jour», «fleurs», «trichoptères», «vent», «miel» dans les dix derniers poèmes publiés), selon le principe du *kigo* (季語 «mot de saison»). En outre, se posent implicitement les grandes questions de l'humanité: on peut ainsi recenser dans ces *haiku* des notions comme celles de perception, d'être et d'existence, mais aussi des évocations sur la place de l'homme dans l'univers, sur le temps et sur les origines. Le transfert de la forme poétique japonaise (ou plutôt de l'*idée* de *haiku* retranscrite en langue romane) se concentre ainsi moins sur les particularismes de plusieurs cultures mises en relation (hypothétiquement une culture japonaise, voire chinoise par l'origine des *haiku*, et une/des cultures de langue française) que sur des questionnements plus généraux comme le temps qui passe ou l'universalité du temps. Il y a donc franchissement (*trans-*) de l'interstice *entre* les cultures. Ce pont numérique est d'ailleurs marqué par l'anonymat résultant de la génération automatique des textes, bien qu'il rappelle aussi l'indéfinition du sujet dans le *haiku* car le *je* poétique s'y dilue dans l'espace et le temps – il n'est pas anodin que Balpe ait choisi le *haiku* pour créer ses premiers programmes de génération automatique de textes. Le *contre-haïku* est donc une forme numérique d'écriture qui traverse, mais aussi transcende. En même temps, elle dé-forme et contre-forme (côte à côte ou face à face) par la multiplication à l'infini sans subjectivité, émettant de la sorte une critique des formes établies. Les *contre-haïkus* de Germaine Proust, en tant que manipulation de mots, signalent une infinité de possibilités et permettent de manifester à l'infini le temps qui passe et la vie elle-même.

Ainsi, malgré les apparences de sa dénomination, le *contre-haïku* n'est pas une différence par opposition car, comme l'écrit Gilles Deleuze, il «appartient à l'essence de l'affirmation d'être en elle-même multiple, et d'affirmer la différence» (1972, p. 343). En reprenant une structure (celle couramment employée de nos jours pour réaliser un *haiku*), l'auteur signale implicitement l'existence de problématiques artistiques liées à la production d'un texte-type, fondé sur un cadre qui produit du

prêt-à-consommer. D'un *contre-haïku* à l'autre, la machine effectue des translations et des glissements à l'intérieur d'un cadre, tout en créant des rapports entre ces possibilités artistiques. Dans le poème animé *L'Où* (1990), Philippe Bootz joue lui aussi avec les cadres syntaxiques en faisant glisser et évoluer les mots à l'intérieur d'une structure particulière. De fait, le cadre est aussi «fenêtre» (d'après l'un des sens attestés de *quadro*) (*TLF*, 1994) ou «écran» qui permet à la fois de concentrer le regard et d'ouvrir vers un ailleurs. Le cadre est en même temps «carré» ou «peinture» (autre sens de *quadro*) (*ibid*.). Avec ce jeu du taquin, il s'agit aussi chez Balpe d'un retour humoristique sur le principe créateur des *contre-haïkus* comme forme poétique affichée sur l'écran et placée *sur* une image, et comme mise en abyme d'un carré dans le rectangle de l'écran. D'un poème à l'autre, d'un site internet à l'autre, naissent une intra-scansion et une inter-scansion issues de la succession des textes et des images, de leurs origines, de leur simultanéité et de leur agencement. La scansion apparaissant dans la structure du *contre-haïku* et celle qui s'instaure entre les *contre-haïkus* évoquent le rythme des langues, fait de répétitions, de télescopages, de suspensions. Face au hasard apparent des créations poétiques de Germaine Proust ou du Poète, cette organisation met en lumière une syntaxe des *contre-haïkus*, faite de symétries, de placements en miroir, de diffractions et d'arborescences qui soulignent en même temps l'existence d'une ligne de fuite. Il ne s'agit donc pas d'un éternel retour qui rendrait toute communication impossible. Comme dans le cas de la spirale, il y a des décalages par rapport au centre que constituerait la structure initiale du poème. En outre, la machine est capable de se détacher progressivement du modèle en incluant dans son stock de structures et de mots ceux qu'il a (re)créés (Chatonsky, 2018b). Ainsi, on perçoit déjà l'expérience limite de la littérature telle qu'on l'entend dans son sens le plus traditionnel et son éloignement par rapport à la littérature dite «assistée par ordinateur».

3 Pour une post-culture numérique?

Les *contre-haïkus* constituent aussi des méta-haïkus parce qu'ils mettent en scène la génération du texte. De la sorte, sur le site *Jean-Pierre*

Balpe – Un Univers de génération automatique littéraire (voir figure 3), on propose à l'internaute de cliquer sur un bouton afin de générer un (contre-)*haiku* : « La poésie étant ce que de nos jours elle est, je refuse d'écrire des haïkus si vous n'en manifestez pas le désir en utilisant le bouton ci-dessous. Cependant, si vous en manifestez le désir, ma productivité poétique est infinie… » (Balpe, 2015). Ce préambule est attribué à un « auteur » comme le précise la page d'identification de Germaine Proust, et associé à une image représentant une femme blonde, au regard légèrement outré et présentée à la façon des peintres renaissants.
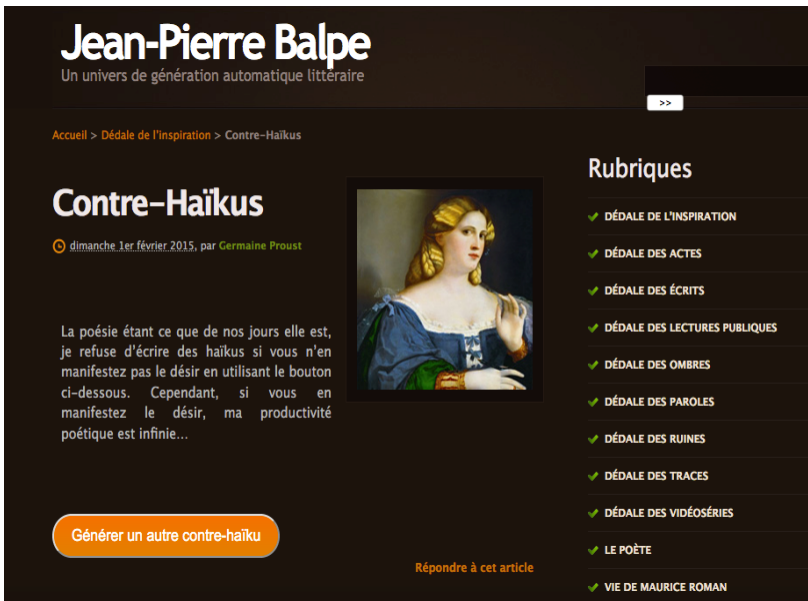
Figure 3. Germaine Proust, préambule aux Contre-Haïkus, février 2015, capture d'écran reproduite avec l'aimable autorisation de J.P. Balpe

Le regard mi-indigné, mi-surpris de la femme blonde contredit les propos presque aguicheurs. En effet, après un premier constat désabusé et la manifestation d'une individualité forte, la subordonnée conditionnelle évoque le « désir » potentiel du lecteur. L'anaphore de construction «si vous (n')en manifestez (pas) le désir» dans sa forme imparfaite

(négative puis affirmative) souligne la soumission (voire la *prostitution* au sens baudelairien du terme) de Germaine Proust à son lecteur, ou du moins met en évidence un pacte de lecture. L'échange entre l'objet du désir et le sujet lisant est de l'ordre du troc ou du commerce, comme le confirme l'emploi des mots «désir» et «productivité». Cliquer sur le bouton revient à assumer un système créé pour satisfaire le désir humain qui met un étant-machine à sa disposition car «produire» n'est pas l'équivalent de «créer», même s'il existe aussi des littératures *produites*, c'est-à-dire construites grâce à des récurrences qui font vendre (Balpe, 1994, p. 10). La commande revient donc à l'internaute: ce n'est plus le poète qui donne l'influx mais le *générateur* qui devient alors un pseudo-géniteur. Le bouton porte en effet la commande «Générer un autre contre-haïku» afin de créer à la demande. Le préambule instaure donc une relation particulière entre un internaute et un dispositif machinique. Mais s'il existe un influx qui est celui du générateur, c'est toujours la machine ou l'«Imagination artificielle» (Chatonsky, 2018a) qui s'essaie à la fabrique poétique. Gregory Chatonsky, artiste numérique ayant collaboré avec Jean-Pierre Balpe, écrit que

> si l'anthropotechnologie peut être abordée comme une genèse relationnelle produisant les éléments mis en relation, l'être humain et la technique, elle peut aussi être envisagée comme une méthode archaïque (sans fondement puisque originairement relationnelle) d'heuristique artistique, c'est-à-dire d'exploration expérimentale. (Chatonsky, 2018a)

L'interculturel homme/machine se constitue donc aussi comme un franchissement de ces mêmes cultures, telles qu'on les perçoit traditionnellement, pour les transcender dans une relation hyper-contemporaine, hyper-humaine et hyper-machinique. L'homme et la machine fonctionnent en réseau et prennent l'écran pour support d'apparition des textes. Ce réseau tripartite se distingue néanmoins de celui qui s'instaure entre ses membres hors-création et dans un but différent. En effet, par le biais de ses hétéronymes, Balpe décontextualise l'homme devant son écran, mais aussi l'acte créatif et la machine. Leur recontextualisation permet de quitter la sphère du banal et celle du champ littéraire traditionnel afin

de les rendre à un espace qui n'est plus neutre. Les créations de Balpe et de ses hétéronymes *désinstitutionnalisent*. Christophe Hanna écrit ainsi à propos des nouveaux dispositifs poétiques que «l'institutionalisation de l'écriture, les logiques sociales de sa conception, de sa mise en circulation, de ses usages ne vont plus d'elles-mêmes: elles sont devenues objets de création, de reconception par l'écriture» (Hanna, p. 7).

De la sorte, on peut dire que la poétique de Balpe est *simulacre*, au sens deleuzien du terme, c'est-à-dire «image démoniaque, dénué(e) de ressemblance» ou plutôt celle qui «contrairement à l'icône, (…) a mis la ressemblance à l'extérieur, et vit de différence» (Deleuze, p. 167). Ainsi, la ressemblance avec la création poétique traditionnelle et les relations interculturelles qu'elles peuvent établir ne sont que superficielles: elles sont contrebalancées dans les poèmes des hétéronymes par une *différence* majeure avec l'idée traditionnelle de «culture» et avec celle que l'on se fait des relations anthropocentrées. Cette différence propre à l'œuvre des hétéronymes crée de nouvelles relations et des traversées culturelles (au sens large). Perceptible au travers de l'humour et de la métamorphose des genres littéraires, picturaux ou filmiques établis, la critique implicite à la création numérique de Balpe indique une différence du «concept et du sujet pensant» (Deleuze, p. 342). Mais on ne peut non plus limiter cet art numérique à la critique qu'il véhicule car on risque alors de le réduire à une différence par opposition. Il ne s'agit pas seulement de jeux de surface, sur une ou deux dimensions. On joue aussi sur la profondeur de champ et les diagonales (*trans*-) qui se matérialisent entre plusieurs cultures : culture humaine et culture machinique, culture de la composition poétique et culture du bricolage, culture livresque et culture numérique. Les manipulations se perçoivent comme un ensemble de problèmes qui se posent face à la multiplicité des variables possibles. Mais la transpoétique de Balpe ne peut se réduire non plus à une synthèse dialectique (critique oppositionnelle *versus* affirmation de solutions possibles). Ainsi, la duplication numérique de la forme du *haiku* passant par la moulinette machinique et celle des paramètres établis par l'homme n'est pas synonyme de copie : elle crée une épaisseur, comme le montre l'étymologie du mot «double», issu de *duplex*. C'est pourquoi cet art sort du cadre de

la représentation traditionnelle des relations interhumaines ou transhumaines. La transpoétique de Balpe se rapproche d'une post-culture numérique qui, dans un processus infini constamment réactualisé par l'internaute et par les paramètres automatiques de la machine, se nourrit d'énergie vitale (celle du générateur) et de mouvements (celle de l'apparition des textes sur l'écran). Ces déplacements culturels se veulent donc aussi rapports dans et hors du cadre (écran, institution, société). La transpoétique numérique n'est donc pas l'éternel retour qui rend impossible toute création mais l'infinie et hasardeuse création. Selon un fonctionnement spiralaire, elle crée toujours un décalage par rapport à tout *centre* (homme, institution…), ce qui lui permet de se déplacer à côté des chemins établis ou à la marge. Elle est donc doublée d'un *mouvement forcé d'amplitude plus grande* (Deleuze, Proust et les signes, p. 191) qui balaie à la fois la culture humaine et la culture numérique, tout en les transcendant. De la sorte, les œuvres des hétéronymes sont des *machines* (au sens deuleuzien du terme) qui fonctionnent en produisant des fragments cloisonnés qui ne semblent pas communiquer. D'ailleurs, il n'y a pas un seul hétéronyme, mais plusieurs, dont Le Poète « anonyme ». Toutefois, des écarts et des distances se produisent entre le genre poétique tel qu'on l'imagine et la transpoétique de Balpe, entre les origines du *haiku* et ce qu'en fait la machine, entre les supports institués de la poésie et la poésie numérique, etc. Ils prennent la forme d'une organisation onirique, semblable à celle qui se produit dans les rêves.

Comme dans le rêve, les fragments prélevés (discours sur l'espace dans les films documentaires, *haiku*) deviennent des matériaux de construction ou *objets partiels* (Deleuze, *ibid*., p. 181) dans leur forme la plus minime. La perception des *haiku* (en tant que forme traditionnelle japonaise) et plus généralement des créations poétiques (en tant que création originale d'un poète humain) divergent de celle que l'on a habituellement. En tant qu'agencement d'éléments existants déjà dans un système symbolique préexistant, la *préperformance* des fragments employés (tournures et mots de saison du *haiku*, discours des documentaires…) est modifiée par leur *implémentation* (Quintyn, pp. 106-107). Ils produisent des *effets de résonance* puisque la poésie numérique fait entrer en collusion plusieurs cultures et plusieurs temporalités, voire plusieurs

espaces. Il ne s'agit pourtant pas entièrement de réminiscences mais plutôt d'un art transculturel (comme on parle de transhumanité) qui fait résonner le désir et l'émotion. Dès lors, malgré les paramètres intégrés au logiciel de production de texte, Balpe réalise une expérimentation artistique possédant des effets de *jamais vu* (Deleuze, *op. cit.*, p. 184) qui fonctionnent puisque l'internaute s'interroge quant au discours de l'homme sur l'univers (avec le poème animé du Poète) et sur la place du spectateur et de la machine dans l'acte de création (avec les *con-tre-haïkus* de Germaine Proust). Ainsi, Jean-Pierre Balpe évoque une transposition infinie. Il précise que « n'ayant pas de support "naturel", ou plutôt – comme par exemple la peinture ou le théâtre – "culturel" qui lui soit destiné, l'art numérique se doit, à chacune de ses créations, d'inventer à la fois son espace et son mode d'exposition » (Balpe, 2001). On pourra dire aussi qu'à partir des fragments prélevés et réactivés, et de cette syntaxe du côte à côte qui se renouvelle aussi par l'infinie mise en branle du fonds que possède la machine et par la création d'un stock nouveau, l'internaute produit sa propre épiphanie. Gilles Deleuze écrit en effet que l'épiphanie se produit lorsque l'on dégage «l'image précieuse des conditions naturelles qui la déterminent pour la réincar-ner dans les conditions artistiques élues» (*ibid.*, p. 187). On pourrait ajouter qu'elle se produit lorsque l'écriture est elle-même dégagée des conditions habituelles qui la déterminent habituellement ou institution-nellement. C'est pourquoi la transpoétique de Balpe (mais surtout l'art numérique en général) produit une *inquiétude*. En effet, elle signale en même temps la disparition de la figure traditionnelle de l'artiste et la métamorphose des relations qu'elle induisait entre l'œuvre, l'artiste et le public. La poésie numérique implique aussi dans le cas de Germaine Proust une précarité de l'écriture car les poèmes produits disparaissent de l'écran à chaque fermeture de la fenêtre du navigateur et à chaque nouveau désir de production poétique de l'internaute (ou des internautes car la création peut être simultanée si deux internautes se connectent en même temps sur le site). Cette création décuplée par l'ubiquité dilate et contracte aussi le temps et crée le *mouvement forcé d'amplitude plus grande* dont parle Gilles Deleuze, mouvement par lequel l'acte créateur et le temps de la réalisation deviennent *sensibles*.

Pour conclure, la transpoétique de Balpe est un lieu de rencontre entre des éléments éloignés dans leur espace d'origine, presque une métaphore surréaliste. Elle réside *entre*, elle transforme et elle traverse les cultures dans leur définition courante. Ce faisant, elle les transcende aussi. C'est pourquoi elle pourrait être qualifiée de post-culturelle dans le sens où elle correspond davantage à une *science nomade* qu'à une *science royale*, toutes deux définies par Gilles Deleuze et Félix Guattari (pp. 446-448). En effet, la transpoétique de Balpe présente des instabilités et des hétérogénéités inhérentes à leur devenir incessant (celui de la génération automatique de textes). L'espace *strié* (c'est-à-dire le cadre institutionnel ou celui de l'écran) est parcouru par des mouvements divers (poème animé, disparition/génération) et ponctué d'écarts que l'internaute met en action et franchit selon son bon vouloir, créant alors un espace *lisse*. Tout est projeté dans l'espace numérique infini et s'agite à l'intérieur du cadre de l'écran et dans l'imagination de l'internaute. Création atypique, la transpoétique signale l'existence d'opérations et d'opérateurs (humains ou machiniques) qui s'agitent de manière démesurée, tout en s'articulant avec le monde actuel et le présent, régis par leurs propres lois. Les zones de turbulence qui se créent permettent alors de transcender les territoires, les cultures, les temps et les identités figeantes.

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CLONTS

Releasing the Creative Self in Transcultural Neo-Tales.

Baba Yaga in Jane Yolen's "Finding Baba Yaga" and

Lana Hechtman Ayers' "Red Riding Hood's Real Life"

HENRIEKE STAHL
Trier University

Abstract

This article deals with two American (US) 'novels in poems,' both of which draw on Russian and East Slavic fairy tale motifs. In them, the witch Baba Yaga is reinterpreted, on the one hand, as an initiator into female self-liberation and self-realisation and, on the other, as a catalyst for the release of creativity. Through Baba Yaga, the protagonists discover and develop an autonomous self that derives its strength from the aesthetic act, whereby art resp. poetry and autonomy are shown to coincide. Meanwhile, femininity stands for the human soul, freed from the structural constraints imposed by the masculine principle of logos. The figure of Baba Yaga is thus chosen simultaneously and very likely independently by both authors as an archetype for the soul's discovery of its own autonomy in aesthetic (self-)creation, while the genre of the 'novel in poems' itself reflects this motif of formal self-constitution.

Keywords: verse novel, novel in poems, Baba Yaga, creative self

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Life"

While it remains rather marginal in other literatures, in the anglophone world, especially in the United States and Britain, the hybrid genre of the verse novel is enjoying a strong upswing. In the context of this renaissance, a special genre has emerged: the novel composed of individual poems (cf. Stahl, forthcoming). Each constituent poem may vary with regard to length and composition of the stanzas as well as in the ratio of narrative sequences to genuinely lyric, dramatic, or poetic passages. 'Narrative' here refers to a dominant treatment of the object (characters and their world, plot), 'lyric' to the performative constitution of the content by the speech act, 'dramatic' to the performance of communication, and 'poetic' to the medium of language, underscored by the use of poetic and linguistic devices and the short form of the poem. Although the 'novel in poems' is normally attributed to the verse novel, it is unique in form; it also differs from arrangements of poems in cycles or books, combining the basic features of both the novel and poetry in a certain balance.

The advantage of this specialised genre lies in the fact that the plot has to be (re-)constructed from short scenes or reflections upon them and, in many cases, from the multiple perspectives of persons to whose subjectivity the poems are assigned. There is no coherent narration in the usual sense. The reader must synthesise the plot, character development, and motivation from the poems and from paratexts —such as chapter titles, epigraphs and, in some cases, ancillary poems, pre- or postfaces, and appendixes —like a puzzle or mosaic. This fragmentary and episodic arrangement is the exception in other language literatures, where

it is only gradually regaining some contemporary acknowledgment. In Russia and Germany, for instance, where the novel in verse has deep 'high art' roots and is still less than widespread, the 'novel in poems' today is practically absent, whereas it is climbing the anglophone bestseller lists and enjoying notable success, among other things even in the 'low art' young adult market.

Within the young adult (YA) niche, there is another general synthetic tendency: the hybridisation of fairy tale motifs—often of foreign cultural provenance—with a 'realistically' narrated present-day world. These motifs and their functions are transformed and reinterpreted to build up a contemporary mythology that individualises archaic collective myth and at the same time engenders a supra-individual meaning. The fairy tale material is revived in transcultural hybridizations, changing the spectrum of its meanings, as established by respective traditions.

This article deals with two American (US) 'novels in poems,' both of which draw on Russian and East Slavic fairy tale motifs. In them, the witch Baba Yaga is reinterpreted, on the one hand, as an initiator into female self-liberation and self-realisation and, on the other, as a catalyst for the release of poetic or artistic creativity. Through Baba Yaga, the protagonists discover and develop an individuality that derives its strength from the creative act, whereby art and autonomy are shown to coincide. Meanwhile, femininity stands for the human soul, freed from the structural constraints imposed by the masculine principle of logos. The figure of Baba Yaga is thus chosen simultaneously and very likely independently by both authors as an archetype for the soul's discovery of its own autonomy in aesthetic (self-)creation, while the genre of the 'novel in poems' itself reflects this motif of self-constitution.

1 Baba Yaga - old and new, again and again

Baba Yaga is perhaps the most famous figure in all of East Slavic folklore, traditionally appearing in fairy tales about magic (cf. Jones 2004/2010). Her roots go back to Slavic mythology, where she has her archetype in the goddess of death, who guards the threshold to the af-

terlife (Johns, 2010, pp. 27; 16).[1] The latter is reflected in her hut, which stands in the forest on chicken legs and is able to move, hinting at an ancient Slavic burial rite. Her fence, made of human bones and skulls, and her cannibalism (she eats children and young men) emphasise her deadly power. Although she is imagined as an old and ugly hag, she also possesses sexually suggestive attributes that connote transformation and new beginnings: e.g., she travels using a mortar and pestle, which, as is well known, crushes seeds.[2] She is also a sorceress who possesses the ability to change her outward form or enchant objects. As a threshold figure (Johns, 2010, p. 3), her function is to initiate the hero, to whom she gives advice or an important magic item or with whom he must do battle in order to proceed.

In present-day music and literature, but also in comics and film, Baba Yaga's territory has expanded beyond her East Slavic homeland along with a revival of the witch motif more generally. The latter, which has been in use by feminist movements since the 1960s, became a rallying figure for the self-determined free woman in juxtaposition to the 'traditional,' system-compliant functionalisation of the witch as a dread spectre (Calla, 2018). In more recent years, the witch has again been used as a figure for positive self-identification —for instance, in the 2017 founding of Witch Bloc Paname (Paris), which attracted international media attention.

In 2015, Russian-American writer Taisia Kitaiskaia began a reinterpretation of the witch motif in the US, transforming it into the prototype for female writing: "To write, then, is to make magic. And so it follows that to be a female writer is, in fact, to be a kind of Witch".[3] Kitaiskaia also specifically picked up the motif of Baba Yaga and, through her widely viewed internet project *Ask Baba Yaga* (founded in 2015 and published in book form in 2017), incorporated it into American women's literature as a symbol of the ambivalence of female creativity. For Kitaiskaia,

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1   There is a wide range of interpretations of Baba Yaga's origins. For this reason, "the word 'witch' does not describe Baba Yaga in all her complexity and richness." (Johns, 2010, p. 2).

2   Baba Yaga is "the death of human beings and nature", but also "associated with the fertility of earth, marriage, and birth" (Johns, 2010, p. 19).

3   Cf. the foreword by Grossman (2017, p. 5).

what is significant about the witch, especially Baba Yaga, is that she stands for the transformative, dynamic power of creativity, which both destroys and gives life; she is understood as a "female archetype that has power in its own terms" and as "a change agent" (Grossman, 2017, p. 5). In this article, we will analyse two such examples of the Baba Yaga motif in its contemporary deployment.

2 Jane Yolen: Baba Yaga, the "inner witch"

Jane Yolen, an American writer with Russian-Jewish roots, studied Russian as a minor subject in college (Scholastic, 2019).[4] In many of her works, she not only uses magic motifs but also European fairy tales, in which the Russian tradition plays a central role. She published an illustrated children's book, *The Flying Witch,* based on Baba Yaga, in 2003; but Baba Yaga also figures in her adult-oriented poems and other works. Of these, the most significant is *Finding Baba Yaga.* Yolen herself defined it as "a short novel in verse," but the book is presented in the specialised form of a 'novel in poems.' Individual poems included in the book have been published separately since 2015. In interviews, Yolen talks about the ambivalent fascination she developed with Baba Yaga since childhood. Her appreciation of Baba Yaga oscillates between nightmare and admiration, because the motif combines destruction with vitality. Baba Yaga is, for her, "the strongest and greatest witch in the world," with whom she identifies as a writer: "*So from the time I was about eight years old, I wanted to be Baba Yaga, gnashing my iron teeth*" (BookTrib, 2018). The "anarchic" life force of the witch and her mental autonomy ("she always says what she thinks" [BookTrib, 2018]), which Yolen emphasises, are presented in this book as the source of poetic creativity. Baba Yaga is raised to the archetype of female writing. Yolen also refers to Taisia Kitaiskaia's interpretation of the witch in her internet project *Ask Baba Yaga* (Kitaiskaia, 2017) and identifies Baba Yaga directly with Kitaiskaia (Yolen, 2018, pp. 12, 120).

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4   Additional information is available at BookTrib (2018).

Yolen's book consists of thirteen parts: nine chapters of poems attributable to the protagonist (an adolescent girl), a prologue and epilogue of unmarked attribution but pointing to the author herself, and two other paratexts: a foreword and a didactic "Reading Group Guide" explicitly in the voice of an external author. The poems describe, in a diary-like form, the girl's escape from her parents' house to the hut of Baba Yaga. The aim of the girl's quest is to find herself, which coincides with her becoming a poet. She writes about her "path": "I am becoming a poet. / I am thinking in metaphors. / I am walking through a poem." (Yolen, 2018, p. 52) At the end of the novel, the girl is the heiress to Baba Yaga, whose mission is to tell the 'truth by lying,' i.e., to be a poet: "I've learned to write poetry, telling the truth / through metaphor, simile, straight-forward lies." (Yolen, 2018, p. 127). Finding words and creating worlds from them is the magic of the witch. Accordingly, the novel is self-consciously logocentric—"Things always come back / to the word" (Yolen, 2018, p. 40)—and uses a self-reflexive poetic language instead of prose speech.

The girl's journey involves the repeated crossing of borders (leaving her house, the city, crossing natural boundaries like a river) and is presented with allusions to alchemical symbolism (washing-up as purification, defeat of fire). It leads her from Putrefactio to Conjunctio and culminates in the "finding of Baba Yaga" as the "inner witch." The old and the young woman form an "odd, the oddest" Conjunctio, in which the girl has arrived at her real "home": "We are like an old couple now, an odd couple, / the oddest. Are we sisters? Cousins? / Mother and child? It doesn't matter ,/ for I crossed tundra, taiga, major highways, / nineteen stones and a meadow / to find this home" (Yolen, 2018, p. 127).

This Conjunctio involves, on the one hand, the girl's native talent as a poet (her genius) and, on the other hand, the necessity of an education (Baba Yaga as mentor): "Witches are made, not only born. / […] We pass on our genius / as well as our genes" (Yolen, 2018, p. 131). The creation of poetry is thus presented as a process of endless learning and new trials. It is about acquiring the ability to ask questions, to listen, and to perceive the—referring to Baudelaire—correspondences of the

language of the 'forest' (i.e., the unconscious): "This is a place of corre-spondence […] I need to learn how to frame a question. / I need to learn how to listen" (Yolen, 2018, p. 48). Furthermore, to be a poet demands that one be ready to face new and troubling experiences and to accept injuries (Baba Yaga herself is injured by Kostchai the Deathless and weeps a flood of tears for the loss of her daughter).

To be a poet-witch also presents a third way beyond the antinomies of a patriarchally structured world. At first glance, the novel draws upon the pattern of Apollonian-Dionysian opposition: the paternal "logos" —the word as order, norms, and rules but also sterility— is opposed to the "bogus" —impure speech— as well as the 'dirty' but fertile count-er-world of witchcraft and of art: "Good words, *logos* he [father] calls it, / God's words in the beginning. […] But bad words, he calls *bogus*, / confusing anger with sin. […] Swearing can be held too tight in the heart, / Speaking it aloud, an artefact, an art" (Yolen, 2018, p. 21).

This contrast is reflected in the novel's language itself, which plays with Russian-language infusions and allusions. Russian is explicitly in-troduced as the language of cursing (swear words), which Baba Yaga praises: "*Try these*, she says. / *Mudak, suka, dik*" (meaning: "asshole," "bitch," and the third word, which is a bilingual pun—both English "dick" and Russian "wild") (Yolen, 2018, p. 102). The poetic compo-sition proves Baba Yaga sublimely right and turns the speech of the father on its head. His pejorative "bogus" contains the Russian word for "God" ("*bog*"), which also appears explicitly on the next page in English: "the Goodest Word, the God-est Word". Here, again, a Russian word is sublimely present: "est'" – "is", resulting in "the God-is Word" or "God is the Word," in a reversal of the beginning of the Gospel of John ("The Word was God," John 1:1). Cursing is a denial of the given order and thus contributes to the release of the creative self, which finds its strength in resistance.[5] In the end, the girl acquires her own language and truth: "great magic" means "telling my own truth" (Yolen, 2018, p. 118). Subordination to the transcendent truth of God is thus suspended,

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5   The name of the Baba Yaga is connected with Slavic words meaning "anger", "rage" or "strength, force", but also with "disease, illness" and some other words (see in detail: Johns 2004/2010, p. 10).

as much as the patriarchal ratio.

Upon closer inspection, however, it becomes apparent that, in the 'novel in poems,' the binary oppositions on which the world of the father is based are themselves transcended; for the world of Baba Yaga is its antithesis only from the perspective of that world. In itself, however, it exceeds such duality as a structural principle of rational order, formally constituting itself as a third. This can be seen on multiple levels: the nine chapters thematically form 3x3 units, mirrored around the fifth chapter; they are supplemented by three paratexts and the didactic instructions for analysis, which breaks up the closed 4x3 composition (13 is the number of the witch). Figures are introduced in shifting constellations of three, which conflict and thus constantly alternate (father-mother-child; Vasilisa-prince-protagonist; Baba Yaga-protagonist-Vasilisa). The 'third' principle is the disturbance of the binary order, which 'shifts' it and thus opens it to change.

This shifting as a transgression of established orders is the essential principle of Baba Yaga, as her attributes in the story also illustrate: her hut rotates constantly and is depicted as the "head" and seat of poetic creation; her mortar and pestle serve as a flying vehicle and stand for the fact that, in movement, the grains of reality are crushed and thus made suitable for poetic transformation; her destructive force is represented by her iron teeth, with which she devours little boys, the heirs to the patriarchal order, while her "pen" —in the role of a female phallus— passes on the creative power of transformation to the protagonist: "but the memory of creation is here / in my fingers, as they hold fast / to the feather weight / of Baba Yaga's pen" (Yolen, 2018, p. 119).

These fairy tale motifs are used in the novel as images for the processes of consciousness. Thus, the hut of Baba Yaga is also explicitly called "Nowhere" ("A Long Walk to Nowhere," [Yolen, 2018, p. 38]), which one only reaches if one shifts one's consciousness "around the corner": "Just turn a corner of your mind, / and it's there" (Yolen, 2018, p. 38). In a metaphorical way, it is said that the ordinary hierarchical order must be reversed in order to expose the non-place of pure becoming, of

creativity, in the moment of shifting, of transition. The quality of this third world of Baba Yaga or creativity is "ever after" to be in transition and lives in the expectation of constant disturbance, displacement, and transformation. Thus, the two women expect a third, Vasilisa, the lost ideal, to return to their lives, wounding them again and again: "*Will she come back?* I whisper. / *Bad pennies always do*, she tells me. / Then, finger against her nose, adds: / *She'll break your heart all over again.* // […] *Not when you want her, but when you don't*" (Yolen, 2018, p. 123).

Accordingly, Baba Yaga is not simply a counter-image of the father's world of ordered consciousness, but rather a place of constant transformation. Tradition, as that which has already become, is deconstructed, analysed, reassembled, and thereby made her own. For this reason, the young protagonist learns in the last poem of the last chapter to analyse literature from different cultures, especially Russian and American, and from both 'low' and 'high' literature. As a "witch-poet," she is an eternal learner.

The 'novel in poems' itself implements this principle: seemingly 'found' materials are removed from context, compositionally reorganised, and transformed into a new story. And it is precisely this task that the book presents to the reader, who is asked in the "Coda" to "tell this story" in turn: the book concludes with a guide to analysis as a first step towards appropriation in the form of continued writing. The two framework poems, "You Think You Know This Story," focus on the free appropriation of inherited material in literature and life and invite the reader to do the same: "You want to tell this story, / perhaps now you will" (Yolen, 2018, p. 131). Individualisation happens for Yolen through creative appropriation: "Until it's my own" (Yolen, 2018, p. 131).

In her 'novel in poems,' Yolen uses the Baba Yaga material to tell a new fairy tale that identifies creative force with the image of the witch. This creativity releases the self, which has to transcend norms and rules in order to fashion its own and, in turn, overcome them as well. Only then does it realise its essential principle, which Yolen regards as life force and, thus, as constant becoming and passing away, as a capacity for

transition. She simultaneously understands this creativity as an inner human form of the divine. The protagonist imagines poetry in analogy to the Holy Communion: *"Come to the altar of the book, / open your heart, take in the story / It's a transubstantiation, / as great as any you believe in."* (Yolen, 2018, p. 118). In the release of creativity, which is at the same time individuation, Yolen realises the actual power of God in man. The "memory of creation" in the poet is the memory of God's creation (Yolen, 2018, p. 119). This power, however, is at the same time the other side of God—'deus inversus,' magical witchcraft—because by shifting what has already become, it is always a process of the simultaneous undoing and transformation of the divine order. The witch is the eternal transformation of life, activated and used by the creative self, and her nature is ambivalent, divine and not divine at the same time: "Baba Yaga represents the ageless life force" (Yolen, 2018, p. 11).

3 Lana Hechtman Ayers: Between Baba Yaga and Wolf

In Lana Hechtman Ayers' *Red Riding Hood's Real Life*, which can also be characterised as a 'novel in poems,' Baba Yaga is combined with German fairy tale motifs. Its protagonist is an adult woman in her early thirties named Eve Red Riding Hood. Her self-discovery as an independent artist is not only initiated by Baba Yaga, who sometimes overlaps with the grandmother of the German fairy tale but also by the Wolf. Here, Baba Yaga is, first of all, a traditional symbol for the emancipation of women, who, like the protagonist at the beginning of the novel, are only instrumentalised as a function of family and society: "We inherited the broom […]. To sweep, sweep, sweep […] We were told to sweep and be grateful. […] But could we dance in the rain / splatter paint on a canvas, / without being called selfish witch or insane?" (Ayers, 2017, p. 133). The woman who refuses these roles exposes herself to "hellfire" and breaks with the order of society: "my polite apology to society / for being female was over. / I'd become author of some new / inscrutable ever after. Hellfire was to come our way […]" (Ayers, 2017, p. 120). Baba Yaga asks the protagonist to become self-determined and to find her own way: "Take my advice […] Teach your chicken-legged / house to

dance. / A man will just keep you down" (Ayers, 2017, p. 27); "Live your story, missy, / your own – not mine" (Ayers, 2017, p. 28).

The protagonist carries the seed of her individual creativity hidden under "seven veils," which she sheds, like Oscar Wilde's Salome (in that novel, too, self and creativity are two sides of the same coin). Self-knowledge coincides with the release of her talent as an artist: "self-knowledge […] was a seed already alive / in me that begun to sprout / the day I ventured out / to the art museum" (Ayers, 2017, p. 158), where she first encounters the Wolf. However, the germination of the seed needs stimulation. This is what the Wolf gives her, who, as a lover, releases her from marriage and introduces her to art as her mentor and master. At first, he is the embodiment of what the protagonist is yet to become: "Being a creative spirit, / the Wolf excels at one thing // especially – individuality" (Ayers, 2017, p. 96). The Wolf gives her the consciousness of her creative self for the first time: "Oh, that Wolf, / I wouldn't take a moment of us back. / You made me conscious of the fact that I / contain multitudes, more fathoms than the sea" (Ayers, 2017, p. 162).

However, the protagonist finally moves beyond the Wolf: he needs her as his "Muse" (Ayers, 2017, p. 181), but she detaches from him in order to find herself. The protagonist discovers more and different depths within herself than the Wolf possesses, and she separates from him in order not to become dependent on a man again: "Should I have been more clear / with the Wolf about my fear of losing // not only him, but my newfound sense of self? […] I must trust my intuition more, not second guess" (Ayers, 2017, p. 162). She subsequently finds the Wolf inside herself—"her artist animus" (Ayers, 2017, p. 163) in the sense of C. G. Jung: "When I staggered upon a wolf animus / inside me, I embraced my wildness, / went deeper into my own dark side. // I can be sweeper no more, weeper no more, […]" (Ayers, 2017, p. 134).

After her separation from the Wolf, she meets a human-sized wolf in the depths of the forest, the image of her unconscious, who then transforms into Baba Yaga. The wolf is only one of Baba Yaga's manifestations, because, as Red recognises: "Wolf is more anima / than he is masculine

male" (Ayers, 2017, p. 165). However, the real essence of Baba Yaga is not her appearance as a witch but her next transformation into a pile of bones in the moonlight. This is where the central initiation takes place. The protagonist collects some of these bones; only this symbol of being reduced to death gives her new life: she suddenly feels "energized" (Ayers, 2017, p. 156). With these bones, she follows the way home intuitively—i.e., to her actual self (Ayers, 2017, p. 157). The bones symbolise for her the essence of herself ("These bones are truth, / are essence"; "Harrow every bone, and by this / know myself to the marrow" [Ayers, 2017, pp. 163, 164]).

From now on, she carries both Wolf and Baba Yaga within her, and, at the same time, she has overcome them, because she sets herself free as her own female deity. With the "seven veils," she puts down images that have determined her. Merging symbols of ambiguous goddesses from different mythologies, she becomes her own deity: "seven powerful feminine identities / midwifing into one - / this one - / this new Red / I am becoming" (Ayers, 2017, p. 159). Her goddess realises itself in "wolf-woman configurations" (Ayers, 2017, p. 164) (the Wolf is hidden in each of her paintings). She has found in the deep forest her own individual archetype as a "timber-wolf-woman spirit" ("where forest / deepens with Limber pine and timber-wolf-woman spirit" [Ayers, 2017, p. 167]).

After she has become "whole" in herself, she can meet the Wolf again after many years, aged and with grey hair, in order to become his partner on an equal footing. Baba Yaga has fulfilled her function as an initiator into self-knowledge, and, now, as a lonely old woman, she becomes the counter-image of love between the two artists: "Only Baba Yaga, unpartnered, remains unchanged, / alone in the woods in her chicken-legged home, / scheming ways to trick the lovelorn / into doing her terrible bidding" (Ayers, 2017, p. 211).

4 Baba Yaga as initiator of a free and creative self

Both 'novels in poems' can be characterised as transcultural neo-tales that hybridise motifs of foreign cultural provenance. What they have in common is that Baba Yaga—in accordance with Slavic folkloric tradition —assumes the function of an initiation figure. In both cases, she stands for a deeper, transrational dimension hidden from the ordinary consciousness of the protagonists, which is at the same time the origin of their creative power and their self-determination. Accordingly, their self-discovery coincides with their development of creativity as a poet resp. painter. While the emancipatory meaning of Baba Yaga is prefigured by its use in feminist contexts in the 20th century and is also internationally widespread, the relation Baba Yaga draws between the self and artistic creativity constitutes a specific re-evaluation of the motif in recent years in the United States.

However, the two authors treat this new function of Baba Yaga differently. In Yolen's novel, "finding Baba Yaga" —i.e., finding the self— is a permanent union with Baba Yaga as the 'inner witch,' which means individuation and creativity as an endless process of transition. This goal is characterised as exclusively feminine, whereas the masculine is only needed as a catalyst for its power: men stand for the patriarchal order to be abandoned or broken, boys are witch food, and powerful princes are disturbing interlopers. Ayers, on the other hand, uses Baba Yaga not as a destination, but as a stage on the path of individuation that must be overcome. She formulates this shifting goal as an inner and outer balance of female and male elements, which she calls love. Even though love is defined as an uninterrupted work of self-reflexive creation,[6] at the end of her novel, the development of the characters is nevertheless completed, as she explicitly points out: fairy tales end when things "get vexing".[7] Yolen's protagonist never arrives at such a conclusion; rather, she has learned to learn—becoming an autonomous and creative person, a poet, with ongoing readiness for further develop-

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6   The moral of the story is: "Listen – this is the truth: … Love is daily labor. … Love's labor pays / in love / that stays - / love." (Ayers, 2017, p. 213).
7   "Fairy tales aren't fair. // They end when things / are just about / to get vexing –" (Ayers, 2017, p. 211).

ment. Her self is and remains genuinely transitory.

The choice of the specific form of a 'novel in poems' has a fundamental meaning for both authors. Yolen's book eludes the dichotomy of prose novel and poem and thus corresponds to the idea of an ongoing transition as a third form beyond binary orders, which is adequate to the self as a pure force of creativity. All of the poems—with the exception of the frame texts—originate from the pen of the protagonist herself and reflect her aesthetic evolution as a poet. Ayers, on the other hand, uses the form of a 'novel in poems' to provide insights into her characters from multiple perspectives; sometimes Red Riding Hood speaks, sometimes the Wolf, sometimes other figures, or sometimes a narrator, to which the epigraphs, the titles of the poems, and their arrangement refer. This polyphonic form corresponds to the protagonist's developmental goal in the novel, which consists in the ability to live in a balance between multiple selves on the basis of their self-determination, avoiding superiority or subordination.

Yolen and Ayers demonstrate the 'novel in poems' to be a productive form, which is able to narrate a plot in an elaborated as well as suspenseful way and open up psychological insights through the expressive value and semiotic surplus of poetic language.

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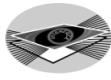
Culture as transition/translation. Vera Pavlova's

"Heavenly animal" ("Nebesnoe zhivotnoe", 1997)

RAINER GEORG GRÜBEL
Carl von Ossietzky Universität Oldenburg

Abstract

This paper confronts to each other two alternative concepts of the genesis of culture: (1) The model of an all-embracing creativity, which includes physical procreation as well as mental creation, suggested by Vasily Rozanov; and (2) the model of two alternative, either physical or mental creativities, developed by Siegmund Freud.

Furthermore, the paper distinguishes two processes of conversion in culture: transition (the change of the cultural active subject), and translation (the change of objects, with which the active subject is busy). An examination of the two models of culture reveals that in each of the two models transition and translation condition each other, even if they do so in different ways.

The title of Vera Pavlovas book of poems "The Heavenly Animal" (1997) suggests a position, which with regard to the genesis of culture is much closer to Rozanov's than to Freud's model of cultural genesis: It takes the human being as well as an animal (so in procreation), as a holy being in its religious activity. The paper considers different forms of transition of the producing institutions of the poems, so from one culture to others, from one gender to the other, one generation to the other as well as different ways of the translation of language forms and poetical structures, of themes and motifs, of persons and things.

Keywords: culture, transition, translation, creation, aesthetics, sex, Vera Pavlova

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1 What is culture?

> He <the artist> is a translation module from one state to another.
>
> D. Prigov (2004)

The word and the concept of "culture" ("cultura") originated more than two thousand years ago from Rome. At first, they meant cultivation of the land, which later, in a narrower sense, was called "agri-culture" ("*agricultura*", [Columella, 1530; Columella, 1941]). On its example it can be shown that every act of cultivation, every cultural action of a person, so to speak, consists of two processes that often are carried out simultaneously, but which should be distinguish from each other in order to understand the complex working of culture: transition and translation.

A prerequisite for cultivating the land is the idea of the human being that the earth is not only something given and inviolable (*natura naturata* in the terminology of Spinoza and Bakhtin), something that can not (or even should not) be changed, something existing without the possibility of redoing it, but that the earth is also something given to mankind in order to redo it, that is, there is a task that requires an activity from him, we can call the processing of nature. In this sense, culture is transition, and in addition there is a movement of the human consciousness from the state of non-action, from passivity in relation to the world to the state of its action, to activity. A person moves from the life of a collector to the life of a plowman. And doing so, mankind knows, that it moves from the life of collectors to the life of plowmen, of farmers.

A person who begins to engage in agriculture, changes his place in the world, he or she is not any more a passive part of nature, but its

active element, which transforms it. In the philosophy of Spinoza and Bakhtin, this position is simultaneously called "*natura naturata*", this is "Created nature" and "*natura naturans*", this is "Creating nature". As Created nature, a person coincides with plants and animals, as Creative nature, he or she corresponds to God. Every creative act, every action in culture, every cooked food, every spoken word, every written poem implies the transition of a person from a Created creature to a creature, which is creating. The person, writing a poem becomes a poet. Changing the world changes the person, who changes it.

By the way, any un-cooked food, every un-spoken word, every un-written poem in a situation in which they are supposed to be cooked, said or written, is also a creative act. This is very important in the context of the preservation of nature and in apophatic culture, when just non-action is the most important cultural action. In these cases non-activity of a person implies his or her transition, his or her transgression from the passivity of a traditional action to the activity of a non-traditional non-action. In this sense, non-writing an article about Hitler the artist and Stalin the poet can be a contribution to our fight against totalitarism. Not taking a plane, can be a contribution to preserving world climate.

The complementary facet of culture is translation. In this case, the change does not occur in relation to the culture of the creative person, the cultural agent, but in relation to his object, for example, the ground. Agriculture transforms nature into fields, natural ground into field lands. In this sense, culture is not only a transgression, not only a transition, but also a transformation, a translation. This translation transforms more or less natural products into an artificial dish, the composition of a poem translates the thoughts, feelings, experiences of a person and the raw material of the language into the meaningful and linguistic whole of a poetic text. This translation acts simultaneously with respect to the translator: he is more or less aware of that, what translates the phenomena into their artistic equivalents. And he notices that he becomes a poet. This means that the work of cultivation leads inescapably to the transgression of its employee. Significantly, this transition, in which, for example, a Poetic subject arises, is one of the most interesting processes of modern culture just in our time.

This is shown, for example, by the fact that during the transition of late structuralism to deconstruction and neo-avant-gardism and of social realism into postmodernism, the function of the author was doubted. This is evident in Roland Barth's (1984) thesis that "the author is dead" and the current discussions about the function and status of a Poetic subject. The Poetic subject is precisely the intra-textual point of intersection between translation and transition as a transitive cultural process of a poetic text.

In developed cultures, the majority of cultural translations consist in the transformation of already existing cultural products from one form into another. A good example of this transfer of cultural phenomena into others in the dialogue of cultures is intertextuality, the theory of which is itself the result of intercultural dialogue, in this case Russian, Bulgarian and French (by Bakhtin and Kristeva, Ilyin 1999, pp. 204-206).

Going back to our initial example, to agriculture, we have to keep in mind, that culture as a translation does not only concern nature, the raw earth, but also the field, the cultivated ground. We cannot only convert cultivated land to a different quality and grow vegetables today where corn grew last year, but we can also turn it into uncultivated land, into wasteland. We can transform the cultivated forest plantation, more or less, back into a virgin forest.

In this context the destruction of cultural monuments is also an act of cultural translation; in the case of the removal of fascist or Stalinist monuments, it was a positive, emancipative act, and in the case of the destruction of Assyrian monuments by the so-called Islamic state in Palmyra –a barbarian act.

Another example of early human cultural activity is cattle breeding. Within the framework of animal husbandry, man influences the natural reproduction of animals. This activity is accompanied by the domestication of animals. By the way, the title of the book, we will study now, "Heavenly animal", says that here we deal more with the activity, so to speak, of a breeder, than with that of a plowman. Before we start with

the analysis of the book of Vera Pavlova (1997), we have to remind of two theories of the origin of culture at the beginning of that century, at the end of which she wrote the poems of the collection "Heavenly animal".

2 Two Twentieth Century Theories on the Origin of Culture

At the beginning of the twentieth century, two theories about the emergence of culture arose in Russia and in Austria. The first one was created in Petersburg as a response to the Orthodox Church's concept of the role of gender in a person's life. Another, better known theory, appeared independently of the first a decade later in Vienna as part of psychiatric practice. We start with the second, because it is well-known and, against its background, the specifics of the first come forward more clearly.

Sigmund Freud (1905, pp. 116-117) based his theory of culture on the concept of mental economy. In his opinion, cultural acts of a person imply a temporary rejection of the waste of sexual energy. He called this refusal "sublimation" ("Sublimierung"). With the help of sublimation, that is, the transfer of creative energy from the physiology of sexual activity to the psychology of spiritual creativity, a person can create, for example, artistic works. In this process human beings transfer creative energy from the sphere of nature into the sphere of culture. Freud outlined his theory of the creation of culture by the example of Leonardo da Vinci, who had no children, what, according to Freud indicates the abstention of this artist from sexual life.

Unlike Freud, several years before the emergence and publication of his economic theory of cultural production, the Russian philosopher, journalist and writer Vasily Rozanov (1995, 2008) laid the foundation for a different concept of the emergence of culture. His model of culture was not grounded on the competing with each other physiological and psychological activities, but on the coexistence of human biological and spiritual action. According to Rozanov, there is no competition and there is even no fundamental difference between physical and mental

human creative acts.

In order to emphasize the equivalence of the creation of a child and of an artwork, Rozanov even called the creation of the artifact its birth. He regarded it as a female activity of the writer. Rozanov's theory of human creativity, about which the American Slavicist Adam Ure (2011) has written the interesting book *Vasilii Rozanov and the Creation*, forms at the same time his emancipation from Leontyev's philosophy, which stated that the top of human behavior is not sexual or artistic creation, but austerity.

When Rozanov came into contact with Freud's theory, in special, its economic concept of alternative physiological or mental creation, he pointed to examples of people like Leo Tolstoy, who was the father many children and the author of many books (Grübel 2019, p. 275-278, 344).

According to Freud's theory, man, as the creator of culture, moves from the area of physiology to the field of mental phenomena. At the same time he translates personal experiences into universal human knowledge. According to the concept of Rozanov, a person can freely, without a fundamental change, go from one reproductive action, be it conceiving children or creating a work of art to the other. For Rozanov, culture is the complex realization of the creative power of mankind, whether physiological or spiritual.

As a creature with love, the human being according to Rozanov is on the same level with God (Grübel 2016). This distinguishes his concept from the idea of Nietzsche about the death of God. For Rozanov, God did not die, but became a partner and interlocutor of man.

3 The proximity of the concept of love in Vera Pavlova to Rozanov's theory of culture

In an untitled poem, consisting of five verses, included in the anthology "Majority" and beginning with the words "or maybe ..." the Poetic subject reproduces the image of the bodily activity of the collective "we". Calling the production of (celestial) sounds "birth", to designate it with a word, initially indicating a biological phenomenon of reproduction, implies a reference to Nietzsche's (1912) book, The birth of tragedy from the spirit of music. Like Rozanov (and Nietzsche), Pavlova's Poetical I puts the creativity of man and God on one and the same level.

This, of course, is contrary to the spiritual canon of the Orthodox Church. In this text, the un-audibility of the sounds of the bodies of people, engaged in sexual intercourse, indicates that the music of spheres in the philosophy of Aristotle (1981) is not audible to a person in his treatise On the Sky (Περὶ οὐρανοῦ, II.9).

> а может быть, биенье наших тел
> рождает звук, который нам не слышен,
> а слышен там, на облаках и выше,
> но слышен тем, кому уже не слышен
> обычный звук…
>
> or may it be, the beating of our bodies
> gives birth to sound that is not heard by us,
> but heard there on the clouds and there above,
> but heard by those who can no longer hear
> the normal sound...
>
> (Pavlova 2001, p. 127)

Comparing the movement of human bodies with the movement of celestial bodies, we explain the meaning of the name of "Heavenly animal". Pavlova's human being is not so much ζῷον πολιτικόν as ζῷον οὐράνιον. He is more cosmic than a political being. Human physiological activity,

which is identified by the word "birth" with heavenly creation, like the movement of the planets, is not heard by the human being himself, but by celestial beings who, for their part, cannot hear the same sounds if they do not have a creative basis.

If someone doubts that the expression "the beating of bodies" in Pavlova's text has a sexual meaning, this will be clarified by the following poem of the same collection (I apologize for the frank language of the author):

> О чем бы я не писала, пишу о ебле.
> И только когда я пишу о самой ебле,
> то кажется, что пишу совсем не о ебле.
> Вот почему я пишу только о ебле.[1]

> What about I ever write, I write about the fuck.
> And only when I write just on the fuck,
> it seems that I'm writing not at all on fuck.
> This is why I write only about the fuck.

<div align="right">(Pavlova 1977, p. 223)</div>

In this case, we find in this poem a figure of denial, which can be attributed to Freud's concept of repression (Verdrängung), but since Pavlova has put it upside down, this figure is here anti-Freudian. By the way, the author's reflection on sexual action translates this very action into an act of culture, into creativity, and this act contributes to the fact that an active person moves from a biological animal to human culture.

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1   The question asked by a professor of linguistics after the reading of this paper at the Institute of Linguistics of the Russian Academy of Sciences in Moscow whether there is really a poet called Vera Pavlova and his indication that a Russian woman still does not speak about sexuality in the public eye, can be interpreted as a proof of the thesis, that Vera Pavlova's poetry really processes a translation in Russian culture and that precisely by this translation the Poetic subject of these poems performs a cultural transition.

4 Figures of cultural transition / transgression in the collection "Heavenly animal"

If the closeness of Pavlova's concept of culture to Rozanov's philosophy of culture is fairly obvious, then examples of the transition of the Poetic subject to a new cultural state are less evident in most of Pavlova's poems. This lesser salience follows from the complexity of the position of the author and the Poetic subject in her poetic world.

Our first example is the poem "Corps" ("Body"), which, within the framework of the cycle *Blasons* (*Coats of Arms*), is printed in the middle of the book not with the usual horizontal, but with the vertical position of the verses. Of course, such a rotation of the book by 90 degrees, when we are reading the text, indicates the general world reorientation, expected from the reader in the process of receiving this book.

The Poetic subject calls the body of the speaking I, first, as his only property, which is given to him by the creator in the form of a naked figure. This means that the human body is a work of art from the very beginning. However, the raw body gets this property only in the process of thinking and writing poems about it with the name "Le corps". Moreover, the French name gives the subject of the body the semantic aura of French culture. As examples, we recall the bodies in the work of the sculptors Camille Claudel and Auguste Rodin. However, according to Pavlova's poem, this is man-made work, his so-called divine sculpture, which over time is lost:

Le corps
Что мне терять на земле, кроме этого тела?
И – уже теряю.
<div align="center">Тело уже поредело.</div>

Но оно и сейчас – у меня ведь судьба не дура! –
удача
<div align="center">всевышнего мастера обнаженной натуры. <…></div>
<div align="right">(Pavlova 1977, p. 112)</div>

Le corps
What do I have to lose on earth besides this body?
And – already am losing.
                                        The body is already thinned.
But it is also now – because my fate is not a fool! –
success

                        of the almighty master of the nude. <...>
                                (Pavlova 1977, p. 112)

The feminine person about which the text speaks, appears in the recollection of the Poetic I in the form of some kind of libretto of a dream, which however is the text of an opera, that in this case on its side is left without the words that the woman sang with the man, while they made love:

Подружка! Кто научил тебя
вовремя поднимать ножки и,
        кончая, кричать, окликать
                        отлетающую душу?
                Никто не учил.
                Природа
Природа, меня наделившая тонким запястьем,
чтобы сошлись на нем намертво
                мужские пальцы,
природа, меня наделившая телом
                        компактным и белым, чтобы
стелиться ему по земле под тяжелым телом мужчины,
        которого пишет влюбленная память
                        в сновиденьи,
                натура которого дышит под боком,
                в сновиденьи,
        либретто которого вместе распели…
Вокализ андрогина и взбитые сливки постели.

Girlfriend! Who taught you
in time to raise the legs and
coming, to cry and to echo
                    the flying off soul?
                    Nobody taught it.
                    Nature
Nature has given me a thin wrist,
to come together on it tightly
                    male fingers,
nature has given me a body
                    compact and white to
move along the ground under the heavy body of a man
                    which love memory writes
                    in a dream
                    whose nature breathes alongside
                    in a dream
          the libretto of which was sung by us together ...
Vocalise of androgyne and whipped cream of the bed.
                    (Pavlova 1977, p. 113-114)

Here the transgression is performed by the work of memory and by writing a poetic text. At the same time, it is worth to pay attention to the fact that nature itself, which gave the human being the body, appears in these lines also as *doctrina*, as a teaching, in the center of which there are Russian words with the root "gender": childbirth, give birth and birth: "*rody*", "*rodit*" and "*rozhdenie*". Secondly, it's great that the vocalization, i.e. the text of this libretto, unlike the text of the poem itself, does not contain any words, but consists only of sounds, and that at the end of the text the sexual opposition of woman and men is removed, as in the androgyne.

Our second example of transition is a poem in which the Poetic subject talks about those life tasks that it could have accomplished, but did n o t accomplish in fact. There remains only one position, realized by the person. This position is designated with such irony and humor, which are characteristic precisely for the artist of which it speaks –for

69

Prigov. The text realizes the posterity, which the verses call by name, with the help of four rhetorical Litotes-figures. Here transition serves as the choice of a person's life opportunity, a career, which eventually leads to the existence of a poet-artist:

Во мне погибла балерина.
Во мне погибла героиня.
Во мне погибла лесбиянка.
Во мне погибла негритянка.
Как много их во мне погибло!
И только Пригов жив-здоров.

In me has died a ballerina.
In me has died a heroine.
In me has died a lesbian.
In me has died a woman, black.
How many of them died in me!
And well, alive, is only Prigov.

(Pavlova 1977, p. 201)

If all the four not-carried out possibilities (Rozanov intended to write his second philosophical monograph about the philosophical problem of possibility), are designed as properly constructed four-foot jambes with exact rhymes, then these rhymes are absent in the last two verses, speaking about the really chosen path. Un-realized opportunities rhyme with each other, but the real career does neither have a metrical nor a sound-match.

Our third and last example for the implementation of transgression is given in a relatively short poem without a title from the same collection. It contains only eight words. The first two verses of this text, "Goes / a man", repeat the beginning of many Russian anecdotes, such as "There is a man walking through the cemetery at night". In contrast to these comical texts, the poetic subject of Pavlova's poem conveys in her very short, one- or two-syllable words the development of a person through death into another state, in which, however, his movement coincides

with the original one. So, this text can, as an endless story, approaching its end, be restarted from its very beginning.

The border between this world and the world beyond is indicated by me by means of a straight line. Here the transition concerns not only the way from nature to culture, but also the path from earth to heaven:

Идет	There goes
мужик.	a man.
Упал.	He fell.
Встает.	He rises.
Идет	There goes
мужик.	a man.
Упал.	He fell.
Лежит.	Is lying.
Лежит	There lies.
мужик	a man
и не	and does
встает.	not rise.
Потом	And then
встает.	he rises.
Потом	And then
идет.	he goes.

(Pavlova 1977, p. 6)

It is noteworthy here (and this distinguishes these verses from ordinary infinite stories) that in this Russian repetition begins already from the fifth word, the verb "Идет" – "goes", which at the same time personifies transition itself. Thus, transition is implemented as a possibly endless passage from transition to transition. This idea of an endless course contradicts both the Marxist and Soviet concept of communism as the final stage of human history on the one hand and Fukuyama's famous thesis about the end of history on the other.

5 Figures of cultural translation in the collection "Heavenly animal"

Transformation, or translation as a cultural strategy, is found in Pavlova's poems often in a dialogic form. In one poem, starting with the question "Got you, my darling" («Попался, голубчик?»), this translation is given as an inversion of the biblical story about the creation of man. Unlike the first book of Moses (3,22), according to which the woman Eve is created by God from the rib of the already existing man Adam, in Pavlova's poem the man is present in every cell of Eve, the woman, and can be (re-)created from it:

> Попался, голубчик? Ты в клетке,
> ты в каждой моей клетке,
> могу из одной своей клетки
> создавать тебя, как голограмму,
> всего тебя – из миллиграмма,
> из Евиной клетки – Адама.

> Gotcha, honey? You are in the cell
> you are in every cell of me,
> I can from one of my cells
> create you like a hologram
> all of you – from a milligram,
> from the Evian cell – the Adam.
> (Pavlova 1977, p. 19)

First, this turn changes the traditional gender hierarchy: now priority is given to Eve. If in the previously considered text about the body, and in some form also in the poem, where the subject is poetically identified with Prigov, the opposition of genders is neutralized, in this poem their opposition is reversed. Secondly, the manner of re-creation is changing: in the world of the poem it is not only the biological process of multiplying a person from an egg cell, but also the reduplication and the diversification by using a hologram. There is not only a new biological creature, but also an optical illusion of another person. In this sense, the poem provides, in addition to the alternative to the religious concept

of the creation of man, that is, in addition to the biological concept of reproduction (procreation), also a model for the creation of the poetic text. And indeed, at the end of the text, we witness the creation of Adam in verse.

In another case of translation, in the eighteen verses, which begin with a quote from Lermontov's Heine-translation, "In the North is wild ...", the poetic subject initially rejects the opinion that the translation of the verse "In the North is wild ..." is a motive, taken from Heine. Of course, in the narrow sense and even historically verifiable, Lermontov's verse is a translation from Heine:

> Ein Fichtenbaum steht einsam
> Im Norden auf Kahler Höh'.
> (Heine 1827, p. 173)

На севере диком стоит одиноко　　In the wild North stands alone
На голой вершине сосна　　　　　　On the bare top a pine
(Lermontov 1961, p. 512)

But in the broad sense of love songs, about which the lyrical "I" of this poem speaks, the motive of unrealized love is in fact rather the matter of Sappho, who according to the legend committed suicide, having been thrown down the Levkady rocks because of the unrequited love for the ferryman Phaon. This means that the semantic correspondence is created not so much by the coincidence of words, like in a superficial quotation, as by the deep meaning of the literary motive. If in this context Heine can be taken into account at all, the lyric "I" argues, then with his poem about Lorelei, where, on the contrary, the skipper of a small ship, who cannot take his eyes off a beautiful girl, is sinking because of that to the ground of the river Rhine.

As is well known, the translation of Lermontov already implies a gender "exchange" because in Heine's North the German "Fichtenbaum" ("spruce tree"), having the masculine gender, is opposed to the in German feminine tree "Palme" ("palm"), whereas in Lermontov's poem the

feminine word "sosna" ("pine") is opposed to another feminine word, to "palma" ("palme"). This is a gender game, in which Lermontov transforms the heterosexual relation into a homosexual one, and the Poetic subject of Pavlova restores it by contrasting the female poetess Sappho with the male poet Heine:

«На севере диком…» – Сапфо, а не Гейне.
Ты – пальма. И юг твой, как север мой, дик.
А если из Гейне, то пенье на Рейне,
дуэт лорелей. А сплочая сплетенье –
Наталья, пойдем в хоровод эвридик,
которым орфеи и лели – до фени:
с нездешнею нежностью, без сожаленья
покажем им розовый острый язык!

"In the wild north,..." – Sappho, not Heine.
You are a palm tree. And your south is like my north, wild.
And if from Heine, then singing on the Rhine,
the duet of Lorelei. And rallying interlacement
Natalia, let's go to Eurydice's dance,
which Orpheus and Lily – give a damn about:
with tenderness from above, without regret
we will show them a pink sharp tongue!

(Lermontov 1961, p. 215)

Here again, we meet a cultural translation: first, gender transfer from the point of view of a man to a woman's point of view and, second, aesthetic translation from a tragic situation to a comic one. In place of Heine's deadly end, Pavlova's Poetic subject uses the crudely humorous gesture of showing the ,tongue' (which in Russian is also the language). In this context the reader should not forget that Sappho created a fabulous female homophil culture. So, we have to do with an inaccurate – though very precisely calculated – translation from German and Greek cultures that gives rise to the original Russian text in both: Lermontov and Pavlova. These transfers show also that culture as translation implies

inevitably also deliberate productive inaccuracy. The creative translation of a cultural element is never its identical repetition

Pavlova's poem, which begins with the word "Poetry" and with the colon sign, raises the expectation that it gives a definition of this word. In fact, however, it speaks about the function of verses. In the beginning, it defines this function as a "lie", but as a "lie in the salvation of an idea", and then as a transfer of an object from the negative position of death, destruction, danger, misfortune or / and sin to the positive state of existence, security, happiness or / and bliss. Through poetry, says the poem, the idea of the divine nature of the word expressed at the beginning of the Gospel of John (1,1) is resurrected: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." However, the subject of the text denotes poetry not as truth, but as a lie, however as such a lie that can save the idea of the divine nature of the word. In this way, it makes the resurrection of man possible:

Поэзия: ложь во спасение
идеи, что слово – бог,[2]
что легкое слово гения
спасительно, как вдох
ныряльщику, что колыбельная
печальнейшей из панихид
рули повернет корабельные
и спящего воскресит.

Poetry: a lie for the salvation
of the idea that the word is god,
that the light word of the genius
is saving, like a breath
to the diver, that a lullaby
is the saddest of the dirges
will turn the rudders of the ship
and resurrect sleeper.

(Pavlova 1977, p. 188)

This text implies the possibility that the poet, with the help of a poetic word, becomes the savior, the messiah, and this is in the horizon of Jewish and Christian cultures the most far-reaching human transition in the world. In fact, this is a transgression to another world, namely, to that world, from which, according to Zosima in *The Brothers Karamazov*, the seed of the people of our world is taken: "God took the seeds from

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2   The spelling of the word "god" in a post-Soviet context with a lowercase letter shows that the lyrical I means not the God of Christian faith, but any concept of God. Thus, the prophet John's maxim is summarized and the poem passes from the field of religious art to the area of the religion of art.

other worlds and sowed them on this earth and raised up his garden".
(Dostoevsky 1976, p. 290).

In such poems, the Poetic subject of Pavlova enacts the transfer of culture from this world to the world above, in favor of the designation of that, for which we have no words. So, in our last example, he calls the expression "the other world" – "the figure of speech," that is, the traditional manner of speaking, to which a real subject corresponds only conditionally. In this six-liner, the speaking "I" crosses the border of possible expression:

Тот свет – фигура речи.   The world above is a figure of speech.
Но там не будет речи.   But there will be no speeches.
Кладбищенские речи–   These cemetery speeches –
последний натиск речи   the last onslaught of speech
и последнее поражение речи and the last loss of speech
в борьбе с неизреченным.   in fight with unspeakable.
                                        (Pavlova 1977, p. 210)

Translating a poetic verbal culture across the border of what can be expressed (and this is the biggest step, possible in this field) the Poetic subject of this text transfers us into the sphere of the world above, in which, in his words, "there will be no speech". And as the philosopher Wittgenstein said at the end of his book The Logical Philosophical Treatise (Tractatus logico-philosophicus): "Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent" (Wittgenstein, 1971, p. 115).

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